

ANALOG GAME STUDIES
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As a lesser known quote from Gandalf the Grey goes, "An academic is never late, nor are they early. They arrive precisely when they mean to." So goes for academic journals, we say, as we introduce the first installment of *Analog Game Studies* 2025! Welcome to Volume XII. In many ways, this slim but purposeful issue vibrates and shimmers with the energy and tumult of the new year—uncertain, challenging, yet timely, agitated, ready for change and transformation.

The issue opens with "Postcards from Role-Playing the Humanities," a special feature to AGS. This collaborative, retrospective essay weaves together the reflections of fourteen participants at the Role-Playing the Humanities¹ event at the University of Cincinnati (UC) on March 31 and April 1, 2025. Organized by our very own Evan Torner, the symposium brought together students, faculty, and administrators with expert designers and scholars of role-playing to think about how role-playing can enhance the work of the humanities and to explore the worldbuilding and radical worldmaking possibilities of role-playing games. The essay includes brief reports from Evan Torner, Tim Kask, Maria K. Alberto, Shelly Jones, Jason Cox, Beatrix Livesey-Stephens, Antonio Roda Martínez, José P. Zagal, Emily C. Friedman, Katherine Castiello Jones, Luke Hernandez, Megan Condis, Michaele L. Ferguson, and Edmond Y. Chang.

Next in line, Mads Grønne Bärenholdt's "How to Re-Configure the Social Interaction Among Danish Lonely Young Adults Through a Social Design Approach" thinks about the ways games can "foster and shape interpersonal connection and communication," particularly in response to social fragmentation and isolation. Looking at a particular case study of a group of young adults in Denmark playing a modified *UNO* game, Bärenholdt explores how a simple, leisure game might be "hacked" to combat social problems like loneliness.

The issue closes with a review of *Von bierbrauenden Mönchen und kriegerischen Nonnen: Klöster und Klerus in analogen und digitalen Spielen* (Kohlmann Verlag, 2023), a German-language conference proceedings edited by Lukas Boch, Anna Klara Falke, Yvonne Püttmann, and Sebastian Steinbach. Evan Torner translates the title to read *Of Beer-Brewing Monks and War-Like Nuns: Cloisters and Clergy in Analog and Digital Games* and praises the text's scope, research, and specificity in its survey of representations of monks and nuns in analog and digital games. According to Torner, "In an era after not only literary theory's dominance but also the

¹ See "Role-Playing the Humanities," <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/role-playing-the-humanities-tickets-1259698404839>.

general funding of the humanities themselves, this quiet co-edited volume maintains a humanistic position.”

Thank you to our contributors, present, past, and future, and we remind our circles and networks that AGS is currently seeking submissions of full-length articles, book reviews, and proposals for special issues. AGS remains committed to the academic and popular, theoretical and humanities-forward, and diverse and inclusive study of analog games. In these times of stress, precariousness, and darkness, we work to help and hold close our friends, peers, families, allies, and communities, and we continue to read, write, create, play, dream, and build worlds.

-The Editors, April 30, 2025

