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Notes

Chapter 1

1. Hayley Tsukayama, "Everything You Need to Know about *Fortnite* and Why It's So Popular," *Washington Post*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2018/04/03/everything-you-need-to-know-about-fortnite-and-why-its-so-popular/>. Over the summer of 2018, at the height of the game's success, there were over 150 million players worldwide who watched others play on Twitch and YouTube Gaming by the hundreds of thousands. At that point, the game pulled in over \$120 million in revenue per month for Epic Games.
2. Nick Paumgarten, "How *Fortnite* Captured Teens' Hearts and Minds," *New Yorker*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/05/21/how-fortnite-captured-teens-hearts-and-minds>.
3. Dmitri Williams, "The Video Game Lightning Rod," *Information, Communication & Society* 6, no. 4 (2003): 523–550.
4. Paumgarten, "How *Fortnite* Captured Teens' Hearts and Minds."
5. Paumgarten.
6. To read about the relationship between the game industry's culture of secrecy and its inability to draw on an institutional memory, see Casey O'Donnell, *Developer's Dilemma: The Secret World of Video-game Creators* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

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9. Laura Parker, "Inside Controversial Game That's Tackling the Holocaust," *Rolling Stone*, August 31, 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/inside-controversial-game-thats-tackling-the-holocaust-251102/>.
10. Graeme Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary* (London: Polity, 2013), 39.
11. Kirkpatrick, 73.
12. Kirkpatrick, 6.
13. Brian McKernan, "The Morality of Play: Video Game Coverage in *The New York Times* from 1980 to 2010," *Games and Culture* 8, no. 5 (2013): 307–329; Felan Parker, "Roger Ebert and the Games-As-Art Debate," *Cinema Journal* 57, no. 3 (2018): 77–100.
14. Whitney Phillips and Ryan M. Milner, *The Ambivalent Internet: Mischief, Oddity, and Antagonism Online* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), 6, 10.
15. José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
16. Adrienne Massanari, "#Gamergate and The Fappening: How Reddit's Algorithm, Governance, and Culture Support Toxic Technocultures," *New Media & Society* 19, no. 3 (2017): 329–346; Whitney Phillips, "It Wasn't Just the Trolls: Early Internet Culture, 'Fun,' and the Fires of Exclusionary Laughter," *Social Media + Society* 5, no. 3 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119849493>.
17. Gregory Perreault and Tim Vos, "Metajournalistic Discourse on the Rise of Gaming Journalism," *New Media & Society* 22, no. 1 (2020): 159–176; Severin Justin Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game

Journalism: Interviews with Games Writers Regarding the State of the Profession" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2019).

18. Maxwell Foxman and David B. Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Games Coverage and Its Network of Ambivalences," *Journal of Games Criticism* 3, no. 1 (2016), <http://gamescriticism.org/articles/foxmannieborg-3-1>.

19. Thomas F. Gieryn, "Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 6 (1983): 781–795; Seth C. Lewis, "The Tension Between Professional Control and Open Participation: Journalism and Its Boundaries," *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 6 (2012): 841.

20. Tim Vos and Ryan J. Thomas, "The Discursive (Re)Construction of Journalism's Gatekeeping Role," *Journalism Practice* 13, no. 4 (2019): 396–412.

21. Maarit Jaakkola, *Reviewing Culture Online: Post-Institutional Cultural Critique across Platforms* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 136.

22. Foxman and Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place."

23. On game developers, see O'Donnell, *Developer's Dilemma*. On journalism, see Mark Deuze, "What Is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered," *Journalism* 6, no. 4 (2005): 442–464.

24. For music journalism, see Eamonn Forde, "Journalists with a Difference: Producing Music Journalism," in *Media Organisation and Production*, ed. Simon Cottle (London: Sage, 2003), 113–130. For film journalism, see Mattias Frey, *The Permanent Crisis of Film Criticism: The Anxiety of Authority* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014). For television criticism, see Amanda D. Lotz, "On 'Television Criticism': The Pursuit of the Critical Examination of a Popular Art," *Popular Communication* 6, no. 1 (2008): 20–36.

25. Note that we purposely exclude two types that are not aimed at the broader public. First, our categorization ignores academic

forms of game criticism. Although scholars have been quite prolific in engaging in this form of writing, we would argue that, as of yet, their impact on mainstream audiences is small. For an overview of scholarly game criticism, see Patrick Jagoda, "Videogame Criticism and Games in the Twenty-First Century," *American Literary History* 29, no. 1 (2017): 205–218. Second, our categorization does not include the trade press. For instance, *Game Developer* magazine and its online counterpart *Gamasutra* are undeniably an institutional touchstone for producers; however, as with academic game criticism, we excluded this type of reporting because we are interested in forms of writing that are aimed at a public audience rather than a professional one. For more research on this subject, see Amanda C. Cote and Brandon C. Harris, "The Cruel Optimism of 'Good Crunch': How Game Industry Discourses Perpetuate Unsustainable Labor Practices," *New Media & Society*, May 7, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211014213>.

