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To the Chair of the Selection Committee,

As a specialist in digital games (videogames), with an established publication record, and experience teaching both videogame criticism and design, I hope you will consider my application. Responding to the desired qualifications and experience within the application description, I believe my research in digital theory, including media archaeology, media-ecology, software studies, interactivity, media philosophy and game studies make me an excellent fit for the summer position. For an early career researcher, I have already gathered extensive teaching experience in a range of subjects at both The University of Glasgow's Film and Television department, and from the degree program at Fife College, Scotland. Although my focus has most often been on theoretical videogame criticism, I have always endeavoured to allow my interdisciplinary experience to shape taught courses, making them more philosophically and methodologically broad whilst satisfactorily theoretically deep.

I was awarded my PhD in 2017 from The University of Glasgow. In my thesis, "Videogame Ecologies: Interaction, Aesthetics and Affect", I engaged with international, independently developed digital games, analysing their underlying technical 'ecologies', suggesting how digital dependencies can prompt an engagement with the entanglement of matter and meaning discussed within new materialist scholarship. My interdisciplinary work required a novel methodology that combined the investigative, media archaeological practices inherent in code studies with the performance focused research of scholars such as Karen Barad and Jane Bennett. Engaging with specific game functions, I wrote numerous computer programmes that simulated elements of gameplay then close read the functions I had created, discussing their ecological nature, from the micro level outwards. In all, my thesis found a powerful correlation between the functioning of contemporary videogames and the recent ontological shifts within contemporary philosophy; just as Karen Barad has suggested a fundamental 'entanglement' and a drive to move away from thinking about 'things', focusing instead on phenomena, the digital media I creatively analysed revealed important 'intra-active' qualities that set them aside from other media. Videogames, I suggested – when read through my critical lens – are an invaluable philosophical tool for understanding recent innovations within the humanities. At present, I am working with Steven Connor and the Open Humanities Press towards a publication of the thesis.

If given the chance to teach this course, I would hope to put some of my research into play, exposing students to the cutting-edge theory in which my research was formed. However, I am just as aware of the long-history of digital games studies and how this can and should impact upon a course with a range of students. I would be sure to place equal emphasis on questions of narrative, representation, play and technology when developing a course document. In my research, I placed a great emphasis on ecological

issues concerning games, but was forced to refrain from exploring many of the current political issues surrounding race, gender and political motivations centered around gaming culture. If given the opportunity to teach this course, I would relish the opportunity to put my knowledge of these issues into practice and expand my own ideas through engaging with a diverse range of students.

I have three years' teaching experience in a broad variety of subjects. This, I believe, could be an invaluable asset to Wilfrid Laurier's online course as my teaching interests cross the boundaries of film studies/design but also transgress borders of digital technology and online media. Over the years in The University of Glasgow, I have been responsible for my own courses, lectured on others and provided seminar tuition for others still. In generating materials for the core course, Film Analysis, I endeavoured to stay true to the needs of the module while updating the course as much as possible to engage with contemporary concerns within film and media studies. In a similar fashion, in 2018 I have begun teaching on the Film History, Aesthetics and Genres course where I have helped Dr Rebecca Hamilton shape the course into an object and material focused course, developing new forms of assessment such as introducing a curatorial element into their work. While at Fife College, Dunfermline, in their creative industries department, I taught computer game design, animation, digital modelling, and computer programming. I was responsible for over one hundred students, with varying capabilities. My experiences with teaching conventional, close-reading centred film-studies, less conventional, micro-historical, object-centred film studies, as well as my experience with production and digital-media, have prepared me to contribute to a wide range of potential subjects at any University.

Given the commitment to digital theory and practice expressed by Laurier, I believe my teaching experience and desire to build new courses could be an excellent contribution to the department. I am excited by the opportunity to take up supervision of students in an online capacity, and would do my best to foster collegiate and engaging experience for all involved.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you will extend an invitation to interview to enable us to further discuss the future of game cultures at Wilfrid Laurier.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Conor Mckeown