Individualized Communal Experience: Players of *Detroit: Become Human*

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ABSTRACT

I argue that digital interactive fiction – narratives that evolve in response to viewer choices – represents a distinct form of narration and participant engagement that leads to a seemingly paradoxical communal immersion experience. In this paper, I used an online survey with qualitative and quantitative items to study the reception of Quantic Dream's *Detroit: Become Human*. I ask: which factors contribute to immersion and drive choice-making in a branching narrative? Which elements affect the replay value? I show that this game promotes high immersion through players' agency. It also allows for a seemingly paradoxical individualized communal experience leading to replay to explore the different narrative paths. Finally, it promotes imbalanced empathy for the different protagonists.

Keywords

immersion, players, replay, digital interactive fiction, choices, narrative exploration

INTRODUCTION

Players of digital interactive fiction question and combine media. They are active, make choices, identify with the characters, and participate in a communal experience in an individualized way. Digital interactive fiction – narratives that evolve in response to players' choices – places the audience at the core of its narrative: the spectator becomes, in a way, the "creator" of content. I understand interactive fiction as a story (including a branching narrative, a storyworld, and multiple characters) designed by an author. In this story, the author leaves multiple narrative choices to the player who plays as one or several characters. The player can then compare their choices with those of other players. Interactive fiction is a format that works on repetition: repetition of actions and choices inside the story, and then repetition of the whole story to make different choices and experience it in a unique way.

However, considering the player as a single entity in digital interactive fiction can lead to misconceptions. Gaming platforms all benefit from a constant internet connection that allows games to display choice stats, and most new releases today benefit from a communal investment in the narrative content (Albrechtslund 2015; Tseng et al. 2015). For instance, forums dedicated to fan communities of a specific title or franchise have been increasingly popular since the 2000s. On video game platforms, users can access data representing the choices made by other players. This data allows users to compare

their own choices against those other players have made. The comparison between the user's choices and other players' choices is a recent phenomenon that has spread out to become one of the more important characteristics of interactive fiction. Furthermore, the multiple possible narrative paths embedded into digital interactive narratives are discussed on social media (sub-Reddit group, Facebook group, YouTube playthroughs, Discord servers, Twitch, Twitter, etc.) with users asking for advice for other playthroughs. Therefore, the individualized experience of the interactive narrative in video games is rendered communal by the existence of the data and forums dedicated to discussions linked to users' choices.

In this paper, I choose to focus on the video game, *Detroit: Become Human* (Quantic Dream 2018), for two main reasons: it involves multiple playable characters in the narrative and includes a visible flowchart. This decision tree indicates which choices lead to which narrative path and contains users' data for each choice. The player's actions do not just affect whether the characters live or die, but they are also major narrative elements with more variation than any game before it. The game has proven to be highly popular: ten weeks after the release of *Detroit: Become Human* in May 2018, 1.5 million players had spent 20 million hours in the game (Holl 2019). In January 2023, the studio had sold over 8 million copies (Carter 2023).

In this video game set in Detroit and the year 2038, androids are part of everyday life. They are thought of as replacing usual services – house cleaning, babysitting, police, sexual work – and have all become very affordable. The video game's narrative focuses on the appearance of "deviant" androids who have begun to feel empathy. The player makes choices for three different characters, who often have contradictory goals: Connor, a police investigator android, whose mission is to track down deviants, accompanied by Hank, a detective with a profound hatred for androids; Kara, a deviant housekeeper android, who tries to save a little girl from her abusive father by taking her to Canada; and Markus, a deviant caretaker android, who wants to free the other androids and ends up leading the liberation movement in Jericho. After each chapter of the game, a flowchart appears on the screen which only unlocks the choices the player has made but allows them to compare their choices with those other players (or their "friends" on the platform) have made. In the game, each of the characters can die (including player characters), and the narrative continues without their storyline (except for Connor, who is just replaced by another model, erasing the user's previous attempts at making him a deviant).

The existing research on *Detroit: Become Human* focuses on three main elements: its representation of contemporary issues, decision making and morality, and empathy. Daniela Bruns argues that the game addresses social issues such as discrimination and social injustices (Bruns 2020) while Leach and Dehnert focus on the representation of race, gender, and sexuality in the game (Leach and Dehnert 2021). Since the game places a heavy emphasis on moral or immoral decision-making, several researchers focus on this aspect, with Arrambide et al. demonstrating that participants mobilize their moral intuitions to make decisions inside of the game, and that their decision-making is also influenced by how much they care about the characters (2022). However, they fail to examine that this game specifically creates dilemmas in which the moral decision is often not the one that benefits the character. Engels and Evans, through qualitative study, suggest that the game allows for moral reasoning in a philosophical way (2022). Finally, Holl and Melzer, through the study of the flowcharts' data, find that moral choices in the game are more likely to be made under time constraints and with non-human characters (2021).

