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Many theorists have discussed the ways video games, as a medium, are unique (Boutler, 2015; Cairns et al., 2014), and the confusion around subject-avatar that often arises while playing video games (Sundén, 2012; Wilde & Evans, 2017). Brendan Keogh (2018) takes this notion in his book *A Play of Bodies,* and closely examines the relationship between embodiment and video games. Keogh's book describes how the sensorial experience of playing video games is fundamental not only to understanding video games as texts, but also to how we think about what video games are and how they come to be implicated in our sense of embodiment. Bringing the body back into video game studies allows us to question the autonomy of the video game player, as Keogh states, "*all* videogame play augments and restricts the player's corporeal experience in particular, cyborgian ways through sights, sounds, and interfaces" (189).

In order to develop this new narrative surrounding the experience of playing video games, Keogh takes time in the first chapter to develop a phenomenological understanding of video games. *A Play of Bodies* lingers on the sensorial experiences of playing video games – in terms of how things such as sight, touch, audio, and aesthetics are understood through our bodies. The understanding of bodies as something that we *are,* rather than things that we possess, lays the foundation for Keogh to cleverly theorize the co-constitutive relationship between video game and player that arises through play. This fresh perspective on how video games operate, that moves beyond analysis pointed towards an external object, instead focusing on the intermingling of body and machine, opens up a new avenue of exploration for video games.

A Play of Bodies opens with the material body re-centered in the video game experience. After this is established, Keogh makes three main theoretical claims throughout the book. Firstly, he details the co-attentiveness that the player experiences when playing video games. The analysis of video game play on smart phones, such as *Flappy Bird* (2013) and *Fruit Ninja* (2013), and the modes of co-constitution that these draw our attention to demonstrates the co-attentiveness across worlds that is an element of video game play, "where the player is fully aware of the hybrid assemblage across actual/virtual worlds and bodies that all video games demand" (73). Mobile games make explicit what all video games require – an attentiveness to both virtual and nonvirtual worlds.

Once this co-attentiveness is established, *A Play of Bodies* details different sensorial experiences that establishes how the player and the video game are elements that exist in a complex and irreducible form of embodiment. Keogh unpacks how controllers and other devices we use to play video games become incorporated into our material bodies through learning and repeating certain gestures. Once we learn certain inputs (that X equals jump for example), they come to be

seen as natural. In other words, we develop a *feel* for playing video games, and this feel reconfigures the body, these learned actions become natural, and "alternative modes of input that contradict the learned mode become explicitly unnatural" (83). This line of thought is furthered by detailing how sight and sound converge to produce an "experience that is not available with visuals alone" (111). Our senses must work together when playing video games. Keogh does this to demonstrate that the irreducible nature of "audiovisual flesh" (117) operates in conjunction with mechanics to create meaning in videogames.

Finally, *A Play of Bodies* shifts to describe the ways that a games' rhythms come to be embodied in the player. This is explored through the ways that different forms of death in video games influence "the player's life experience of the player-and-videogame assemblage and constitution of played time" (159). Here Keogh details how player death is a learning experience and can send the player both back and forward in time. Video game texts are "caught up in broader corporeal rhythms and contexts where pasts and futures make themselves present through failure and repetition or through the threat thereof" (165).

Keogh uses Donna Harraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (2006)*,* in order to demonstrate how video games are more than a tool to be mastered. Instead, we are in a constant process of integrating the video game itself into ourselves – video games augment our corporeal experience. *A Play of Bodies* poses an understanding of video games that allows us to move beyond the perception of video games as something to be dominated or mastered. Instead, it provides us with an image of the video game player as merely a part in a larger circuit, decentralizing the narrative of the hegemonic dominance of the player and recognizing the hybridity and co-attentiveness of the player-game relationship.

A Play of Bodies does excellent work to deconstruct the notion of video games as sites of active, aggressive domination. However, this is often constructed in a way that emphasizes textual elements that are active. There is room in *A Play of Bodies* to explore more subtle forms of material embodiment. Although the examples presented do an excellent job in working through these forms of embodiment, more attention to what Lauren Berlant (2015) would term *underperformed* affective experiences would allow for a more robust critique of dominant understandings of what video games are and how they are presented. Underperformed affect details uncertain and flat reactions to events that "destabilize the conventional relation between high intensity and importance" (p. 195). For example, when Keogh explores games such as *Dear Esther* (2012)*,* where the player walks up a mountain, interacting very little with the game while the narrator divulges the events surrounding a car crash that happened in the past (183), underperformed emotion could provide a more nuanced and subtle understanding of the forms of 'recessive action" (p. 193) that underlie the way in which these games often limit the player's freedoms (186).

However, this is a minor critique. *A Play of Bodies* explores our co-constitutive relationship to video games both eloquently and effectively. *A Play of Bodies* opens many doors in the field of video game scholarship, that pays careful attention to perceptions of video games that often lie at the margins, both within academia and in the gaming community. Keogh's *A Play of Bodies* is insightful and invigorating, drawing our attention towards the sensorial experience of playing video games. We are all cyborgs, after all.

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