26. Ian Bogost, *How to Talk about Videogames* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), x.

27. Bogost, *How to Talk about Videogames*, ix.

28. Rebecca Carlson, "'Too Human' Versus the Enthusiast Press: Video Game Journalists as Mediators of Commodity Value," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 2, no. 1 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2009.098>. See also Howard D. Fisher, "Don't Let the Girls Play: Gender Representation in Videogame Journalism and the Influence of Hegemonic Masculinity, Media Filters, and Message Mediation" (PhD diss., Scripps College of Communication of Ohio University, 2012), https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=ohiou1332372302; Gregory Perreault and Tim Vos, "The GamerGate Controversy and Journalistic Paradigm Maintenance," *Journalism* 19, no. 4 (2018): 553–569; Wannas Ribbens and Ruben Steegen, "A Qualitative Inquiry and a Quantitative Exploration into the Meaning of Game Reviews," *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies* 1, no. 2 (2012): 209–229.

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Proceedings of the First International Joint Conference of DiGRA and FDG, vol. 13, Dundee, Scotland, 2016, <http://www.digra.org/digital-library/publications/critical-alternative-journalism-from-the-perspective-of-game-journalists>, 10.

30. Folker Hanusch, "Broadening the Focus: The Case for Lifestyle Journalism as a Field of Scholarly Inquiry," *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 5. See also Elfriede Fürsich, "Lifestyle Journalism as Popular Journalism: Strategies for Evaluating Its Public Role," *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 12–25.

31. Hanusch, "Broadening the Focus," 5.

32. Bogost, *How to Talk about Videogames*, x.

33. Adam Ruch, "Signifying Nothing: The Hyperreal Politics of 'Apolitical' Games," *Communication Research and Practice* 7, no. 2 (2021): 128–147.

34. Maarit Jaakkola, "Witnesses of a Cultural Crisis: Representations of Media-Related Metaproceses as Professional Metacriticism of Arts and Cultural Journalism," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 18, no. 5 (2015): 537–554.

35. The idea of "objective reviewing" is certainly confusing. This oxymoron is particularly popular among game fans who are wary of the "social justice talk" or industry critiques that are—or at least should be—hallmarks of game criticism. It is unclear to us how, other than solely listing a title's technical details or requirements, to "objectively" review a game.

36. In terms of followings, as of 2023, Markiplier has 2.4 million followers on Twitch and 34 million subscribers on YouTube. An international star, Fernanfloo has 45.6 million subscribers on YouTube. Freyline has a dedicated following for a single game (*Sea of Thieves*) which means she only has 9,800 subscribers on Twitch.

37. Tony Harcup, "'I'm Doing This to Change the World': Journalism in Alternative and Mainstream Media," *Journalism Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005): 361–374; Sara Platon and Mark Deuze, "Indymedia Journalism: A Radical Way of Making, Selecting and Sharing News?" *Journalism* 4, no. 3 (2003): 336–355.

38. Jason Toynbee, "Mainstreaming: From Hegemonic Centre to Global Networks," in *Popular Music Studies*, ed. David Hesmondhalgh and Keith Negus (London: Hodder Arnold, 2002), 159.

39. For a similar discussion of how cult movies and fandom are rife with ambiguities in their relationship towards "mainstream, commercial cinema," see Mark Jancovich, "Cult Fictions: Cult Movies, Subcultural Capital and the Production of Cultural Distinctions," *Cultural Studies* 16, no. 2 (2002): 306–322.

40. Shyon Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow: From Entertainment to Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jancovich, "Cult Fictions."

41. Benjamin Woo, "Is There a Comic Book Industry?" *Media Industries Journal* 5, no. 1 (2018): 27–46.

42. On the issue of comprehension, consider also how games express ideas through play and playfulness: "the use of a game is not only determined by its design, but also by the player's motivations and choice of actions." Kristine Jørgensen and Torill E. Mortensen, "Whose Expression Is It Anyway? Videogames and the Freedom of Expression," *Games and Culture* 17, no. 7–8 (2022): 1007.

43. Emma Vossen, "On the Cultural Inaccessibility of Gaming: Invading, Creating, and Reclaiming the Cultural Clubhouse" (PhD diss., University of Waterloo, 2018), <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/13649>, 15.

44. Toynbee, "Mainstreaming."

45. Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 4.

46. Dal Yong Jin, *Korea's Online Gaming Empire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010).

47. Parker, "Roger Ebert and the Games-As-Art Debate," 84.

48. Foxman and Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place"; Perreault and Vos, "Metajournalistic Discourse on the Rise of Gaming Journalism."

