8. A POSTDISCIPLINARY POSTURE ON GAMES

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Abstract

This postscript considers how our field's interdisciplinarity status provides the possibilities for *post*disciplinary approaches to the study of games. Here, postdisciplinarity is described as a project of critical and politically committed knowledge production that eschews the notion of disciplinary homes – a notion that interdisciplinarity largely leaves intact – in favour of a more nomadic orientation. Through an autobiographical account of the power relations at work in a mundane ritual of play, I show how a postdisciplinary posture on gaming allows us to ground accounts of digital play in some of the more urgent issues of our time, while also showing how postdisciplinarity is itself made possible through certain expressions of intersectional and institutional privilege.

Keywords

postdisciplinarity; mobilities; infrastructure; interdisciplinarity; masculinities; colonialism; race; materiality

EVERY BEGINNING IS A NEW ENDING

In the fall of 2022, I was asked by Lina Eklund, Björn Sjöblom, and Jon Back to provide the senior keynote address for 2023's Nordic DiGRA conference. I enthusiastically and gratefully accepted. I did so while also feeling that the keynote, as a genre of knowledge-sharing, is an odd beast: often offered at the start of a gathering, it is supposed to set the tone for what is to follow (the 'key note' around which all others should harmonize) but usually without the benefit of knowing what the gathering will be like, beyond conference theme, titles, and abstracts. A central worry is that the keynote will fundamentally misunderstand or misrepresent what follows; that the keynote deliverer will end up a solo act, conceptually and (even worse) socially, an academic version of the nightmare scenario in which you start to sing in front of others and no one joins in. Fortunately, this worry did not materialize at Nordic DiGRA, due to the generosity and creativity of its community.

The conference theme of "interdisciplinary embraces" is timely. We are at a moment – not just in game studies, but in academia more broadly – where interdisciplinarity is often frequently framed as an imperative, and not just an opportunity. This state of affairs is not without ambivalence; as Eklund, Sjöblom, and Back point out in the introduction, interdisciplinarity is often easier to talk about than it is to enact in practice. But the possibilities it presents are captured poignantly by the assembled works in this special issue, and by the editors themselves, who enacted the conference's theme of "embracing" by choosing "to be as inclusive as possible when considering presentations at the conference" (Eklund, Sjöblom, and Back 2024). The topical, theoretical, and methodological diversity on display in this special issue brings this vision to fruition. From AR-enabled playground escapades to acculturation processes among games industry expats, and from game development workflows to the casual misogyny of casual games, this special issue demonstrates that the "interdisciplinary project of game studies" remains timely and vibrant (Eklund, Sjöblom, and Back 2024).

I used my keynote to provisionally develop what a "postdisciplinary posture" on knowledge production in game studies, in playful deference to the conference theme of interdisciplinary embraces.[i] I now have the opportunity to book-end this project with a postscript, concluding this special issue by both reworking what I offered in the opening to the 2023 Nordic DiGRA conference, while also exploring what sorts of new beginnings are made possible by this collective work. I do so through expanding upon what a postdiscplinary orientation to games might entail, and how it might prove generative for game studies.

Articulations of postdisciplinarity are often deliberately slippery and nebulous (Darbellay 2019; Pernecky 2019). Here, for the sake of clarity, I consider a postdisciplinary posture towards game studies as one that involves an openness to and engagement with knowledge traditions that may, at first glance, have very little to do with games. The point is not to engage in empty sophistry or promiscuous theory-play. Rather, it is to understand how games are enmeshed in some of the most urgent challenges of our time, while also acknowledging that such sense-making may be difficult even within game studies' current broad interdisciplinary purview. This posture is necessarily idiosyncratic and personal, but in my case at least, it is intended to *ground* understandings of games in the broader conditions and ongoing transformations – historical, material, infrastructural – that make digital play and its manifold forms of pleasure, belonging, and communication, possible (for some). Here, ground is meant quite literally, emphasizing the importance of land, and our relations to land, in our accounts of digital play. This is particularly (though not exclusively) important for those of us living and working on lands wrested from Indigenous populations through the still-unfolding legacies of colonialism and the extractive regimes they enacted (Liboiron 2021; TallBear 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012).

