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**Introduction**

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# Introduction

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For those who were not there, the first few European hosted scholarly conferences devoted to game texts and gaming practices became pivotal settings for dictating “*how to study games and who should study them*” (Juul 2001, p. 1). Early debates included the relevance and role of existing paradigms for understanding the medium, and how accounts of the pleasures of interactivity and immersion could be obtained from the user. In such contexts many warned of the dangers of mapping pre-existing paradigms onto the study of games as a new cultural object. Yet, the earliest and most public theoretical scuffles in this field were also themselves concerned with delineating ‘Game Studies’ and asserting the collective identity of its research community. This edition of *Eludamos* serves to illustrate how such early distractions, whilst fruitful, have not constrained inquiry in a field that still comprises of “uneven layers of functions and roles, practiced by persons who differ greatly in background and training” (Bardon 1983, p. 185). We are still very much in the business of contemplating how to “raise new questions, put aside old questions, and provide new answers” (Morris 1991, p. 125).

This edition is testament to the way *Eludamos* is not about prescribing the type of questions game scholars should be addressing. Instead we have openly invited and embraced the application and exploration of alternative conceptual foundations for inquiry. This is exemplified by Johansen Quijano-Cruz’ application of literary theory as a means of achieving a closed reading of the specific *meaning* offered by the text. Meaning also serves as a central theme of Jayne Isabel Gackenbach and Beena Kuruvilla’s examination of the impact of gaming experiences upon dream states and content. This paper presents a completely new dimension to research devoted to the impact and understanding of gaming on the player. While it was ‘preference’ that shaped the inquiry of Jason Tocci in *Are You Dead. Continue?* In this paper ‘death’ as a story-element is explored, with a specific emphasis on the impact of failure scenarios on players who possess proclivity for complex narration. Illustrating again the need to re-engage with earlier debates concerned with our analytical focus, this time using player’s enjoyment of story as a catalyst for evaluating the value of scholarly focus on the rule-based systems of play over ‘fictional coherence’. Likewise, Stuart Slater, Robert Moreton, Kevan Buckley and Andrew Bridges’ review of Agent Emotion Architectures adds another flavor to this edition with its concern with long-term research endeavors in the area of computational models of emotion.

Reaffirming the need for a responsive theorization of gaming and its experiential capacities with significant technological developments in our medium of study. Finally, Arne Schröder's work serves as a reminder of the need to continue to draw attention to the issues that persist with regard to the representation of gender and sexuality in games, this time illustrated with reference to role-play game series *Gothic*.

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## **References**

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