49. Miguel Sicart, *Play Matters* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).
50. Our tone, scope, and brevity recognize the goal of the MIT Press's Playful Thinking series to publish short, readable, and provocative books.
51. Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
52. Samuel Coavoux, Manuel Boutet, and Vinciane Zabban, "What We Know About Games: A Scientometric Approach to Game Studies in the 2000s," *Games and Culture* 12, no. 6 (2017): 563–584; Paul Martin, "The Intellectual Structure of Game Research," *Game Studies* 18, no. 1 (2018), http://gamestudies.org/1801/articles/paul_martin; Thorsten Quandt et al., "Digital Games Research: A Survey Study on an Emerging Field and Its Prevalent Debates," *Journal of Communication* 65, no. 6 (2015): 975–996.
53. For example, Poirot interviewed 15 US-based game journalists, Perrault and Vos interviewed 17 English-speaking game journalists, and Ribbens and Steegen interviewed 8 Flemish game journalists.
54. We conducted 20 interviews with 19 subjects, which took place over the phone or in-person, with one respondent choosing to answer questions by email. One interview in 2014 inspired our work, but we returned to that respondent for a second interview in 2017. We stopped at 19 subjects as we quickly reached the point of saturation in our first rounds of interviews. All interviewees were briefed on the scope of our research and gave informed consent before our conversations and our interview protocols were reviewed by ethics boards at Columbia University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Toronto. We were mindful to recruit a diverse pool by considering race, gender, and outlet. We had some moderate success as roughly half of respondents wrote mostly for the enthusiast press and half for the institutional press. Some practicalities hindered this process, however; in particular, we observed a lower response rate among those from underrepresented groups. Anecdotally, journalists told us that members of these groups (women, people of color, and LGBTQ+) may have been wary of such requests post-Gamergate,

particularly ones coming from white men such as ourselves. Still, we made significant efforts to quote diverse voices throughout this text to make sure the gamut of cultural concerns was represented in our findings. We have anonymized those writers who chose to remain “off the record.” Last, there are categories of writers that we did not reach out to because they work at the edge of what we consider game journalism; for instance, those who exclusively write guides and walkthroughs or work as PR and marketing professionals for game publishers. In this sense, our own “boundary work” and understanding of game journalism influenced the study and findings.

55. Shira Chess and Adrienne Shaw, “A Conspiracy of Fishes, or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying about #GamerGate and Embrace Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 59, no. 1 (2015): 208–220; Torill Elvira Mortensen, “Anger, Fear, and Games: The Long Event of #GamerGate,” *Games and Culture* 13, no. 8 (2018): 787–806.

56. Anastasia Salter and Bridget Blodgett, “Hypermasculinity & Dickwolves: The Contentious Role of Women in the New Gaming Public,” *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 56, no. 3 (2012): 401–416; Vossen, “On the Cultural Inaccessibility of Gaming.”

57. Kishonna L. Gray, Bertan Buyukozturk, and Zachary G. Hill, “Blurring the Boundaries: Using Gamergate to Examine ‘Real’ and Symbolic Violence against Women in Contemporary Gaming Culture,” *Sociology Compass* 11, no. 3 (2017): e12458.

58. Massanari, “#Gamergate and The Fappening”; Christopher A. Paul, *The Toxic Meritocracy of Video Games: Why Gaming Culture Is the Worst* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018). However, toxic behavior is not unique to game communities and “can evidently occur in a range of cultural sites and through, and in relation to, an array of different cultural identities.” Matt Hills, “An Extended Foreword: From Fan Doxa to Toxic Fan Practices?” *Participations* 15, no. 1 (2018): 108.

Chapter 2

1. Electronic Arts, “Battlefield 5 Official Reveal Trailer,” May 23, 2018, YouTube video, 2:34, <https://youtu.be/fb1MR85XF0c>.

2. Nina B. Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne, eds., *Joystick Soldiers: The Politics of Play in Military Video Games* (New York: Routledge, 2009).
3. Thomas H. Apperley and Kishonna L. Gray, "Digital Divides and Structural Inequalities: Exploring the Technomasculine Culture of Gaming," in *The Video Game Debate 2: Revisiting the Physical, Social, and Psychological Effects of Video Games*, ed. Rachel Kowert and Thorsten Quandt (New York: Routledge, 2020), 41–52.
4. Mikolaj Dymek, "Video Games: A Subcultural Industry," in *The Video Game Industry: Formation, Present State, and Future*, ed. Peter Zackariasson and Timothy L. Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2012), 34–55.
5. Shira Chess and Christopher A. Paul, "The End of Casual: Long Live Casual," *Games and Culture* 14, no. 2 (2019): 107–118; Amanda C. Cote, *Gaming Sexism: Gender and Identity in the Era of Casual Video Games* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).
6. Emma Vossen, "On the Cultural Inaccessibility of Gaming: Invading, Creating, and Reclaiming the Cultural Clubhouse" (PhD diss., University of Waterloo, 2018), <https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/13649>.
7. Mia Consalvo and Christopher A. Paul, *Real Games: What's Legitimate and What's Not in Contemporary Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
8. David B. Nieborg, "How to Study Game Publishers: Activision Blizzard's Corporate History," in *Game Production Studies*, edited by Olli Sotamaa and Jan Švelch (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 179–195.
9. Mia Consalvo, *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 18.
10. Graeme Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary* (London: Polity, 2013); Graeme Kirkpatrick, *The Formation of Gaming Culture: UK Gaming Magazines, 1981–1995* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

11. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*, 40.
12. Carly A. Kocurek, *Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
13. José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
14. Nick Montfort and Ian Bogost, *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).
15. Michael Z. Newman and Elana Levine, *Legitimizing Television: Media Convergence and Cultural Status* (New York: Routledge, 2012).
16. In the late 1980s, a similar process took place in the UK, as noted in Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*.
17. Kocurek, *Coin-Operated Americans*; Michael Z. Newman, *Atari Age: The Emergence of Video Games in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
18. Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1995).
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20. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 249.
21. Newman, *Atari Age*, 12.
22. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*.
23. Media and communications scholars have used game magazines to great effect to substantiate claims about gender representation or "violent" game content. See, for example, Erica Scharrer, "Virtual Violence: Gender and Aggression in Video Game Advertisements," *Mass Communication and Society* 7, no. 4 (2004): 393–412.
24. Stephen Kline, Nick Dyer-Witheford, and Greig De Peuter, *Digital Play: The Interaction of Technology, Culture, and Marketing* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2003), 120.

25. Dominic Arsenault, *Super Power, Spooky Bards, and Silverware: The Super Nintendo Entertainment System* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017).
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27. Jaakkola, *Reviewing Culture Online*, 8.
28. James Newman, *Playing with Videogames* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Consalvo, *Cheating*.
29. Kline et al., *Digital Play*, 120.
30. Cote, "Writing 'Gamers.'"
31. Rebecca Carlson, "Too Human versus the Enthusiast Press: Video Game Journalists as Mediators of Commodity Value," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 2, no. 1 (2009), §4.5, <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2009.098>.
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33. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*; Kirkpatrick, *The Formation of Gaming Culture*.
34. Kirkpatrick, *The Formation of Gaming Culture*, 105.
35. Arsenault, *Super Power, Spooky Bards, and Silverware*, 74.
36. Consalvo, *Cheating*, 27.
37. Severin Justin Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism: Interviews with Games Writers Regarding the State of the Profession" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2019), 7.
38. Dan Golding, "Writing Games: Popular and Critical Videogame Writing over Time," *TEXT* 22, no. 49 (2018): 2.
39. Kieron Gillen, "The New Games Journalism," *Kieron Gillen's Workblog*, March 23, 2004. https://web.archive.org/web/20120531235659/http://gillen.cream.org/wordpress_html/assorted-essays/the-new-games-journalism/.
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44. Carl Therrien, *The Media Snatcher: PC/CORE/TURBO/ENGINE /GRAFX/16/CDROM2/SUPER/DUO/ARCADE/RX* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).
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49. Kline et al., *Digital Play*, xxix.
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51. Therrien and Picard, "Enter the Bit Wars."
52. Brendan Keogh, *The Videogame Industry Does Not Exist: Why We Should Think Beyond Commercial Game Production* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2023).
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54. Williams, "The Video Game Lightning Rod," 543.

55. Brian McKernan, "The Morality of Play: Video Game Coverage in *The New York Times* from 1980 to 2010," *Games and Culture* 8, no. 5 (2013): 321.
56. Felan Parker, "Canonizing *BioShock*: Cultural Value and the Prestige Game," *Games and Culture* 12, no. 7–8 (2017): 739–763.
57. Patrick Jagoda, "Videogame Criticism and Games in the Twenty-First Century," *American Literary History* 29, no. 1 (2017): 208.
58. Consalvo and Paul, *Real Games*.
59. Shira Chess, "A Time for Play: Interstitial Time, Invest/Express Games, and Feminine Leisure Style," *New Media & Society* 20, no. 1 (2018): 105–121.
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63. Lindbergh, "Why Does the Mainstream Media Struggle to Cover Video Games?"
64. Keogh, "From Aggressively Formalised to Intensely In/Formalised," 22.
65. Kirkpatrick, *Computer Games and the Social Imaginary*.
66. Dymek, "Video Games," 36–44.
67. Keogh, "From Aggressively Formalised to Intensely In/Formalised," 27.

Chapter 3

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2. For a similar version of this story, see Severin Justin Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism: Interviews with Games Writers Regarding the State of the Profession" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2019), 37.
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14. In this chapter, the "I" and "me" refer to David Nieborg's experiences as a Dutch game journalist.
15. The newspaper was distributed for free at major public transportation hubs and was launched in early 2007.
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17. Elfriede Fürsich, "Lifestyle Journalism as Popular Journalism: Strategies for Evaluating Its Public Role," *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 12–25.
18. Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism," 55.
19. Fürsich, "Lifestyle Journalism as Popular Journalism," 23.
20. Poirot, 92.
21. Rebecca Carlson, "Too Human versus the Enthusiast Press: Video Game Journalists as Mediators of Commodity Value," *Transformative Works and Cultures* 2, no. 1 (2009), §4.15, <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2009.098>.
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1332372302; Foxman and Nieborg, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place.”

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25. Jamie Woodcock, *Marx at the Arcade: Consoles, Controllers, and Class Struggle* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2019), 89.

26. Jennifer Smith Maguire, “Bourdieu on Cultural Intermediaries,” in *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*, ed. Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews (London: Sage, 2014), 22.

27. Mia Consalvo and Christopher A. Paul, *Real Games: What’s Legitimate and What’s Not in Contemporary Videogames* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019), 61–86.

