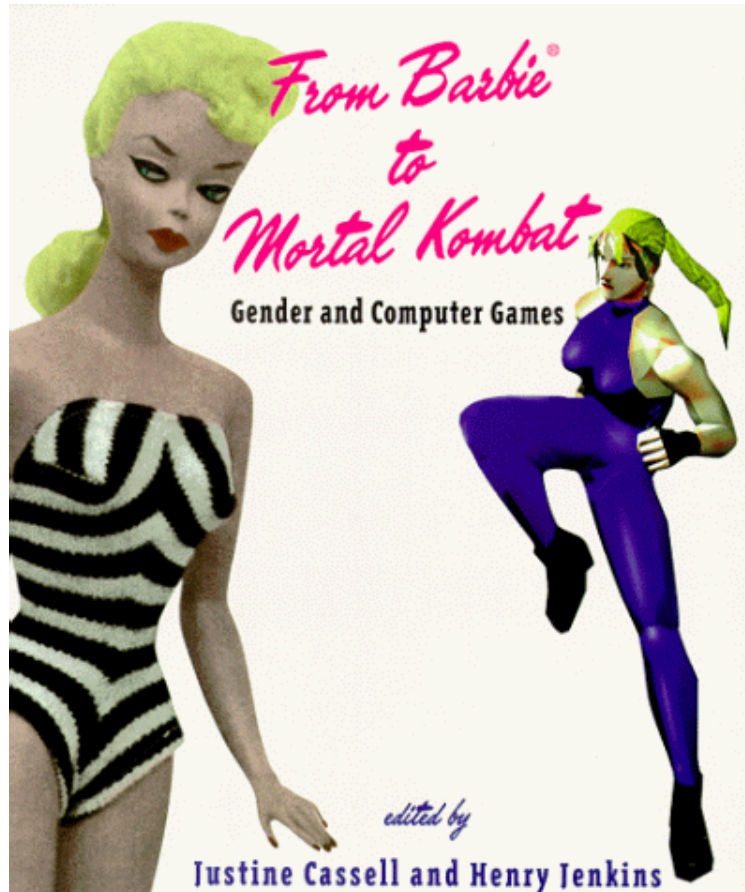


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From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games

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From The MIT Press : From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Inside view of computer games for girls.By A CustomerIf you have only boys in your family or have never put down money for a computer game, you probably haven't kept up with the brouhaha that has been developing over computer games for girls that has appeared in the last four years.The focus on computer games for girls became a issue when it was noticed that while boys liked playing computer games and were more comfortable with computers; girls stayed away from these games. The result - girls would be computer illiterate and be unable to compete in the technical job market.The book is openly feminist, dealing with how girls and women are represented in computer games; bringing in academic research into gender play, and interviewing the women in the game companies who are designing and producing the games. The interviews with the women in the game industry offers outsiders the rare opportunity to hear the opinions of the designers and developers. Some explain how market research determines what they produce, others provide a more personal view of what moves them to design. The word

"empowerment" appears repeatedly. The editors conclude with ideas for game play that gives voice and play space to both girls and boys. The book's inclusive points of view ends with a talk back piece by Game Grrls - women who enjoy playing action games to compete and win - often over men. The book provides a scholarly treatise on girls, computers, and society. Each of the academic chapters are followed by extensive bibliographies. For those who are interested in the subject it is extremely valuable to have everything in one place. Genevieve Katz 1999, Games4Girls2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Videogames views from the other half of the sky By Andy JKR What a pretty fine job! I'm compiling my thesis at university about the topic of videogames. Well, if you are in the same conditions of mine do not miss this book. It is not only a good example of understandable writing but it focuses on important topics too many times left in a corner. Of course, everyone who would approach a study of videogames phenomenon should consider that since they see the light, videogames were full of masculine points of view (and the relative effects those they carry with them). Despite some relatively non fundamental mistakes, I think that the book hit the bull's eye: attracting the reader inside a new perspective by which he/her can consider the whole subject. The result, in my personal opinion, was a more complete and clear idea about videogames world. After I've finished to read the last line my feeling was the awareness that I didn't miss any aspect of a topic (which still complex, from a social-cognitive point of view). [p.s.: I hope my English is enough understandable] 4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Provocative, Challenging and Insightful By A Customer This collection is truly thought-provoking and insightful. It dares to tackle one of today's most challenging issues -- the relationship between gender and technology. The book is worth owning for the first chapter alone, Cassell and Jenkins' "Chess for Girls? Feminism and Computer Games." For video game programmers and toy designers, this book should be required reading, especially for those who wish to be conscious of their contribution to gender differences in society. And a must read for parents and video game enthusiasts alike.

