Editorial

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Press Start 2023 Editorial Board

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When we published our regular issue last June, we were not expecting to be publishing a new issue less than a year later, but our authors and editors have been working hard (like always!), and here we are, ready to share a new issue with you.

Like every year, we have had a few changes in our editorial board: some of our board members have left to work in the game industry, got hired as postdoctoral researchers, or wanted to focus on other commitments, while other wonderful students have joined our team. Samuel Poirier-Poulin stayed at the helm as Editor-in-Chief, and Lauren Watson, Andrew Fleshman, and Christopher Barkman are now sharing the role of co-Vice Editors. The publication of this issue also means that it is time for us to say our farewells to Erin Maclean, our former Senior Vice Editor, who has successfully defended her doctoral thesis and is now ready to move on with new projects. Erin had been on the board since 2018. She was a veteran editor and was known among the board for her thorough work and for being the "APA expert." We are thankful for all her help over the past few years and her dedication to the journal.

Since our last issue, we have continued our project of publishing more book reviews that reflect the multidisciplinary subject of game studies. We have also started working on a special issue on postcolonialism and video games in India, guest edited by Zahra Rizvi and Souvik Kar. And of course, we have been closely working with our authors to publish their research articles. This issue is a little shorter than our previous one, but still contains invaluable contributions, and we could not wait any longer to share them with you.

The issue begins with Mark Hines's article, "Becoming Halfling: Racial Permeability as Ludonarrative Architecture in the Critical Role Web Series," which examines racialized fantasy tropes and the role they play in the second season of the popular *Dungeons & Dragons* live play podcast, Critical Role (2012-present). Hines draws on real world political discourses to frame the way the fantasy world of the tabletop story brings the audience's prior knowledge of race into their understanding of the fantasy world. He concludes that narratives of racial permeability and transformability in the fantasy setting can reinforce regressive notions of racial identity.

In "Lost in a Dream: Queering Time and Space in *Yume Nikki*," Elliot Bear Yu proposes a queer reading of the adventure game *Yume Nikki* (KIKIYAMA, 2004) and highlights the many opportunities for queer play the game offers. His work pays close attention to the game's spatio-temporal dimensions, analyzing how it evokes queer experiences of movement, wandering, disorientation, and failure. Yu's work ultimately reveals that *Yume Nikki* can be read as a critique of normative values and ways of being, and can be used to reflect on the potential of unintuitive and unfun methods of play.

Matthew Allan's article "Doki Doki Subversion Club! Gothic Ghosts, Uncanny Glitches, and Abject Boundaries" reveals how spatial metaphors embedded in the design of user interfaces have given expression to a strain of gothic horror endemic to digital media of the 21st century. Allan observes in *Doki Doki Literature Club!* (Team Salvato, 2017) a confluence of modern technologies and old anxieties through which boundaries are blurred and unseemly things, like glitches, wield a horrifying influence over the player. With this article, he draws attention to the development of a literary tradition within a new form, offering an analysis by which we may come to appreciate in video games the medium-specific nature of haunting.

Lastly, we are very excited to include ten book reviews as part of this issue: Michael Iantorno's review of *Game Wizards: The Epic Battle for Dungeons & Dragons* (Peterson, 2021); Andre Cowen's review of *Perspectives on the European Videogame* (Navarro-Remesal & Pérez-Latorre, 2021); Florence Smith Nicholls's review of *Image Objects: An Archaeology of Computer Graphics* (Gaboury, 2021); Beatrix Livesey-Stephens's review of *Play Like a Feminist* (Chess, 2020); Courtney Blamey's review of *Experimental Games: Critique, Play, and Design in the Age of Gamification* (Jagoda, 2020); Rebecca Grose's review of *Ethics of Computer Gaming: A Groundwork* (Ulbricht, 2020/2022); Doruk Balcı's review of *Digital Playgrounds: The Hidden Politics of Children's Online Play Spaces, Virtual Worlds and Connected Games* (Grimes, 2021); Alexander Hurezeanu's review of *Playful Pedagogy in the Pandemic: Pivoting to Game-Based Learning* (Johnson & Salter, 2022); Elizabeth Neumann's review of *Game: Animals, Video Games, and Humanity* (Tyler, 2022); and David ten Cate's review of *Digital*

Games After Climate Change (Abraham, 2022). These books each offer a meaningful contribution to game studies, so we are pleased to include such thorough and insightful reviews in this issue.

We are always delighted to be publishing the exceptional work of students and recent graduates from a wide variety of disciplinary fields. We will soon be looking for new motivated board members to join our team, so please keep an eye out! As always, we would like to thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for believing in us. We are always looking for peer reviewers and accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Don't hesitate to reach out!

Best wishes from the *Press Start* editorial board!