28. Peter Suderman, “Red Dead Redemption 2 Is True Art,” *New York Times*, November 23, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/23/opinion/sunday/red-dead-redemption-2-fallout-76-video-games.html>.

29. Suderman, “Red Dead Redemption 2 Is True Art.”

30. Christopher A. Paul, *The Toxic Meritocracy of Video Games: Why Gaming Culture Is the Worst* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

31. Dean Takahashi, “Our Cuphead Runneth Over,” *VentureBeat* (blog), September 8, 2017, <https://venturebeat.com/2017/09/08/the-deanbeat-our-cuphead-runneth-over>.

32. Adrienne Shaw, *Gaming at the Edge: Sexuality and Gender at the Margins of Gamer Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 4.

33. Russ Pitts, *Sex, Drugs, and Cartoon Violence: My Decade as a Video Game Journalist* (n.p.: Flying Saucer Media, 2016), 64.

34. Eric N. Bailey, Kazunori Miyata, and Tetsuhiko Yoshida, “Gender Composition of Teams and Studios in Video Game Development,” *Games and Culture* 16, no. 1 (2021): 42–64.

35. Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 33.
36. Nina B. Huntemann, "Working the Booth: Promotional Models and the Value of Affective Labor," in *Production Studies, The Sequel!* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 45.
37. Reflecting on his own decade long career as a game journalist, which ran from 2006 to 2016, mapping neatly with Pitts, David can only agree with this statement.
38. Pitts, *Sex, Drugs, and Cartoon Violence*, 135.
39. Consalvo, *Cheating*, 36.
40. Ramon Lobato and Lawson Fletcher, "Prestige and Professionalisation at the Margins of the Journalistic Field: The Case of Music Writers," in *Amateur Media: Social, Cultural and Legal Perspectives*, ed. Dan Hunter, Ramon Lobato, Megan Richardson, and Julian Thomas (London: Routledge, 2012), 122.
41. Gregory Perreault and Tim Vos, "Metajournalistic Discourse on the Rise of Gaming Journalism," *New Media & Society* 22, no. 1 (2020): 159.
42. Howard D. Fisher and Sufyan Mohammed-Baksh, "Video Game Journalism and the Ideology of Anxiety: Implications for Effective Reporting in Niche Industries and Oligopolies," *Journal of Media Ethics* 35, no. 1 (2020): 45–59.
43. Fisher and Mohammed-Baksh, "Video Game Journalism and the Ideology of Anxiety," 57.
44. "Doxxing" aims to reveal a target's personal information (e.g., addresses), whereas "SWATting" involves summoning a heavily armed police team to a victim's location. To get a sense of the personal toll of one of Gamergate's key targets, see the harrowing memoir by Zoë Quinn, *Crash Override: How Gamergate (Nearly) Destroyed My Life, and How We Can Win the Fight Against Online Hate* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2017).

45. Amanda C. Cote, *Gaming Sexism: Gender and Identity in the Era of Casual Video Games* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 180.
46. Kishonna L. Gray, "Intersecting Oppressions and Online Communities: Examining the Experiences of Women of Color in Xbox Live," *Information, Communication & Society* 15, no. 3 (2012): 411–428.
47. David Nieborg and Maxwell Foxman, "Mainstreaming Misogyny: The Beginning of the End and the End of the Beginning in Gamergate Coverage," in *Mediating Misogyny*, ed. Jacqueline Ryan Vickery and Tracy Everbach (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2018), 111–130.
48. Shira Chess and Adrienne Shaw, "A Conspiracy of Fishes, or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying about #GamerGate and Embrace Hegemonic Masculinity," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 59, no. 1 (2015): 208–220.
49. Torill Elvira Mortensen, "Anger, Fear, and Games: The Long Event of #GamerGate," *Games and Culture* 13, no. 8 (2018): 787–806.
50. Gregory Perreault and Tim Vos, "The GamerGate Controversy and Journalistic Paradigm Maintenance," *Journalism* 19, no. 4 (2018): 565.
51. We do not mean to suggest they are the only bulwark, but one of many institutions that struggled to keep up with Gamergate tactics.

Chapter 4

1. Keza MacDonald, "Things I've noticed since moving from specialist media to the Guardian," Twitter thread, May 8, 2018, 7:21 a.m. (EDT), <https://twitter.com/kezamacdonald/status/993858436562595841>.
2. Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg, and Brooke Erin Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 2022).
3. These declines include consolidation of local outlets into larger conglomerates and the loss of revenue streams (like classified ads) that papers tended to monopolize. For research into the digitization of newsrooms, see Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, "Economic Contexts of

Journalism," in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*, 2nd ed., ed. Karin Wahl-Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch (New York: Routledge, 2019), 324–340.

4. Poell et al., *Platforms and Cultural Production*; Rasmus Kleis Nielsen and Sarah Anne Ganter, *The Power of Platforms: Shaping Media and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

5. José van Dijck, Thomas Poell, and Martijn de Waal, *The Platform Society: Public Values in a Connective World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

6. Maarit Jaakkola, *Reviewing Culture Online: Post-Institutional Cultural Critique across Platforms* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

7. For more, see T. L. Taylor, *Watch Me Play: Twitch and the Rise of Game Live Streaming* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018).

