



Playing with the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History

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Game Studies is a rapidly growing area of contemporary scholarship, yet volumes in the area have tended to focus on more general issues. With *Playing with the Past*, game studies is taken to the next level by offering a specific and detailed analysis of one area of digital game play -- the representation of history. The collection focuses on the ways in which gamers engage with, play with, recreate, subvert, reverse and direct the historical past, and what effect this has on the ways in which we go about constructing the present or imagining a future.

What can World War Two strategy games teach us about the reality of this complex and multifaceted period? Do the possibilities of playing with the past change the way we understand history? If we embody a colonialist's perspective to conquer 'primitive' tribes in Colonization, does this privilege a distinct way of viewing history as benevolent intervention over imperialist expansion? The fusion of these two fields allows the editors to pose new questions about the ways in which gamers interact with their game worlds. Drawing these threads together, the collection concludes by asking whether digital games - which represent history or historical change - alter the way we, today, understand history itself.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*Playing with the Past* is a serious cultural contemplation on a media genre that forever changed the way a generations thinks. An engaging exploration into the way media engages and redefines history, *Playing with the Past* is a groundbreaking work in Media Studies and an essential text for the study of video games and the history of ideas.” ?C. Jason Smith, Professor of English, The City University of New York-LaGuardia, US

“Elliott and Kapell have gathered a remarkable collection of contributions?engaging deep issues about what history IS, and how one can present its issues in a vital contribution within contemporary studies. The scope is compendious, from Rome to Native America, from Japan to Colonial America; this book just might become the basis for up-to-the-minute narrative/historical/digital mediations, and should be of interest in the many fields of the superior college or university.” ?William G. Doty, Professor Emeritus, University of Alabama, US

“*Playing with the Past* is an innovative, lucid and engaging collection that strikes a number of carefully constructed and rewarding balances. The tone is both serious and playful. Its analysis and findings are simultaneously rigorous, illuminating and entertaining. *Playing with the Past* provides a neat summation of the previous work which has explored the relationship between digital games and their interaction with history as a foundation to establish, with great sophistication and clarity, the critical and conceptual terrain for the current and future debates.” ?Stephen McVeigh, Associate Professor, Department of Political and Cultural Studies, Swansea University, UK

“*Playing with the Past* is a far-reaching volume, guiding readers through ancient civilizations, modern wars, and futures premised upon counterfactual pasts. In this reflexively-organized array of essays, game scholars will find both a primer on historiographic inquiry and a series of cogent analyses that are not simply conversant with issues driving the field but also bring new depth and insight to their examination.” ?Gerald Voorhees, Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Communication, University of Waterloo, Canada

About the Author

Matthew Wilhelm Kapell has graduate degrees in biological anthropology and history as well as a Ph.D. in American Studies. He has published on genetics, urban history, African colonial history, as well as four books in film and television studies and has taught extensively in the United States and Great Britain.

Andrew B.R. Elliott is a Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Lincoln, UK, where he teaches cultural studies, media studies, history, film, and television. He is the author of *Remaking the Middle Ages* (2010) which concerns itself with authenticity, violence, and a semiotic reconstruction of the medieval period.

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