Some researchers have also focused on the factors favoring empathy in the game. Pallavicini et al. analyze the way in which video games can promote empathy-related

skills, even if they might not address the complexity of the human empathy experience. They argue that immersion and interactivity both contribute to encourage cognitive perspective-taking and elicit affective empathy (2020). Craig et al. argue that character attachment and empathy for the character guide decision-making in *Detroit: Become Human* (2020).

If several studies have focused on morality and decision-making, only Pallavicini considers immersion as a factor encouraging empathy in the game. Although some researchers have criticized the use of the term "immersion" in game studies for its confusing meaning, suggesting instead to use the term "incorporation," (Calleja 2011) I use the term *immersion* in relation to story *transportation* (Green et al. 2004). Players who become immersed in – or transported into – a storyworld become emotionally and cognitively engaged in the story and can picture events taking place vividly (Gerrig 1993; Green et al. 2004). Additionally, in the case of digital interactive fiction, they can clearly envision the consequences of their choices in the story world.

I hypothesize that interactive fiction video games increase immersion and first-person identification for characters while promoting a paradoxically individualized communal experience. Because digital interactive narratives are co-constructed (they evolve depending on users' choices), it is impossible to understand them entirely without focusing on the player's experience.

As David Cage, the writer and director of the game asserts, *Detroit: Become Human* is a video game with a high replay value:

> *What we do know is that there is an extremely high percentage of people who finish the games. We have always been above 75%, which is a remarkably high percentage because the industry has an average of 20%. 15 to 20% of the people who start a game finish it, and with our games, the number is higher than 75%. […] We also track people who start again, and we know there is a bit more than 50 to 60% of the players who replay at least one branch, and we know there is about 3 to 5% of players who platinum the game, which means they have seen absolutely everything[1].*

The purpose of this paper is to analyze how players respond to an interactive fiction video game that incites them to replay, and what consequences this type of narrative has on immersion, empathy, and identification with the characters.

In this study, I ask:

1) Are interactive fiction games immersive and what contributes to immersion?

I hypothesize that interactive fiction games are highly immersive and that the individualized story as well as the world-building and compelling characters contribute to immersion.

2) How do people make choices in interactive fiction?

I conjecture that the players anticipate the outcome of their choices by referring to the context given by the fictional world that they are playing in. This would corroborate Craig et al.'s analysis of players strategizing in their gameplay by anticipating the outcome of their choices (2020).

3) Do players replay the game, and why?

I hypothesize that most players do replay the game to explore different narrative elements of the game.

4) Do players feel empathy for all characters or is it one-sided?

I predict that players feel empathy for specific characters but not necessarily balanced empathy for all of them.

5) Can interactive fiction video games induce behavioral change?

Based on the Proteus effect (Yee and Bailenson 2007), and the player's projection onto their avatar, I conjecture that interactive fiction video games can affect players' attitude shortly after finishing the game.

METHODS

Researchers have used a variety of methods to study this game. Qualitative methods include interviews (Arrambide et al. 2022; Craig et al. 2020) and study of the game's data (Holl and Melzer 2021; Szilas and Ilea 2014). However, interviews are limited in the number of participants (Arrambide et al. study counts 19 participants and Craig et al.'s 18) and the reliability of the proceedings' analysis. Regarding the study of the game's choice data, since there is no known information behind the treatment of the game's data in the flowchart owned by Sony, this method also has its limitations. I chose to focus on a post-experience questionnaire with aggregated scales, involving both quantitative responses (participants were asked to rate their answers on different scales) and qualitative responses (participants were asked to respond to questions in writing).

Participants

I recruited a total of 430 participants via forums dedicated to *Detroit: Become Human* on Reddit, Facebook, as well as on my personal Twitter account. Participants could take the study only if they had played the video game *Detroit: Become Human*. Participants volunteered for the study and were not remunerated. Of the 430 participants, 268 filled in the whole questionnaire. I opted to only keep participants who completed the entire survey. The average age of participants was 23 years old. Of the 268 participants who answered the question, 103 participants identified as male, 137 as female, 21 as non-binary, and the rest preferring not to state their gender. This gender repartition already goes against the general bias stating that video games are mostly directed towards a male audience. Participants' location was not disclosed.

Measures

Participants filled in a Qualtrics survey. They first had to answer questions pertaining to their first playthrough of the game and choice-making, such as "How did you make your choices in your first playthrough of *Detroit*?" and "Each time you made a choice, did you think about what the outcome could be?".

The next section focused on immersion in the game with the following question: "How strongly were you immersed in the story?" Participants were then asked to rate their control over the story, empathy, and side-taking. They also had to answer questions pertaining to moral choices in the game and to the interface, some of them being open-ended questions such as "If you made an immoral choice (such as taking the bus ticket and lying or sacrificing your friend), how did you feel about that?".

