**MILSTEIN — Kapital**

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***Kapital*: An Interactive Fiction Game**

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Japanese publisher East Press published a manga edition of Karl Marx’s multivolume *Das Kapital* in 2007, and in that same year released 507,000 copies. Several scholars have written on (and created) the practice of transposing difficult philosophy or classic literature into graphic novels and comic books. However, what happens when the manga themselves are transposed into a more interactive art form?

Visual novels are interactive fiction games that incorporate game play and are usually centered on dialogue, non-linear narratives, and multiple perspectives. In this presentation I immerse the audience in *Kapital* using Ren’Py, a visual novel engine based on simplified Python scripting. (Please see the game’s information site here: http://campuspress.yale.edu/marxifg/.)

**Session Audience**

Teaching and learning professionals / faculty / instructional designers, frontline practitioners.

**Session Description**

The focus of this presentation is to immerse our audience in game play of *Kapital*. I anticipate that audience participation will serve as experiential learning for the visual novel as a serious game, and will therefore lead to a robust discussion about the merits and pitfalls of this learning approach. For learners of *Kapital*, I am concerned that long philosophical documents that hold importance for current cultural issues are, nevertheless, inaccessible to the majority of students because they are dense, weighty, and of astronomical length. I endeavor through gameplay to have players embodied in the philosophy, to learn theory through doing, and to react in ways that will reveal that they are able to make appropriate decisions using their new knowledge base.

**Value of Serious Games and Interactive Fiction for Higher Education**

1. This is a method for promoting literacy of and exposure to inaccessible philosophical texts whose ideologies are vogue in culture and criticism.

2. The form of the visual novel is gaining popularity and will find some use value in education (is it serious game, edutainment, or literary?).

3. The issues of digital learning—to code in Python, techniques for storyboarding, and translation issues—are paramount. Increasingly, IT will need to develop these types of games, offer workshops to support student and faculty learning of programming, and mentor groups in project management and theories of game design.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Understand and apply critical concepts from *Kapital*.

2. Engage in and comprehend the structure and form of the visual novel.

3. Identify the process for designing an IF game.

4. Envision use value for the genre in learning environments.

Of interest to the presentation is the unique collaborative background for this project: The presenter is partnering as a staff-faculty member with undergraduate student Alex Lew to create *Kapital*. They have successfully presented the game design, history, and practice in two conferences, including the inaugural presentation of Yale’s Performance Studies Working (fall 2014), and in the first session of the INKE (Implementing New Knowledge Environments) Conference (Chicago, 2014). They have also submitted this proposal to Educause 2015 for joint presentation of the interactive demo.