The Man Within: Blackness and Simulation in *Injustice: Gods Among Us*

By Peter Spearman

Abstract

In this essay I dissect the physical design, narrative, and in-game mechanics of Cyborg, a black superhero within the superhero fighting game, *Injustice: Gods Among Us.* Cyborg's overall aesthetic is caught between the history of black experience in the United States and an Afrofuturist vision for what could be. Experiencing the world of the game with him as their avatar provides players with a potential opportunity to learn more about and empathize with the double-ness that permeates Cyborg's worldview.

I extend Alison Landsberg's theory of prosthetic memory past its original focus of film to video games. This distinction highlights the unique relationship between performance and memory that operate within video games as a medium. In particular, I explore the viability of video games to create a prosthetic experience that addresses race. I examine Cyborg's overall design in relation to other not-quite-human performances of the African American body, like Jim Crow. Performance holds open a space for Cyborg to resist many of the pitfalls that accompany attempts to depict black experience. The space held open in *Injustice: Gods Among Us* results from the interactivity of video games—namely, the extension of the player's body through the avatar.

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Fighting games are often won and lost on the character select screen, and *Injustice: Gods Among Us (Injustice)* is no different. Players use the joystick to navigate nearly two-dozen thumbnail images of legendary DC Comics heroes and villains. As a player passes over the image of a potential avatar, the character manifests center screen, suspended in a shroud of mist. Their bodies are positioned mid-attack with inertia that can only be realized in the battle. This frozen moment tells the player everything. From the visualization of the character alone, players extrapolate the size, weight, and potential playing style of their avatar. Tactics are not the only force at work when it comes to character selection; after all, most players have encountered these characters elsewhere. Unlike many fighting games, the characters of *Injustice* are part of a cultural memory that extends far beyond the game. Superheroes are everywhere: on our screens, on our clothes, and on our food.[1] The character's history and a player's experience of that history also factor into the decision to choose an avatar.

When examined with these criteria, Cyborg, the hero at the center of this article, demands further investigation. On one hand, his mechanics make him relatively intuitive to control and master. His weight makes him difficult to knock down and his size lends itself to evasion. His history, however, complicates the decision. Like many black superheroes, Cyborg's nearly thirty-year comic-existence is rife with stereotypes and tokenism (Jones Jr). In some ways his depiction in the game parallels the comic

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[1] I am personally responsible for one Wolverine and three Batman birthday cakes.

trends. He is the only black character in the game. On its surface, his design is similar to what is found in the comics. He even keeps, "Boo-Ya" as his signature catchphrase. With all the similarities, it is easy to see this iteration of Cyborg as trending with the rest. Indeed, the ubiquity of superheroes causes us to miss the nuances that each attestation possesses. Redevelopment and recoding of symbols can happen through a shift in medium. I believe the change in medium from comic to video game— and the performative consumption that video games demand— opens the stereotypes and nuance of the character of Cyborg in ways that the comic simply cannot.

The following essay explores Cyborg's place in the narrative of *Injustice: Gods Among Us* and his overall design through the experiential medium of a video game in order to identify how real-world dynamics appear in a virtual world full of superheroes. This analysis stems from my own play through of the "Ultimate Edition" of the game on a PlayStation 4, which includes extra characters and missions.[2] I explore how the interactive nature of the video game medium frames the black experience and how the game layers design, narrative, and embodied language to encourage empathy. First, I will take a look at existing conversations on memory-making and the performative pedagogy of video games. Then I will explore Cyborg's story arc, design, and movement to see how the game utilizes the duality of the Cyborg as a metaphor for black experience. I place Donna J. Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* into conversation with Douglas A. Jones's *The Captive Stage* to explore how Cyborg's body speaks to a future latent with potential, while simultaneously wrestling with a past marked by harmful commodification. Lastly, I turn to the video game controller itself to see how it unites the player and avatar. My aim is that the relationship between player and avatar might illuminate potential

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[2] I have crosschecked my findings with play through videos available on YouTube, and they matched.

connections between the "real" world and the virtual worlds of video games.

