understanding current "social and cultural practices," mediatization is an important theoretical tool.

Reference

Stolow J (2005) Religion and/as media. *Theory, Culture & Society* 22(4): 119–145.

Kishonna L Gray, *Race, gender, and deviance in Xbox live: Theoretical perspectives from the virtual margins*. Elsevier Inc.: Oxford, 2014; 88 pp.; ISBN-13: 9780323296496, $20.85 (pbk)

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In the wake of "Gamergate," scholars have devoted greater attention to video games and other interactive platforms and those that create them. Gamergate has demonstrated that the social inequities that exist in our daily lives like race, gender, and sexuality inequality are reproduced in online and virtual spaces. Furthermore, role-playing that happens in video games allows for virtual cultural appropriation and tourism. And as we have learned, virtual actions and ideas almost always have tangible repercussions in our lives offline. In *Race, Gender, and Deviance in Xbox Live: Theoretical Perspectives from the Virtual Margins*, Gray offers a thoughtful analysis of the ramifications of race and gender in virtual spaces, particularly in game playing communities. Outlining the commodification of the "other" in virtual, role-playing spaces, Gray discusses the long-standing history of the exclusion of "girl gamers," predominantly women of color in Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG), Role-Playing Games (RPG), and in First-Person Shooters (FPS) (p. xxii).

Gray opens by describing the atmosphere of the Xbox Live community and culture, stating that Xbox Live memberships must be purchased and that users must create or purchase an avatar that is associated with a user ID. "Avatars can sometimes embody the player's offline presence in this gaming space, although some people opt for an avatar bearing no resemblance to the self" (p. xix). In doing so, she describes gender segregation that is present in these communities. She argues that gaming spaces have been constructed primarily as white male spaces and secondarily as Asian male spaces. The thesis of the book centers on the idea that the narratives throughout MMOG communities can and do serve as spaces for ideological negotiation and resistance. Throughout the remainder of the text, Gray provides excerpts from game storylines and conversations among game players that deliver convincing evidence in support of the presented argument.

She also seamlessly bridges these conversations and story narratives with existing theory from cultural studies, communication, sociology, and critical race theory. The first chapter aims to ground the presented research within existing conversations in these various disciplines. Those who are familiar with these frameworks will appreciate the way Gray applies them to MMOG communities. For instance, in applying critical race theory, Gray argues that "[b]y employing Omi and Winant's (1994) conception of racial project, we can see how many popular video games fit within this theoretical schema wherein racialized ideas, bodies, and structures are constructed, mediated and

presented through a safe medium" (p. 4). Linking a critical race analysis with Gramsci's conception of hegemony, Gray argues that game narratives hold three important functions: "(1) a means of social control (2) a hegemonic process enhanced by the narratives' ability to colonize consciousness, and [are] (3) a contributor to hegemony to the extent that they conceal the social organization of their production and plausibility" (p. 6).

After presenting her theoretical framework, Gray provides a more in-depth, intersectional analysis of several overlapping inequalities that are present in game narratives and gaming culture in subsequent chapters. The second chapter focuses on racialized representations within game playing and game narratives. The third and fourth chapters focus on the construction of deviance within game narratives and game players; it features a brief discussion of the docile body and the construction of deviance. Gray's approach to the issues of linguistic profiling and the punishment of blackness in Xbox live communities is strong, novel, and creative. Chapters 3 and 4 consist of the bulk of the theoretical work. But by including her own interactions with the Xbox live community, Gray provides a compelling account of the marginalization and discrimination that women of color experience in MMOG communities.

Chapter 5 highlights the efforts of women of color in resisting the dominant racialized storylines in game narratives and in game play interactions. Although hopeful, Gray admits that "it is imperative to examine if their efforts can be sustained to elicit actual change within the space" (p. 61). Gray notes that "[t]ypically, one would not assume that collective organizing and resistance would take place inside a virtual gaming community. But this is exactly where a cohort of female gamers of color experience and resist hegemonic inequality every day" (p. 62). However, she neglects to situate these actions within the framework of participatory culture. Given the nature of resistance—modifying actions or positions in game play to create new narratives or to resist hegemonic roles—this chapter would have benefited from a more thorough discussion of media convergence and participatory culture.

Chapter 6 concludes the book with a poignant discussion of Audre Lorde's ideas about dismantling the master's house. Gray astutely observes that

> '[d]ismantle' suggests the breaking down into parts, not the total destruction of those elements. Dismantling could also mean that, at some other time, those singular entities could very well form again into a cohesive whole, although not necessarily modeling the previous form. (p. 79)

Gray provides a compelling argument by suggesting that the dismantling process can be regenerative for women of color in MMOG spaces if we continue to resist hegemonic narratives both online and offline.

Race, Gender, and Deviance in Xbox Live provides an excellent introduction to issues of gender and racial inequality in MMOG communities. Gray uses game narratives and critical race theory to describe how racism is embedded in the culture of video games in a way that is accessible to more general audiences but will also inspire academics to think more deeply about the hegemonic forces at work within video game culture.

Reference

Omi M and Winant H (1994) *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.