In what follows, I distill discussions of postdisciplinarity into a more straightforward account of what it involves and how it relates to the handful of other forms of disciplinary travel, blurring, and transgression. I focus primarily on how postdisciplinarity differs from

interdisciplinarity. This prompts a critical reflection on *why* interdisciplinarity is so frequently positioned as a goal for academic knowledge production, and of the political economic conditions under which interdisciplinarity has become common sense. Far from a liminal and precarious mode of knowledge production, interdisciplinarity has become institutionalized. While this means that interdisciplinarity is frequently expressed through, and captured by, the neoliberal logics of contemporary academic management, it also creates possibilities for the kind of critical postdisciplinarity that I see as one route forward for game studies. This postdisciplinary posture is illustrated through an autobiographic account of play and privilege, an analysis made possible through a deliberate and reflexive engagement with scholarly traditions that engage with the politics of place and space: here, feminist cultural geography and critical infrastructure studies. In doing so, I show how enriching the soil of game studies with these knowledge traditions – which are not new, but relatively new to game studies – has allowed me to consider how digital gaming is enmeshed in some of our most vexing social and political crises.

POSTDISCIPLINARITY AND/AS PLAY

Discussions of what postdisciplinarity is, or ought to be, are most rigorously undertaken by scholars in tourism studies. This is a field with which game studies has had little engagement, despite a plethora of shared conceptual boundary objects, aside from the somewhat tired notions of 'virtual travel' that circulate in game studies (Bjarnason 2020; Nitsche 2008). Tourism studies has had to engage with the very material legacies of colonisalism, and the relations of class, gender, coloniality and race that undergird the tourist industry, in ways that have only recently been critically interrogated by game studies scholars (Mukherjee 2017; Murray 2018; Patterson 2020). Postdisciplinarity emerges as a concern in tourism studies due, in part, to the inability for other, more discipline-bound modes of

knowledge production to reckon with such legacies (C. M. Hall and Tucker 2004; Hollinshead 2010).

According to tourism scholar Frédéric Darbellay, "post-"disciplinarity is not imply a strict temporal relationship: it is not imagined as coming after disciplinarity, as if we are wandering through the "ruins of outmoded disciplinary structures" (Buckler 2004, 2; Darbellay 2016, 364). Rather, it stands in relation to disciplinarity in the same way we speak of postliteracies or postmodernism: a stance in which disciplines are still present, but do not (or ought not) exert a gravitational pull on academic knowledge production. As such, postdisciplinarity is an effort to "both capitalize on the contributions of disciplines while transforming them into new theoretical, methodological, and practical frameworks" (Darbellay 2016, 371). Thomas Pernecky, in his "unintroduction" to the edited volume *Postdisciplinary Knowledge*, describes this as a "horizontal" orientation to disciplinary knowledge with "multiple entry points and ways of assembling", in contrast to a "tiered, structured and vertical organisation of knowledge" (Pernecky 2019, 15). At times, descriptions of postdisciplinarity are characterized by a rhetoric of radical departure and emancipation from convention that is somewhat undermined by the material formats in which they circulate: Pernecky may describe his opening to the edited volume as an "un"-introduction, but it is still preoccupied with the conventional introductory work of outlining a curated collection of scholarship. In light of this, it is perhaps best to approach postdisciplinarity as an active and aspirational process rather than a state: as a *posture*, one that may be difficult to hold for sustained periods of time as the gravitational pull of disciplinary structures (such as expectations for tenure and promotion) wax and wane.

