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Elements in Histories of Emotions and the Senses
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PLAYFUL VIRTUAL VIOLENCE

*An Ethnography of Emotional
Practices in Video Games*

Christoph Bareither
Humboldt University of Berlin



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108819435
DOI: 10.1017/9781108873079

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781108873079

First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-81943-5 Paperback
ISSN 2632-1068 (online)
ISSN 2632-105X (print)

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Playful Virtual Violence

An Ethnography of Emotional Practices in Video Games

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First published online: October 2020

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Abstract: Violence in video games has been a controversial object of public discourse for several decades. However, the question of what kind of emotional experiences players enact when playing with representations of physical violence in games has been largely ignored. Building upon an extensive ethnographic study of players' emotional practices in video games, including participant observation in online games, qualitative interviews, and an analysis of YouTube videos and gaming magazines since the 1980s, this Element provides new insights into the complexity and diversity of player experiences and the pleasures of playful virtual violence. Instead of either defending or condemning the players, it contributes foundational, unprejudiced knowledge for a societal and academic debate on a critical aspect of video gaming.

This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.
Keywords: violence, games, emotions, digital media, ethnography

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ISBNs: 9781108819435 (PB), 9781108873079 (OC)
ISSNs: 2632-1068 (online), 2632-105X (print)

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