Many parents worry about the influence of video games on their children's lives. The game console may help to prepare children for participation in the digital world, but at the same time it socializes boys into misogyny and excludes girls from all but the most objectified positions. The new "girls' games" movement has addressed these concerns. Although many people associate video games mainly with boys, the girls games' movement has emerged from an unusual alliance between feminist activists (who want to change the "gendering" of digital technology) and industry leaders (who want to create a girls' market for their games). The contributors to *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat* explore how assumptions about gender, games, and technology shape the design, development, and marketing of games as industry seeks to build the girl market. They describe and analyze the games currently on the market and propose tactical approaches for avoiding the stereotypes that dominate most toy store aisles. The lively mix of perspectives and voices includes those of media and technology scholars, educators, psychologists, developers of today's leading games, industry insiders, and girl gamers. Contributors: Aurora, Dorothy Bennett, Stephanie Bergman, Cornelia Brunner, Mary Bryson, Lee McEnany Caraher, Justine Cassell, Suzanne de Castell, Nikki Douglas, Theresa Duncan, Monica Gesue, Michelle Goulet, Patricia Greenfield, Margaret Honey, Henry Jenkins, Cal Jones, Yasmin Kafai, Heather Kelley, Marsha Kinder, Brenda Laurel, Nancie Martin, Aliza Sherman, Kaveri Subrahmanyam.

.com This book explores the complicated issue of gender in computer games-particularly the development of video games for girls. One side is the concern that the average computer game, being attractive primarily to boys, furthers the technology access gap between the genders. Yet attempts to create computer games that girls want to play brings about another set of concerns: should games be gendered at all? And does having boys' games and girls' games merely reinforce the way gender differences are socialized in play? Cassell and Jenkins have gathered the thoughts of several feminist and media scholars to explore the issues from multiple perspectives, but this is not a work confined to ivory-tower theorizing. Alongside the philosophical explorations are pragmatic investigations of the hard-nosed, real world of computer-game manufacture and sales. Particularly enlightening is a section featuring interviews with several leading creators of games for girls. And while all agree that it's good to be past the days when women in computer games were limited to scantily clad background figures or damsels in distress, the visions of an appropriate future are both diverse and well defended. There is no pretense here of easy answers, but there are many excellent questions. -- Elizabeth Lewis From Publishers Weekly In this intriguing anthology of essays, studies and interviews, voices from both academia and industry discuss what the experience of computer games is and should be for girls. While game creators have recently discovered the young female consumer, few of these authors are happy with the offerings, which tend to push domesticity and an obsession with looks. Almost all the contributors share some basic belief that the marketplace is dominated by games promoting bad values while shortchanging values identifiable as truly feminist. As Cassell points out, feminism in this context can mean values not pertaining exclusively to gender. The resulting proposals for video games are filled with such buzzwords as "subjective," "creativity," "community" and "collaboration" (all good) as opposed to "violent," "competitive" and "conquest" (all bad). It is always nice to see theorists come down from the clouds to enter into discussions of everyday-life subjects such as the ramifications of the Tomb Raider character Lara Croft's ample endowment. The best move of the editors is to conclude the volume with

commentary by girl gamers, many of whom worry that the contributors' solutions will underequip girls for the ugly real world. Says one: "I don't want to be friends! I want to be King!" Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist This book brings together the perspectives of feminist activists and media scholars in a thought-provoking discussion of the "gendering" of video games. Until recently, women have appeared in computer games mostly as eroticized competitors to the male protagonist, distressed maidens, or other victims or objects. Recently, the girls' games movement has taken the computer-game industry to task for the use of these misogynistic images. Contributors discuss this issue as well as myriad related concerns: the cultural definition of computer games as boys' toys; girls' access to the technology and interest in it; and the complications of creating gender-neutral play space. In addition, girl gamers have a chance to discuss factoring their interests into the development of action games. There are no simple solutions to the often troublesome relation between gender and technology, but this book's presentation of the problems and possibilities makes academic reading relevant again. Philip Herbst