The association between postdisciplinarity and play that appears throughout Pernecky's introduction offers a useful avenue for further consideration. Where Pernecky understands play as a "free", uninhibited, and undisciplined, a conceptual strength in game studies is its appreciation for the ambivalence and precarity of play, as an activity

that frequently depends upon the labour and support of others (Harvey 2015; Kerr and Kelleher 2015; Trammell 2023b), and often involves the belittlement and dehumanization of Others (Fickle 2019; Trammell 2023a). This ambivalence is intimated in one of the most canonical definitions of play, as "free movement within a more rigid structure" (Tekinbas and Zimmerman 2003, 304). If we think of postdisciplinarity as a kind of intellectual mobility, a capacity to skip across constellations of knowledge without being pulled into the gravity well of disciplines, we must also reckon with the fact that playful mobilities – "free" movements -- *always* involve relations of power. We are well past the point in game studies where we could romanticize play as a universal human activity; under patriarchal settler capitalism, the resources for play are never distributed equally (Dyer-Witheford and Peuter 2009). Someone, somewhere, always pays for our play. In my case, and as I discuss below, the capacity to maintain a postdisciplinary posture is due in large part to my social location as a white, settler, cis-gendered, middle class man, with a relatively stable institutional home. By approaching postdisciplinarity as a kind of play that is neither innocent nor liberatory, we are able to take seriously Darbellay's assertion that postdisciplinarity is not only an epistemological stance – the unfettered exercise of an undisciplined mind, as Pernecky characterizes it. Rather, "we should take into account the institutional, social, and material conditions for its implementation and its sustainability in the academic system" (Darbellay 2016, 371).

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

While postdisciplinarity is one among a number of terms in use for various forms of disciplinary-blurring or breaking – cross-, multi-, trans-, anti-, and so on – it is compared most frequently with interdisciplinarity.[ii] Reflecting on these differences can help make sense of a vital moment, not just for game studies – where the field's interdisciplinary status is a perennial topic of debate (Deterding 2017; Gekker 2021; Malaby and Burke 2009; Ouellette and Conway 2020; Simon 2017; Stenros and Kultima 2018) – but for academic knowledge

production more broadly. This is a moment in which interdisciplinary collaboration is not only a possibility in the academy, but is impelled, at least in the social sciences and humanities. Interdisciplinarity is discursively positioned as inherently good, appearing across all manner of internal academic documents, job calls, conference outlines, calls for papers, grant applications, job applications, course and program proposals, tenure letters, and so on. It is materially instantiated in cluster hires, labs, research centers, and other sites of disciplinary mixing, blurring, and hybridization. Interdisciplinarity has become institutionalized. In what follows, my aim is to contextualize interdisciplinarity, historically and in its unfolding political economic milieu. This allows us to then situate the discussion about game studies' interdisciplinary status, and clarify what might be at stake in the vibrant discussion – outlined and extended by the introduction to this special issue -- of how (and whether) game studies ought to 'do' interdisciplinarity.

As it is understood and practiced in contemporary academia, interdisciplinarity involves a cyclical motion of scholars away from their home discipline and back again. Perhaps this means you go to DiGRA to see what other game studies scholars from other backgrounds are up to, even as you find a greater sense of belonging amongst, say, other historians, or literature scholars, or sociologists. One quotidian, albeit suitably playful, metaphor to illustrate the difference between postdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity lies with LEGO.[iii] We can imagine a group of LEGO enthusiasts, who agree to come together to build something that can solve a particular challenge; for example, building a bridge. In an interdisciplinary arrangement, each of the LEGO enthusiasts involved exclusively collects sets from a different 'theme', or product line: one may be an avid *Star Wars* enthusiast with its monotone palette of spaceships, while another may gravitate towards the pastel-drenched ingenuity of Friends sets. They each contribute a few pieces from their collections, perhaps exchanging techniques for putting pieces together. The result is an artifice that, while collaborative, still clearly bears the imprint of multiple, separate collections of techniques and bricks.

After the session is done, the builders sort and gather their pieces and return to their respective homes, perhaps with a couple new ideas for how to assemble the bricks they have. A postdisciplinary approach would instead involve each collector dumping all their pieces on the table, mixing them all up together, and collectively deciding how to combine them in novel ways in order to do the work of bridge-building. At the end of the session, each collector has had their collections fundamentally transformed.