CHOOSE *YOUR* FIGHTER

Players identify with their characters beyond just a gameplay mechanic. At video game tournaments, players usually master one or two characters. The character that players "main,"[3] that is their primary selection, often reflects their favorite style of play while their secondary character selection functions to "counter" their opponent's selection. Most tournaments like EVO and DreamHack offer significant purses and operate under double elimination brackets. Each outcome affects the livelihood of the player. As such, synergy between character and player is paramount. Their character selection serves as an avatar and mediates how they navigate the virtual world of the game. The OED contains five varying definitions of the term "Avatar." Of particular interest are the first and final meanings of the word:

> *Hindu Mythol.* The descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form.
>
> …
>
> *Computing* and *Science Fiction*. A graphical representation of a person or character in a computer-generated environment, *esp.* one which represents a user in an interactive game or other setting, and which can move about in its surroundings and interact with other characters (OED).

The latter definition is part of a 2008 addition to the OED. Interrogating the above etymological journey of the term avatar reveals the intimacy between player and character. The avatar permits players to inhabit

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[3] A term (n,v,adj) in gaming that refers to a player's most frequent character choice.

spaces and bodies otherwise inaccessible to them. They become a vessel through which the player's will can play out in the virtual world. The narrative structure of *Injustice: Gods Among Us* complicates this relationship. The story mode of the game is fixed. Therefore, players must experience the world not as they wish, but as the character does. The power dynamic flips, but the process of memory transmission from avatar to player still occurs.

These memories are prosthetic. The notion of prosthetic memory first appears in Alison Landsberg's book of the same name, in which she theorizes that film creates artificial memories by stimulating the senses in a way that simulates experience (Landsberg). The change in medium, however, requires a nuance of theory. Like films, fighting games and other limited-narrative games offer predefined parameters for experience and set moments. Yet, video games require a player to progress. Players transform from audience members to interlocutors. Participation is mandatory. Landsberg writes that memories generated by film allow viewers, "to experience in a bodily way something that one was not actually living through" (Landsberg 28). More than a sensory stimulation, the player-avatar relationship allows players to more directly partake in the experience and may therefore heighten those memories. These practices and stories vary from game to game.

The gameplay of *Injustice* consists of a series of battles with various artificially intelligent opponents. The story mode explores a predetermined series of battles that serve as interactive moments connecting the larger narrative of the game. It is broken into chapters that explore the perspective of one character. On whomever the chapter focuses, that is the character that players can control. Cyborg's story comes in the middle of the saga— chapter six of twelve— but he appears elsewhere throughout the game. The narrative that emerges concerning

Cyborg in the story mode is entirely fixed: the player can only experience it as written. The narrative suggests a heroic hierarchy within the Justice League, but it also provides space for Cyborg's contributions and being to take primacy. While it is not possible to accurately mediatize blackness—and in a superhero fighting game at that— the potential for encouraging empathy at the very least is there. The prosthetic experience of video games provides a space for empathy rather than providing players with an embodied relationship to the material.

     The larger narrative opens with a cryptic and existential quotation from Lex Luthor, "I can say without a doubt that there are an infinite number of universes. Some are just like our own… but for one or two significant events, exactly the same" (Injustice). The events of the video game take place five years into the *Injustice* comic book series timeline, but begin in the prime universe. The game opens after a brief recap of the comics in the prime universe under a title card reading, "Elsewhere." In the cut scene that follows, the familiar good and evil divisions exist. Superman and Batman fight side by side along with the other members of the Justice League. Meanwhile at the Justice League headquarters, Cyborg, Nightwing (Dick Grayson), and Raven attempt to fend off Lex Luthor and his cronies.[4] It becomes clear quickly that these are the same events that brought about Superman's demise in the universe. Yet, when Batman attempts to stop Joker, the two teleport to the Alternate Universe. The game follows the members of the prime universe as they attempt to rescue their Batman from Alternate Earth and simultaneously free the inhabitants of that world from Regime Superman's rule.

     The chapters provide each hero with four battles and explore their respective contributions to the rescue and removal mission. Cyborg's main

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[4] This moment is clearly meant to be an Easter egg for fans of the Teen Titans. Dick Grayson is the original Robin and the other two are founding members of the Teen Titans.

labor in the story ties directly to his cybernetic identity— he handles the technical aspect of transporting the heroes from the prime universe into the alternate one. He takes a calculated risk, allowing a program that he creates to run despite Superman's concerns. The risk pays off; he successfully teleports them to the secondary universe. This scene marks the transition into Cyborg's chapter.

