DiGRA India

DIGRA INDIA CONFERENCE 2023

9th December, 2023

Theme:

LOVE AND GAMES

Love in/and/for Games

Loving a game can lead to formation of gaming communities, and game communities can later become sites where love can be found and at times love for games can be lost. One can also sit back and play to complete a love story as a side quest of a game. One could also declare one's love for games by establishing an academic discipline. Each case is a specific and possibly conflicting manifestation/articulation of love for/in/and games. While it is easy to reach a consensus that we all love games, the question 'why do we love games?' is politically charged and a heavily contested one. Sara Ahmed has argued that even 'hate groups' operate in the *name of love*, as we saw in the online harassment campaign known as Gamergate, where hatred, toxicity and violence were packaged as "*love for games*". However, the women at the receiving end were subjected to violence, harassment and hatred not because they hated games but because their love for games did not coincide with attitudes of white male right-wing gamers. Often when we think of love and games, it seems that the conflict is not between game haters and game lovers, rather it is always between various constructed variations of the umbrella phrase *love for games*.

Love in/and/for Games

In all this the *game hater* appears as a straw(o)man figure, who is almost like a phantom friend to gamers, designers, scholars, who they regularly speak of and talk to, who however, does not exist or perhaps is extremely difficult to find or maybe hides in plain sight. Perhaps, the answer to the question 'why do we love games?' involves a necessary speculation on how we love games and what languages, modes and mediums do we invoke to express our love for games.

Love, games and play has been a topic of interest for game studies for quite some time. In 2008 Jessica Enevold proposed a categorization model for Game-Love, in 2012 Jane Pinckard edited a special issue for the journal *Well Played* on the subject of romance in games, 'Game Love: Essays on Play and Affection' was published in 2014, in 2016 another volume 'Digital Love: Romance and Sexuality in Games' edited by Heidi McDonald was published. The current one day conference is an effort in the same direction, in that, it wants to understand the ways in which games operate as a source of our feelings and how we are shaped by games. The challenge is to move beyond default expressions such as *I love games because they are fun* or *I love games because they make me happy* or *I love games because they teach X* (valid as these statements are), and question what is this fun/happiness/pedagogy that makes one a lover of games.

Themes

We welcome abstracts, artistic musings, loveletters, testimonials and posters in line with the conference theme.

Topics may include but not be restricted to the following:

- Love, addiction, and games
- Devotion, love and games
- Love, poetics and gameplay
- Queering play and politics of love
- Algorithmic intimacy
- Love, games, and fandom
- Toxicity and obsession for games

- Game studies and ludophilia
- Posthuman love and games
- Game-mechanics of love
- Love for retro games
- Consumerism and game-love
- Ethics of care and love in digital games
- Play as love

Guidelines

Important Dates:

- Submission of Abstracts: 15th November, 2023
- Intimation of Accepted Abstracts: 23rd November, 2023
- Submission of Full-Length papers: 7th December, 2023
- Date of the Conference: 9th December, 2023

Guidelines for Abstract and Paper Submission:

We invite abstracts of less than 300 words (and five keywords that will help us determine the focus area) along with a short bio-note of 100 words to be sent via email to digraindiaconference@gmail.com by 15th of November, 2023. Full-length papers of accepted abstracts, of 4500-6000 words, in citation style MLA 9th Edition, should reach the same on or before 7th of December, 2023.

In accordance with our theme, we have also curated a list of provocations to act as springboards for engaging with the area of interest. These provocations are to aid you in your creative processes. They do not restrict our preferred objects of study.

Provocations

Article 1

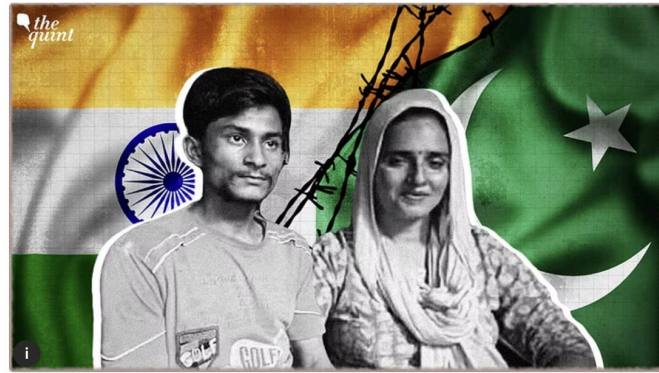'Don't Separate Us': Indo-Pak Couple, Who Found Love on PUBG, Out on Bail

Out on bail, the couple urged the Indian government to give Indian citizenship to Karachi's Seema Ghulam Haider.

HIMANSHI DAHIYA
Published: 09 Jul 2023, 5:14 PM IST

CRIME
6 min read

thequint.com

Pause to think… What does it mean to find love on a platform?

Think to pause… how many violent borders and blue walls were crossed to overcome the limitations of the worlds where love can only be found... never realised?

Think and pause…pause and think…PLAY

Article 2

SAL 9000: Man Marries Video Game Girlfriend (VIDEO)

SAL 9000: Man To Marry Virtual Girlfriend

Mar 18, 2010, 05:12 AM EDT
Updated Dec 6, 2017

Connecting...   0:16 / 2:33

Wasn't love both affectionately and accusatively always called a game? One wonders what if anything changed in 'Love- Game' post SAL 9000'.

Article 3

In the end, like you always said, it's just the two of you together. You have ten seconds, but there's so much you want to do: **kiss** her, **hold** her, **take** her hand, **tell** her.

2

From Queers in Love at the End of the World by Anna Anthropy on itch.io

Click on the link above and play the short game.

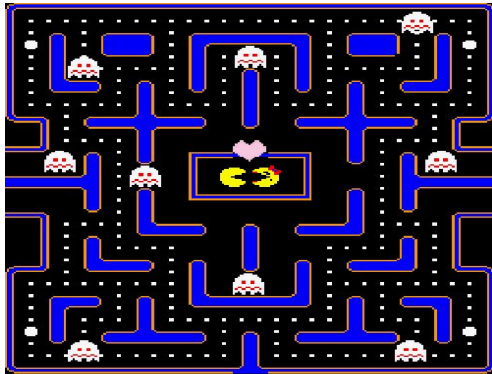10 seconds is all you get.

10 seconds is all that we ever get,

10 seconds is all that we will ever need.

Article 4

Each expression of our love for games is political. How we express our love for games matters.

Article 5

Can games question *happily ever after* and other such heteronormative tropes?

Article 6

If video games were like crack, I would've been dead long ago.

If video games were like crack, I would be buried six feet below.

If video games were like crack, I would've overdosed and wouldn't be alive.

If video games were like crack, I wouldn't have been able to survive.

If video games were like crack, somebody would've had to call my next of kin.

If video games were like crack, I wouldn't have played video games ever again.

If video games were like crack, I would've been like a man who can't swim, I would've drowned.

If video games were like crack, my ex-wife would be happy because I'd no longer be around.

— [Randy Johnson](#)

Article 7

Of narratives where 'Love for games' is a background for love stories to unfold...

Can we risk imagining a tale where the roles are reversed and love stories foreground the 'love for games'?

Article 8

Are Esports the only way through which video games can meditate patriotism?

What are the implications of including esports in international sports events like the Asian Games?