



FEATURES

# *TNI Syllabus: Gaming and Feminism*

By THE NEW INQUIRY SEPTEMBER 2, 2014

The last couple weeks have seen a frenzy of organized misogynist harassment of female and feminist game producers, critics and commentators by self-identified "gamers." Women in all fields face constant harassment just for having the audacity to appear online, let alone doing so to critique white supremacist patriarchy, and we do not want to imply in any way that game critics are alone in this. But because of the particular concentration and visibility of this current misogynist campaign, we wanted to highlight, in solidarity with feminist critics and thinkers everywhere, some of the wonderful, complicated and powerful work that has been done against, outside and in spite of gaming's heteropatriarchal structures. The simplest, easiest thing we can do in the face of these attacks is to spread the work that has sent these gaming man-children into an apoplectic rage. Many of the thinkers and designers on this list disagree, even vociferously, with one another; this list is not meant to represent a singular viewpoint, nor to imply that feminism is in any way univocal. Nor is this by any means an exhaustive or comprehensive list. It is instead meant as a useful and evolving resource. If we've missed a game, blog or piece you love, please send them to Willie [at] TheNewInquiry.com. And thanks to everyone who helped compile this list—please see the bottom of the syllabus for a list of contributors.

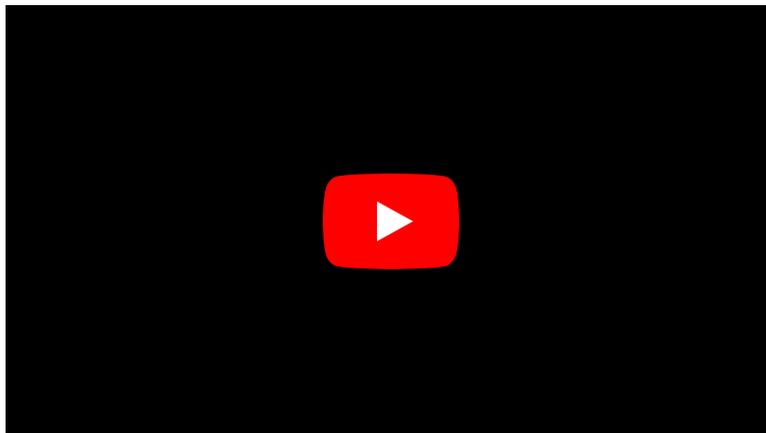
**Context and Reactions: The Last Couple Weeks**



- Leigh Alexander - ['Gamers' Don't Have to Be Your Audience. 'Gamers' Are Over](#)
- Andrew Todd - [Videogames, Misogyny and Terrorism: A Guide to Assholes](#)
- Mattie Brice - [Moving On](#)
- Samantha Allen - [Will the Internet Ever be Safe for Women?](#)
- Kris Ligman - [This Week in Videogame Blogging: August 31st](#) (a good overview of much of the coverage)

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### The Work Most Recently Under Attack



- Tropes Vs. Women in Video Games: [Women as Background Decoration: Part 2](#). TRIGGER WARNING: some very upsetting in-game footage of violence against women. This video is the most recent in [Feminist Frequency](#)'s incredible crowdfunded video series Tropes Vs. Women in Video Games (more [here](#) [here](#) [here](#) [here](#) and [here](#)), which through video essays centered around game footage reveal the most insidious patriarchal and violent misogynist tropes in video games. Host and writer Anita Sarkeesian has been [particularly targeted](#) by misogynist threats.
- Zoe Quinn's [Depression Quest](#): An interactive, educational story game about depression and the often very difficult and personal methods

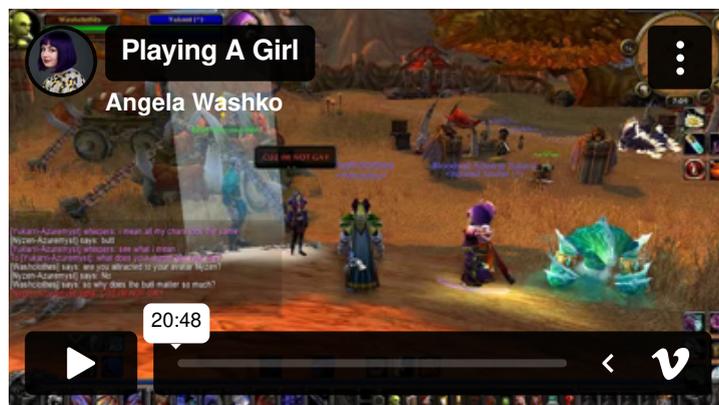


to support Quinn, who has faced near [constant harassment](#) since the game's release.