Like a LEGO enthusiast who only collects one particular product line, interdisciplinarity presumes that the researcher retains an intellectual and institutional home to which they return in between bouts of interdisciplinary exchange. Such bouts may be as brief as an academic conference or as sustained as a research cluster, but in each instance, the logic of cyclical departure, exchange, and return remains constant. Interdisciplinarity is premised on keeping the disciplines firmly intact, and maintaining their status as central apparatuses of training, specialization, and belonging. For this reason (among others), interdisciplinarity is a frustrating proposition for scholars seeking a more foundational recalibration and democratization of academic knowledge production. Felix Guattari, for instance, found interdisciplinarity to be "subject to an institutional orthodoxization and normopathy" that amounted to intellectual tourism rather than anything more intellectually or politically transformative: for Guattari, interdisciplinarity thus amounted to an *abracadabra* word deployed cynically by many pretenders" (Genosko 2003, 129).

Proponents of interdisciplinarity tend to draw from two distinct justifications: what we can term a *reparative* rationale, on one hand, and a *performative* rationale on the other. A reparative justification for interdisciplinarity sees it as a key strategy for addressing the vexing, multiscalar challenges that are too complex and/or too monumental to be effectively solved by any one discipline acting in isolation. The solution for mending a broken world is to contribute our various specialized knowledges. This forms the impetus behind the proliferation of interdisciplinary fields, beginning in the mid-20th century and continuing into the present (Darbellay 2016, 364): Cultural Studies,

Media Studies, Gender Studies, Food Studies, Science and Technology Studies, Tourism Studies, Game Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, and so on. The ascendancy of neoliberalism in academic governance has brought the second rationale for interdisciplinarity – a performative justification -- to the fore. The term is provided by Jean-Francois Lyotard, describing the fundamental shift in scientific knowledge well underway by the late 1970s, (when *The Postmodern Condition*, his report on the "condition of knowledge" for the Quebec Council of Universities, was written; (Lyotard 1984). Lyotard outlines a confluence of numerous transformations including the rise of digitization, the emergence of a neoliberal economic order, and well-placed mistrust of Enlightenment ideals of progress, combining to create a crisis of legitimacy for higher education. Emerging out of this crisis is a university increasingly realigned according to the logics of free market liberalism, in which the "performative" function of science --- its capacity for economic productivity – replaces the search for transcendental truth (Lyotard 1984, 41–51). Universities exist to train workers for jobs in a digitized economy, and to produce quantifiable outputs that can help drive an economy that runs on the proliferation of information (and, now, data). In a performative rationale, which has only become more intensified under the platformization of higher education (G. Hall 2016; paperson 2017), academic disciplines continue to serve a useful function, but ought not become barriers to the generation of quantifiable outputs: papers, citations, grant applications, university rankings, recruitment numbers. For the ballooning and well-compensated university managerial class, interdisciplinarity becomes a key technique in ensuring greater productivity , which – under a neoliberal logic – is the same thing as making the world a better place (Giroux 2014).

It is certainly not the case that reparative and performative rationales for interdisciplinarity are mutually exclusive; after all, fields of study (and, for that matter, individual scholars) explicitly embracing a reparative logic must also, always, worry about performativity. Under current conditions, it's hard to argue for the legitimacy and importance of a field if it fails to attract students, citations, grant

funding, or public interest. That said, it is important to note how some of the more well-circulated commentaries on game studies' relation to disciplinarity seem to unproblematically rely on and reproduce a performative rationale. Sebastian Deterding, who offers one of the more generative discussions of game studies' interdisciplinarity and the tensions it produces, argues that game studies scholars should align themselves with fields that are more oriented towards performative priorities, such as HCI or design (Deterding 2017) – forgoing the fact that these fields often struggle to embrace critical and social justice related approaches (Fox et al. 2016). According to this line of reasoning, game studies is interdisciplinary, but perhaps not the right *kind* of interdisciplinary: too much of a critical and reparative focus, and not enough emphasis on productivity. In contrast, the introduction to this special issue embraces both the performative and reparative justifications for game studies' interdisciplinary ventures: offering scholars (and particularly, junior scholars) an avenue to find generative collaborations with other folks interested in games, while also, crucially, remaining "open to new influences, allowing formulation of novel research problems that might not fit our current formulation of what game studies is and is not" (Eklund, Sjöblom, and Back 2024).

