
LUCA PAOLO BRUNO
University of Florence
luca.paulo.bruno@unifi.it

Game Studies Meets Japanese Studies

Ten Years of Research

ABSTRACT

During the last ten years, there has been an increasing interest within Game Studies towards video games produced in Japan, deployed as culturally “Japanese” and circulated as such. This has produced an encounter-cum intersection between Game Studies and Japanese Studies, leading to emerging commonalities, gulfs, and frictions. What emerges are explorations into what the study of Japanese video games/video games from Japan might entail; the emergence of “Japan” as a distinct context of video game production, consumption, and circulation; how frameworks emerging out of Japanese Studies can contribute to Game Studies and vice-versa. This paper showcases a few of these developments, providing a first, tentative mapping of possible research directions, challenges, and potentialities.

1. INTRODUCTION

Within the broad scope of Game Studies, and in particular, the study of digital games, “Japan” is, and has been, a popular thread of research (Hutchinson, 2019b; Navarro-Remesal & Loriguillo, 2015; Picard, 2013; Pelletier-Gagnon, 2011). “Japan” here is intended as both a media landscape with distinct local conditions for digital game production (Nakamura & Tosca, 2021; Kobayashi & Koyama, 2020; Kohler, 2016; Consalvo, 2022; 2006; Aoyama & Izushi, 2004; 2003), the Japanese nation itself and the expanding global popularity of Japanese cultural industries (Galbraith, 2021a; Pelletier-Gagnon, 2018; Choo, 2013a; Picard, 2009; O’Hagan, 2007). In the last ten years (2012-2022), there also has been an emergence increasing encounters and intersections between the study of digital games within Game Studies and approaches to computer games within Japanese Studies (Roth, Yoshida, & Picard, 2021; Saito, 2021; Galbraith, 2021b; 2011; Bruno, 2019; Taylor, 2007). On the one hand, the field of Game Studies preoccupies itself with the study of digital games as a mean towards investigating their surrounding practices and the cultures. On the other hand, the field of Japanese Studies is chiefly concerned with the study of Japan as an “area” as the end of research. In this, the two fields offer both complementarity and tension. Approaches to Japanese digital games located within the field of Japanese Studies

provide important situated expertise. Approaches within Game Studies furnish theoretical perspectives allowing the questioning of the *how* of Japanese digital games, beyond *what* Japanese digital games may be.¹ At the same time, the different ends of the two fields expose fault lines, tensions, and gaps in the treatment of Japanese digital games as objects of research.

The overarching problematic of intersecting Japanese Studies and Game Studies is the lack of a shared terminology to ground the study of Japanese digital games. In other words, it is still not clear what makes a Japanese digital game “Japanese”. Is it, perhaps, its origin in creators and industries located within the Japanese landmass? Or is it by virtue of expressing a set of aesthetic and consumption practices that are perceived as ‘distinctly’ Japanese? This challenge deeply relates to the role that “Japan” plays in the definition of “Japanese” digital games. For example, terms such as *gēmu* (Picard, 2013) highlight “the crossing of electronics, computer, amusement and content industries *in Japan* in which some aspects were, subsequently or synchronously, established globally and under an increasingly transnational mode, all forming a particular media ecology or system” (Ibid.; emphasis by the author). Contributions such as Rachael Hutchinson’s *Japanese Culture Through Video Games* (2019b) define Japanese digital games as videogames “developed by studios incorporated in Japan, with their head offices located in Japan” (p. 2).

“Japan” as production context is also one of the axes, the other being “the convention and dynamics of the digital role-playing game”, around which knowledge of the JRPG genre is structured within *Japanese Role-Playing Games: Genre, Representation, and Liminality in the Jrpg* (Hutchinson & Pelletier-Gagnon, 2022). These important contributions emphasize locality – the Japanese geo-socio-industrial context – as one, if not the defining factor in distinguishing Japanese digital games from a global (North American) milieu of software production (Picard, 2013). Connected with the challenge of defining what makes a Japanese video game “Japanese” is the necessity – or lack thereof – of emphasizing Japanese (or perceived as such) cultural and aesthetics practices within a video game’s assemblage of software mechanics and narrative content. With such emphasis, or lack thereof, comes the issue of access: while the lack of Japanese language proficiency should not disqualify a scholar from engaging with Japanese games, there is a significant issue in access to existing research in Japanese and Japanese games, for keywords and theoretical discourses distinct from Euro-American perspectives² may be unavailable in English.

At the same time, it is necessary to account that Japanese video games are not solely made within the Japanese mainland or connected to Japanese studios. The number of digital games which reproduce the mechanics and aesthetic milieus of video games developed in Japan increases each year, as are video games produced under the aesthetic milieu of anime-manga. It is not possible to reduce the entirety of Japanese video game production to a monolithic bloc obscuring the manifold cultures of digital play that exist in Japan and in contact

1. Jaqueline Berndt makes a similar exhortation in her examination of Anime within academic disciplines (2018), highlighting gaps between “area and discipline, context and text, media ecology and media specificity” (p. 11).

2. One excellent example lies in Tsugumi Okabe and Jérémie Pelletier-Gagnon’s examination of *Enzai - Falsely Accused* – (Langmaor, 2002) through the lens of *asobigokoro*, providing for the usage of “non-Eurocentric ideas of play and playfulness in game analysis” (2019, p. 37). Another example concerning Japanese video games is Hiroki Azuma’s *Gēmutekina Riariizumu no Tanjō – Dōbutsukasuru Posutomodan 2* [The Birth of Game-like Realism: Animalizing Postmodernity 2] the sequel to *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals* which remains unavailable in English to this day.

with Japan (Picard, 2021; Kawasaki, 2021; Levy, 2021). This further complicates answering the question of what makes a Japanese video game “Japanese” without resorting to problematic focuses on geographical or cultural provenance. In fact, Japanese video games might be increasingly difficult to define, resulting in a preference for emphasizing their cultural origin and software development practices (Consalvo, 2022, pp. 96–97), rather than interrogating how a game might become “Japanese” in the eyes of users and creators.

This, together with the different ends of Japanese Studies and Game Studies – studying the ‘what’ opposed to the ‘how’ – makes making sense of Japanese digital games increasingly challenging for scholars in both fields: perspectives located in Japanese Studies might question the lack of Japanese language sources or engagement with Japanese cultural discourses; approaches situated within the milieu of Game Studies or Media Studies might object to a preference towards generalizing singular case studies against a generalized Japanese audience as it may happen in studies of Japanese anime (Berndt, 2018, pp. 3–5). Nevertheless, there is much more than a semblance of discourse around Japanese video games, and it is emerging out of approaches rooted in both fields. These should not be pitted one against the other, but rather operationalized towards complementarity, despite the potential for area studies to alienate other disciplines (Berndt, 2018, p. 9; Choo, 2013b). A theoretical discourse, with a growing number of cross references and stable research foci is emerging, but it still lacks the completeness needed to stand on its own at the intersection of Game and Japanese Studies. This paper thus seeks to provide a first, tentative mapping effort of research approaches to Japanese digital games through the last ten years, from the perspective of both Game Studies and Japanese Studies

2. LOCAL, GLOBAL, AND IN-BETWEEN HYBRIDITIES

Mikhail Fiadotau (2021), in his examination of Japanese digital game history, highlights the tension existing between “local specificity and global embeddedness in media production” (p. 34). Fiadotau remarks that while this is certainly not unique to Japan, and that Game Studies has engaged with such complexity since its early days, its approaches have often focused on the global aspects of gaming (p. 35). A reflection of this focus on the global is the citation analysis performed on the *Game Studies* and *Games and Culture* journals by Paul Martin and Jonathan Frome (2019). Of the thirty-eight most cited digital games in absolute terms within the two publications above (2019, p. 6), six – *Metal Gear* (Konami 1987–2018), *Pac-Man* (Namco 1980), *Space Invaders* (Taito 1978), *The Legend of Zelda* (Nintendo 1986–2022), *Final Fantasy* (Squaresoft 1987–2002; Square Enix 2006–2022), and *Super Mario Bros.* (Nintendo 1985) – are Japanese-produced. Stratifying their analysis, the authors observe how, while the composition of most cited work changes over time, select games/game series such as *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment 2004) and *Grand Theft Auto* (1997–2013) continue to be cited throughout the examined timeframe of 2003–2018 (p. 9).

However, there is no digital game produced in Japan that endures citation through the years like *World of Warcraft* or *Grand Theft Auto* (Frome & Martin, 2019, pp. 10-11). More interesting are the results obtained when citations are stratified by journal: within *Game Studies*, the Japanese-produced games ranking as the most cited are *Pac-Man* and *Super Mario Bros*; within *Games and Culture*, *Final Fantasy* is the lone entry. Within *Game Studies*, the two games therein represent Japanese digital game production reaching global notoriety. Within *Games and Culture*, the digital game (series) most cited through the years is the masthead genre of Japanese Role-Playing Games, one of the most, if not the most, culturally-connotated video game genres. And while the presence of these digital game series suggests their part in composing a global game canon of sort, both publications are testament to the focus on the global side of Japanese digital games. *Pac-Man*, *Super Mario Bros* and *Final Fantasy* are globally recognized digital game series, whose content creators are Japanese and recognized as such. However, there is not an equivalent attention towards more “local” video game series such as *Metal Gear Solid* (Johnson, 2020), *Soulcalibur* (Hutchinson, 2016), or Japanese visual novel games (Bruno, 2021; 2019). Mikhail Fiadotau, in this regard, recalls Liboriussen and Martin’s suggestion to pay more attention to regional game studies, and to engage more systematically with non-Anglophone scholarship and game histories, while also remarking that this is not exclusive to Japan. Despite this, Fiadotau makes three arguments for why Japan is still an interesting case (Fiadotau, 2021, p. 35):

1. Japan possesses the largest video game industry where there is both an exclusive focus towards the domestic market and an orientation towards worldwide competition.
2. Video games are a vital part of the Japanese nation-branding strategy along with the broader media-mix of Japanese pop culture.
3. The perceived uniqueness (at home and abroad) of Japanese culture, and its connections to ideologies of Japanese exceptionalism (*nihonjinron*).

