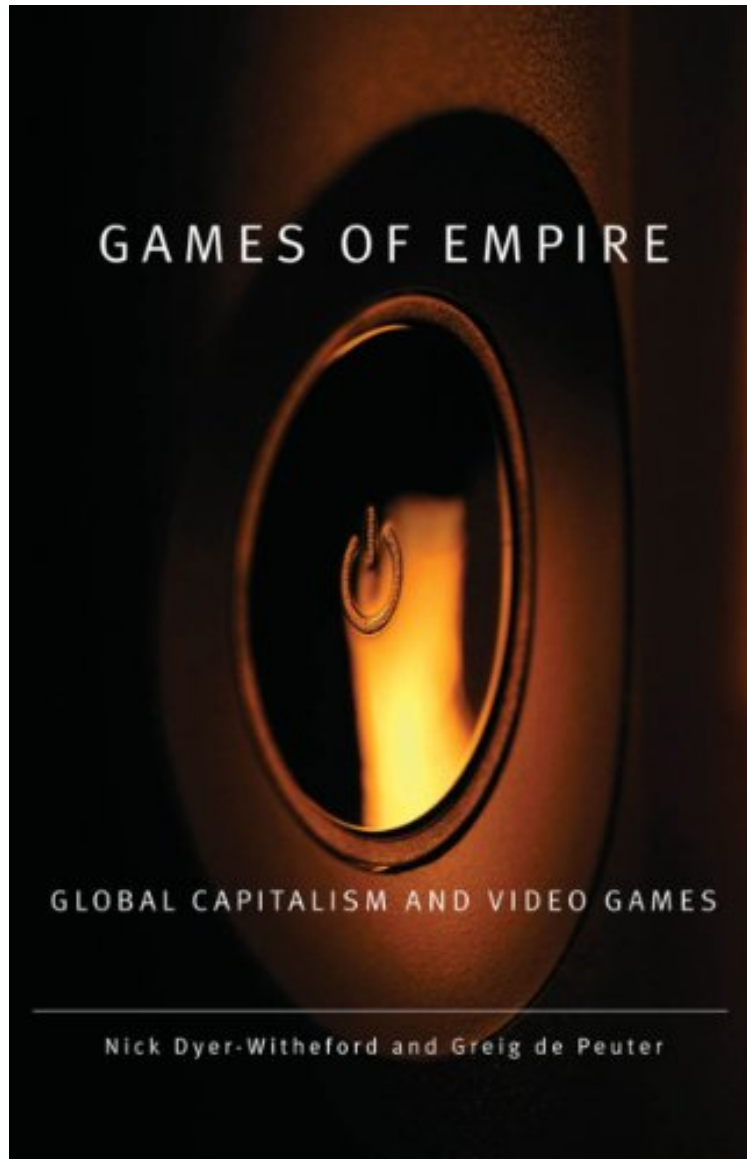


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Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games (Electronic Mediations)

Nick Dyer-Witheford, Greig de Peuter
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Nick Dyer-Witheford, Greig de Peuter : Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games (Electronic Mediations) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games (Electronic Mediations):

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Games of Empire is greatBy Cameron KunzelmanThe short version of my review is that Games of Empire is a great analysis of the material conditions that make up the system

that enables us to play video games. The authors' deployment of Hardt and Negri as their cornerstone theorist creates a grand unifying theory of social/technological relationships that surround video games, which is useful to think through. However, if you are already familiar with their work, be prepared for long sections where they quote the basics at you. That isn't a bad thing, mind you, just something that anyone who plans on reading the book should be aware of. That said, if you are interested in Hardt and Negri and the way they can be applied to video games, this is SUPER the book for you. 14 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Plug in, turn on and drop out

By Malvin "Games of Empire" by Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter offers a uniquely incisive analysis of video game industry and culture. Mr. Dyer-Witheford and Mr. de Peuter's fascinating post-Marxist discussion is informed by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's influential book *Empire*, where videogaming is seen both as a paradigmatic expression of the corporate desire to control machines, immaterial labor and subjectivities; and as a possible pathway of resistance and liberation for the multitude. The book is divided into three parts. 'Game Engine: Labor, Capital and Machine' shows how videogaming provides a persuasive training tool that subtly prepares a new generation of laborers for post-industrial production; how some workers at a major video game manufacturer have pushed back against severe exploitation by their corporate bosses; and how game consoles have become sites of contestation over the control of content and game play. The second section, 'Gameplay: Virtual/Actual' deconstructs three massively popular games to explore themes about war, biopower, and neoliberalism. 'Full Spectrum Warrior' presents the banality of the U.S. military's interminable war to secure empire against the threat of theocracy; 'World of Warcraft' highlights struggles between workers in the developed and developing economies over commerce; and 'Grand Theft Auto' cynically renders a world where there are no alternatives to bare-knuckled capitalism. The third section, 'New Game?' demonstrates how the means of production can be coopted by the multitude in acts of defiance, suggesting the possibility of freedom. Mr. Dyer-Witheford and Mr. de Peuter cite spontaneous acts of online protest, tactical games, and self-organized worlds as evidence that gamers are capable of building credible, decentralized social systems. In this light, the authors believe that gamers may have learned some formidable unintended lessons from corporate game marketers: an understanding of how systems of power and politics work in both the game universes and the real worlds they inhabit; and the technical capacity and desire to construct an inclusive and sustainable alternative to empire. This highly-readable, entertaining and informative book is highly recommended to everyone.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, video games are an integral part of global media culture, rivaling Hollywood in revenue and influence. No longer confined to a subculture of adolescent males, video games today are played by adults around the world. At the same time, video games have become major sites of corporate exploitation and military recruitment. In *Games of Empire*, Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter offer a radical political critique of such video games and virtual environments as *Second Life*, *World of Warcraft*, and *Grand Theft Auto*, analyzing them as the exemplary media of *Empire*, the twenty-first-century hypercapitalist complex theorized by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. The authors trace the ascent of virtual gaming, assess its impact on creators and players alike, and delineate the relationships between games and reality, body and avatar, screen and street. *Games of Empire* forcefully connects video games to real-world concerns about globalization, militarism, and exploitation, from the horrors of African mines and Indian e-waste sites that underlie the entire industry, the role of labor in commercial game development, and the synergy between military simulation software and the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan exemplified by *Full Spectrum Warrior* to the substantial virtual economies surrounding *World of Warcraft*, the urban neoliberalism made playable in *Grand Theft Auto*, and the emergence of an alternative game culture through activist games and open-source game development. Rejecting both moral panic and glib enthusiasm, *Games of Empire* demonstrates how virtual games crystallize the cultural, political, and economic forces of global capital, while also providing a means of resisting them.

About the Author Nick Dyer-Witheford is associate professor and associate dean in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. Greig de Peuter is a doctoral candidate in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University.