STORY MODE

The chapter opens with another cut scene. The player's Cyborg arrives in the secondary universe where the factions of hero and villain are mixed. The secondary universe version of Cyborg has turned evil, and Deathstroke and Lex Luthor— two particularly nefarious villains— are good. These are the first two with which the player's Cyborg does battle. Each opponent irks him for different reasons: Deathstroke is the canonical opponent for Cyborg due to his noted rivalry with Teen Titans. However, his issues with Luthor stem largely from what he sees as an appropriation and fetishization of his cybernetic aesthetic, which for Cyborg is not a choice. Luthor's commodification enacts a circular process of violence and seizure. He uses his financial capital to appropriate Cyborg's body and create a super-suit, which becomes the physical capital that he uses to further his gains.

Opening the chapter with a cut scene that centers on Cyborg eases the player into the transition from one avatar to another. Before players are able to play as Cyborg, they must first witness how he experiences the world. Ultimately this cut scene does more to characterize Cyborg than to advance the plot of *Injustice,* and that is precisely why it primes the player to empathize with Cyborg's point of view. Video game scholar Ian Bogost refers to moments such as these as vignettes: "a vignette is a brief, indefinite, evocative description or account of a person or situation.

Vignettes are usually meant to give a sense of a character rather than to advance a narrative" (23). The player understands because of the rhythm of the game— four battles per chapter— that narrative advancement cannot happen at this point. Instead a player must connect with their avatar. Before the battle with Luthor begins, the scene calls attention to the anger and discomfort that Cyborg feels as a result of his nonconsensual commodification. This vignette highlights the importance of Cyborg's body and how it informs his conception of self. This bodily focus sharpens as players enter the battle sequence.

CHROME PLATED – CYBORG'S DOUBLE BODY

Luthor enters the scene as Cyborg celebrates his victory over Deathstroke and provokes him: "What do you think Cyborg? Like yours only better" (Injustice). Lex wears a suit that derives much of its aesthetic from Cyborg. Cyborg's "Insurgency" skin has much in common with the 2016 film design. There are two tones of metal: bright, almost-white chrome and vibrant, grey steel. His cybernetic limbs are smooth and muscular. Around his neck and groin the plated-flesh gives way to cables that mimic muscular striations. In the middle of his chest is a red round light: his emblem. It captures his twoness— the glow of the light displays his machine-ness and the blood-red light declares his humanity. Similarly his face is split nearly down the middle: half human and half machine.

Luthor's face, on the other hand, remains completely exposed; however, from the neck down, metal armor covers Luthor's body. In this secondary universe, varying shades of grey – from gunmetal to silver – replace the green that identifies him in his usual costume. Perhaps the most notable addition to Luthor's costume is the red "L" backlit by a bluish-white octagon. This symbol mocks Superman's iconic "S." While the meaning of that symbol may vary, dependent upon the translation or

interpretation of Superman's Kryptonian identity, Luthor's "L" represents himself and his economic status in the form of a logo. Not only does he appropriate Cyborg's color palate and cybernetic status, in his commodification— through the placement of the logo— he also questions the authenticity of Cyborg's ontology. This provocation motivates the fight, and when Cyborg defeats his opponent, he quips, "Wardrobe malfunction." In victory, Cyborg distinguishes his body from Luthor's costume. This two-word celebration undermines Luthor's claims of superiority and suggests that the authentic cybernetic body does not separate from the host. It highlights the distance that commodification creates. Cyborg distinguishes the prosthetic from the costume. The former is integrated to the self, whereas the latter can be removed by the wearer, or, in this case, by another.