Despite this distinction between local and global Japanese games, there is still limited consensus, as anticipated within the introduction, for what may make a Japanese digital game “Japanese”. As with the two axes around which the JRPG genre is structured (Hutchinson & Pelletier-Gagnon, 2022, p. 3), on the one hand, Japan is referenced in relation to the physical boundaries of the Japanese nation. On the other, as with anime and manga, “Japan” points to an identifiable, but blurry, ensemble of aesthetic and production sensibilities (Kacsuk, 2018, pp. 6-10; Brienza, 2016; Erik-Soussi, 2015; Cohn, 2013; Groensteen, 2013; 2010; Malone, 2010; Natsume, 2010) – tethered but not limited to the Japanese landmass. This resembles the tensions found in research on anime-manga and other products of Japanese cultural industries (Suan, 2021; 2018; 2017a; Kacsuk, 2018; Brienza, 2016; Berndt, 2008), where perceived connection with Japan

– nation and media landscape – oscillates against aesthetic conventions, their dynamics and actual global diffusion of media production (Kacsuk, 2018, p. 2).

The Japanese context of media production has certainly produced distinctive conditions (Picard, 2021; 2013; Kobayashi & Koyama, 2020; Koyama, 2020). At the same time, there is a growing number of digital games whose aesthetics and underlying conventions in software mechanical system which are in continuity with Japan. One example can be found in South Korean-produced interactive romance digital games such as *Mystic Messenger* (Cheritz, 2016), which subscribes to anime/manga aesthetics (Ganzon, 2022, pp. 97-100; 2019). Similar works include *Doki Doki Literature Club* (Team Salvato 2017), *VA-11 Hall-A: Cyberpunk Bartender Action* (Sukeban Games 2016), and *Please Be Happy* (Studio Élan 2022). Non-visual novel works include *Neon White* (An-gel Matrix 2022) and *Genshin Impact* (miHoYo 2020). The works listed above, which are far from being an exhaustive sample, in showcasing the popularity of Japanese anime/manga aesthetics in non-Japanese developers, further highlighting the tensions between Japan as space-nation and as a set of conventional aesthetics and practices.

However, the global/local dichotomy cannot account for all the intermediate steps that may exist in-between the local – Japanese digital games oriented towards the domestic market and aesthetic sensibilities – and the global – Japanese digital games for global consumption. Glocalization “may not suffice as the sole term to account for Japanese videogaming maneuvering between different contexts and scales of cultural production” (Fiadotau, 2021, p. 36.) To this end, Fiadotau, taking after Anthropologist Carlo Cubero (2011, in Fiadotau, 2021, p. 36) proposing the concept of “transinsularity” for the study of Japanese digital games. Transinsularity proposes that the isolation and connectedness that are central to islands (cultural and geographical) are not an opposition to be resolved, but rather a “constant interplay between mobilities and insularities” (Cubero, 2011, p. 5, in Fiadotau, 2021, p. 36). For example, what is perceived as Japanese in JRPGs is not considered “Japanese” within Japan’s contexts, but rather a default feature of role-playing video games, while western-produced visual novel games seek to “produce a “Japaneseness” that is not rooted in geography or language (since they are mainly created in languages other than Japanese) but that instead stems from following aesthetic conventions and narrative tropes recognized by players as Japanese” (p. 39).

Scholars such as Martin Picard (2021; 2013), Victor Navarro Remesal and Antonio Loriguillo López (2015), Jérémie Pelletier-Gagnon (2018) and Patrick Galbraith (2021a) emphasize the local dimension of Japanese video games, whenever it applies to production structures, aesthetic practices or reception. A complementary position offered by Mia Consalvo (2022 [2016]; 2006) and Joleen Blom (2020a) emphasizes that Japanese games are (or have become) part of a global video game culture, and while it is foolish to discount local conditions (Consalvo, 2022, pp. 2-5), it is also foolish to ascribe essential qualities to “Japanese” games (Consalvo, 2006, p. 127). Both perspectives, as it hap-

pens in discourses on anime-manga, emphasize different aspects of video game production within Japan, coming from Japan and/or subscribing to Japanese aesthetic practices. And, in the very same fashion, the existence of such tensions prompts a re-examination of the question of, as Mia Consalvo puts it, “Japaneseness in relation to popular culture” and the “conditions in which culture is made and remade” (2022, p. 5). Responding to Mia Consalvo, Rachael Hutchinson (2019a), in anchoring Japanese games to games whose creator’s main office is located in Japan (p. 2), discusses how the international standing of Japan and Japanese companies may obscure Japan’s colonialist past in East and Southeast Asia, along with the repackaging of nationalist narratives and the embedding of problematic, revisionist discourses about Japan’s role and conduct during the Second World War (pp. 233–251).

Returning to Fiadotau’s proposal for trans-insularity, his attempt to account for the non-isolatedness of islands – cultural and geographical – is symptomatic of the challenges faced by scholars in approaching Japanese digital games and their manifold facets. Japanese video games cannot be reduced to geographical provenance – commercial or creative as it might be – nor can be pinpointed to a definite set of features or aesthetics.³ These tendencies also leave the meaning of Japanese Game Studies in tension: should Japanese games be intended as digital games from Japan, or as digital games produced according to a – blurry and unstable as it might be – “Japanese” aesthetic continuum whose formalization may ultimately be impossible? Rather, it is vital that the manifold hybridities – geographical, cultural, commercial – are engaged from multiple angles, oscillating, rather than opposing, global and local conditions.

3. TRANSNATIONAL JAPANESE (ANIME-MANGA) DIGITAL GAMES?

Parallel to the study of Japanese digital games proper, are approaches looking at Japanese digital games in continuity with the context of production in which anime-manga are produced, circulated, and received. This facet of Japanese video game production is in broad continuity with what Akiko Sugawa-Shimada calls the ACG field – Anime, Manga Comics and Games (Sugawa-Shimada 2021b). In proposing the descriptor, Sugawa-Shimada, emphasizes the growing and strong interconnectedness of production of anime-manga media, interactive, static, embodied and dis-embodied. She also seeks to emphasize media production and scholarship therefor for and by female, against a strongly male-dominated field, especially in its use of the masculinist otaku descriptor⁴ in reference to users (Sugawa-Shimada 2021b). Originating in manga research (Kacsuk, 2018; Brienza, 2015; Berndt & Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2013; Berndt, 2011; Johnson-Woods, 2010; Itō, 2011), research on ACG encompasses *anime* animation and media, (Suan, 2021; 2020; 2018; 2017a; 2017b; Lamarre, 2018; 2013; 2009; Uno, 2018; 2009), content reception by select user niches such as otaku, *fujōshi* and *otome* (Galbraith, 2021a; 2021b; 2021c; Santos, 2020a; 2020b; Andlauer, 2018; Lamarre, 2013; Azuma, 2009; 2007), social practices in physi-

3. It needs to be said that anime/manga aesthetics, as an integral part of the media-mix strategies of Japanese cultural industries, make an excellent case of “Japanese” aesthetics unmoored from geography of language (cf. Suan, 2021; 2018; 2017 for extended discussion of anime aesthetics).

4. *Otaku*, as a descriptor for superfans – presumed to be male – in the context of consumption of Japanese media, possesses its own problematic intellectual history, intersecting discriminating labeling, self-orientalization and pathologizing views. For vastly more articulated views of the matter, see Galbraith 2019 and Ōtsuka 2015. See Miho 2015 for a comprehensive view in English of discourse around otaku in Japan.

cal and virtual space (Sugawa-Shimada, 2021; 2020; 2019a; 2019b; 2019c; Dit Alban, 2020; 2016, Baffelli & Yamaki, 2018; Steinberg & Dit Alban, 2018; Steinberg, 2015a, Yamamura, 2015; Saitō, 2014; 2011; Sharp, 2014; 2011; Morikawa, 2012; 2008) and more recently, it has extended towards including video games (Bruno, 2021; 2019; Kacsuk, 2021). Japanese video games, albeit growing in importance (Hutchinson, 2019b), have historically played a secondary role, and have been historically subsumed into studies of media-mix industrial practices (Steinberg, 2015b; Allison, 2006) or considered in the role of adaptations/expansions of existing franchises (Greenwood, 2015; 2014).

