accepting the fact that you may very well feel left behind. This is also where Baraitser’s insights hold specific import for feminism. 

Although Baraitser’s book is not a book about feminism per se, her reassessment of time is certainly relevant to thinking about feminist politics in the present. This is most evident in the fourth chapter, ‘Delaying’. Here, Baraitser begins by asking, ‘In what ways might temporality be a form of politics?’ (p. 93). Her question is not entirely new. Feminist theorising on nostalgia and intergenerational politics and queer theorising on temporality have explored similar questions. Baraitser, however, delves deeper to consider why ‘delayed action’ and even actions that appear to not entail any action at all (e.g. staying) may be especially politically potent.

To explore this question, she introduces the somewhat paradoxical idea of the political encampment. From the nearly two-decade-long Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp to the far more fleeting camps that appeared during the Occupy Movement in 2011, one can find examples of political actions defined by waiting, staying, maintaining, remaining and enduring. Yet, as anyone who has ever participated in a political encampment knows, these camps are not sites defined by stagnation. They are also, as Baraitser reminds us, ‘a mode of potentially sustainable living that both experiments with and creates new collective imaginaries’ (p. 112). Baraitser further suggests that the recent re-emergence of the political encampment as a form of protest may itself reveal something about what it means to stay in relation to an elongated present. Rather than represent something new, she suggests that these camps may be best understood as ‘a time delay’ – a ‘reconnection with something that has remained, perhaps unnoticed, in public life’ (p. 113).

To be clear, most of the examples that Baraitser references in *Enduring Time* are derived not from politics but rather from theory, literature and art. The point of her collection of essays, however, is not to offer close readings of events or cultural texts and objects but rather to use these collected meditations to disrupt our entrenched assumptions about time. In *Enduring Time*, Baraitser asks her readers not only to defamiliarise myriad taken-for-granted assumptions about time but also to consider the powerful political potential of time that appears to have stopped – the time we encounter in the delay, the wait, the repeated sequence. In the process, she also leaves her readers with a surprising revelation – that we may not be as pressed for time or as time-deprived as we thought.

Shira Chess *Ready player two: women gamers and designed identity.* Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017. 223 pp. ISBN 978-1-5179-0069-4, £17.61 (pbk)

**Reviewed by:** Esther Wright, University of Warwick, UK

Shira Chess’s *Ready Player Two* can be situated within an ever-growing body of critical feminist research on video games that disrupts notions of an industry and
culture that presumes the straight, white, cis-gender male player as the norm. Chess’s work explores the ways that the industry from the early 2000s began to ‘idealise’ women gamers: marketing certain kinds of games to the ‘casual’ female player, rather than the ‘hardcore’ (male) gamer presumed to occupy the position of ‘Player One’. This image of the prototypical ‘gamer’ haunted the industry and popular perceptions of games culture for decades, despite the fact that the demographic of female players has long hovered around the 50% statistic. While this has been a comparatively neglected area of academic interest, the rise of games that address and assume a female player has only continued, given the ubiquity of mobile games and gaming, as explored throughout.

‘Player Two’ is not, however, a real person. It is what Chess names the ‘designed identity’ of a presumed female player: ‘a hybrid outcome of industry conventions, textual constructs, and audience placement in the design and structure of video games’ (p. 31). It is an identity that the industry constructs, manages and thereby markets to. Therefore, because Player Two is ‘a ghost’, the study focuses on specific games as texts to create an analytical framework, rather than on the specific identity or experiences of players themselves. Moreover, while the focus here is on women players and games targeted at them, there is scope for academics going forward to adopt this concept for the study of other kinds of identities ‘designed’ by and through mass media, as Chess notes (p. 32).

Chess argues that this industrial idealisation has led to the development and marketing of games that deal in a ‘complicated representation of gender and leisure’ (p. 4). That is, a ‘leisure’ or ‘casual’ ethos to technology and play coded as ‘feminine’ has enabled the creation of games (and their attendant paratexual surrounds) which repurpose ‘female’ genres and stereotypes historically found in wider media. Moreover, by usefully situating these games as part of a broader media landscape of feminised meaning and expectation, and as texts often consequently deemed unimportant or of lesser value, Chess argues that they ‘take on the work of helping us understand the larger issues of play in terms of gender and leisure practices in a more general sense, as well as the larger stories of how they are embedded within the video game industry as a whole’ (p. 5). Indeed, as Chess’s concluding chapter proclaims, ‘the playful is political’ – arguably the book’s core sentiment. In this sense, this work will be of interest not only to those studying gender, video games and paratexts, but also to feminist media scholars more broadly looking to understand how the ‘feminine’ is coded across media forms, and the similarities therein.

Across four core chapters, Chess explores how several deeply gendered themes are represented and played within games: namely time and time management; the performance of emotional or affective labour; consumption and women-as-shoppers; and women’s management of their bodies. Throughout, Chess demonstrates how feminised notions of productivity and play become blurred within and through them. Moreover, Chess not only considers the role of advertising and game design principles in structuring ‘Player Two’, but also includes industry interviews that illuminate the developer perspective on player identity and
desire. The study also employs a range of case studies across different game types and themes, from ‘time management’ games like *Diner Dash* (deemed the ur-text of this sub-genre), to ‘fashion games’ such as *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, to show how these feminised themes are an inbuilt aspect of the ‘casual’ way women are expected or encouraged to play.

A striking feature of this book worth mentioning is its preface. In it, Chess reflects on her position as researcher, and how not only games have changed (or not) since she first began the project in 2005, but also how Chess’s relationship to these games has changed. Chess locates herself now as actually ‘part of’ the audience idealised by the games industry (p. x): time-poor women (often mothers) wishing to snatch at small, ‘casual’ moments of playful relaxation. In many ways, this is an exemplary piece of reflective writing on the way that many of us who study games may become ‘entangled’ (p. x) with the texts we choose to study.

Ultimately, the sum of these case studies is the suggestion that the industry idealises the woman gamer as the ‘counterpart’ (p. 6) to the dominant male gamer – still white, cis-gender, heterosexual, able-bodied. ‘Player Two’ is not, however, equal to Player One: she is still marginalised by game creators and game players, and is defined by long-held stereotypical constructions of what women are and can or should do. Complementary further studies of how women – from an intersectional perspective – receive and respond to this idealisation could work to build on these theoretical foundations.

**Ania Loomba** *Revolutionary desires: women, communism, and feminism in India*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019. 321 pp. ISBN 978-0-8153-8173-0, £110 (hbk), ISBN 978-1-351-20971-7, £15 (ebk)

**Reviewed by:** Priyanka Tripathi, Indian Institute of Technology Patna, India

*Revolutionary Desires* traverses the history of colonial India where women challenged the gender divide and found a new way of being women in Indian society, one that was not necessarily feminist but was socio-politically sensitive. According to Ania Loomba, ‘women would have to fight hard to bring that society into being; indeed, “all the oppressed people will have to fight, and women, being the most oppressed, should lead the fight”’ (p. 1). Within and beyond the intersections of nationalism and women, these women created a unique communist space by questioning the conceptual bifurcation between the personal and the political and its critical engagement with otherwise neglected public spaces. These communist women rerouted these divides differently from the mainstream nationalist women and ensured that they did not simply build upon a system of hierarchies. The book traces milestones which suggest a reshaping of norms and practices as well as those which show the enduring capacity of conventions to limit change. Loomba establishes that while there is no dearth of material available on the