Haptic Vision, Footwork, Place-making: A Peripatetic Phenomenology of the Mobile Phone Pedestrian

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In this paper we aim to develop a post-phenomenology of walking through an analysis of the relation between pedestrian mobility and the use of mobile devices, and then apply this analysis to users of third and fourth generation location-aware touch phones that enable mixed reality gaming in urban spaces. As theorised by a number of human geographers, phenomenologists and proponents of material culture, walking is fundamental to our corporeality, ontology and cultural practices. In this light, it is our contention that mobile media use has a significant bearing on the habitudes of walking as such devices become increasingly embedded in our everyday ambulatory activities. At the outset, we will outline a “peripatetic phenomenology” that can usefully interpret the embodied micro- and macro-practices of “walking in the city” in present-day contexts. Following this, we will suggest that a phenomenology of walking in the contemporary urban circumstance must include a critical interpretation of “tactile” or “haptic” vision (eye-touch in Claude Gandelman’s (1991) sense) and the special relationship between the eye, hands and feet to emerge from the practices of the mobile phone pedestrian. As we will argue, this inquiry invokes a relational and hybrid understanding of both space and place in public urban environments, investigating the particular body-place relations and place-making practices to emerge from modes of perception which are grounded in peripatetics and tactile vision. Our phenomenological approach will then be applied to location-based mobile gaming, to suggest how such activity invokes a particular body-place relation and “peripatetic modality”.

A Peripatetic Post-phenomenology

By turning to the specificities of mobile phone use in urban space, the mobile phone becomes an effective lens or medium through which one can more fully apprehend the nuances, hybridities, and ontologies of urban pedestrian space and movement. To this end, the mobile device can be considered a useful “theoretical object” in Nanna Verhoeff’s (2008, 2009) terms. As Verhoeff notes, borrowing from Herbert Damisch, a theoretical object has an agency that produces effects “around itself” and invites us to reflect upon and reconsider our own interpretive approaches and methodologies, in this case towards media, mobility and body-technology relations.

Focusing on the peripatetic aspect of urban movement and pedestrian mobile phone use also allows us to consider our “embodiment” of the mobile phone, and its impact upon our collective embodiments or corporeal schemata. As phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964) insists, the structure of embodiment is not determined by the boundaries of the material body but rather reflects the way that our corporeality extends and withdraws—changing its reach and shape—in its dynamic apprehension of tools and things in the world. Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964) argued that this schematic is inherently open, allowing us to incorporate technologies and equipment into our own perceptual and corporeal organisation. Subsequent theorists such as Don Ihde (1993) and David Morris (2004) have added complexity to this body-tool relation by including the nuances of personal practices and cultural specificity. That is, while Merleau-Ponty’s approach tends towards the notion of a typical, common or—by some accounts—essential mode of embodiment with a more or less universal “fit”, Ihde develops a post-phenomenology which supposes instead that body-technology relations translate differently across cultures and their specific ways of perceiving, knowing and making the world. Thus, the dynamic shaping of our corporeal schemas...
is under continuous modification by artifacts, tools, techniques and more complex technological ensembles, which are always-already embedded in a palimpsest of cultural milieus and collective habits. Ihde’s approach is particularly useful, then, for interpreting both the somatic intimacy of wearable and handheld media, and the collective or sedimented routines of walking and urban pedestrian movement when modified by mobile media user-practices.

This post-phenomenology of body-technology relations can be usefully combined with Marcel Mauss’s (2006) ethnographic conceptualisation of “techniques of the body”. Mauss contends that the body is our “first” instrumental object and technical means; he uses the term technique to describe the range of bodily habits (habitus du corps) that vary between individuals and societies: techniques are culturally and contextually specific—taught, learnt, and dynamically evolving. In a similar vein, Erving Goffman’s (1963, 1972) detailed attention to the micro-gestures and eye-behaviour necessary for pedestrian navigation can also be insightfully applied to a phenomenology of mobile phone peripatetics in public urban spaces. As Wilken (2008) notes, within the literature on mobile telephony it is often argued that the “downcast eyes” of users attending to their mobile screen devices disrupts the “scanning gaze” that is considered crucial to successful pedestrian flow. In other words, mobile phone use disrupts “established patterns of place-based public interactions and navigational tactics, thereby causing pedestrian to renegotiate their spatial interactions and pedestrian navigation in light of a lack of familiar facial cues” (2008: 44). Attending in this way to the pedestrian and peripatetic demands of mobile media offers broader insights into our micro- and macro-mobilities or “techniques of the body” enacted in public urban and pedestrian space, both in terms of our smaller gestures, motor movements, and techniques and footwork particular to mobile phone use and mobile gaming, and larger trajectories through the city or full-bodied actions such as walking while talking, texting or gaming.

