
Everything (2017): Aesthetics and Politics of Re-Scaling as a Video Game Mechanic

Redimensionner le visuel dans Everything (2017) : Implications esthétiques et politiques d'une mécanique ludique

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- 1 *Everything* (2017) is a video game whose main mechanic rests on the process of re-scaling. Players are invited to move around in the game's virtual environments by "ascending" or "descending" into any of the creatures, organisms, or objects they come across. Players can thus travel through seven "scale levels" – which range from the subatomic to the interstellar – alternately playing as a horse, a plant, a stone, a microparticle, a galaxy, a continent, a building, etc., but never as a human person. As they continuously change their perspective, players are led to adopt various stances towards this predominantly non-human world.
- 2 This video essay examines the various ways in which players of *Everything* can affect and be affected by the interactive process of re-scaling. It explores how the gameworld can be regarded both as a playground for entertaining experiments, and as a site of deep reflection, challenging the players' sense of themselves in relation to the non-human entities (animal, technological, and other) with which they are interacting.
- 3 In an attempt to highlight the mutual and interactive nature of this configuration, the video essay not only shows moving images captured from the game, but also includes a thumbnail of the player (who is also the author of this essay). The goal was to bring out that the game works in tandem with a human user meant to control the re-scaling process. However, towards the end of the essay, the thumbnail also reveals that this human presence is by no means necessary to the process of re-scaling, which can actually unfold on its own in the game's "autoplay mode" (launching only a few seconds after the player has stopped touching the buttons on their controller).

- 4 In this and in many other ways, *Everything* invites its users to move back and forth between interacting and viewing, between action and reflection, transformation and meditation. Depending on how they decide to engage with the process of re-scaling, players might go through an experience of transformative self-reflection, one of exhilarating control, or maybe just one of perceptual and cognitive relaxation. Ultimately, with its multilayered journey through scales, *Everything* could result in both weakening or strengthening anthropocentric assumptions about perspective, immersion, environment habitation, technological control, and agency.
- 5 This video essay was created with the support of the “ACV” (“Arts and Visual Cultures”) research group, in the Anglophone Studies Department of Université Paris Cité.

6 This media file cannot be displayed. Please refer to the online document <http://journals.openedition.org/interfaces/7408>

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Clémence Folléa is an Associate Professor at Université Paris Cité, where she teaches literature, film, and video game studies in the Department of Anglophone Studies. In 2016, she completed a PhD on the afterlives of Charles Dickens's novels – a topic on which she published several articles and book chapters. Her more recent research examines how video games can open up possibilities for narrative, aesthetic, epistemological, and political experimentations, as well as ethical experiences. She also currently works on using the video essay format to publish her

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