Peeling back the layers of the cyborg metaphor reveals trends much deeper and more systematic than one would expect to find in a superhero fighting game. Luthor's appropriation suggests a view of Cyborg's body as powerful and extraordinary, but something that he does not own and thus, is reproducible. Understanding Cyborg's identity as a metaphor for African American identity— bearing the marks of centuries of trauma and forced labor— his relationship with Lex Luthor in *Injustice* is not unlike the historical practice of minstrelsy. Cultural and literary historian Douglas A. Jones writes in his monograph, *The Captive Stage,* concerning the complicated origins for the appropriation of blackness by early minstrel performers: "Although the form's texts and practices register an admiration for its antiauthoritarian and crafty black characters, its extra-theatrical contexts undercut, or even nullify, the esteem its figurations accord African Americans and slaves" (51). Jones maintains that minstrelsy, in its exclusion of the black bodies from the creation and execution of performance, undermines any potential for resistance that

the form offers. Instead, it re-inscribes white hegemony across class lines, rather than encourage interracial alliance. The same cavalier attitude motivates Luthor's appropriation of Cyborg's aesthetic.

For the player controlling Cyborg, this affront provokes the battle, and the only way to progress the story requires an active disproving of Luthor's claim. Like early purveyors of minstrelsy, Luthor certainly admires the vitality and spirit of the cybernetic body, but literally recreates a hollow shell that only imitates the surface of Cyborg, belying the trauma and survival skills that the cyborg identity demands. For Luthor, the cyborg body is a means of acquiring more. Whereas for Cyborg, his cybernetic body results from an attempted reconstruction of what has been taken. In turn, the success of Cyborg— and by extension the player— advocates for a heroism that privileges a specific resilience that finds its basis in history as well as morality.

Cyborg's body and its functionality complicate the cut scenes that lead into his third fight of the sequence as well. Following his battle with Lex Luthor, Cyborg reconfigures his appearance— presumably through code— to infiltrate Regime Superman's ranks. This new skin— aptly named "Regime" in the character selection screen— appears noticeably less "human." The overall aesthetic of Regime Cyborg in comparison to Prime Earth Cyborg implies a correlation between cybernetic verisimilitude and inner morality. Even though less than half of Cyborg's face is now metallic, the overlapping of metal and skin gives the sense that he is being taken over, and thus somehow more robotic and less human. This theme continues as one moves down his body. While his upper arms are exposed in his original form, the entirety of the arm becomes completely prosthetic. Even his hands change. Replacing the smooth lines and lifelike shape of his original aesthetic in the game, his hands in the Regime skin are claw-like. Both his elbows and knees extend like armor to protect the

upper arm and thighs respectively. Instead of boots, his cybernetic feet are exposed. Each foot is symmetrical and contains four toes, the two largest being in the middle. The feet resemble paws more than anything else. Overall, the metal that composes the costume appears darker, and more sinister. Likewise, the red accents, typically found at his core and his eye, extend throughout the body via cables. Thus, the more human Cyborg appears, the more likely he is to be on the "right" side of the fight.

   At all times, however, Cyborg still manages to occupy a liminal space between organism and machine. He constantly slides back and forth between the two states, never able to fully occupy either position. Donna J. Haraway observes the potential of the Cyborg body in her seminal essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto:" *"*The dichotomies between mind and body, animal and human, organism and machine, public and private, nature and culture, men and women, primitive and civilized are all in question ideologically" (32). Central to her approach is the notion that fluidity implies flexibility. The cyborg body contains within it more possibilities than one that is entirely organic or one that is entirely mechanical. Haraway decenters the "normal" body and argues that power stems from the potential of the cyborg body. However, Cyborg's blackness and the memory that it carries complicates the "potential" his cybernetic position privileges. While his cyborg body looks toward a future where it is able to transcend the dichotomy of man and machine, his black body battles the trope of the black body as being more animal than man. He is an amalgam—containing the animal, the human, and the machine. There is a power in this mutability but at the same time it also echoes the dangerous tendency to represent the black body as an amalgamation in early American performance.[5]

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[5] The stock characters of minstrelsy such as Zip Coon and Jim Crow situate the black body between human and animal.

Figure 1 displays an engraving of Thomas Dartmouth Rice's portrayal of Jim Crow. Clearly his name suggests a connection between the character and a bird. In this particular engraving, his arms, legs, and back are bent providing his iconic shape. Tatters in his coat conjure notions of feathers and emphasize the wing-like positioning of his arms. The crookedness of his body bears witness to the labors that he performs daily, and the toll that it takes physically. Despite the brokenness of his body and clothes, his face appears completely human. Certainly there are other engravings and drawings (Fig. 2) that provide Jim Crow with a more wild facial expression and less ragged clothing.

