

By boys for boys: The entanglement of designers, objects, and players in videogame interactions

Prof Norma Mendoza-Denton | University of California, Los Angeles

This work is an intervention into the language and gender/language and materiality/language and embodiment literature taking as data the entanglement (Hodder 2014) of video game designers, objects, and players. A group of four students (three men and one woman) were video-recorded playing the side-scrolling game Mario Party 8 (Nintendo 2007). In this game, there is a subset of mini-games where players interact with the physical objects of the game. By taking an approach arising from archaeology that takes into account how humans depend on objects which depend on the actions of other humans, we can understand how sexism in videogames may arise as an already incipiently embodied feature of gaming interactions, and which appears epiphenomenal and entirely original to the players (Mendoza-Denton and O'Connor 2016), but which has in fact been already entextualized and enregistered for previous generations of players.