More recent approaches, bridging research into the Japanese geo-social-technical context, have attempted to provide wide-ranging perspectives on Japanese video game industries (Picard, 2013), gaming culture (Picard, 2021) and facets of it such as adult computer games (Galbraith, 2021a; 2021b; Bruno, 2021; 2019) and Japanese role-playing games (Pelletier-Gagnon, 2018). However, a significant number of studies dealing with Japanese video games fall prey to existing biases within Japanese studies, and area studies more generally (Berndt, 2018, p. 2; Bourdags, 2018, p. 591). It is a reprise of the issues highlighted by Jaqueline Berndt in her examination of studies in anime works (2018). Japanese video games are (re)purposed as “an occasional tool for the exploration of societal issues concerning Japan and Japanese audiences”, with “the Japanese audience is first generalized and then short-circuited, i.e., immediately correlated, with individual media texts” (p. 3). Such approaches share a “modernist preference for leveraging discrete art objects against large social forces and power relations” (Berndt, 2018, p. 5; Lamarre, 2018, p. 29).

Interestingly, the criticism of generalization deployed by Jaqueline Berndt echoing Thomas Lamarre is similar to the critic deployed by Paolo Pedercini of Molleindustria: “You think [pop culture artifact] is cool and progressive but here’s how it reinforces [capitalism/sexism/militarism]” (2016, in Murray, 2018). Soraya Murray argues that “[t]his mock formula encapsulates a great deal of noise that surrounds the study of video games from a critical cultural perspective more generally, and a postcolonial perspective more specifically”. In the same vein, Berndt’s criticism could be rephrased as “you think [Japanese anime work] is cool and important, but here’s how you’ve generalized it to audiences who might have never watched it or watched it in totally different ways”. This can be then (re)applied to videogames, for example: Rachael Hutchinson argues that “the fears, anxieties, desires and dreams of the Japanese people are enacted and expressed through videogames, enabling the player to enter the world and experience the same emotions as the main character” (2019b, p. 254).

While the importance of the video games approached by Hutchinson – The *Yakuza* (2005–2023) series, *Persona 5* (Atlus 2016), the *Metal Gear* series amongst others – is clear by sales and popularity, the views expressed within games geared towards global distribution may not be the prevalent attitudes about towards race, ethnicity, gender, and sex in Japan. Such digital games still undergo

validation in light of global sensibilities, which might be different from those present in Japanese games destined for a domestic market. This argument is made not to argue that the games examined are not representative of cultures and sensibilities within Japan. Instead it argues that the sensibilities embedded in such games may still be part of a more systematic employment of Japanese-ness as a design and business strategy. Japanese content producers, while rooted in Japan and in its context of content production, circulation, and reception, also contend with global sensibilities. This may result in a hybrid sensibility that may not be as prevalent under local conditions. Important scholarship such as Christopher Patterson's (2020) and Tara Fickle's (2019) can be re-examined in light of Pedercini and Benrdt's discipline-wide criticisms.

Tara Fickle (2019) examines the ludo-orientalist logic structuring the act of game play itself, with a specific focus on how "the design, marketing, and rhetoric of games shape how Asians as well as East-West relations are imagined and where notions of foreignness and racial hierarchies get reinforced" (p. 3). This produces what is a racialized gaming even in the absence of racialized representations. At the same time, Fickle produces an important critique of how early game studies were rooted in Orientalism and Eurocentrism, where culture – and the culture of play especially – is implicitly correlated with European culture in an obfuscation of issues of structural inequality, especially in relation to race and ethnicity (pp. 123-124). Fickle highlights how the removal of markers of race and ethnicity in the localization of Pokémon games – with a focus on Pokémon Go (Niantic 2016) – produces a sense of familiarity in American audiences by obscuring the game's origins, "fostering the illusion of Pokémon being "local" and "familiar" despite being from Japan" (p. 160). Fickle subsequently highlights how this is the result of a "painstaking and deliberate removal effort: it is, in other words, no more natural or neutral than the seemingly unmarked, objective map of the world it seemingly reproduces" (pp. 166-167).

In *Open World Empire: Race, Erotics, and the Global Rise of Video Games* (2020), Christopher Patterson argues how the Japanese auteur discourse, including figures such as Sakaguchi Hironobu, Horii Yuji, Aonuma Eiji, Ono Yoshinori, Harada Katsuhiko, Kojima Hideo, Nishikado Tomohiro, Suda Goichi and Suzuki Yu as forefather figures of a number of global "Japanese" video game genres (p. 62). These creators, idealized as "renegades", first dependent on, then operating outside of big publishers, "struggle for the freedom to express their art amid the business interests of game companies and legal firms" (ibid.). Patterson further remarks about how the "tendency to aggrandize Japanese developers is informed by their foreign aura, which produces much of the text's cultural meanings as bizarre, layered, or arthouse" (ibid.). Like the "unknowability" of Space Invaders or the "mysterious origins" of Pac-Man, Suda's games are shrouded in the unknowable Asiatic, as most reviewers and gamers excuse his games' eccentricities as a form of Japanese otaku subculture" (p. 63). Further examination of otaku subculture(s) would reveal that such auteurs might

not be as close to otaku subculture as reviewers and gamers might claim (Picard, 2021; Galbraith, 2021b; 2019; Bruno, 2021; 2019).

The underlying challenge is that, as Fickle and Patterson's work show, is that reception of "Japaneseness" and "Japaneseness" in Japanese digital games may be rooted in local, Euro-American conditions. At the same time, such reception is aided by the employment of Japaneseness as a business strategy. This should be intended in a slightly different way that the cultural odorlessness posited by Iwabuchi Koichi (2002), but rather in the deliberate fostering of a culturally distinct "odor", different from its local counterparts that is palatable for worldwide consumption. The Japaneseness deployed therein might not be as reflective of local "Japanese" mores and attitudes. In the same vein as the global acclamation of select manga auteurs such as Taniguchi Jirō may not reflect at home in the same way, so the western-based Japanese video game auteur discourse may not reflect in the same way in local (Japanese) contexts. While no less deserving of consideration, an increased focus on how the two might be distinct is arguably necessary.

4. "JAPAN" AS A GEO-SOCIO-TECHNICAL CONTEXT FOR JAPANESE VIDEO GAME PRODUCTION

Interest in Japanese digital games has in turn generated an interest in Japan as the context of origin of Japanese video games. It is a media landscape where such games are expected to be first circulated and whose cultural milieus are hopefully referenced during video game production. This has been accompanied by a growing awareness of outstanding blind spots that may hinder exploration of such a territory. This, however, is less of a case of scholars being unable to access material, even when scholarly work necessitates a translator intermediary as it's the case of Nathan Altice's work (2015), than the material not existing in the first place. Despite recent initiatives aimed at preserving video game sources and artifacts by organizations such as the Game Preservation Society [*Gēmu Hozon Kyōkai*] and the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs-funded Media Arts Database, there is an outstanding lack of shared histories or otherwise texts that might serve to provide a more unified body of knowledge for research.

Texts providing insights into the development of Japan's game industry remain limited: in English, works such as John Szczepaniak's *The Untold History of Japanese Game Developers* (2014; 2015; 2018) or Nathan Altice's (2015) *I Am Error The Nintendo Family Computer / Entertainment System Platform* provide important information on select events and artifacts of Japanese video game industry. However, these books may be written with a journalistic register and aimed at non-academic audiences, providing only a very limited, and at times strongly anecdotal perspective on select segments of Japanese video game developers and the Japanese video game industry. For example, within *The Untold History of Japanese Game Developers vol.2*, the interview with Nanashi Hideo (in fact an amalgamation of multiple anonymous sources at serious risk of litigation) pro-

vides clues towards shared, negative cultural attitudes in Japan towards gaming in general, and the challenges faced by the video game industry in securing development capital (Szczepaniak, 2015).

The account being journalistic in nature is problematic, as that information remains difficult to verify for academic work. When it comes to research on the Japanese media landscape in Japanese, while there is a fertile background of fannish writers (see Miyamoto, 2013 for an example), with guides and histories being released as part of commercial circuits, there seems to be a more limited interest in producing perspectives by university researchers. Two such approaches are Koyama Yūsuke's *Nihongēmusangyōshi. Gēmusofuto no Kyojintachi* [The History of Japanese Game Industry: The Giants of Video Game Software] (2020) and Nakagawa Daichi's *Gendai Gēmu Zenshi: Bunmei no Yūgi Shikan Kara* [A Complete History of Modern Games: Civilization from the historical view of play] (2016).

Koyama makes a comprehensive examination of the evolution of Japan's video game industry, along with important contributions such as the identification of the “three co-evolving markets” for Japanese video games, each presenting a different paradigm for hardware-software development: arcade cabinet games, PC games and home consoles (pp. 17-18). Each market niche, catering to profoundly different audiences and use cases, led to progressively widening gulfs between play-focused hardware (home consoles and arcade cabinets) and multi-purpose, business-oriented personal computer machines. As with the presence of existing media conglomerates focusing video game development along specific lines, the top-down rather than bottom-up approach adopted by Japanese market players led to radically different development conditions.

Nakagawa Daichi (2016), on the other hand, structures his history of contemporary video games by going back to Johann Huizinga's concept of *Homo Ludens* (2014), and producing an examination of the cultural conditions that have led to the emergence of the landscape of contemporary digital games. He locates the foci of video game production in the United States and Japan as the leaders of the post-war economic order, where the video game has developed as an expressive form. While Nakagawa acknowledges the contributions of other contexts such as South Korea, Europe, and China, especially after the advent of the internet, his focus is on the interconnections and relations between Japan and the United States, while emphasizing the rise of Japanese video games as the global standard during the early days of video game development on both sides of the pacific (Nakagawa, 2016). Nakagawa locates the role of Nintendo and his Famicom/NES as pivotal in the emergence of a type of Japanese game that is then disseminated globally, resulting in what he calls a “Pax Famicana”. At the same time, he locates another point of rupture at the turn of the 21st century, which he metaphorizes as a “Cambrian Explosion” (Chapter 8), offering an almost paleontological historiography of Japanese video games.

Japan's distinct industrial conditions were first hinted at by Martin Picard's first explorations, emphasizing the differences in market, industrial focus, gov-

ernment intervention (or lack thereof) that characterized the Japanese video game industry. In particular, “The Japanese video game industry was not supported by the military-academic complex, or even initiated by start-ups, but rather developed from the outset by entertainment corporations and import/export businesses that were already well established in the consumptive post-war Japan” (Picard, 2013, p. 8). Never seeing the emergence of a university-centered culture of amateur and experimental programming (Uemura, Hosoi, & Nakamura, 2013), “subsidized by the military-space complex” (Picard, 2013; Kline et al., 2003, p. 86), the Japanese video game industry orbited around home consoles, pushing the personal computer as a platform to the margin, in the role of a “second fiddle” (Fiadotau, 2019, p. 220). As a niche, personal computers were characterized by a sense of stagnation and by its occupancy by niche interests such as *dōjin* [hobbyist] computer programming (Fiadotau, 2019; Hichibe & Tanaka, 2016) and pornographic entertainment software (Pelletier-Gagnon & Picard, 2015; Miyamoto, 2013). Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, there is an emerging picture of the development of the Japanese game industry and, more importantly, of the local conditions in Japan. What is more important is that these perspectives are not indissolubly tethered to anime-manga or their industries. More multifaceted, nuanced approaches are starting to appear (Picard, 2021).

One example is the work of Kawasaki Yasuo (2021) on Japanese Game Centers, emphasizing the roles of establishments dedicated to playing video games, along with the industry segment they represented, and the influence exerted on Japanese game industry. In particular, Kawasaki highlights the role of game centers as facilities that present “a variety of cultures based on coin-operated entertainment devices.” (p. 39), highlighting the role of place in game culture, and how this may influence local conditions. A connected vein of research is the research on Pachinko gambling machines and centers conducted by Gerey Rockwell and Amano Keiji (Amano and Rockwell, 2021a; 2021b; Rockwell and Amano, 2019; 2015; 2013), which requires its own particular methodologies in light of Pachinko’s gambling nature.

One last research niche is research conducted on visual novels and more broadly, intimacy-focused video games and pornographic adult computer games in Japan. Adult computer games circulate on the personal computer and are not intended for generalist consumption. These works of interactive software may feature pornography and/or intimacy with their characters as the fulcrum of gamic activity (Bruno, 2022; 2021; 2019; Galbraith, 2021a; 2021b; Ganzon, 2019; 2017a; 2017b). Distinctive in this are approaches by Saito (2021), Galbraith (2021b) and Bruno (2021; 2019) and Ganzon (2022; 2019), attempting to shed light on a genre whose focus has been generally a reluctant proposal for Game Studies (Blom, 2020b, p. 2). Adult computer games, within and without Japan, have historically been at the center of public concerns on the indiscriminate circulation of explicit content perceived as harmful for the public (Galbraith, 2021b, pp. 95-101; Koyama, 2020 [2016], pp. 137-140; Pelletier Gagnon Pic-

ard, 2015, pp. 33–34), and in particular, “sexual minorities” (Nakasatomi, 2013 [2009]). These concerns intersect and mobilize with wider debates regarding otaku culture and their media consumption habits (Galbraith, 2021b, pp. 46–59; Kamm, 2015; Morikawa, 2008 [2003], pp. 262–269).

As these games come under scrutiny in global diffusion, their ‘Japaneseness’ is emphasized as a source of danger and disruption coming from an external other, and as a symptom of wider social malaises in Japanese society (Galbraith, 2021a, pp. 75–76). Great emphasis has been given to the problematic aspects of male-oriented works, especially in depiction of sexual intercourse and anti-social behavior, with a global historical flashpoint in the accidental exposure of *Rapelay* (Illusionsoft 2003) by English-speaking media (Galbraith, 2021a; Pelletier-Gagnon & Picard, 2015; Nakasatomi, 2013 [2009]). Joleen Blom (2020b) further highlights that engaging with sex and sexuality in Japanese erotic games is a proposal that requires to address the labels that are put on acts depicted as sexual but labelled as romantic, for instance, along with avoiding the risk of falling into the depiction of an eroticized, oriental other (pp. 2–3). Nevertheless, “using Japanese pornographic games as cultural products allows us to say something about them as a form of the representation and engagement of sex and sexuality in games, in Japanese culture, and in its reception of a Western culture” (p. 3). Another outstanding issue lies in the distinction between restricted male-oriented adult games and non-restricted but nevertheless adult oriented games targeted towards female audiences. Such games present important distinctions that are challenging to correlate, with the former type featuring explicit anime-manga content implying an heterosexual audience (Bruno, 2022; Galbraith, 2021a; 2021b; Blom, 2020b; Taylor, 2007) and the latter type featuring stylized anime-manga homoerotic relationships implying a female, not necessarily heterosexual audience (Patterson, 2020, p. 36; Okabe & Pelletier-Gagnon, 2019; Bollman, 2010). On the other hand, a subset of women-oriented software, featuring heterosexual relationships, does not feature as much explicit content (Tosca & Klastrup, 2019, p. 138; Ganzon, 2017a; Clough, 2017), which retraces the asymmetry highlighted by Tamaki Saitō (2009) in his examination of anime-manga pornographic content. Addressing this divide within the Japanese media landscape and in Japanese-inspired games is an ongoing issue. On the one hand, both male-oriented games and female-oriented games center their experience on eliciting users to develop emotional and sexual responses towards game characters. On the other hand, the clear distinction – by market, by regulation – that emerges out of the presence of explicit content is at risk of severing research on adult (porn) games and other female-oriented games.

At the same time, such works open the potential for locating different modes of relating with sex, sexuality, and play, as it’s shown by Tsugumi Okabe and Jérémie Pelletier-Gagnon in their exploration of *asobigokoro* in *Enzai Falsely Accused* (Langmaor 2002). The term, beyond playfulness connotes a quality of “leisure (*yutori*), characterized by a sense of witticism, lighthearted-ness (*sharekke no aru*

kokoro) and even a degree of mischief (*itazura*)” (Okabe & Pelletier-Gagnon, 2019, p. 39). *Asobigokoro* is then used to produce an examination of explicit, deviant, and violent depictions of sexual conduct in *Enzai Falsely Accused*, an adult computer games aimed at women featuring androgynous characters engaging in homoerotic emotional and sexual relationships. They argue for the need to situate challenging subjects and games such as *Enzai* from “regional frameworks”, necessary for investigating “notions of ‘play,’ ‘entertainment,’ and ‘humor’ that are equally relevant and in fact necessary to widen the scope from which the production of games with ‘taboo’ content can be studied across cultures” (p. 50).

Finally, while further research into such games is necessary, it is also important to note that existing research has maintained male-centered bias, and as highlighted by Akiko Sugawa-Shimada (2021) a re-evaluation of existing scholarship and artefacts within the Japanese media landscape to open up possibilities for non-male, non-heteronormative, non-fetishized non-binary⁵ representations of sexuality is still strongly needed. The nature of the material requires a separate, dedicated approach, which is outside the scope of this paper.

5. GĒMU, MEDIA-MIX, LUDO-MIX: GLOBAL GAME STUDIES AND GLOBAL JAPANESE THEORY

The study of Japanese digital games is not merely the encounter of an area-centered discipline with a methodological-focused field with resulting in objects of study from the former being approached with the methodologies of the latter. Such encounter, instead, has been multifaceted, allowing for both a decoupling of Japanese digital games from Japan, or at least the potential to do so, and the development of Japanese-originating concepts within the global-oriented field of game studies. The first and most iconic of these concepts is the concept of *gēmu*⁶ (Picard, 2013).

Gēmu is the Japanese term for video game, which has found new employment in emphasizing the distinctiveness of Japanese video game production. These considerations are based on a recognition of the distinctive geo-socio-technical conditions that are part of the Japanese market, delimited by the Japanese landmass and its media landscape. Such different conditions lead to a distinct typology of video game software. Martin Picard (2013) further ascribes distinctiveness to Japanese *gēmu* due to their role in so-called media-mix [transmedial] industrial production strategies proper to Japan: due to significantly higher levels of integration between cultural industries, and consequent interrelation of content within, without and across interactive and static media, *gēmu* are distinct from western [mostly North American] video game production (ibid.). As a concept, *gēmu* responds to the need to examine the “the economic and material conditions of the video game industry on the Japanese territory in order to portray a comprehensive picture of the evolution of video games on a local, global and glocal level, as well as on any levels between these” (Picard & Pelletier-Gagnon, 2015, p. 2).

5. The term is used in reference to the tropes and practices in connection with Yaoi/Boys Love. While the re-appropriation of such visual languages by non-binary persons has long taken place, its origins as a product by women for women should still be examined in relation to digital game production.

6. The term within Picard 2013 transliterates *gēmu* [japanese: ゲーム] as ‘*Geemu*’. This paper refers to all transliterations of ゲーム with *gēmu*, employing the macronized *ē* to signify the long e vowel.

Assessing the taxonomical viability of *gēmu*, Victor Navarro Remesal and Antonio Loriguillo López (2015) highlight the double necessity of avoiding an overemphasis of local dimensions and, at the same time, avoid assumptions of Japanese digital games being part of a universal culture diffused around the world (pp. 5–6). They also emphasize “common features and the intimate aesthetic connection” between anime/manga and *gēmu* (p. 6), along with distinct features such as a visual reliance on character mascots and distinct production features. These are influenced by and connected with local culture and references, genre framing, animation concepts and a “general notion of ‘Japanese-ness’” (pp. 8–10). Such features, in Navarro and López’s eyes, are the result of local conditions, which in turn require proper taxonomy. Importantly, Navarro–Remesal and López also argue that “Western perception of Japanese video games works in three different axes: character design, game design and animation in the cinematic sequences, with the possible addition of gender issues, identities and sexism” (2015, p. 8). While such perceptions can be attributed to both approaches subscribing to Japanese as “style” and Japanese as “made in Japan”, the latter three, “gender issues, identities and sexism”, are especially evident in approaches envisioning the usage of “Japanese” as a descriptor as “made in Japan”.

However, despite the taxonomical viability of *gēmu*, its usage has tended towards decline, and its usage has not been picked up within wider studies of Japanese video games. As it stands, amidst the distinction between games from Japan [made in] and Japanese [style] games, *gēmu* appears to be primarily referring to games from Japan, with a strong emphasis on Japan’s local conditions. At the same time, however, the local conditions of Japan are not some sort of essential quality ascribed to the Japanese nation; rather they are pinpointed towards specific industrial and economic conditions which have in turn allowed the emergence of *gēmu* as a distinct genealogy of video game production. This does not necessarily mean that Japanese video games should be conned to games produced in Japan. Rather, it is more apt to consider these aspects as being the object of reproduction within and without Japan, and ultimately constituting a way of looking at Japanese video game production as distinct. This is not because it comes from the national boundaries of the Japanese nation. Rather it is because *gēmu* constitute a typology of digital games where the role of Japan and the Anglosphere, as periphery and center are reversed and thus worthy of significant scholarly interest.

Beyond *gēmu*, another significant intersection of Game Studies and Japanese Studies lies in the emergence of concepts such as “ludo-mix” as a development of the media-mix descriptor employed in studies of anime-manga media. As per Marc Steinberg’s (2015a; 2015b; 2012) definition, the media-mix refers to processes of industrial and media convergence which privilege narrative content as an immaterial commodity regardless of host media and individual author intent. This includes strategies such as the so-called “Cool Japan” campaign and the production committee industrial framework

(Steinberg, 2019; 2015a; 2015b; 2012). If the media-mix is conceived as a commercial approach and/or strategy heavily reliant on character-based icons and mascots, linking multiple media products and services across technologies and platforms, the ludo-mix is a model where “games and play increasingly occupy the focal point of such a diversified distribution and consumption model”, which may include “several versions of the games or several different games together with other content thus resulting in novel media ecologies, business models and development of consumption cultures” (Digital Game Research Association, 2019). As the theme of the 2019 conference of the Digital Game Research Association, the ludo-mix concept represents an important development, a new framework born out of transactions between Japanese and Game Studies, integrating and inviting expertise and approaches from both sides. Also of extreme importance is the rise of yearly conferences such as Replaying Japan, which, in addition to co-hosting DiGRA 2019 at Ritsumeikan, allowing crosspollination between Japan-focused and non-Japan-focused scholars, has its focus on Japanese digital games and the culture around it. Its journal, the *Journal of Replaying Japan*, published by Ritsumeikan’s center for computer game studies (RCGS), hosts contributions in both English and Japanese, furthering the cross-pollination inside and outside Japan.

Echoing early approaches to the media-mix possessing gamic qualities, as well as the remediation of video games and “software” within static media (Steinberg, 2015a; 2015b), ludo-mix has given birth approaches spanning trans-media storytelling (Nakamura & Tosca, 2021); video game characters (Blom, 2021; 2020a); narrative design (Bjarnason, 2021; 2019); aesthetics (Chiappello, 2019) and musical design (Oliva, 2021), to name a few. Digital games and playing with narrative content become the anchor of transmedia industrial strategies. This, of course, produces its own array of challenges for content producers and content recipients. In a ludo mix, as games “become the anchor on which the strategy operates, the incoherency that games create, cannot be concealed” (Blom, 2021, pp. 108-109).

At the same time, however, the frictions exposed by approaching properties as ludo-mix, emphasizing the role of games, should not be reduced to the presence of games, especially given the presence of gamic elements already highlighted by Marc Steinberg (2015a, p. 10; 2015b, p. 47). Rather, emphasizing video games allows to further expose the role of content recipient, whenever they are engaging with static or interactive media, in producing and exerting creative agency over media. Games might create a sense of incoherency, as Blom (2021, pp. 108-109) argues, or lead to the outsourcing of narrative developments outside the ludic sphere, as argued by Bjarnason (2021, p. 71). However, the free circulation of content, which might not be necessarily devoid of a personal narrative or connection to a specific narrative context, may also create similar incoherencies, especially when, as showcased by Marc Steinberg in Madara’s case (2015b, p. 47) the means to produce alternative readings and what-ifs via factoids, and statis-

tics are provided to recipients of static media. On a different note, Nökkvi Jarl Bjarnason (2021; 2019), examining the *Final Fantasy XV* game universe as a case study, emphasizes the changing industrial conditions of video game development and its influences on the emergence of ludo-mix media ecologies. Bjarnason's comparative analysis of the *Final Fantasy XV* game universe concludes however that “the terms of the ludo mix are still being negotiated, and the *Final Fantasy XV* Universe only represents a certain point in its ongoing development” (p. 91).

Parallel to the study of digital games proper there are also strands of research preoccupied with the themes in Japanese digital games, and the influence of Japanese culture – religion, history, literature – on the global culture of digital games. In particular, the work of Lars De Wildt and Stef Aupers has helped break important new ground in how religious heritage, including Japan's, is re-purposed in digital games (2021; 2020; 2019). Japanese digital games are particularly important as they may present a re-purposing of Judeo-Christian religious heritage – amongst others – repurposed in gamic form. Just as global video game culture has appropriated non-Euro-American heritage, as it's the case with the concept of avatar (De Wilt et al., 2020), Japanese digital game products have done so in specular fashion. In approaching *the Final Fantasy* series as a case study, De Wilt and Aupers engage with the eclecticism that permeates its representation of religious heritage, arguing that by “remixing’ various religious tradition eclectically, (Japanese) videogames can confront us with the fictional and socially constructed nature of traditions – no matter how sacred” (2021, p. 27). Kathryn Hemmann (2021), adopting a more philological approach, examines the Buddhist cultural background of *The Legend of Zelda*, with particular attention towards the Japanese script of the game. In particular, the game's worldview, garnered through examining the Japanese idiolect of recurring antagonist Ganon, is revealed to be inspired by Japanese Buddhist traditions, which contribute to adding “cultural depth to the games, thus endowing the conflicts underlying their narratives with a greater sense of literary complexity” (p. 17). Furthermore, the application of “culturally informed literary analysis to video game scripts and extratextual material can contribute a great deal to our understanding of the stories that have already begun to influence and shape transnational digital mediascapes” (Hemmann, 2021).

Following in the examination of Japanese culture is the strand of research accounting for the approaches to Japanese history in Japanese digital games, with particular attention given to Japan's relation with the history of the Pacific War. Ryan Scheiding (2019) produces an important examination of the impact of atomic fears in Japanese digital games, linking Mikami Shinji with atomic and war memory in Japan. By examining digital games where Mikami has featured in an authorial/directorial role, Scheiding highlights recurring tropes and settings – physical and emotional traumas, destruction of cities, distrust, and misuse of power (pp. 9-11)– which “indicates a relationship and similarity between Mikami's games and the literary genre” (p. 11) of atomic and war mem-

ory. With this analysis, Scheiding argues how a “high-level employee within a corporate structure can be considered an author of video games and both engage with and create collective/cultural memory” (p. 12). A similar approach has been undertaken by Rachael Hutchinson (2019a) in linking game auteur Kojima Hideo with auteur filmmaker Fukasaku Kinji. In approaching *Kantai Collection* (Kadokawa Games 2013), Akiko Sugawa-Shimada examines how the anime-styled characters of *Kantai Collection* are employed to produce affective connections with war-related imagery (2019a; 2019b). Employing such images and characters, with their mannerisms and tropes, produces a detaching effect from actual history, connecting “young audiences to ‘soft’ nationalistic ideology by alleviating antipathy against extreme and obvious militarism” (2019b, p. 1). A similar attention to the body of female characters has been deployed by Rachael Hutchinson in her examination of *Kantai Collection* (2020).

6. CONCLUSION

This paper has provided an examination of multiple strands of research on Japanese digital games. Across its explorations, the paper has highlighted underlying tensions in what constitutes the object of research. There is a shift from Japanese digital games as video games produced in Japan towards Japanese digital games as videogames referencing Japanese practices and modes of engagement. The encounter between the eld of Japanese studies and the discipline of Game Studies has produced an extension within the study of digital games in order to account for increased attention towards the contexts in which games are produced, circulated and consumed. At the same time, it has produced a kind of narrowing of the object of research in the case of Japanese Studies.