In both cases the representation of blackness by T.D. Rice, a white minstrel performer, places the black body somewhere between animal and man, but it is unclear as to what direction he finds himself transforming— if he is transforming at all. Douglas A. Jones argues that the representations in minstrelsy show a specific vision for what could be: "The deliberate and marked differences between actual slave life, in the north and elsewhere, and representations of slaves on the minstrel stage reflected the economic, political, and social desires of white northerners *looking forward*" (56). In minstrelsy, the romanticized black body becomes closer to nature over time. In the minstrel tradition, the body trends more and more animalistic, whereas the cyborg body surrenders more of itself to the machine and loses its natural shape. However, the body of the cyborg becomes more powerful, while the minstrel body becomes less reliable.

Cyborg's fear of what might be understood as a cybernetic transcendence— that is, reaching a status that is perhaps above superhero— stems from an embodied memory of the black body's abjection. His fear grows from the implication that as he becomes more mechanical, he becomes less human. Cyborg's body in its Regime skin

recalls the representative tendencies of minstrelsy and implies the powerful potential of the cyborg. He derives his powers from this fluid body. However, its portrayal determines his place on the spectrum of human identity. In making the hyper-mechanical body that of the villainous Cyborg, it suggests that he feels that he can become too robotic. For Cyborg, his amphibiousness does not prompt hope for the future, nor does it reflect white hope of "*looking forward;*" rather, it inculcates the player with a glimpse at the simultaneous existences of trauma and survival that define their avatar.

   Another consequence of his mutable intersectionality can be found in Cyborg's interactions with his third adversary, Catwoman, whom heencounters in the regime skin. Cyborg gathers intelligence for the resistance as Catwoman teleports into the laboratory. She immediately senses something peculiar about this Cyborg. She quickly utilizes seduction as a means of deducing the truth. The exchange is brief:

   CATWOMAN: We still on for tonight?

   CYBORG: Sorry, gotta cancel. New orders.

   CATWOMAN: Since when has that stopped you.

   CYBORG: Yeah, we've had some— um— *wild* times.

   CATWOMAN: No we haven't. (Injustice)

The simplistic— even trite— dialogue seems to balance the complex plot of the game. Indeed, without the names of the heroes beside them, the dialogue says nearly nothing. However, Frances Gateward and John Jennings observe in their introduction to *The Blacker the Ink, "*When it comes to the politics around representation concerning Black people: no aspect can be taken for granted" (7). Narratively speaking, Cyborg becomes simultaneously hyper-sexualized and sexually pacified through this exchange. It further highlights the tension between his human and mechanical natures. The sexual outing of Cyborg builds on traditional

depictions of the cyborg body and the black body. Neither body poses a sexual threat to the white hero. This preserves a racial hierarchy that relies entirely on bodily difference. Pacifying Cyborg in this way ensures that the black hero will not replace the white hero through romantic or reproductive means. The cyborg transcends traditional conceptions of gender and sexuality— no longer participating in either performance— and in turn operates free from social constraints.

The cyborg lends itself to a genderless future that chafes against— in the American context— the black body's castrated past. Harraway argues that the lack of cyborg sexuality stems from the "utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end" (7). The limitlessness of the cyborg's body permits, and yet somehow relies on, its post-gender outlook. One ought to view the genderless cyborg body as progressive and idealistic. The cyborg can boast these distinctions precisely because it holds the position of power. On the other hand, the lack of self-determination in artistic, discursive, and literary representation is what makes the relationship between the black body and gender so complicated. Gender and sexuality in regards to the black body are often sites of binding and control. Toni Morrison refers to the regulation of the black body as Africanism. For Morrison, this practice, "in the Eurocentric tradition that American education favors," disables the black body and "polic(es) matters of class, sexual license, and repression, formations and exercises of power, and meditations on ethics and accountability" (7-8). His interaction with Catwoman brings Cyborg's twoness to the foreground. The genderless notion of the cyborg takes on new significance when coupled with the sexual pacification of Africanism. The very source of his power and potential upholds a trope used to contain his blackness. At all times Cyborg's two histories fight for his present and future.

