

Editorial

Welcome to Issue 5 of the *International Journal of Role-Playing*.

INTRODUCTION

This issue, compiled in 2014, is long overdue. During the last two years, the study of role-playing has advanced on many fora, ranging from books (e.g., Brown, 2015; Simkins, 2015) to blog posts and several new doctoral dissertations. A key theme during this time has been the segmentation of the field. We have reached the clear tipping point where following all of the research and developments taking place within the spectrum of role-playing has become practically impossible. At the same time, the number of scholars has risen high enough that it is now possible and even academically viable to become a specialist in one or a handful facets of role-playing, rather than having to be first and foremost a role-playing scholar. Similarly, others are intentionally crossing borders, both disciplinary and regional (e.g., Fedoseev et al., eds., 2015). The next two issues of *IJRP* will also reflect that shift as well.

CONTENTS

The articles and the book review in this fifth issue bear witness to that transformation. All of the four articles represent directions to which role-playing research is heading, sometimes following in the footsteps of other forms of game and simulation studies, at other times forging its own ways ahead. Two of the contributions discuss educational aspects of role-playing. In "Educational Larp in the Middle School Classroom: A Mixed Method Case Study," Sarah Lynne Bowman and Anne Standiford show that adding role-playing elements to middle school science curriculum increased the students' intrinsic motivation and perceived competence in the topics being taught. Mary Lynn Crow's and Larry P. Nelson's "The Effects of Using Academic Role-Playing in a Teacher Education Service-Learning Course," in turn, examines the teacher-training side of the educational uses of role-playing.

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With "Ecological Approach to the Performance of Larping," Marjukka Lampo continues her exploration of the still understudied topic of the performative aspects of larp and larping, while Michael Sangyeob Lee and Carrie Heeter remind us of the importance of believable characters in digital contexts, with "Cognitive Intervention and Reconciliation: NPC Believability in Single-Player RPGs." Finally, Mika Lopenen and Jukka Särkijärvi provide an academic review of Jon Peterson's *Playing at the World* (2012), one of the most impressive and contested historical works on role-playing.

EDITORIAL CHANGES

This issue was also the last one edited by me. Starting from *IJRP* #6, the position of executive editor has been taken by **William J. White** of Penn State Altoona. In order to avoid conflicts of interest, I left both the editorial position and the *IJRP* board, as I took on the task of co-editing *Simulation & Gaming* from January 2016 onwards with Dr. Timothy C. Clapper and Dr. Willy C. Kriz, when the esteemed Dr. David Crookall retired.

Dr. White has contributed several articles on the study of role-playing, co-edited a book (2012) on immersive gameplay with Evan Torner, designed games, and is a member of the *IJRP* editorial board.

I sincerely thank all of the authors who have submitted to this journal, both those whose works have been published and those whose work required further refinement. I also thank all of the numerous peer reviewers who have done the anonymous volunteer work and been great at it without possibly receiving any public "thank you" for it. Finally, I thank my fellow board members, who have been there to offer their advice and help whenever it was needed.

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