### Reviews/Essays/Work on a Single Game

- Lana Polanksy: [Jupiter is a Failed Star Because it Didn't Want it Hard Enough](#) (*Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*)
- Mike Thomsen: [Fuck Forever and Never Die](#) (*Skyrim*)
- Patricia Hernandez: [Gaming Made Me: Fallout 2](#) (*Fallout 2*)
- Liz Ryerson: [The Monster Within](#) (*Hotline Miami*)
- Aevee Bee: [How Flat is the World](#) (*GrimGrimoire*)
- Zoya Street and Samantha Allen: [Bunk Bed #1: Everlove](#) (*Everlove*)
- Naomi Clark: [Not Gonna Happen](#) (*Gone Home*); [A Hasty Review: Howling Dogs](#) (*Howling Dogs*—written in response to a gamer claiming it couldn't be reviewed because games by women aren't "real games")
- Angela Washko: [Playing a Girl](#) (video essay/performance art/intervention performed within *World of Warcraft*)





- Leigh Alexander: [A Game is Being Beaten](#)
- Sarah Wanencheck: ["The Consumption Palace": Gamers, Misogyny and Capitalism](#)
- Patricia Hernandez: [You Know What's Gross? We Often Play Nice Guys™ In Games With Romance Options](#)
- Patricia Hernandez: [Three Words I Said to the Man I Defeated in Gears of War that I'll Never Say Again](#)
- Maddy Myers: [Bad Dad vs. Hyper Mode: The Father-Daughter Bond in Video Games](#)
- Cara Ellison: [Games, Noir and the 17%: Where are the Women?](#)
- Katherine Cross: [I'm Being So Sincere Right Now: Gaming as Hyperreality](#)
- Ben Kuchera: [Its time to leave the brothels and strip clubs behind when real victims fuel your narrative](#)
- Feminist Frequency: [Tropes vs. Women in Video Games](#)
- Jenn Frank: [On Consuming Media Responsibly](#)
- Mary Flanagan: [Violent Video Games Reveal the Dark Side of Play](#)

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### **Gender Play: Queer, Trans and Feminist Spaces in Gaming**

- Kaitlin Tremblay: [The Buxom and the Beasts; or, Why I need Monsters as a Feminist; Intro to Gender Criticism For Gamers: From Princess Peach, to Claire Redfield, to Femsheps.](#)
- Liz Ryerson: [The Abstract and the Feminine](#)



## Games as Transitional Objects

- Lana Polanksy: [Pushing Buttons](#)
- Mariam Naziripour: [The Awfulness and the Importance of the Dress-Up Game](#)

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## **Redefining "Game", Text, Twine and New Ways of Constructing Narrative**

- Merritt Kopas: [Trans Women and the New Hypertext](#)
- Porpentine: [Creation Under Capitalism and the Twine Revolution; Parasite](#)
- Emily Short: [Reading and Hypothesis](#)
- Line Hollis: [Game Change: Minigames and Narrative Arcs](#)
- Mattie Brice: [Death of the Player](#)
- Celia Pearce & Friends: [Experimental Game Design](#)

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## **Straight White Males: Video Game Media and Gaming Culture**

- Maddy Myers: [Gaming, rape culture, and how I stopped reading Penny Arcade; A Challenger Appears: One woman's battle against the anxious masculinity of the fighting-game scene](#)
- Jonathan McIntosh: [Playing with privilege: the invisible benefits of gaming while male](#)
- Samantha Allen: [An Open Letter to Games Media; Community or Island Nations](#)



•Arthur Chu: [Your Princess Is in Another Castle: Misogyny, Entitlement and Nerds](#)

•Celia Pearce, Janine Fron, Tracy Fullerton, Jacquelyn Ford Morie: [The Hegemony of Play](#)

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### Games 4 U 2 Play

•[SABBAT: Director's Kvt](#) by Oh No Problems

•[Bubbegum Slaughter](#) and [Consensual Torture Simulator](#) by [Merritt Kopas](#)

•[Crypt Worlds: Your Darkest Desire Come True](#)

•[Sacrilege](#) by Cara Ellison

•[Love is Zero](#) by [Porpentine](#)

•[Hate Plus](#) by Christine Love

•[Mainichi](#) by [Mattie Brice](#)

•[Dys4ia](#) by [Anna Anthrophy](#)

•[Depression Quest](#) by Zoe Quinn

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### FURTHER READING: Blogs, Sites, Projects and Zines to follow

• Cara Ellison's [S.EXE](#) on Sex in Videogames

• [Mammon Machine: ZEAL](#) curated by Aevee Bee on weird, small and exemplary games



- [The Arcade Review](#): A magazine about experimental/art games
- [The Borderhouse](#): A blog for feminist, queer, disabled, people of color, poor, transgender, gay, lesbian or otherwise marginalized gamers and their allies
- [Critical Distance](#): A site curating great video game writing from across the web: a safer space, reader-supported, upping voices outside the mainstream
- [Forest Ambassador](#): Curates small games, with write-ups.

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*A big big thanks to TNI contributor [Ben Gabriel](#) (@[Benladen](#)) without whom this list would only be a shell of its current self. Thank you also to Lauren Naturale (@[lnaturale](#)), Twitter users FKA Stamens (@[33mhz](#)) and Kamin Katze (@[\\_kaminkatze](#)), everyone who spread the call for submissions, and anyone who contributes more to the syllabus in the future!*

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