The material, corporeal and cultural specificities of the foot as a significant component of the body-as-technical-instrument is an idea also put forward by Tim Ingold in his historical investigation ‘Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet’ (2004). For Ingold, a critical inquiry into past and present “footwork” enables a ‘more literally grounded approach to perception’ that will counter both the privileging of vision in Western culture and the primacy given to manual touch in analyses of tactile perception, thereby restoring bipedal haptics to ‘its proper place in the balance of the senses’ (2004: 330). In particular, his work aims to disclose the ‘special properties of pedestrian touch’ and ‘circumambulatory knowing’ as a way of countering the higher corporeal and technical status given to the hand (2004: 330-331)—a bias that is clearly evident in both phenomenologies of the body-technology relation and current investigations into the “handiness” of mobile phone use. He writes:

Rather than supposing that the hand operates on nature while the feet move in it, I would prefer to say that both hands and feet, augmented by tools, gloves and footwear, mediate a historical engagement of the human organism, in its entirety, with the world around it...It is in the very “tuning” of movement in response to the ever-changing conditions of an unfolding task that the skill of walking, as that of any other bodily technique, ultimately resides (2004: 332).

Thus, he asks, how are our bipedal habits and footwork techniques implicated in our material and spatial perception of the environment, and in our ways of knowing and being more broadly? In this paper we consider how the mobile media device becomes appropriated by such habits and techniques as they are routinely enacted in urban space.

It is useful at this point to determine in a post-phenomenological context a workable understanding of space and place as they will be deployed throughout our discussion. In line with the post-phenomenological method that embeds cultural specificities in any notion of a collective embodiment, Edward Casey’s (2001) succinct differentiation between the terms is expedient:

I maintain that "space" is the name for that most encompassing reality that allows for things to be located within it; and it serves in this locatory capacity whether it is conceived as absolute or relative in its own nature. "Place", on the other hand, is the immediate ambiance of my lived body and its history, including the whole sedimented history of cultural and social influences and personal interests that compose my life-history. (Casey, 2001: 404)
This definition hints at a notion of place as hybrid and relational as suggested by a number of geographers and media critics (Ek, 2006; Massey, 2005; Castells, et al., 2007). According to a relational way of thinking, not only is space a process, something that is produced, but so is place. As Richard Ek (2006: 51) explains, places, along with our experiences of them, are continuously ‘worked out through social action in ways that ceaselessly change over time’. In this context, place is properly understood as a bounded, but open and contested, site, a complex amalgam of competing discourses, fluid social relations, and internal as well as external events (Malpas, 1999: 33). For geographer Doreen Massey (2005), this feeds what she terms the ‘throwntogetherness’ (181) of place, the ‘event’ (140) of place. In other words, any given “place” is ‘dependent upon the interconnectedness of the elements within it—as it is also dependent on its interconnection with other places’ (Malpas, 1999: 39).

What emerges from such conceptualisations is an understanding of place imagined as ‘articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings’ (Massey, 1994: 154). What’s more, these “articulated moments” carry implications far beyond ‘what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself’ (1994: 154). A relational understanding of place, we are suggesting here, holds specific value for understanding the pedestrian, peripatetic uses of mobile devices. This value can be grasped by making reference to Mizuko Ito’s research into the quite sophisticated ways that Japanese youth engage with mobile phones. Ito’s research reveals patterns of mobile use that involve a complex set of interactions within and between places, incorporating physical transportation (on foot and by other means), navigation (utilizing, among other tools, existing physical landmarks), fluid temporal arrangements, and communication (both mediated and face-to-face). In combination, these interactions bring into close relation particular places (the ultimate destination of the mobile caller, as well as those through which they pass), much wider geographical and informational networks (Castells, et al., 2007), as well as networks of social relations and understanding (in other words, individual and cultural specificities embedded within wider collective social and public contexts).

