

INTRODUCTION

Critical Game Studies*Estudos Críticos em Videogame***Aline Conceição Job da Silva*****Amanda Phillips****

This issue, “Critical Game Studies”, the first of its kind for *Antares: Letras e Humanidades*, offers a diverse range of perspectives on a diverse range of games of interest to Brazilian scholars and beyond.

Although game studies, like video games, is a global phenomenon, US and European voices dominate the conversation. The 2021 Digital Games Research Association conference in Guadalajara, Mexico, for example, will be the international association’s first conference in Latin American after 18 years of gathering primarily in the United States and Europe. Its journal, *ToDigra*, is also published in English - as are all of the major journals in the field of game studies. However, the strong response to this call in *Antares* indicates a growing community of scholars aware of the political role video games play in research.

With this in mind, the issue called for research that theorizes the politics of video games. Therefore, the core of the issue is not simply an appreciation of a specific game, an assessment of its content or a detailed analysis of its parts, but an understanding that research on and for video games needs political and epistemological approaches (as suggested by Alastair Pennycook for Applied Linguistics) to go beyond the canonical positions of game studies. Furthermore, video game research also needs to be thought about locally, as only studies with situated knowledges (HARAWAY, 2009) will be able to provide us with more understanding about this media.

The 2018 Open Library of the Humanities collection, “Postcolonial Perspectives in Game Studies,” draws attention to the Eurocentric perspectives of video games and game studies, which exist despite an international community of players and scholars

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who engage with games. Eurocentrism still prevails, as in other areas of study, but critical research has made it possible to rethink video games and game studies from positions that understand the impossibility of non-social, apolitical and a-historical analysis.

The “Critical Game Studies” issue was organized thinking about these questions and other ways to problematize the study of games. The publication has a strong current of leftist critique, including post-colonial, decolonial, indigenous and anti-capitalist perspectives. Applying these approaches to the study of video games is a crucial intervention for the development of the field, and critical game studies work is on the rise around the world. As Linda Martín Alcoff proposed, thinking about classical epistemology, we need a “political epistemology” in our field to think about the video game, its production and reception, because only then will it be possible to problematize the epistemology of canonical game studies.

Many of the articles in this issue contextualize video games specifically within the history and culture of Brazil and other Latin American countries like Colombia and Mexico. Another thread of inquiry in the issue concerns ecocriticism and the relationship between games and materiality. A number of articles address questions of identity and diversity in games. In addition, some of the texts are concerned with understanding the structure of game technologies for scholarly and educational use. Accordingly, we have grouped the articles in the issue thematically: Design (articles 1-3), Cultural Studies (4-7), Close Reading/Aesthetics (8-10), Brazilian Games and Culture (11-13), Education (14-15), and Gamification/Political Economy (16-17). Finally, there is a book review of *Video Games and the Global South*, a new collection that “redefin[es] game culture from south to north” (PENIX-TADSEN, 2019).

All the articles and the review in the issue make evident the need to decolonize game studies, but also the hegemonic way in which games are produced and appreciated, since we still live and research, predominantly, from Westernized views, that are based on hierarchies of oppression connected by the logic of coloniality (GROSGUÉL, 2008; MIGNOLO, 2017).

We hope that this issue will be the first publication, but not the last, in Brazil that aims to highlight studies that are proposed as political projects for research on and for video games.

We hope you enjoy reading our issue.

References

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