GOING TO GROUND

In contrast to the birds-eye view on the field offered by Deterding and other scholars concerned about the field's interdisciplinary status, the postdisciplinary approach outlined here is resolutely personal, situated, and grounded. I offer it less as a prescription and more as a possibility space – one that is afforded by a critical mass of interdisciplinary work, including the scholarship gathered in this special issue, rather than a radical departure from interdisciplinarity. For this reason, my postdisciplinarity posture will be resolutely different from that of others, due to social and institutional location, career conditions and pressures, and one's own understanding of where the reparative work in and around games is most urgent. In a

forthcoming book called *The Grounds of Gaming,* I suggest that we might gain some traction towards reckoning with gaming's long-standing injustices if we attend to the material contexts and infrastructural conditions that make play possible (Taylor 2024). The "new influences" that I engage in the book include, among other knowledge traditions, anticolonialism, critical infrastructure studies, and cultural geography: all interdisciplinary fields explicitly foregrounding reparative goals, and all centrally concerned with understanding the histories and contemporary politics of our relations to land.

The consideration that I borrow from this larger project for consideration here centers on a ritual that I shared with a friend of mine, when our two families lived close together in our former home of Raleigh, North Carolina. My partner and I moved into the rapidly gentrifying neighborhood of Boylan Heights in 2014, months after my friend and his partner did. Our child was born five weeks after their eldest and like many neighbours who are also new parents, we fell into a fast friendship. Every so often, after our children's bedtime, he and I would meet in my kitchen, where I would set up an ad hoc gaming station on my kitchen counter. We initially landed on this specific location out of sheer convenience: I had the gaming equipment, and our kitchen island was within range of both our baby monitors. The gaming setup consisted of a PS4, a small computer monitor, and a portable speaker. He would bring beer and I would provide salty snacks.

We jokingly referred to these sessions 'mancounters' and inevitably, the name stuck. These sessions took place on a kitchen counter, after all. The name carries further semantic weight: it combines "man" and "encounter", invoking so many other transient sites of homosocial and homoerotic ritual between (predominantly white) men, from locker rooms, to frat parties, to sporting events (Sedgwick 1992; Ward 2015). It is also a self-deprecatory play on "man cave", those spaces of masculine leisure and bonding carved out from the fabric of the middle class, and again most frequently white, North American home with all its feminizing / feminized place-making

(Rodino-Colocino, DeCarvalho, and Heresco 2018). In practice, however, the mancounter held very little in common with the man cave. If the latter is a stable space of masculine seclusion and escape maintained through both misogynistic gatekeeping and privileged relation to leisure time, the mancounter was characterized by its ephemerality and precarity – momentarily occupying a central space in not one but two domestic media arrangements (again: it needed to be within range of two separate baby monitors). It was designed to be set up and taken apart with minimal work, and without a trace; it existed within the seams of mine and my friends' roles as active caregivers and considerate partners. Intricate conditions had to be met in order to hold a mancounter: after our child's bedtime, no urgent demands from work or family, the approval of our respective partners and the assurance that we would be 'on call' should the baby monitors start chirping. While we occasionally tried party games like *Gang Beasts* or arcade-style sports games such as *NHL Hitz,* the titles we gravitated towards most were FPS games such as *Titanfall 2, The Division 2,* and *Battlefield I.* These are games that plainly draw from the well-worn and well-studied tropes of "militarized masculinity" (Blackburn 2018; Eichler 2014), but for the mancounter, these games' aesthetic and ideological aspects were far from the only draw. Crucially, these games make use of control schemes with which my friend and I were both familiar, and recalled the kinds of gaming experiences out of which those embodied competencies first grew: places and periods in our past lives when we had more time to play.