Importantly, a phenomenological consideration of walking as a practice interwoven with mediated experience confounds the notion that “walking” is any more an immediate and multisensorial experience of the world than driving or attending to a screen. Theorists such as Paul Adams, for example, argue that primarily visual and mediated experiences of any kind are sensorially impoverished or “thinner” than unmediated experiences such as walking which afford us with ‘a peripatetic sense of space’ (2001: 188). In particular, “mediated experiences” include those that are game-, screen-, computer- or web-based—though in fact the inclusion of driving suggests that any experience that occurs through an actual or virtual window or frame fits the “medial” category. He states:

*The cultural transformations attending one technological diffusion, the diffusion of vehicles, parallel the cultural transformations linked to other technological diffusions. Computer simulations, video games, World Wide Web experiences, and other “virtual worlds” are overwhelmingly visual, and in their foundation in instantaneous connection they both reflect and reinforce the dislocated worldview of the driver.* (2001: 191)

Against the notion that there is a distinct hierarchy of sensorial quality between “unmediated” and “mediated” experiences, our phenomenological interpretation presumes that both are equally “multisensory”, and that vision must always-already include the other senses. As we will suggest in the following section, the very notion of haptic or tactile vision, which can be richly described as an aspect of mobile phoning and gaming, discounts the view that perception isn’t always-already synaesthetic. Indeed, the techniques of haptic vision embodied by the mobile phone pedestrian
point to the impossibility of distinguishing between a “peripatetic sense of space” on the one hand, and a mediated experience of the urban environment on the other.

Haptic Vision

Ingold’s critique of the privileging of vision and touch notwithstanding, the importance of these two senses persists and it is necessary to say a few words here about their close interrelationship, and the significance of this for the development of a peripatetic post-phenomenology of the mobile phone pedestrian. One aspect of a broader post-phenomenology of walking that will have a significant bearing on our later discussion of mobile gaming is a particular mode of visual perception that has been referred to as “haptic vision”: ‘the idea that vision is a form of touching’ (Gandelman, 1991: 5).

The association of vision with touch, and the influence of the haptic sense on our visual sense, has a long history. For instance, according to Claude Gandelman, it was Berkeley who posited that ‘there is no vision in the performative meaning of the term—that is, in the sense of seeing as a potentiality of acting over the objects that surround us—without a transfer of the sense of touch to the properties of the eye’ (Gandelman, 1991: 6). Italian Futurist Filippo Marinetti (1991: 120) puts the matter more directly. In a 1924 manifesto on “tactilism”, Marinetti declares that, ‘a visual sense is born in the fingertips’. Similarly, Irigaray argues that without a sense of touch seeing would not be possible (Vasseleu, 1998: 12). Derrida, meanwhile, develops a characteristically more equivocal perspective on the commingling of sight with touch. On the one hand, he admonishes those who ‘might let themselves be tempted by a tactilist interpretation of sight’, stating that ‘everyone knows […] that no one has ever touched anything with his or her eyes’ (Derrida, 2005: 169). Yet, on the other hand, earlier in the same text Derrida acknowledges the importance of touch to sight, stating that ‘touching is no longer just one sense among others, since it conditions them all and is coextensive with them’ (161), including sight.

It is this idea of a “conditioning” of vision by touch—not a literalist interpretation of eyes that touch—that is implicit in the present application of the notion of “haptic vision”. In other words, what is being invoked here could be described as a ‘tactile sensibility’ (Marinetti, 1991: 117) characteristic of particular modes of looking and wider proprioceptive engagement. According to film theorist Laura Marks (2002: xiii), this is ‘an understanding of vision as embodied and material’. She writes, ‘Haptic perception is usually defined as the combination of tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies’ (2002: 2). Within this broad understanding, at least two further delineations can be drawn. The first is that haptic vision can be understood as a mode of visual perception that fixes on surface rather than depth, and seeks out the textural qualities of a surface or scene (Marks, 2002; Gandelman, 1991). It is the scanning gaze of surface and texture that has led to the second feature of haptic vision: its characterisation as a mode of visual perception that is concerned principally with movement, a shifting across surface and between textures or features but without resting to dwell in depth. ‘Haptic looking’, Marks (2002: 8) writes, ‘tends to rest on the surface of its object rather than to plunge into depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture’; it is a mode of looking ‘more inclined to move than to focus’.

While Gandelman and Marks are primarily concerned with visual imagery (painting, video, film), in many respects, the above understanding of haptic vision can also be seen to be part-and-parcel of existing experiences of spatial perception and pedestrian mobility. For instance, our perception of surface and texture, as felt through the feet and passed over by the eye, is crucial to all successful pedestrian movement and navigation. An ever shifting gaze which moves over surface and texture is critical to how we perceive visual depth (Morris, 2004) and distance (Higuchi, 1983)—including our perception of depth, distance and texture when experienced at speed (Wilken, 2000)—as well as to how we negotiate fellow pedestrians in urban space. For example, to return to Goffman, in his pioneering observational studies of pedestrian interaction, (1963) found walking crowded city streets to involve a “complex web of movements” where the smallest facial or other bodily gestures are crucial to successful navigation and to avoiding collision (see also, Whyte, 1988).