8. Mark R. Johnson and Jamie Woodcock, "The Impacts of Live Streaming and Twitch.tv on the Video Game Industry," *Media, Culture & Society* 41, no. 5 (2019): 670–688.

9. IGN was ranked at #498 in global traffic as of February 2020 according to Alexa search statistics: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200210054521/https://www.alex.com/siteinfo/ign.com>.

10. "Mission Statement," *Critical Distance*, last updated December 13, 2021, <https://www.critical-distance.com/about/>.

11. Maxwell Foxman and David B. Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Games Coverage and Its Network of Ambivalences," *Journal of Games Criticism* 3, no. 1 (2016), <http://gamescriticism.org/articles/foxmannieborg-3-1>.

12. These findings are fairly ubiquitous in the English-speaking press, with examples in Australia, the United States, and Canada. For more, see Kathryn Hayes and Henry Silke, "The Networked Freelancer? Digital Labour and Freelance Journalism in the Age of Social Media," *Digital Journalism* 6, no. 8 (2018): 1018–1028.

13. Ben Lindbergh, "Why Does the Mainstream Media Struggle to Cover Video Games?" *The Ringer*, October 25, 2019, <https://www>

.theringer.com/2019/10/25/20929604/the-mainstream-media-is-not-playing-games.

14. Foxman and Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place."

15. Nicole S. Cohen, *Writers' Rights: Freelance Journalism in a Digital Age* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 2016).

16. This is an avenue of exploration where there is room for significant future research to counterbalance journalists' and audience impressions.

17. We must confess that we felt ambivalent about including Kjellberg. Since 2017, he has been embroiled in a string of controversies regarding his public behavior. While there are plenty of other popular Let's Play artists who have not been entangled in such ignominy, we concur with Dan Golding's observation that YouTube as an outlet for all kinds of game journalism is "a combatively regressive one, and one that may actively work against the gains that videogame criticism made in diversifying its base writers and intellectual frameworks in the late 2000s." Dan Golding, "Writing Games: Popular and Critical Videogame Writing over Time," *TEXT* 22, no. 49 (2018): 12.

18. Stuart Cunningham and David Craig, *Social Media Entertainment: The New Intersection of Hollywood and Silicon Valley* (New York: New York University Press, 2019).

19. For instance, Kjellberg has made fun of being paid to "sit on [his] ass." See BBC, "YouTube Gaming Star PewDiePie 'Earned \$7m in 2014,'" July 8, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-33425411>.

20. Vicky McKeever, "This Eight-Year-Old Remains YouTube's Highest-Earner, Taking Home \$26 Million in 2019," CNBC, December 20, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/12/20/ryan-kaji-remains-youtubes-highest-earner-making-26-million-in-2019.html>.

21. For more on relational labor, see Nancy K. Baym, *Playing to the Crowd: Musicians, Audiences, and the Intimate Work of Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 2018). For more on entrepreneurial journalism, see Nicole S. Cohen, "Entrepreneurial Journalism and the

Precarious State of Media Work," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114, no. 3 (2015): 513–533.

22. Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

23. These numbers only went up with the rise of COVID-19; see Bijan Stephen, "The Lockdown Live-Streaming Numbers Are Out, and They're Huge," *The Verge*, May 13, 2020. <https://www.theverge.com/2020/5/13/21257227/coronavirus-streamelements-arsenalgg-twitch-youtube-livestream-numbers>.

24. Simon Parkin, "Fifa: The Video Game That Changed Football," *Guardian*, December 21, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/dec/21/fifa-video-game-changed-football>.

25. While this was not mentioned by any of our interviewees, D'Anastasio's name has also been invoked regarding the challenges of reporting on alleged abuse, specifically regarding some reporting of hers that involved a game developer. This developer subsequently requested that the website *Kotaku*, D'Anastasio's employer, remove interview material about them, which they eventually did.

26. Ethan Gach, "Goodbye to Cecilia D'Anastasio, Planeswalking Cyber Sleuth and Aspiring Palutena Main," *Kotaku*, December 5, 2019, <https://kotaku.com/goodbye-to-cecilia-danastasio-planeswalking-cyber-sleu-1840247238>.

27. See, for example, Cecilia D'Anastasio, "Inside the Culture of Sexism at Riot Games," *Kotaku*, August 7, 2018, <https://kotaku.com/inside-the-culture-of-sexism-at-riot-games-1828165483>.

28. Jason Schreier, *Blood, Sweat, and Pixels: The Triumphant, Turbulent Stories Behind How Video Games Are Made* (New York: Harper, 2017); Jason Schreier, *Press Reset: Ruin and Recovery in the Video Game Industry* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2021).

29. For basic tenets, see Melanie Magin and Peter Maurer, "Beat Journalism and Reporting," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

30. Aron Garst, "Video Game Development in Iran: Limited Tools, Front Companies and a Specter of War," *Washington Post*, February 5, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/video-games/2020/02/05/video-game-development-iran-limited-tools-front-companies-specter-war/>.

