

Editorial

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Press Start 2025 Editorial Board

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Eight months have passed since the release of our special issue on gaming cultures in India, and we are pleased to announce that a new issue of *Press Start* is now ready for publication. As some of you already know, 2025 has not been an easy year for *Press Start* due to technical difficulties with our website that forced us to pause our journal for more than three months. Nevertheless, we have been able to prepare several publications for our newest issue, and we are grateful to our authors for their patience and for sticking with us through everything. We have also received many new submissions since our website was fixed, and we are very thrilled to start working on them. We love reading the work of emerging scholars, so if you are a student or recent graduate and write about video games, please send us your fantastic work!

Since 2024, we have had some turnover in our editorial board, bidding farewell to some of our editors and welcoming and mentoring new ones. Changing our board is always a bittersweet process: we part ways with valued colleagues—sometimes friends—with whom collaboration has been nothing short of magical, but we also warmly welcome new board members and introduce them to the rewarding experience of editorial work and the joy of working closely with brilliant authors. Samuel Poirier-Poulin stayed at the helm as Editor-in-Chief for one final year (this is his last editorial!), and Meg Ritchie joined Cassandra Barkman and Andrew Fleshman in the role of co-Vice Editors.

We are proud to present this new issue, which features four research articles and five book reviews.

The issue begins with Joel White's article, "How 2B[?]: The Narrative Mechanics of Posthumanism in *NieR: Automata*," which explores the

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manner in which the narrative and gameplay mechanics of *Nier: Automata* (PlatinumGames, 2017) conspire to produce a posthuman subjectivity at the intersection of the player's engagement with those mechanics and the narrative's vision of a world beyond human influence. Play and narrative thereby combine in *Nier: Automata* to develop a new ideal of involvement and concern for the world and its cohabitants not predicated on antiquated notions of human domination.

Then, Ember Martin's article, "Rose-Tinted Videogames: The Influential Nature of Nostalgia in Videogame Development," proposes a typology of nostalgia within the development and reception of video games and their histories. As the author explains, nostalgia can serve to remind players of a beloved object from the past, repeat—as closely as possible—the experiences that gave rise to fond memories, or revive an intellectual property with varying degrees of (dis)continuity with experiences treasured by creators and players alike.

In "Riot Games' Content Marketing Approach for VALORANT Champions 2022," Edward Stazd examines the primary mediums of content distribution for VALORANT Champions 2022 and compares the marketing strategies used for this event to those of other esports events. He argues that the use of immersive, themed content combined with the inclusion of various types of players and world regions can effectively sustain and grow interest in competitive gaming events, explaining the popularity of VALORANT Champions 2022.

Finally, Lara Wood's article, "Can Ordinary Horror Games Reduce Avoidant and Safety Behaviours in Players with Anxiety Disorders?" considers how off-the-shelf horror games might help mitigate anxiety. The article uses a heuristic analysis to assess the extent to which an Itch.io game, *Carbon Steel* (Klubnika, 2024), aligns with therapeutic standards and functions like the purpose-made therapeutic game *MindLight* (GainPlay Studio, 2014). Although it was not marketed as a mental health aide, *Carbon Steel* features tacitly therapeutic mechanics that support a health-oriented approach to the gratifications of horror gaming.

We are also very happy to include five book reviews in this issue: Mark Hines's review of *The Privilege of Play: A History of Hobby Games, Race, and Geek Culture* (Trammell, 2023); Luke Thomley's review of *The Stuff Games Are Made Of* (Barr, 2023); Chelsea Russell's review of *Posthuman Gaming: Avatars, Gamers, and Entangled Subjectivities* (Wilde, 2024); Tony Payment's review of *Bioware's Mass Effect* (Winter, 2022); and Kacper Karwacki's review of *Przygody cyfrowego tułacza. Interpretacje groźnawcze* (Kłosiński, 2023). These books cover a wide range of topics, from game design, hermeneutics, and autoethnography, to critical race theory, hobby gaming, and posthumanism. We believe that they are timely contributions to game studies and are happy to include such thoughtful reviews in this issue.

As always, we would like to thank our authors for their trust and dedication, our reviewers for their constructive feedback and for helping us to build a friendlier academic community—academic friendliness is the way to go!—and all our readers for supporting us. We are also grateful to all the professors and course instructors who encourage their students to submit their work to *Press Start*. We are always looking for peer reviewers and accepting submissions on a rolling basis. Please keep an eye out for updates, calls for papers, and review requests on our website and social media, and as always, don't hesitate to reach out. Take care everyone!

Best wishes from the *Press Start* editorial board!