Haptic vision—framed within, and forming one important sub-component of, a wider phenomenology of pedestrian movement—will also prove...
important in the examination of mobile gaming that follows below. In particular, an understanding of haptic vision can shed light on our bodily orientations to mobile media, especially in light of increased industry moves towards touchscreens. It can also contribute to a fuller comprehension of what Heidi Rae Cooley (2004: 145) has characterised as an increasingly ‘material experience of vision’ by mobile media users, where ‘hands, eyes, screen, and surroundings interact and blend in syncopated fashion’.

In the following section, we apply the above understandings of peripatetic post-phenomenology, relational place, and haptic vision to an examination of an established Japanese-based location-aware mobile game: Mogi.

**Location-Aware Mobile Gaming: The Case of Mogi**

Mogi (a commercial incarnation of an earlier prototype called Nido) is a simplified mobile phone equivalent to massive multi-player online role playing games (MMORPGs), where the player navigates an actual geographical space of a city—in this case, Tokyo—at the same time as they navigate the game space, which consists of a virtual map of the same geographical space (Liccope and Guillot, 2006). In other words, the game is a literal manifestation of McKenzie Wark’s (1994: 120) notion of “third nature”, whereby ‘second nature, which appears to us as the geography of cities […] is progressively overlayed with a third nature of information flows, creating an information landscape which almost entirely covers the old territories’. The game was created by French designers and marketed in Japan by KDDI; it was played between 2003 and 2006 (Licoppe and Inada, 2008: 6). The principle of the game is to accumulate a series of “virtual objects”, which can vary from the lifelike (such as fruit) to the more abstract (such as the idea of morning). These “objects” are collected by clicking on them with the mobile phone when the player is within sufficient proximity (less than 300 metres) to the object (Licoppe and Guillot, 2006: 166). The other key feature of the game in the context of this paper is that the onscreen map—or “radar” interface, which has a radius of 500 metres—also shows the icons of other players present in the same geographical space (Licoppe and Inada, 2006: 166). Players can also communicate with one another via text message (166).

This and further location-sensitive mobile games, such as Botfighter, Tourality, Fast Foot Challenge, among others, evidence an increasing ‘enfolding of contexts’ (De Souz e Silva, 2004: 18; Sotamaa, 2002: 40), a ‘hybridisation of space’ (15), whereby the game space that is accessed through the mobile device overlaps and intertwines with urban space in key ways. In particular, using the physical environment as a ‘playground’ (Sotamaa, 2002: 40) forces mobile gamers to divide their attention between two things: the mobile interface and the information this device offers, and the actual physical setting in which the gamer is moving. Involved here is a canny and subtle form of ‘environmental knowing’ (Hjorth and Richardson, 2009: 33) attuned to both the specific requirements of mobile game play and retaining a ‘crucial peripheral awareness of one’s spatial surroundings’ (32). Performing this double requirement simultaneously involves a particularly ‘adroit oscillation between stickiness and distraction’ (Richardson, 2009). As Richardson notes, Chris Cheshire’s (2004) categorization of ‘ways of looking’ specific to cinema, television and console games—characterized by the gaze, the glance and the glaze respectively—does not translate accurately onto mobile phone conventions of screen engagement, which demands adaptable and dynamic levels of sensorial “stickiness” or immersion. The mobile phone device crosses over each of these ways of looking if only because we can – and do – watch movies and live TV, and play games on our phones at varying levels of immersion and distraction. Or, at least, we might identify a broad spectrum of corporeal “attachment” and “distraction” across a range of game-play – from casual games to console-based and location-aware games – based upon levels of immersion, engagement and distraction. In sensory terms, and as per the earlier discussion of perception above, location-aware mobile gaming encourages tactile vision: that is, a material and dynamic seeing that involves eyes, hands, feet and the mobile screen device (Richardson, 2009).