31. Sean Gregory, "Don't Feel Bad If Your Kids Are Gaming More Than Ever. In Fact, Why Not Join Them?" *Time*, April 22, 2020, <https://time.com/5825214/video-games-screen-time-parenting-coronavirus/>.

32. Dmitri Williams, "The Video Game Lightning Rod," *Information, Communication & Society* 6, no. 4 (2003): 523–550.

33. Or, at least, this is what we believe. Few studies have measured how mainstream journalists cover video games beyond Williams's research. Future research should certainly take this question into account.

34. Howard D. Fisher and Sufyan Mohammed-Baksh, "Video Game Journalism and the Ideology of Anxiety: Implications for Effective Reporting in Niche Industries and Oligopolies," *Journal of Media Ethics* 35, no. 1 (2020): 45–59; Severin Justin Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism: Interviews with Games Writers Regarding the State of the Profession" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2019), 55.

35. Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism," 98. The author similarly finds that the rise of streaming and video platforms complicates perceptions of game journalism.

Chapter 5

1. *Rolling Stone*, for instance, closed their gaming website Glixel.com in 2017.

2. Casey O'Donnell, *Developer's Dilemma: The Secret World of Video-game Creators* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

3. Maxwell Foxman and David B. Nieborg, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Games Coverage and Its Network of Ambivalences,"

Journal of Games Criticism 3, no. 1 (2016), <http://gamescriticism.org/articles/foxmannieborg-3-1>.

4. Correspondents considered first to whom they were writing and then adjusted content, counterbalancing audience metrics that have become pervasive in the news industry. This is a longstanding debate; see Jacob L. Nelson, *Imagined Audiences: How Journalists Perceive and Pursue the Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

5. These concerns, tied to the media's part in culture wars, go back well over two decades. See, for example, Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995).

6. Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg, and Brooke Erin Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 2022), 139–143.

7. For an excellent critique of hardware “generations” and “console wars,” see Carl Therrien, *The Media Snatcher: PC/CORE/TURBO/ENGINE/GRAFX/16/CDROM2/SUPER/DUO/ARCADE/RX* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019).

8. Shyon Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow: From Entertainment to Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

9. Dan Golding, “Writing Games: Popular and Critical Videogame Writing over Time,” *TEXT* 22, no. 49 (2018): 1–17.

10. One might wonder if game journalists who are permanently employed have enough authority to contribute to a common language. Institutional game journalists seem to be less visible than streamers, who do not seem concerned about shared vocabularies and cultural legitimacy.

11. For studies of labor conditions in studios, see Ergin Bulut, *A Precarious Game: The Illusion of Dream Jobs in the Video Game Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020); and O'Donnell, *Developer's Dilemma*. The journalists we interviewed were acutely aware of this relationship.

12. Poell et al., *Platforms and Cultural Production*, 170–173.

13. Nancy K. Baym, *Playing to the Crowd: Musicians, Audiences, and the Intimate Work of Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 2018).

14. See David Auerbach, "Gaming Journalism Is Over," *Slate*, September 4, 2014, <https://slate.com/technology/2014/09/gamergate-explodes-gaming-journalists-declare-the-gamers-are-over-but-they-are.html>; Carolyn Cox, "Female Game Journalists Quit Over Harassment, #GamerGate Harms Women," *The Mary Sue*, September 4, 2014, <https://www.themarysue.com/gamergate-harms-women/>.

15. Mattias Frey, *The Permanent Crisis of Film Criticism: The Anxiety of Authority* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014).

16. Stephen Totilo, "A Brief Note about the Continued Discussion about Kotaku's Approach to Reporting," *Kotaku*, August 26, 2014, <https://kotaku.com/a-brief-note-about-the-continued-discussion-about-kotak-1627041269>.

17. G/O Media, "G/O Media Editorial Policy," accessed July 27, 2020, <https://g-omedia.com/editorial-policy/>.

18. Amanda D. Lotz, "On 'Television Criticism: The Pursuit of the Critical Examination of a Popular Art,'" *Popular Communication* 6, no. 1 (2008): 20–36.

19. Lotz, "On 'Television Criticism,'" 27.

20. Lotz, 34.

21. Lotz, 27.

22. Lotz, 29.

23. Ramon Lobato and Lawson Fletcher, "Prestige and Professionalisation at the Margins of the Journalistic Field: The Case of Music Writers," in *Amateur Media: Social, Cultural and Legal Perspectives*, ed. Dan Hunter, Ramon Lobato, Megan Richardson, and Julian Thomas (London: Routledge, 2012).

24. Eamonn Forde, "Journalists with a Difference: Producing Music Journalism," in *Media Organisation and Production*, ed. Simon Cottle (London: Sage, 2003), 113–130.

25. Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017).

26. These “staid parts” of the newspaper are hardly uniform, particularly in the digital environment. There is a wide variety of different sections of newspapers based on region, newspaper type, etc.