XP EARNED

At this point in the article, we have discussed the performativity of video games and articulated how players interact with that performance specifically in Cyborg's chapter of *Injustice.* Lastly, it is pertinent to examine the device connecting the player and the avatar: the controller. Cyborg's bodily experience in the game generates memory for players, thus it is crucial to identify how players understand Cyborg's physical vocabulary. It is precisely the relationship between the gamer's body and Cyborg's body and how the game frames their understanding of his body that creates a space for knowledge-transmission to take place. Players achieve their influence on their avatars through their controllers. Like rearranging letters to form new words, different combinations of movement and buttons generate different physical impulses from the avatar. Fighting games demand precision in stick movement and timing in button mashing. For these reasons, players often modify their controllers. Adam "Armada" Lindgren— one of the top *Super Smash Bros. Melee* players in the world (another fighting game)— dropped out of a tournament in April of 2017 because he utilizes inputs that "are only possible through the use of a controller that is technically malfunctioning in a specific way" (Van Allen). The video game controller is one of the most personal pieces of gear for the serious gamer. This connection can lead to mastery, but mastery is not what keeps players returning to games.

Satisfaction can come through the mastery of a game, but Ian Bogost argues elsewhere in *How to Do Things with Video Games* that habituation often provides enough motivation for players to return. He argues that games, "culture familiarity by finding receptors for familiar mechanics and tuning them slightly differently, so as to make those receptors resonate in a gratifyingly familiar way" (Bogost 133). The controller translates the player's thoughts to the avatar's body. Familiarity

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with the language of the controller familiarizes the player with the avatar and in turn the player with the virtual world. The naming of moves by game designers allows players to identify and verbalize the "familiar mechanics" that make games with repetitive actions like *Injustice* and other fighting games so habitual.

Games themselves often name the various inputs. For *Injustice: Gods Among Us,* creators translate the series of buttons and stick motions into simple terminology that is unique to each character. Certain inputs result in similar attacks regardless of character— usually these moves result from shorter sequences— but truly unique animations stem from longer combinations attacks, which most gamers call combos. Cyborg's combos offer unique insight into his mindset and inner turmoil.

Cyborg's competing identities and the internal strife he experiences as a result of them can be seen in the language that developers use to define the actions that players use to fight enemies: "Android, Humanity, Comeback, Chrome Plated, Man Within, Solid Metal, Blowout, Sideline, Lost Faith" (*Injustice: Gods Among Us).* An obsession with identity, composition, and personal history are apparent, but a second look reveals deeper anxieties. Indeed, Cyborg's move list evokes W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness." Du Bois describes it:

> This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, — an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (3)

Cyborg's most potent attacks stem from the trauma of his origin, and from the unreconciled identities that he maintains. In order for a player to fully access the power that Cyborg has within the world of the game, they must

first become fluent in the language of his body and his self-perception. In addition to the narrative and design elements of *Injustice*, the language attributed to Cyborg's movement teaches the player a sort of history of black experience in the United States, a history of two-ness, a history of strength, and a history that continues to manifest itself in the present. Scaffolding metaphors in design, narrative, and embodied language encourages the development of empathy.

It would be dubious— even foolish and reckless— to suggest that playing as Cyborg could provide access to "authentic" black experience that non-black players could experience themselves. Such a claim would conflate black experience into a monolithic phenomenon, and confuse simulation for substitution. Instead, the virtual world of *Injustice* encourages an empathetic understanding of black experience, drawing on just a few historical examples through the symbiotic relationship between player and avatar. Fighting games, however, boast many avatars from which players may choose. As such, players can miss the empathetic space that playing as Cyborg can open. His embodiment of the historic oppressive representation of blackness draws on key concepts in African American literary criticism to relocate history out of textbooks and onto the bodies. As diverse protagonists appear more often in video games, we must continue to take nothing for granted. Expanding these metaphors across hours of gameplay as opposed to the hour or so offered in *Injustice* will allow players to explore more specific understandings. The space of empathy that players can access as a result of navigating virtual worlds might prove useful in the "real" world where empathy is scarce. The interactive, performative storytelling of video games invites players to connect in a bodily way with cultures and experiences other than their own. The radical empathy that video games and prosthetic memory generate provides a possible means of resistance in our present political

moment, where those in power use xenophobia and apathy to justify the exploitation of the marginalized.

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