design not merely as part of the historical back story of digital games, but as a field in its own right with its own future.

In *Unboxed: Board Game Experience and Design*, Gordon Calleja builds a framework for a broad theory of how board game players experience games and how to design for them. As a precis, once you have player attention there are five significant ways through which that attention is converted into involvement. The first is through ludic involvement (buy-in of the player objectives and how the rules broadly function). After this come four other intersecting and often simultaneous forms of involvement: social; fictional (player imaginative participation in the story world’s setting); narrative (a composite of two elements he terms “scripted narrative” and “emergent narrative”); and material involvement (pp. 26-44). By scripted narrative Calleja means the more overt deliveries of narrative into a game (such as event cards) and by emergent narrative he means that generated by players making meaning from causally related mental images derived through the playing of the game (p. 35). Calleja keeps these terms—attention and involvement—distinct from the synonym-like “immersion,” which he reserves for a specific meaning of “imagined habitation” within an agency-affording world (p. 203). With this player involvement, designers may generate affect, providing an experience of emotional resonance.

Calleja builds this framework through wide and broad reading of the subject area—Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois, Brian Sutton-Smith, Miguel Sicart, Soraya Murray, Thomas Malaby, Greg Costikyan, Katie Salen Tekinbaş, and Eric
the terms “fun” and “theme,” each calcifying and unhelpful in their own way. It is also seemingly impossible to read *Unboxed* without being in awe of Anadine, a fifteen-year-long RuneQuest tabletop role-playing game campaign Calleja played from childhood into his teenage years. This, indeed, is immersion that is surely hard to chase.

My single major criticism is that the title undersells the considerable value of this book’s contribution to the field. *Unboxed* is rather a milquetoast heading to encapsulate what Calleja has to offer, and the subtitle, *Board Game Experience and Design*, feels like it should help more than it does. It seems, from Calleja’s personal website, that the book once had the title *Cardboard Lives: Boardgame Design and Experience*, which is a little more arresting but suggests a title never really settled. And although “experience,” “design,” and “board game” are perhaps all supposed to be in the mix somewhere, the words never quite find the right place to make the title sing. If there’s ever a T.I.M.E. Stories adventure where you can go back in time and contribute to the marketing team meeting, I would suggest something bolder like “Critical Concepts in Board Game Design,” or perhaps, “How Board Games Work: Designing Player Experience,” or, my final pitch before the portal recloses, “Involved: A Critical Framework For Board Game Design.”

Titles are hard, and even if this one misses the mark, the contents assuredly do not. I will be recommending this book to students, and I will be paying attention to what Gordon Calleja has to say in the future.

—Maurice W. Suckling, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY