



Introduction to Game Analysis

By Clara Fernández-Vara

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Game analysis allows us to understand games better, providing insight into the player-game relationship, the construction of the game, and its sociocultural relevance. As the field of game studies grows, videogame writing is evolving from the mere evaluation of gameplay, graphics, sound, and replayability, to more reflective writing that manages to convey the complexity of a game and the way it is played in a cultural context.

Introduction to Game Analysis serves as an accessible guide to analyzing games using strategies borrowed from textual analysis. Clara Fernández-Vara's concise primer provides instruction on the basic building blocks of game analysis—examination of context, content and reception, and formal qualities—as well as the vocabulary necessary for talking about videogames' distinguishing characteristics. Examples are drawn from a range of games, both digital and non-digital—from *Bioshock* and *World of Warcraft* to *Monopoly*—and the book provides a variety of exercises and sample analyses, as well as a comprehensive ludography and glossary.

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Review

"As video games become increasingly important in our lives, the need for a guide towards a deeper understanding of games as media experiences has never been greater. *Introduction to Game Analysis* accomplishes this task brimming with depth, precision, and heart." ?Mikael Jakobsson, Comparative Media Studies & MIT Game Lab

"With this volume, the field of game studies now has a thoughtful and comprehensive approach for how to engage in meaningful critique of digital games. Fernández-Vara offers a multitude of theoretical and analytical building blocks and frameworks to help writers produce well-honed critiques of games as well as the social, cultural and technical contexts that surround them." ?Mia Consalvo, Concordia University

"In the best Socratic tradition, Clara Fernández-Vara teaches us to ask insightful questions about games. This accessible manual for game analysis distills knowledge from the most recent game scholarship and will help students at all levels to develop their critical eye and become articulate about video games." ?Susana Pajares Tosca, IT University of Copenhagen

About the Author

Clara Fernández-Vara is Associate Arts Professor at the Game Center, New York University. She teaches courses on videogame theory and game narrative, and works as a freelance game designer and writer. As a researcher, her main interest is in exploring the integration of stories and gameplay, as well as developing theoretical frameworks to understand games better.

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