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Ingrid Richardson and Rowan Wilken, **Bodies and Mobile Media,** Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press, 2024, 224 pp, $22.95 (paperback).

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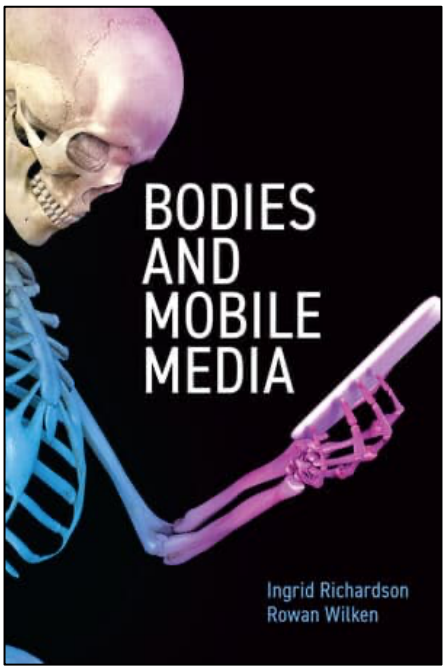

In ***Bodies and Mobile Media,*** authors Ingrid Richardson and Rowan Wilken contend with the ways in which mobile media, often specifically cell phones and their increasing functions, expands and contracts the relationship our bodies have with the physical world. Divided by chapters on face, eyes, ears, hands, and feet, the authors employ knowledge from the field of biology as introduction to each bodily focus, setting up the argument in the real, material space of the body.

Metaphor serves as a backbone of argumentation throughout the book, establishing the relationship between a part of the body to societal and cultural significance. For example, in the chapter on ears, the metaphor "her words rang true" (p. 80) is provided to show how the ear and listening are used to evoke confidence and good character on the part of a speaker. In discussion of eyes, "glued to the screen" is a metaphorizing of the "eyes as limbs entering into an intimate and tactile relationship with the interface" (p. 17). This reliance on the idea of metaphor allows the authors to liken the trueness and meaning-making of metaphor to a person's use of mobile media and its relationship to the physical body.

To continue the use of eyes as an example, the authors argue that a person moving through the physical world with their eyes on a mobile screen both expands and constricts their experience with both the physical and virtual worlds. They challenge the more typical arguments that being on a screen in a public setting closes a person off to the physical world, arguing instead that the screen shifts how the physical world is being experienced and understood. The eyes may be turned down to look at the screen, changing a person's posture and drawing some of their immediate attention away from the physical world, as is commonly argued. Or, as in the case of PokémonGO, which the authors use as an example throughout the book, a person may be looking at their screen searching for Pokémon to appear based on where they are in the physical world. This may lead to experiencing an entirely different part of town or encountering a place in a new way, which expands the relationship with the physical world rather than contracting it.

The chapter focusing on the face places emphasis on the relationship we have with the fronts and backs of devices, referring to how we "face" screens and project literal and metaphorical faces to the real and virtual worlds. Our relationship to screens is "front-to-front a frame of limited dimensions within our own physical space, while the body's frontal relationship with the apparatus varies between media" (p.

37). The authors discuss this frame with regard to physical relations to devices such as angles of mobile photography, attention and inattention to the physical and digital worlds, and the "ergonomic incompatibility between moving bodies and video communication" (p. 38). It is the discussion of the face which may have the greatest potential for future consideration, given the ever-increasing reliance on faces in the digital world for individual usage, facial recognition, and surveillance.

In their chapter on ears, Richardson and Wilken focus on how the ability to put on headphones or, conversely, play audio out loud in public space, renegotiates the relations we have with others in those spaces. They argue that cocooning oneself aurally through putting on headphones allows somebody to take some control of their space, and that the decision not to use headphones is also a method of taking control of or claiming a place within a public space. Because we cannot "turn off" our ears, we cannot ignore noises others around us make and must either counterbalance or deal with those noises. Additionally, they argue that the discontinuity of sounds that come from mobile phones results in an increased corporealization of sound in our bodily relationship to media, which further solidifies the way we acknowledge mobile media as a part of public spaces for ourselves and others. Taken alone, this chapter makes intriguing arguments and interventions, but as is mentioned by the authors, its relationship to the chapter on feet is important in fully engaging with the ideas of mobile media and public space.

Hands and feet, the chapters that most involve physical touch throughout the book, are perhaps the chapters that tie least concretely back to the central core of the argument Richardson and Wilken seek to make. The chapter on hands focuses much discussion on the haptic relationship between hands and mobile media, tracking where technology has improved in this area and where it still lacks in comparison to physical reality. Mobile media largely relies on contact with the hands to operate, which the authors position as the center of the chapter. Discussing feet, on the other hand, the chapter largely becomes about walking (which the authors call a sort of sense in itself) and geolocation through maps or games like geocaching and, of course, PokémonGO. Most interesting, though, is their discussion of "bodily disappearance" (p. 155) through step counters like FitBits, aggregate data from wearables like AppleWatches, and the lack of accommodation by this tech for people with disabilities. As a person with a disability who has a piece of wearable tech on nearly 24/7 (an OuraRing4) and who takes great interest in scholarship that attends to the ways in which disabled bodies are rendered invisible, I did find myself wishing for more than a paragraph on this particular thread of argumentation and feel it to be rife with potential for further inquiry.

Overall, I believe that Richardson and Wilken summarized their argument best when they stated:

> The dynamic shaping of our corporeal schemas is under continuous modification by artifacts, tools, techniques and more complicated technological ensembles, which are always-already embedded in a palimpsest of cultural milieus and collective habits. Mobile phones involve their own specific sensory modes of embodied use, demanding of us that we pay attention to the particularities of body-technology relations. (p. 138)

Their argument, refreshingly, is not centered in any way on the "good" or "bad" of mobile technology. The only value judgement placed is in regard to whether developers of mobile media consider

and make space for people with different kinds of disabilities, praising those that do make that space, allowing people to have greater access to both the virtual and physical worlds, as in the case of the touch chapter, in which they discuss the adaptiveness of vibrations on a cell phone that give a deaf or hard-of-hearing person the ability to distinguish information similarly to how we used to assign a specific ringtone or song to a person in our phones so we knew when they were calling. Otherwise, Richardson and Wilken explore relationships and potentialities between mobile media and different parts of the body without the air of looking to "fix" anything but instead asking the reader to more deeply consider those relationships in their own selves, the bodies of others, and how they may shift their own perspectives and assumptions to better understand and utilize mobile media as a part of the corporeal schema. This intervention provides important shifts in perspective back to the physical body with and through the use of mobile media, something that is frequently lacking in digital scholarship. The decision by Richardson and Wilken to explore the whole body provides space for future scholarship to take up the finer details of individual senses or body parts with a strong foundational base provided by the bigger picture set forth in *Bodies and Mobile Media*.