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global network player authority PewDiePie guild god Lets Play angel undead wri fau nentc mediatization Siskit contest
game rule system representation WGW ble sing nob kills tejo or fact bo ty fight prop epe inc me n s PVP digital
religion gamet analysis The Last of Us death resurrection funeral rules tua virtual identity buff priest genesis clan wedding
simulation ludology narrative Xbox 360 PVE



Gameenvironments from the perspective of an actant. ChatGPT (prompt: "gameenvironments").

Video Games Beyond Play. Decolonizing Gamevironments

by Christopher Helland, 144-165

Gamevironments Revisited from the Perspective of Game Production Studies

by Vít Šisler and Jan Švelch, 166-207

reviews

Videoludic Metalepsis. A Review of Agata Waszkiewicz's *Metagames: Games on Games* (2024)

by Stefano Gualeni, 208-214

Review of Tom Tyler's *Game: Animals, Videogames, and Humanity* (2022)

by Agata Waszkiewicz, 215-220

Review of Melissa Kagen's *Wandering Games* (2022)

by Manh-Toan Ho, 221-226

In the same vein, it is also important to observe that *Metagames* is not really focused on those videogames “that are deliberately designed to materialize, through their gameplay and their aesthetic qualities, critical and/or satirical perspectives on the ways in which videogames themselves are designed, played, sold, manipulated, experienced, and understood as social objects” (Gualeni 2016). Instead, the book discusses about a vast array of videogame-related phenomena tied to videoludic meta-referentiality and meta-fictionality. The presence of metalepsis, meta-referentiality and elements of meta-fiction – as the author admits several times in their book – are not always a guarantee of a meta-critical attitude. What Waszkiewicz’s book discusses, in other words, are not always self-reflexive works. They were not always designed for self-reflection and do not inherently have a political or philosophical message. In that sense, *Metagames* does not solely cover games on games, but instead covers a horizon videoludic phenomena tied to (or directly emerging from) meta-referentiality and meta-fictionality. The book analyses, 210 for example, mini-games, cozy games, and masocore games as videogame forms that borrow from (and often subvert) established ludic conventions. Their deviating from an alleged videoludic norm is not always pursued with satirical or critical intents, however, but is often an attempt to occupy (or to carve) a market niche, or to satisfy untapped player preference related, for example, to game difficulty.

I could make that same point concerning various other themes of the book such as those of game metaphors or hypermediacy. In light of this critical point, the book title could have been less equivocally titled something like *Videoludic Metalepsis: An Exploration of Metareferentiality and Metafictionality in Digital Games*.

supported with images. In my opinion, pictures, schemes and screenshots would also have helped breaking Routledge’s walls of text, making the text more memorable and easier to navigate.

Concluding comments

Leaving my two qualms aside, I want to iterate on the fact that I found *Metagames* to be a rich, detailed, well-written and very well-informed book. I would even go as far as saying that it is a necessary reading for academics interested in themes like fourth wall breaks, unreliable narration and self-reflexivity in video games.

After an introductory chapter that frames the book’s aspirations and introduces its key lexical elements, chapter one focuses on fourth wall breaks in videogames. The second chapter is on hypermediacy, with a focus and the roles played by interfaces in stimulating meta-reflective stances. The third one is dedicated, instead, to unreliable narration and unreliable narrators in videogames. The last three chapters discuss meta-referential possibilities and characteristics of videogames in a more general sense, touching on themes and topics that do not always take a meta stance in relation to the experience of gameplay. Among these more peripheral cases, chapter four targets unusual and uncomfortable videogames, chapter five focuses on the often-ironic use of mini-games, and chapter six delves into themes related to irony and satire.

The various conceptual threads running through the many themes of the book link together (and make good use of) game studies text on metalepsis, metafiction, and meta-reference, citing and connecting works by Jan-Noël Thon, Steven Conway, Alex

Gualeni, S. and Fassone, R., 2022. *Fictional games: A philosophy of worldbuilding and imaginary play*. London: Bloomsbury.

Jagoda, P., 2020. *Experimental games: Critique, play, and design in the age of gamification*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Waszkiewicz, A., 2024. *Metagames: Games on games*. New York: Routledge.