

NO BAD MEMORIES

(Or, Video-game nostalgia and the academic
and popular discourses that shape it)

A talk for Critical Proximity 2014
San Francisco, CA

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TODAY, I'D LIKE TO

share some thoughts about video game nostalgia.

I'll also offer some working methods that I hope might be useful to you along with examples from my own practice as a designer and games researcher.

SVETLANA BOYM

writes, "It is up to us to take responsibility for our nostalgia and not let others 'prefabricate' it for us. The prepackaged 'usable past' may be of no use to us if we want to co-create our future."

("Nostalgia and Its Discontents," 2007)



AS CRITICS, WE

should consider our “prepackaged”
video game past and what it means to
be nostalgic for it.

WHAT'S WRONG

with video game nostalgia?

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twentieth-century games

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- ✧ patrols the borders of who is considered a “real” gamer.
- ✧ can serve as a rejection of contemporary political issues.

eat Room Stuff
eat R

sleep

NOSTALGIA

defers perceived responsibility.



...WHICH IS AN
understandable perspective.

Most people don't like having their
communities and identities torn down
and condemned for reasons that are
out of their control.

IT'S COMPLICATED!

And that's OK.

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A person in a large white Hello Kitty mascot costume with pink ears and a pink and white checkered shirt is holding a video game controller. Next to them, a woman wearing a pink sweater, a blue scarf with white stars, and a white headscarf is also holding a video game controller and smiling. They appear to be playing a video game together in a dimly lit room with some background lights.

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HXLNT[®]



KEEP IN TOUCH

with me; I'd love to hear from you!

- ✧ I'll publish the long form of this work very soon—stay tuned to nobadmemories.com.
- ✧ NES game development: partytimehexcellent.com / [@partytimeHXLNT](https://twitter.com/partytimeHXLNT)
- ✧ FEMICOM Museum: femicom.org / [@FemicomMuseum](https://twitter.com/FemicomMuseum)

en-agers play video hockey game