



Gaming at the Edge: Sexuality and Gender at the Margins of Gamer Culture

Adrienne Shaw

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Video games have long been seen as the exclusive territory of young, heterosexual white males. In a media landscape dominated by such gamers, players who do not fit this mold, including women, people of color, and LGBT people, are often brutalized in forums and in public channels in online play. Discussion of representation of such groups in games has frequently been limited and cursory. In contrast, *Gaming at the Edge* builds on feminist, queer, and postcolonial theories of identity and draws on qualitative audience research methods to make sense of how representation comes to matter.

In *Gaming at the Edge*, Adrienne Shaw argues that video game players experience race, gender, and sexuality concurrently. She asks: How do players identify with characters? How do they separate identification and interactivity? What is the role of fantasy in representation? What is the importance of understanding market logic? In addressing these questions Shaw reveals how representation comes to matter to participants and offers a perceptive consideration of the high stakes in politics of representation debates.

Putting forth a framework for talking about representation, difference, and diversity in an era in which user-generated content, individualized media consumption, and the blurring of producer/consumer roles has lessened the utility of traditional models of media representation analysis, Shaw finds new insight on the edge of media consumption with the invisible, marginalized gamers who are surprising in both their numbers and their influence in mainstream gamer culture.

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