As a site of scholarly interest, the mancounter could be analyzed any number of ways from within game studies' current interdisciplinary purview. These approaches include, but are not limited to, interpretations of the games' representational politics; positivist investigations into our self-efficacy, immersion, or ability to navigate three-dimensional spaces; formalist analyses of the rules, mechanics, and interface elements; critical accounts of the techniques of monetization and surveillance coded into the platform; speculative theorizations about the flows of affect, agency, pleasure and frustration that circulate between the provisional arrangement of

the mancounter. Such considerations are of course just a sample of some of the more well-established and central preoccupations of game studies, and they tell us much about the alluring and problematic circuit between players, games, and platforms. At the same time, they tell us little about the *conditions* that allow the mancounter to come into being. Indeed, for us as players, the games were not really the point. They were eye- and thumb-candy for the mancounter's underlying purpose: a way for two white, cis-gendered new dads to bond over shared life experiences and a shared history of having played similar kinds of games, with other boys and men, in other times.

MAPPING THE MANCOUNTER

When approached as a place-making ritual of homosocial nostalgia and belonging, the mancounter invites us to shift our attention away from the dialogue between player and game – set of relations that constitute the predominant "figure" of game studies – and instead ask about the grounds. By this, I mean the spatial, material, and infrastructural arrangements that made the mancounter possible, not to mention countless other gaming experiences.[iv] Such arrangements might reveal much about the contemporary cultural politics of digital gaming, and about the relations of power and the conditions of privilege and oppression that video gaming engages and transforms. Part of the scholarly significance of the mancounter (however minor) is in how it departs from other domestic media arrangements intended for masculine leisure. Such sites can be traced back at least as far as the "curiosity cabinets" of Renaissance Europe (Williamson 2019), but this genealogy comes into sharper relief in the decades following World War II, with the "white flight" of the white middle class to the suburbs (Trammell 2023b). As scholars of media domestication so adroitly point out, the central domestic arrangement promoted by media industries positioned the television as the "glue" for white surburban domesticity, but also as a passive and feminizing medium (Spigel 1992). Men were encouraged to carve out spaces and times for

properly masculine media within the feminized domain of the home, in the form of elaborate high fideility stereo setups – laying the foundation, discursively, and materially, for contemporary man caves as well as space- and time-sucking gaming setups (Harvey 2015; Keightley 1996; Taylor 2022; Williams and Tobin 2022).

According to feminist media theorist Sarah Sharma, these dedicated spatio-temporal media apparatuses can be characterized as domestic machines for the uniquely masculine fantasy of exit (Sharma 2018). The man cave and the hardcore gaming setup alike are both sites intended for sustained immersion – not in virtual space, but in the not-so-magic circle of a media apparatus made for them, in which men and boys can find freedom from both domestic obligations and political correctness. This is the historical set of cultural politics that the mancounter engages, even as it tries to be a little more careful and respectful. In fact, the mancounter could only come into being because my friend and I had both played a lot of games growing up, and had access to the kinds of spaces, leisure time, and technological infrastructures that are required for the cultivation of "gaming capital" (Consalvo 2007). Even while it engages a more progressive politics in which the work of social reproduction is slightly more equitable, the mancounter builds upon foundational experiences with co-located gaming, in dorm rooms, parents' basements, friends' houses, and so on; these histories were made possible in part because my friend and I belong to a racial, gender, and class demographic that has consistently been *the* target audience for video games and game systems.

Along with these more intimate gendered power relations that make the mancounter possible, we might also incorporate a cultural geographer's sensitivity to the ways that hierarchies of class, race, and gender are concretized through our built environments. These relations are experienced as access to and use of key infrastructures, understood as systems for the storage distribution and storage of vital resources – in other words, as the kinds of mobilities and 'freedoms of movement' available to us and that cater to us. Here is a brief but evocative audit of the infrastructural privileges, and the associated

forms of mobility, that the mancounter relied upon: access to current-gen gaming consoles and monitors, as well as fast and stable Internet connectivity; white collar jobs that allowed both my friend and I considerable control over our time; and, once my friend and his partner moved their family to another neighborhood in Raleigh, the ability to travel through an urban setting, at night, without fear of harassment or violence.