This complex, two-way interaction and experiential flow between game space and urban space also has a direct impact on the way that these games are played. This is particularly the case in relation to Mogi, where quite specific tactical modes of game play have evolved amongst long-term users of this game. For instance, studies of Mogi and other location-sensitive games have revealed that frequency and intensity of game play fluctuates depending on the time of day and other daily temporal rhythms (Chan,
In the case of Mogi, peaks in game-play activity correlated in many cases with the long commutes to and from work that are characteristic of work and travel arrangements in Japan. Even so, researchers also found that there were significant adjustments to these daily temporal and spatial routines and rhythms in order to maximise the opportunities presented by the game (Licoppe and Inada, 2006: 57). These included players changing established mobility patterns and preferred routes through urban space in order to prolong game experiences, and maximise opportunities by, for instance, taking a detour in order to collect specific and sometimes hard to acquire or rare virtual objects (45). In this sense the game takes on some of the characteristics associated with the Situationist practice of dérive, with Amy Jo Kim suggesting that Mogi ‘amplifies your ordinary behaviour—it changes going on an errand into a piece of a game’ (quoted in Hall, 2004).

In a further example of the complex but subtle user interactions that have evolved from the entwinement of game space and urban space, Licoppe and Inada (2006: 46) describe the tactical manoeuvres performed by two romantically involved Mogi players. While out walking together, this particular couple developed a number of game-playing tactics designed to playfully hinder each other’s attempts to acquire virtual objects. These tactics primarily consisted of sending each other a series of short text messages when approaching a nearby virtual object. Each text message appears as a pop-up that overlays and obscures the interface and the icons for each virtual object; each message has to be closed in order for these virtual object icons to become fully visible and therefore collectable again. For Licoppe and Inada (2009: 45), this is a case of pedestrian mobility functioning as a ‘creative performance’. In the present context, this particular example is also significant in the way that it highlights yet again mobile users’ complicated entanglements between physical and “virtual” co-presence (Ito, 2003). In this way, ‘where you locate yourself becomes a hybrid relation between physical and wireless co-present context’ (Ito, 2003), involving the skilful and rapid navigational oscillation between the mobile screen device and the surrounding urban environment.

Further to the above, in a discussion of Botfighter, Sotamaa describes the interactions between the mobile gaming context and the surrounding urban context as characterised by a two-way experiential flow that shapes our encounters with both spaces. On the one hand, it is suggested that ‘locations may get new meanings through playing’ (Sotamaa, 2002: 43), where our experience and understanding of these locations becomes ‘reshaped’ (Crawford and Goggin, 2009: 98) by the game play. For example, Sotamaa describes how experienced gamers using Botfighter ‘may be able to learn to locate the borders of network cells’ within the game and that this information ‘can have an influence on the daily usage of city space’ by these gamers outside of the time spent playing Botfighter (2002: 42). On the other hand, it is also suggested that the ‘real life meanings and memories attached to locations’ can also influence the way the game is played (43). In relation to Mogi, Licoppe and Inada (2009) report on one player’s decision to memorialise an actual train accident that occurred on their train line. He embedded a number of precious virtual objects from his own collection, at the coordinates near where the accident occurred in the game space of Mogi. A range of other (re-)territorialising strategies employed by Mogi players are also documented, including moves by some gamers to claim geomobile places as their own, exploiting technological quirks of the game to get close enough in the real world in order to ‘pick up geolocalized virtual items […] and “place” them at another location’, and, in an even more extreme cases, physically “herding” virtual objects (in this case virtual Mogi “animals”) towards particular geographical locations that, in the context of the game, are deemed “privileged” and therefore unlikely to be accessed by other players (Licoppe and Inada, 2009). Sotamaa also makes the point that our affective experiences of and investments in actual cities can shape location-aware game play in ways that make players acutely aware of existing social and spatial inequities, including ‘virtual no-go areas’ for certain groups of people based on race, class or gender (Sotamaa, 2002: 42). In light of the above examples, Sotamaa (40) is right to remark that ‘this kind of play with location makes mobile phone users more sensitive and more aware of the nature of different locations and contexts’.