27. Folker Hanusch, “Broadening the Focus: The Case for Lifestyle Journalism as a Field of Scholarly Inquiry,” *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 2; Thomas Hanitzsch, “Deconstructing Journalism Culture: Toward a Universal Theory,” *Communication Theory* 17, no. 4 (2007);

28. Hanusch’s focus has mostly been on travel journalism, where he found that even if not affiliated with an institution, writers will take on journalistic trappings. See Hanusch, “Broadening the Focus.”

29. Hanusch, 2.

Chapter 6

1. Dean Takahashi, “Gaming Has Gone Mainstream, But It Still Has Room to Grow,” *VentureBeat* (blog), May 10, 2018, <https://venturebeat.com/2018/05/10/gaming-has-gone-mainstream-but-it-still-has-room-to-grow/>.

2. Ian Bogost, *How to Talk about Videogames* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 185.

3. Twitch is richly researched, but this subject matter falls outside of the book’s purview. See, for example, Bonnie Ruberg, Amanda L. L. Cullen, and Kathryn Brewster, “Nothing but a ‘Titty Streamer’: Legitimacy, Labor, and the Debate over Women’s Breasts in Video Game Live Streaming,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 36, no. 5 (2019): 466–481.

4. Raul Ferrer-Conill et al., “Playful Approaches to News Engagement,” *Convergence* 26, no. 3 (2020): 457–469; Maxwell Foxman, “Play the News: Fun and Games in Digital Journalism” (New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism, 2015), <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8DJ5SWB/download>.

5. Sybil Nolan, "Journalism Online: The Search for Narrative Form in a Multilinear World" (paper presented at the 5th International Digital Arts and Culture Conference, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia, May 2003), 5, <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/pdf/dbd915e5e1f3510c4cb00325aca94af3ebc84b6c>.
6. Dan Golding, "Writing Games: Popular and Critical Videogame Writing over Time," *TEXT* 22, no. 49 (2018): 13.
7. Maxwell Foxman, "Lessons for Journalists from Virtual Worlds" (New York: Tow Center for Digital Journalism, 2022), https://www.cjr.org/tow_center_reports/lessons-for-journalists-from-virtual-worlds.php.
8. "Technobabble" is a discursive trope deployed by game journalists that constitutes pseudoscientific banter about technological minutiae to bedazzle readers; see Dominic Arsenault, *Super Power, Spooky Bards, and Silverware: The Super Nintendo Entertainment System* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017), 78.
9. Kristine Jørgensen and Torill E. Mortensen, "Whose Expression Is It Anyway? Videogames and the Freedom of Expression," *Games and Culture* 17, no. 7–8 (2022): 997–1014. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15554120221074423>
10. Severin Justin Poirot, "The Self-Perception of Video Game Journalism: Interviews with Games Writers Regarding the State of the Profession" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2019).
11. Ergin Bulut, *A Precarious Game: The Illusion of Dream Jobs in the Video Game Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020).
12. GMG Union, "Support GMG Union," accessed June 28, 2022, <https://gmgunion.com/victory>.
13. Rebekah Valentine, "The Uncertain, Unflinching Future of Games Media," *GamesIndustry.biz* (blog), April 20, 2020, <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2020-04-20-the-uncertain-unflinching-future-of-games-media>.
14. Shyon Baumann, *Hollywood Highbrow: From Entertainment to Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 53–110.

15. Thomas Poell, David B. Nieborg, and Brooke Erin Duffy, *Platforms and Cultural Production* (Cambridge: Polity, 2022).
16. David B. Nieborg, "Apps of Empire: Global Capitalism and the App Economy," *Games and Culture* 16, no. 3 (2021): 305–316; Joost van Dreunen, *One Up: Creativity, Competition, and the Global Business of Video Games* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).
17. Maxwell Foxman, "United We Stand: Platforms, Tools and Innovation with the Unity Game Engine," *Social Media+ Society* 5, no. 4 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305119880177>.
18. Bulut, *A Precarious Game*; Amanda C. Cote and Brandon C. Harris, "The Cruel Optimism of 'Good Crunch': How Game Industry Discourses Perpetuate Unsustainable Labor Practices," *New Media & Society*, May 7, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211014213>.
19. Alex Gekker, "Against Game Studies," *Media and Communication* 9, no. 1 (2021): 73–83.
20. Zizi Papacharissi, "The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere," *New Media & Society* 4, no. 1 (2002): 9–27.
21. Maxwell Foxman, Brandon C. Harris, and William C. Partin, "Recasting Twitch: Livestreaming Platforms and New Frontiers in Digital Journalism" (under review).
22. Jacob L. Nelson, *Imagined Audiences: How Journalists Perceive and Pursue the Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).
23. *Wall Street Journal*, "The Facebook Files: A Wall Street Journal Investigation," accessed June 29, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-facebook-files-11631713039>.
24. This is the case in Europe as well, to some extent, given David's account in chapter 3.
25. Michael Schudson, "The US Model of Journalism: Exception or Exemplar?" in *Making Journalists: Diverse Models, Global Issues*, ed. Hugo de Burgh (London: Routledge, 2006), 110–122.
26. Chess, Shira. *Play like a Feminist* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020).

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