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Transformative Works and Cultures releases second issue

SILVER SPRING, MD, March 15, 2009 – "Games as Transformative Works," a special game-focused issue of peer-reviewed academic journal *Transformative Works and Cultures* (TWC), was released on March 15, 2009.

"It was interesting to see the way different disciplines approach gaming and game studies, and I think we can all learn from one another," said guest editor Rebecca Carlson. "TWC allowed me to bring together essays that not only covered a breadth of topics but also a range of theoretical approaches."

An open-access online multimedia journal, the varied content of "Games as Transformative Works" features pictures illustrating Robertson Allen's case study on the Virtual Army Experience, embedded videos showcasing and explaining chiptunes in Kevin Driscoll and Joshua Diaz's "History of Chiptunes," and "Child's Play as Transformative Work," a video interview with Diane E. Levin, professor of early childhood education.

The issue's interviews branch out into art, industry, and education, with Paul Marino, cofounder and executive producer of Academy of Machinima Arts and Sciences (AMAS); Doris Rusch, gaming scholar and video game designer; and business professor Tony Driscoll.

"We are excited to branch out from the types of fan studies and fan communities we've been most familiar with," said Kristina Busse, TWC coeditor. "After all, our goal is to provide a forum that speaks to all types of fans and their particular creations and forms of engagements, so looking at everything from card collecting and war games to live-action role playing and chiptunes has allowed us to expand our regular readerships' field of vision and, I hope, will invite more readers as well."

"Games as Transformative Works" combines TWC's general interest in fan works and fan cultures with a focus on games. Following its regular format, this open-access online multimedia journal has collected scholarly and personal essays and book reviews that seek to bridge fan and academic writers and readers.

The Praxis articles address many of the issues that surround computer games: editor Carlson studies the complex position of gaming journalists who are simultaneously fans and advertisers; Casey O'Donnell looks at the ambiguous role of game producers; and Robertson Allen examines the use of games in Army recruiting, complicating the social role of games and their real life effects. Three other Praxis essays focus on particular games and the communities surrounding them: *World of Warcraft* (Chen), *Kingly Quest* (Salter), and tabletop role-playing game *Exalted* (Underwood). Driscoll and Diaz focus on fan creativity in their introduction to and explanation of Chiptunes.

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The Symposium section looks back and forward: pieces include Will Brooker's recollection of early computer games of the 1980s and what specific effects these games had on a particular generation; Thien-bao Thuc Phi's powerful analysis and personal response to the depiction of Asians in computer games; and Braxton Soderman's meditation on fan labor and fan activities in various online computer games. Several essays focus directly on fan responses and productions, such as Rebecca Bryant's account of the way players have rejected and circumvented recent *Dungeons & Dragons* updates; Amanda Odom's look at the sensory experiences of live-action role playing; Joe Bisz's description of player productivity in card collecting; and Julia Beck and Frauke Herrling's provocative suggestion that reads role-playing game characters through the lens of fan fiction criticism.

While anthropology is the issue's dominant disciplinary approach, literary and cultural studies also frame the discussion. Although several essays address the role of production, the voices of the fans and the gamers themselves remain ever important. Availability and access for fans is central to TWC's mission statement.

"We are particularly proud of the open-access nature," said Karen Hellekson, TWC coeditor. "The journal is available for anyone to read, without any subscription restrictions. We purposefully chose an exclusively online model, rather than a print one. It allows us to go through production much faster, keeping our scholarship current, and we can hotlink and embed images and videos."

The third issue of TWC will feature more general submissions and is scheduled for release on September 15, 2009. Afterward, "Saving People, Hunting Things," which focuses on the WB television show *Supernatural*, will appear on March 15, 2010, and will be guest edited by Catherine Tosenberger.

About TWC: Transformative Works and Cultures

(<http://journal.transformativeworks.org>), a peer-reviewed journal, represents the academic arm of the nonprofit fan advocacy group Organization for Transformative Works (<http://transformativeworks.org>).