Indeed, shortly after they moved, my friend's new neighbourhood was featured on the front page of the *New York Times* (Badger, Bui, and Gebeloff 2019). According to the article, the neighborhood epitomizes the racial dynamics of home sales in gentrifying areas of the southeast US, as prior to the pandemic, white professionals moved back into cities lured by short commutes and hip microbreweries, often forcing out long-time Black residents. The mancounter was made possible through geographical intersections of race, class, gender, intersections that quite literally became a poster for gentrification. The relatively unfettered mobility and bodily autonomy we enjoyed by simply traveling by bicycle or foot, at night, between two downtown neighbourhoods represents a nexus of privileges not easily afforded to women, African Americans, the disabled, and the urban poor (Massey 2013; Nicholson and Sheller 2016; Sheller 2018).

These are some of the considerations made possible through a postdisciplinary posture on gaming: one that attends to the scale-defying dynamics of place and time that allow for a seemingly mundane gaming moment between friends.

POSSIBILITY SPACES

Edited collections such as this one largely represent the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary efforts of its individual contributors. Even when not guided by a reflexive attention to interdisciplinary and a concern for inclusivity as this collection is, this kind of venue is absolutely central to a field like game studies, as it offers scholars a chance to experiment with and/or rehearse perspectives that are novel – either to them, or their discipline, or the field. Such is certainly the

case with several of the contributions here. Marie Dalby's keen and artful application of Sarah Ahmed's queer phenomenology in order to map the "orientations" of queer game studies is a key example, as is Holger Pötzsch, Therese H. Hansen, Emil L. Hammar and Tobias B. Staaby's efforts to incorporate institutional and infrastructural conditions into a theoretical model of gaming's pedagogical applciations, and Annakaisa Kultima, Riina Ojanen and Niklas Nylund's inclusion of developers' personal histories into what gets included and what matters when looking at how a game develops over time. There are more, of course. The point is that these eclectic and boundary-pushing interdisciplinary efforts of individual authors and teams produce rich soil for nurturing the critical and playful postdisciplinarity I gesture towards here.

Proponents of postdisciplinarity position it as a radical break from disciplinary modes of thinking and working: as a de-disciplining. I am less inclined towards this kind of oppositional stance, in part because I recognize the valuable support that disciplines offer, particularly to young and/or emerging scholars for whom sustained disciplinary boundary-crossing – say, publishing primarily in game studies venues rather than in those in their disciplinary homes -- might represent a risk to their career prospects. I imagine that this is why, when the panel members collectively constituting the junior keynote at Nordic DiGRA were asked whether they see themselves as postdisciplinary, they politely shook their heads. When envisioned as either a radical departure from disciplinary forms of belonging and support, or as an individual stance that can be adopted in isolation and through sheer act of will, postdisciplinarity makes little sense. Rather, the postdisciplinary posture towards game studies that I emphasise here is gentler, and perhaps more subtle. It is an emergent property of interdisciplinary collaboration, when accompanied with both a deliberate effort to ground a critical study of games in an understanding of the manifold crises we face, and a reflexive stance on the constraints that disciplinarity (and interdisciplinarity) impose on such efforts. It is an effort to make disciplinary specializations, discourses, and resources work for us, in our collective efforts at

making games (and game studies) more equitable and inclusive, rather than the other way around.

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i. Frédéric Darbellay first used this phrase, in passing (Darbellay 2019).

ii. A full reckoning of the differences and continuities across these positions is beyond the scope of this postscript. Readers are encouraged to once again consult Frédéric Darbellay's work for a concise overview (Darbellay 2016, 365).

iii. For a useful discussion on LEGO's utility as an epistemological tool — its conceptual plasticity — see Kate Maddalena's work (Maddalena 2021)

iv. This intentionally invokes Marshall McLuhan's use of the figure/ground motif from gestalt psychology, which he uses to draw attention to the spatial and temporal transformations wrought by new media rather than their representational content (McLuhan 1964; Sharma and Singh 2022)