The above examples also emphasise how thoroughly embedded location-based games are in a relational understanding of place, which, as detailed above, is understood as ‘dependent upon the interconnectedness of the elements within it […] and] its interconnection with other places’ (Malpas, 1999: 39). For Massey (1994: 154), a relational understanding of place, it will be recalled, also involves ‘articulated moments’ that involve, among other things, ‘networks of social relations’. This last point
is significant for considerations of multiplayer location-based games, like Mogi, insofar as relational place-based interactions extend beyond the experiences of the self to include encounters with others in close geographical proximity. In Mogi, when another player is nearby the icon of both players will appear on the “radar” interface operating on both players’ handsets. Obviously for location-based “exertion games” such as Botfighter and Fast Foot Challenge (cf. Nansen, this issue), where fellow participants in the game are also “targets”, these encounters are crucial to the game experience. However, in a game such as Mogi, where interpersonal encounters between gamers is not a crucial structural feature of the game experience, such encounters take on quite different and arguably more complicated dimensions. [1] For Licoppe and Inada, the appearance of another proximate player carries a number of implications for how Mogi players experience screen space and urban space simultaneously. One consequence of this sudden appearance of another player is that it ‘introduces a potential wedge between the gaze and the screen’ (Licoppe and Inada, 2006: 53) by forcing a greater oscillation between the two and more intensive scanning of surrounding urban space.

A further consequence, they argue, is that the proximity of mobiles to bodies means that ‘onscreen encounters engage the participants’ bodies’ (57) even more directly and fully in Mogi game play. For instance, one Mogi player evocatively describes the sudden appearance of another player’s icon nearly touching her own onscreen icon as ‘like a pinch’ and this led the player to seek the eyes of the other in physical space (52). Picking up on the phenomenological implications presented by this insight, Licoppe and Inada draw on the work of Merleau-Ponty and Ihde to describe Mogi players as ‘hybrid beings’ who are able to ‘smoothly integrate the embodied lived experience of the body and the mediated perception of oneself and of the environment’ (52). For Mogi players (and most other location-aware gamers for that matter), players ‘perceive the world from their own bodies but also perceive themselves as icons on the map of the radar interface’.

In this way, location-aware gaming incorporates two simultaneous perspectives—a “grounded” perspective of their own bodily positioning in urban space, and a bird’s-eye view of their position and movement on a map. Both of these perspectives are achieved via “adroit oscillation” between stickiness and distraction, and dynamic modes of “haptic vision” that involve eyes, hands, feet and mobile screen device.

In this paper we have suggested that pedestrian mobile media use impacts upon the micro- and macro-practices of peripatetic movement in public urban spaces, modifying our “ways of walking” through the city. Via a post-phenomenological analysis of the “street-play” particular to location-based mobile gaming, we have argued that such practices require particular kinds of body-work, and particular kinds of body-technology and body-place relations. The peripatetic modality specific to Mogi and location-based gaming thus involves a situated, corporealised and often personalised negotiation of place, space, co-presence and environmental “knowing”, enacted through the relational ontology of pedestrian body and mobile screen.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the above may not necessarily hold for all forms of mobile gaming. Location-based gaming does constitute something of a specific case in the sense that it is one genre (or sub-genre) of mobile gaming with its own particular affordances and handset and software platform requirements. Location-based mobile games also encourage and, in many cases, demand quite specific forms of bodily engagement that require players to actively walk in geographical space in order control their in-game movements. It is therefore important to be mindful of the limitations of extrapolating these arguments to mobile gaming as it is more broadly understood, not least because of the equally complex body-place relations involved in other forms of mobile game play, including the diverse array of geographical contexts in which this game play takes place, which can range from fully mobile, to ‘semi-mobile’ (Sotamaa,
2002), to (temporarily) immobile (see Bassett, this issue). And yet, it is our argument that there are strong comparisons to be drawn between the findings of our examination of the location-based game Mogi and more generalised forms of pedestrian mobile phone use. This is so because the location-based gamer and the mobile phone pedestrian, as we and others have argued, both experience a hybrid sense of place and space, and engage in a tactile or haptic vision that demands a complex coordination of multisensory perception and the body-in-motion. In this way, at a more fundamental level, our argument maintains that the seemingly mundane act of walking is a continuously emergent, dynamic, biosocial, habitual, contextual and relational capacity, and that the mobile phone pedestrian—and more specifically the pedestrian location-based mobile gamer (if not always the mobile gamer in general)—effectively play out a new discipline of pedestrian movement in the contemporary urban setting. Given the trend towards incorporating locative features into a wide range of non-gaming applications—from social networking (Humphreys, 2007; Callari, 2009), to mobile learning (Raessens, 2007) and mobile advertising (Wilken and Sinclair, 2009: 438-440)—it will be increasingly important to both recognise and critically interpret emerging routines of urban peripatetics as they become transformed by mobile media practices.

Endnotes

[1] The various strategies Mogi players employ to negotiate and, more often than not, seek to avoid such contact are well documented in the literature (see Licoppe and Inada, 2006, 2008; Licoppe and Guillot, 2006; Chan, 2008).

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