It has been a shift from “Japan” as a place of origin for digital games to a class of artifacts which, when view under the combined light of Game and Japanese studies, require additional, combined methodologies to properly be made sense of. Such an encounter has trodden new ground in research about Japan and in research about digital games, in a way that shows the continued potential and promise for the integration of regional-based foci and approaches with artifact-centered elds and methodologies. While the above approach is far from being exhaustive, it is telling of the multifaceted interaction between Japanese studies and game studies, and how the interactions between Japanese Studies and Game Studies may lead to new ground in digital game research. Flipping the perspective, this paper has also shown how the interaction between the two eld/disciplines has opened new windows in the study of Japan from outside current area-focused perspectives as well.

REFERENCES

- Altice, N. (2015). *I am error: The Nintendo family computer/entertainment system platform*. MIT Press.
- Allison, Anne. 2006. *Millennial Monsters*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
- Amano, K., & Rockwell, G. (2021a). On the infrastructure of gaming: The case of pachinko. In *The Casino, Card and Betting Game Reader: Communities, Cultures and Play* (p. 294). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Amano, K., & Rockwell, G. (2021b). Representations of Play: Pachinko in Popular Media. In *Media Technologies for Work and Play in East Asia* (pp. 249–264). Bristol University Press.
- Andlauer, L. (2018). Pursuing One's Own Prince: Love's Fantasy in Otome Game Contents and Fan Practice. *Mechademia: Second Arc*, 11(1), Article 1.
- Aoyama, Y., & Izushi, H. (2003). Hardware gimmick or cultural innovation? Technological, cultural, and social foundations of the Japanese video game industry. *Research Policy*, 32(3), Article 3.
- Aoyama, Y., & Izushi, H. (2004). Creative resources of the Japanese video game industry. In *Cultural industries and the production of culture* (pp. 122–137). Routledge.
- Azuma, H. (2007). *Gemuteki Riarizumu no Tanjō: Dōbutsukasuru Posutomodan 2 [The Birth of Gamelike Realism: Animalizing Postmodernity 2]*. Tōkyō: Kōdansha.
- Azuma, H. (2009). *Otaku, Japan's Database Animals [Dōbutsukasuru Posutomodan: Otaku Kara Mita Nihon Shakai]* (J. Able & S. Kono, Trans.). Minneapolis (MN): Minnesota University Press.
- Baffelli, E., & Yamaki, K. 2018. "Maids in Akihabara: Fantasy, Consumption and Role-Playing in Tokyo." *Journal of International Economic Studies*, 32: 117–37.
- Berndt, J. (2008). Considering manga discourse: Location, ambiguity, historicity. In MacWilliams, M. W., (Ed.), *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime* (pp. 295–310). M. E. Sharpe.
- Berndt, J. (2011). Postcritical Anime: Observations on its "Identities" within Contemporary Japan. In *Arts, Culture and Identity: Compilation of Papers and Seminar Proceedings* (pp. 85–97). The International School Office, Graduate School of Literature and Human Sciences, Ōsaka City University.
- Berndt, J. (2018). Anime in academia: Representative object, media form, and Japanese studies. *Arts*, 7(4), 56. Article 56.
- Berndt, J., & Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. (2013). Introduction: Studying manga across cultures. In *Manga's Cultural Crossroads* (pp. 13–28). Routledge.
- Bjarnason, N. J. (2019). A Recipe for Disaster? The Emerging Ludo Mix and the Outsourcing of Narrative. *DiGRA'19-Proceedings of the 2019 DiGRA International Conference: Game, Play and the Emerging Ludo-Mix. 2019*.
- Bjarnason, N. J. (2021). The Ludo Mix and the Loss of In-Game Narrative: A Case Study of the Final Fantasy XV Universe. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 5(2), Article 2.
- Blom, J. (2020a). A Ludo Mix Perspective on Dynamic Game Characters. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 21.
- Blom, J. (2020b). Your Fantasies are Quantified: Sex and Sexuality in Japanese Erotic Games. *Replaying Japan 2020*. Replaying Japan 2019: The 8th International Japan Game Studies Conference, Liège (Virtual).
- Blom, J. (2021). Characters in Fire Emblem Three Houses: A Ludo Mix Perspective. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 5(2), Article 2.
- Bourdagh, M. K. (2018). Richard F. Calichman. Beyond Nation: Time, Writing, and Community in the Work of Abe Kōbō. *Critical Inquiry*, 44, 590–591.
- Brienza, C. (Ed.). (2015). *Global Manga: Japanese Comics without Japan?* Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Brienza, C. (2016). *Manga in America: Transnational Book Publishing and the Domestication of Japanese Comics*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Bruno, L. (2019). The Element Factor. The Concept of Character: as a Unifying Perspective for the Akihabara Cultural Domain. *IMAGE Journal of Interdisciplinary Image Science*, 29 (Special).
- Bruno, L. (2021). A Glimpse of the Imaginative Environment Exploring the Potential of Data-driven Examinations of Visual Novel Characters. In M. Roth, H. Yoshida, & M. Picard (Eds.), *Japan's Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global. Content, Practice and Theory · Local spaces · Transnational spaces · Transregional spaces*. (pp. 143–170). CrossAsia-eBooks.
- Bruno, L. (2022). Articial Intimacy: Gynoid and Articial Intelligence in Japanese Character Intimacy Game Software. *REPLAYING JAPAN*, 4, 35–46.
- Chiapello, L. (2019). Ludo Mix as an Aesthetic Experience: Designing Games for Franchises. *DiGRA'19-Proceedings of the 2019 DiGRA International Conference: Game, Play and the Emerging Ludo-Mix. 2019*.
- Choo, K. (2013a). Nationalizing "cool": Japan's global promotion of the content industry. In *Popular culture and the state in East and Southeast Asia* (pp. 85–105). Routledge.
- Choo, K. (2013b). Playing the global game: Japan brand and globalization. In *Asian Popular Culture* (pp. 213–229). Routledge.
- Cohn, N. (2013). *The Visual Language of Comics: Introduction to the Structure and Cognition of Sequential Images*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Consalvo, M. (2006). Console video games and global corporations: Creating a hybrid culture. *New Media & Society*, 8(1), Article 1.
- Consalvo, M. (2022). *Atari to Zelda: Japan's videogames in global contexts*. MIT Press.
- Digital Game Research Association (2019). *Call for Papers DiGRA 2019 Kyoto Japan Aug. 6-10, 2019*. DiGRA 2019 Kyoto Japan Aug. 6–10, 2019 Game, Play and the Emerging Ludo Mix. <https://www.digra2019.org/call-for-paper>.

- De Wildt, L., Apperley, T. H., Clemens, J., Fordyce, R., & Mukherjee, S. (2020). (Re-) Orienting the Video Game Avatar. *Games and Culture*, 15(8), Article 8.
- De Wildt, L., & Aupers, S. (2021). Eclectic Religion: The flattening of religious cultural heritage in videogames. *International Journal Of Heritage Studies*, 27(3), Article 3.
- De Wildt, L., & Aupers, S. (2019). Playing the Other: Role-playing religion in videogames. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 22(5–6), Article 5–6.
- De Wildt, L., & Aupers, S. (2020). Pop theology: Forum discussions on religion in videogames. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(10), Article 10.
- dit Alban, E. E. (2016). Mapping Methods Visualizing Visual Novels Cultural Production in Japan. *Gamenvironments*, 4, 140–160.
- dit Alban, E. E. (2018). Otaku Pedestrians. In P. Booth (Ed.), *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies* (pp. 289–304). John Wiley & Sons.
- dit Alban, E. E. (2019). Les aventures urbaines du media mix de l'animation télévisuelle japonaise. *Revue Française Des Sciences de l'information et de La Communication*, 18.
- dit Alban, E. E. (2020). Pedestrian Media Mix: The Birth of Otaku Sanctuaries in Tokyo. *Mechademia: Second Arc*, 12(2), Article 2.
- Erik-Soussi, M. (2015). The western Sailor Moon generation: North American women and feminine-friendly global manga. In C. Brienza (Ed.), *Global Manga: "Japanese" Comics without Japan?* (pp. 23–44). Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Fiadotau, M. (2019). Dezaemon, RPG Maker, NScripter: Exploring and classifying game 'produsage' in 1990s Japan. *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 11(3), Article 3.
- Fiadotau, M. (2021). Isolated Connectedness: Applying the Concept of Transinsularity to Japan's Game History. *REPLAYING JAPAN*, 3, 33–41.
- Fickle, T. (2019). *The Race Card—From Gaming Technologies to Model Minorities*. NYU Press.
- Frome, J., & Martin, P. (2019). Describing the Game Studies Canon: A Game Citation Analysis. *Proceedings of DiGRA 2019*. DiGRA Conference 2019.
- Galbraith, P. W. (2011). Fujoshi: Fantasy Play and Transgressive Intimacy among "Rotten Girls" in Contemporary Japan. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 37(1), 211–232.
- Galbraith, P. W. (2021a). 'For Japan Only?' Crossing and Re-inscribing Boundaries in the Circulation of Adult Computer Games. In *Media Technologies for Work and Play in East Asia: Critical Perspectives on Japan and the Two Koreas*. Bristol University Press.
- Galbraith, P. W. (2021b). *The Ethics of Affect: Lines and Life in a Tokyo Neighborhood*. Stockholm University Press.
- Galbraith, P. W. (2021c). The Ethics of Imaginary Violence, Part 2: "Moexploitation" and Critique in Revue Starlight. *US-Japan Women's Journal*, 59(59), Article 59.
- Ganzon, S. C. (2017a). Making Love Not War: Female Power and the Emotional Labor of Peace in Code: Realize—The Guardian of Rebirth and Princess Arthur. In *Digital Love: Romance and Sexuality in Video Games* (pp. 37–58). AK Peters/CRC Press.
- Ganzon, S. C. (2017b). "Sweet Solutions for Female Gamers": Cheritz, Korean Otome Games, and Global Otome Game Players. In H. McDonald (Ed.), *Digital Love: Romance and Sexuality in Video Games* (pp. 225–244). AK Peters/CRC Press.
- Ganzon, S. C. (2019). Investing time for your in-game boyfriends and BFFs: Time as commodity and the simulation of emotional labor in Mystic Messenger. *Games and Culture*, 14(2), Article 2.
- Ganzon, S. C. (2022). "Playing at Romance Otome Games, Globalization and Postfeminist Media Cultures." [PhD Dissertation], Concordia University, 2022.
- Greenwood, F. (2014). The Girl at the Center of the World: Gender, genre, and remediation in bishōjo media works. *Mechademia*, 9, 237–252.
- Greenwood, F. (2015). The Girl at the End of Time: Temporality (P)remediation, and Narrative Freedom in Puella Magi Madoka Magica. *Mechademia*, 10, 195–207.
- Groensteen, T. (2010). Challenges to international comics studies in the context of globalization. In J. Berndt (Ed.), *Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Towards Scholarship on a Global Scale* (Vol. 1, p. 15.26). Kyōto Seika University, International Manga Research Center.
- Groensteen, T. (2013). *Comics and Narration*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Hemmann, K. (2021). I Coveted That Wind: Ganondorf, Buddhism, and Hyrule's Apocalyptic Cycle. *Games and Culture*, 16(1), 3–21.
- Hichibe, N., & Tanaka, E. (2016). Content Production Fields and Doujin Game Developers in Japan: Non-economic Rewards as Drivers of Variety in Games. In *Transnational Contexts of Culture, Gender, Class, and Colonialism in Play* (pp.43–80). Springer.
- Hinton, P. R. (2014). The Cultural Context and the Interpretation of Japanese "Lolita Complex" Style Anime. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 23(2), Article 2.
- Huizinga, J. (2014). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Martino Fine Books.
- Hutchinson, R. (2015). Virtual colonialism: Japan's others in SoulCalibur. In *Transnational Contexts of Culture, Gender, Class, and Colonialism in Play: Video Games in East Asia* (pp. 155–178).
- Hutchinson, R. (2019a). Fukasaku Kinji and Kojima Hideo replay Hiroshima: Atomic imagery and cross-media memory. *Japanese Studies*, 39(2), Article 2.
- Hutchinson, R. (2019b). *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*. London: Routledge.
- Hutchinson, R. (2020). The body political: Women and war in Kantai Collection. In *The Representation of Japanese Politics in Manga* (pp. 103–120). Routledge.
- Hutchinson, R., & Pelletier-Gagnon, J. (Eds.). (2022). *Japanese Role-Playing Games: Genre, Representation, and Liminality in the Jppg*. Lexington Books.
- Itō, G. (2011). *Tezuka izu deddo: Hirakareta manga hyōgenron he [Tezuka is dead: Toward an open theory of manga expression]*. NTT Shuppan.

- Iwabuchi, K. (2002). *Recentring globalization*. Durham (NC): Duke University Press.
- Jiang, Y. (2019). Bishuaru Noberu ni Okeru Kōzō To Sono Riarity: Gēmu Dezain to Gēmupurei Wo Megutte [Structure and Reality in Visual Novel: Focusing on Game Design and Game Play]. *Core Ethics*, 15, 35–46.
- Johnson, D. (2020). Rhetorics of Autonomy and Mobility in Japanese “AAA” Games: The Metal Gear Solid and Resident Evil series within a global media context. In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Cinema* (pp. 247–262). Routledge.
- Johnson-Woods, T. (2010). *Manga: An anthology of global and cultural perspectives*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Kacsuk, Z. (2018). Re-Examining the “What is Manga” Problematic: The Tension and Interrelationship between the “Style” Versus “Made in Japan” Positions. *Arts*, 7(3), 26.
- Kacsuk, Z. (2021). Using Fan-Compiled Metadata for Anime, Manga and Video Game Research Revisiting Azuma’s “Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals” Twenty Years On. In M. Roth, H. Yoshida, & M. Picard (Eds.), *Japan’s Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global Content, Practice and Theory*. CrossAsia-eBooks.
- Kamm, B.-O. (2015). Opening the black box of the 1989 otaku discourse. In *Debating Otaku in Contemporary Japan: Historical Perspectives and New Horizons* (pp. 51–70). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Kawasaki, Y. (2021). The Power of “Place” in Videogame Culture. In M. Roth, H. Yoshida, & M. Picard (Eds.), *Japan’s Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global. Content, Practice and Theory · Local spaces · Transnational spaces · Transregional spaces*. (pp. 37–40). CrossAsia-eBooks.
- Kobayashi (Hichibe), N., & Koyama, Y. (2020). The Early History of the Hobbyist Production Field of Video Games and its Impacts on the Establishment of Japan’s Video Game Industries. *REPLAYING JAPAN*, 2, 73–82.
- Kohler, C. (2016). *Power-up: How Japanese video games gave the world an extra life*. Courier Dover Publications.
- Koyama, Y. (2020). *Nihongēmusangyōshi. Gēmusofuto no Kyōjintachi [The History of Japanese Game Industry: The Giants of Video Game Software]*. NikkeiBP.
- Koyama, Y., Kobayashi (Hichibe), N., & Nakamura, J. (2019, August 9). *Structure of PC Visual Novel Game Industry in Japan* [Conference Presentation]. Replaying Japan 2019: The 7th International Japan Game Studies Conference, Kyōto.
- Lamarre, T. (2009). *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*. University Of Minnesota Press.
- Lamarre, T. (2013). Cool, Creepy, Moé: Otaku Fictions, Discourses, and Policies. *Diversité Urbaine*, 13(1), Article 1.
- Lamarre, T. (2018). *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media*. University Of Minnesota Press.
- Levy, T. (2021). Entering Another World. A Cultural Genre Discourse of Japanese Isekai Texts and Their Origin in Online Participatory Culture. In M. Roth, H. Yoshida, & M. Picard (Eds.), *Japan’s Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global. Content, Practice and Theory · Local spaces · Transnational spaces* (pp. 85–116). CrossAsia-eBooks.
- Malone, P. M. (2010). *The manga publishing scene in Europe. In Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives* (T. Johnson-Woods, Ed.; pp. 315–331). Continuum.
- Miyamoto, N. (2013). *Eroge Bunka Kenkyū Gairon. [Outline of Cultural Studies in Adult Computer Games]*. Sōgōkagaku Shuppan.
- Morikawa, K. (2008). *Shuto no Tanjō: Moeru Toshi Akihabara [Learning from Akihabara: The Birth of a Personapolis]*. Tōkyō: Gentōsha.
- Morikawa, K. (2012). Otaku and The City: The rebirth of Akihabara. In M. Ito, D. Okabe, & I. Tsuji (Eds.), *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World* (pp. 133–157). Yale University Press.
- Murray, S. (2018). The work of postcolonial game studies in the play of culture. *Open Library of Humanities*, 4(1), Article 1.
- Nagayama, K. (2014). Zōho ero manga sutadizu: “Kairaku sōchi” to shite no manga nyūmon [Erotic Manga Studies, Expanded Edition: An Introduction to Manga as a “Pleasure Apparatus”]. *Tōkyō: Chikuma Bunko*.
- Nakagawa, D. (2016). *Gendai Gēmu Zenshi: Bunmei no Yūgi Shikan Kara [A Complete History of Modern Games: Civilization from the historical view of play]*. Hayakawa shobō.
- Nakamura, A., & Tosca, S. (2021). The Mobile Suit Gundam Franchise: A Case Study of Transmedia Storytelling Practices and Ludo Mix in Japan. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 5(2), Article 2.
- Nakasatomi, H. (2013). ‘Rapelay’ and the problem of legal reform in Japan. *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*.
- Natsume, F. (2010). Pictotext and panels: Commonalities and differences in manga, comics and BD. In J. Berndt (Ed.), *Comics Worlds and the World of Comics: Towards Scholarship on a Global Scale*. (Vol. 1, pp. 37–51). Kyōto Seika University, International Manga Research Center.
- Navarro Remesal, V., & Loriguillo, L. (2015). What makes Gēmu different? A look at the distinctive design traits of Japanese video games and their place in the Japanese media mix. *Journal of Games Criticism*, 2(1), Article 1.
- O’Hagan, M. (2007). Video games as a new domain for translation research: From translating text to translating experience. *Tradumàtica: Traducció i Tecnologies de la Informació i la Comunicació*, (5). Article 1.
- Okabe, T., & Pelletier-Gagnon, J. (2019). Playing with Pain: The Politics of Asobigokoro in Enzai Falsely Accused. *Journal of the Japanese Association for Digital Humanities*, 4(1), Article 1.
- Oliva, C. (2021). The Musical Ludo Mix of Taiko no Tatsujin. *Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association*, 5(2), Article 2.
- Patterson, C. B. (2020). *Open world empire: Race, erotics, and the global rise of video games*. NYU Press.
- Pelletier-Gagnon, J. (2011). *Video Games and Japaneseness: An analysis of localization and circulation of Japanese video games in North America*. McGill University.
- Pelletier-Gagnon, J. (2018). ‘Very much like any other Japanese RPG you’ve ever played’: Using undirected topic modelling to examine the evolution of JRPGs’ presence in anglophone web publications. *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 10(2), Article 2.

- Pelletier-Gagnon, J., & Picard, M. (2015). Beyond Rapelay: Self-regulation in the Japanese erotic video game industry. In *Rated M for mature: Sex and sexuality in video games* (pp. 28–41). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Picard, M. (2009). Haunting backgrounds: Transnationality and intermediality in Japanese survival horror video games. In *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play* (pp. 95–120). McFarland & Company.
- Picard, M. (2013). The foundation of geemu: A brief history of early Japanese video games. *Game Studies*, 13(2), Article 2.
- Picard, M. (2021). Gēmu Communities and Otaku Consumption. In M. Roth, H. Yoshida, & M. Picard (Eds.), *Japan's Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global. Content, Practice and Theory · Local spaces · Transnational spaces · Transregional spaces*. (pp. 11–35). CrossAsia-eBooks.
- Picard, M., & Pelletier-Gagnon, J. (2015). Introduction: Geemu, media mix, and the state of Japanese video game studies. *Kinephanos Journal of Media Studies and Popular Culture*, 5(1), Article 1.
- Rockwell, G., & Amano, K. (2013). Pachinko: Adaptation in the Game Industry. *Japan Game Studies*, 45–46.
- Rockwell, G., & Amano, K. (2015). Pachinko: A game studies perspective. *Kinephanos Journal of Media Studies and Popular Culture*, 5(1), Article 1.
- Rockwell, G., & Amano, K. (2019). Pachinko: A Case Study in Hybrid Physical and Virtual Interface. *Journal of the Japanese Association for Digital Humanities*, 4(1), Article 1.
- Roth, M., Yoshida, H., & Picard, M. (Eds.). (2021). *Japan's Contemporary Media Culture between Local and Global Content, Practice and Theory*. CrossAsia-eBooks
- Saito, K. (2021). From Novels to Video Games: Romantic Love and Narrative Form in Japanese Visual Novels and Romance Adventure Games. *Arts*, 10(3), 42.
- Saitō, T. (2011). *Beautiful Fighting Girl [Sentō Bishōjo Bunseki]*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Saitō, T. (2014). *Kyarakutaa Seishin Bunseki: Manga, Bungaku, Nihonjin*. Chikuma Shobo.
- Santos, K. M. L. (2020a). Queer Aective Literacies: Examining “Rotten” Women’s Literacies in Japan. *Critical Arts*, 34(5), Article 5.
- Santos, K. M. L. (2020b). The bitches of Boys Love comics: The pornographic response of Japan’s rotten women. *Porn Studies*, 7(3), Article 3.
- Scheiding, R. (2019). “The Father of Survival Horror”: Shinji Mikami, Procedural Rhetoric, and the Collective/Cultural Memory of the Atomic Bombs. *Loading*, 12(20), Article 20.
- Sharp, L. (2011). Maid Meets Mammal: The ‘Animalized’ Body of the Cosplay Maid Character in Japan. *Intertexts*, 15(1), Article 1.
- Sharp, L. (2014). The heterogeneity of maid cafés: Exploring object-oriented fandom in Japan. *Transformative Works and Cultures*, 16.
- Steinberg, M. (2012). *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. University Of Minnesota Press.
- Steinberg, M. (2015a). 8-Bit Manga: Kadokawa’s Madara, or, The Gameic Media Mix. *Kinephanos: Journal of Media Studies and Popular Culture*, 5, 40–52.
- Steinberg, M. (2015b). The Second Kadokawa Media Mix Era: The Rise of the Game Master and the Platform Producer. In *Naze Nihon wa “media mikkusu suru kuni” nanoka [Why is Japan a Media-Mixing Nation]* (Revised edition (online), pp. 40–52). Kadokawa E-Pub/Kadokawa Gakugei Shuppan. https://www.academia.edu/35185312/The_Second_Kadokawa_Media_Mix_Era_The_Rise_of_the_Game_Master_and_the_Platform_Producer.
- Steinberg, M. (2019). *The platform economy: How Japan transformed the consumer Internet*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Steinberg, M., & dit Alban, E. E. (2018). Otaku Pedestrians. *A Companion to Media Fandom and Fan Studies*, 289–304.
- Suan, (2017a). Anime’s performativity: Diversity through conventionality in a global media-form. *Animation*, 12(1), Article 1.
- Suan, S. (2017b). Anime’s Actors: Constituting “Self-hood” through Embodied and Figurative Performance in Animation. *Animeshon Kenkyū*, 19(1), Article 1.
- Suan, S. (2018). *Anime's identity: Performativity and media-form in our moment of globalization* [PhD Dissertation]. Kyōto Seika Daigaku.
- Suan, S. (2020). Anime’s Spatiality: Media-form, Dislocation, and Globalization. *Mechademia: Second Arc*, 12(2), Article 2.
- Suan, S. (2021). *Anime's Identity: Performativity and Form beyond Japan*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2019a). Girls with arms and girls as arms in anime: The use of girls for “soft” militarism. In *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture* (pp. 391–398). Routledge.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2019b). Playing with militarism in/with Arpeggio and Kantai collection: Effects of shōjo images in war-related contents tourism in Japan. *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 12(1), Article 1.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2019c). Shōjo in anime: Beyond the object of men’s desire. In *Shōjo Across Media* (pp. 181–206). Springer.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2020). Emerging “2.5-dimensional” Culture: Character-oriented Cultural Practices and “Community of Preferences” as a New Fandom in Japan and Beyond. *Mechademia: Second Arc*, 12(2), Article 2.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2021a). “He Is My Precious.” The Cross-Referential Consumption and Use of “2.5-D” Idols in the King of Prism “Ōenjōei” Screening Series. In *Idology in Transcultural Perspective* (pp. 215–238). Springer.
- Sugawa-Shimada, A. (2021b, December 8). *Global Fandom: Akiko Sugawa-Shimada (Japan)* (H. Jenkins, Interviewer) [Blog post]. <http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2021/9/11/global-fandom-akiko-sugawa-shimada-japan>
- Szczepaniak, J. (Ed.). (2014). *The Untold History of Japanese Game Developers* (Vol. 1). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

- Szczepaniak, J. (Ed.). (2015). *The Untold History of Japanese Game Developers* (Vol. 2). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Szczepaniak, J. (Ed.). (2021). *The Untold History of Japanese Game Developers* (Vol. 3). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Tosca, S., and Klastrup, L. (2019). *Transmedial Worlds in Everyday Life: Networked Reception, Social Media, and Fictional Worlds*. Routledge.
- Yamamura, T. (2015). “Contents Tourism and Local Community Response: Lucky Star and Collaborative Anime-Induced Tourism in Washimiya.” *Japan Forum*, 27 (1), 59–81.
- Taylor, E. (2007). Dating-Simulation Games: Leisure and Gaming of Japanese Youth Culture. *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, 29.
- Uemura, M., Hosoi, K., & Nakamura, A. (2013). *Famicom to sono jidai: Telebi game no tanjou [The life and times of the Nintendo Famicom: The birth of TV games]*. NTT Shuppan.
- Uno, T. (2009). *Zeronendai no sōzōryoku [The Imagination of the 2000s]*. Hayakawa shobō.
- Uno, T. (2018). *Wakai dokusha no tame no sabukaruchāron kōgiroku [Lecture transcription: Subculture theory for young readers]*. Asahishinbun Shuppan.
- Yamada, S. (2017). Joshō: Manga anime de kenkyū suru to iukoto [Introduction: Doing research by means of manga and anime]. In S. Yamada (Ed.), *Manga anime de ronbun, repōto o kaku: “Suki” o gakumon ni suru hōhō [Writing papers and reports on manga/ anime: How to turn a passion into scholarship]* (pp. 1–10). Minerva.

LUDOGRAPHY

- Doki Doki Literature Club*, Team Salvato, United States of America, 2017.
- Enzai Falsely Accused*, Langmaor, Japan, 2002.
- Final Fantasy I-XI*, Squaresoft, Japan, 1987–2002
- Final Fantasy XII-XV*, Square Enix, Japan, 2006–2022
- Genshin Impact*, miHoYo, People’s Republic of China, 2020.
- Kantai Collection*, Kadokawa Games, Japan, 2013
- Metal Gear*, Konami, Kojima Hideo, Japan, 1987–2018.
- Mystic Messenger*, Cheritz, South Korea, 2016.
- Neon White*, Angel Matrix, United States of America, 2022.
- Pac-Man*, Namco, Japan, 1980.
- Persona 5*, Atlus, Japan, 2016.
- Please Be Happy*, Studio Élan, United States of America, 2022
- Pokémon Go*, Niantic, United States of America, 2016.
- Rapelay*, Illusion Softworks, Japan, 2003.
- Space Invaders*, Taito, Japan, 1978.
- Super Mario Bros.*, Nintendo, Japan, 1985.
- The Legend of Zelda*, Nintendo, Japan, 1986–2022.
- VA-11 Hall-A: Cyberpunk Bartender Action*, Sukeban Games, Venezuela, 2016.
- World of Warcraft*, Blizzard Entertainment, United States of America, 2004.
- Yakuza*, SEGA, Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio, Japan, 2005–2023