Participants were then asked if they replayed the game. If they did, they had access to another portion of the questionnaire focused on subsequent playthroughs. All participants could then answer a series of questions pertaining to the real-life impact of

the game and their enjoyment of the game. They then replied to a few questions regarding their demographics and their gaming and video streaming habits (for the full list of questions, see Appendix A).

RESULTS

Gaming Practices

Since there are now multiple ways in which players experience a game, I questioned the players on their experience playing *Detroit: Become Human*. Participants were able to select multiple answers (Table 1). If most of the participants reported to having played alone (83%), an important number of participants also reported to having watched an online playthrough (36%) and having played the game while their friends were watching (31%). There is a diversity of gaming practices associated with this game.

	Number	Percentage
Played alone	222	83%
Watched an online playthrough	97	36%
Watched their friends play	45	17%
Played and their friends were watching	82	31%

Table 1: Gaming practices of Detroit: Become Human.

Immersion and Empathy in *Detroit: Become Human*

Participants report being highly immersed in the video game. On a scale from 0-7, where 0 was "not at all" and 7 was "very much," participants rated their immersion in the video game at 6.49. The control they feel over the story is also high at 5.37.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
Immersion	6.49	0.95
Control	5.37	1.41

Table 2: Immersion and Control in Detroit: Become Human

Detroit: Become Human has the particularity of having three different playable characters. As such, when measuring empathy in the video game, we must measure the empathy for each of the different characters: Connor, Kara, and Markus. I asked participants to rate on a scale from 0-7 how much they felt they were in the shoes of Connor, Kara, and Markus. Participants rate their empathy for each character highly (See Table 3), with Connor being the character with whom participants empathize the most. However, we can also see that results differ wildly from participant to participant with the standard deviation always being above 1.69.

Empathy with	Mean	Standard Deviation
Connor	5.61	1.69
Kara	4.84	1.92

Markus	4.92	1.78

Table 3: Empathy with the characters in *Detroit: Become Human*

In *Detroit: Become Human*, all the characters can die. I wanted to see if the fact that all the playable characters could die affected the way players made their choices. Participants rated this on a scale from 0-7. The results show that this element does alter the way users play, with responses rate ranging from 3 to 7 on average, with a mean of 5.22.

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
Do you think the fact that all characters can die altered the way you played?	5.22	2.07

Table 4: Characters' death affects choice-making

Choice-Making in Detroit: Become Human

Interactive fiction video games are choice-based, and the choices made by the players alter their narrative experience. I asked participants to provide their reasoning behind making choices in *Detroit: Become Human*. Participants reported making choices mostly because it corresponded to what they would do (5.50) and because they benefited their favored character (4.50). However, these reasons vary widely between participants.

Reason for making choices	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**
According to the characters' personality.	3.62	1.96	<.001
Most interesting for the story	3.61	2.07	<.001
What I would do	5.50	1.78	<.001
Benefit favored character	4.50	2.14	<.001
Worst possible choice to see what would happen	1.00	1.76	<.001

Table 5: Reason for making choices in *Detroit: Become Human*

Choice-making is also linked to the outcome of the choice. I asked participants if they thought about the outcome before making a choice in the game, and if the choices lead to predictable outcomes according to them. Finally, I also asked them to which degree they enjoyed the hard moral choices in the game. All these questions were rated on a scale from 0-7.

	Mean	**Standard Deviation**
Think about outcome	5.67	1.61
Predictable outcome	3.61	1.50
Enjoy hard moral choices	5.59	1.52

Table 6: Choices and their outcomes in *Detroit: Become Human*

The results show that participants do think about the outcome of the choices before making them (5.67), but the choices they make do not necessarily lead to predictable outcomes according to them (3.61). However, they still do very much enjoy these choices (5.59).

Another question raised in the introduction of this paper is how much do participants replay the game. To the question "Did you replay the game?", of the 268 participants interrogated, 221 participants said yes (83%), while only 47 said no (17%). Participants report replaying the game 5 times on average (SD: 4.94). Now why do users replay the game? I asked participants to choose all the reasons they had for replaying the game, and the result can be found in Table 7.

Reasons for replay	Number	Percentage
Discover the parts I had missed from the flowchart.	191	71%
Regretted some of my choices and I wanted a perfect playthrough.	113	42%
To pick the least selected choices.	45	17%
To pick the most selected choices.	19	7%
See what happened if one or more of my character(s) died.	106	40%
Wanted all the characters to survive.	117	44%
Wanted to experience the story from the point of view of another character.	86	32%
Wanted to make the same choices and rewatch the story unfold.	63	24%
Wanted to change a few key decisions to experience a different story.	185	69%

Table 7: Reasons for replay *Detroit: Become Human*.

A majority of participants reported that the main reasons for replaying the game were to discover the parts they had missed from the flowchart (71%) and to change a few key decisions that would allow them to experience a different story (69%). Therefore, regret doesn't appear to be a key reason for replaying, while narrative exploration appears to be one.

When participants replay the game, how much do their choices differ? I used the three main series of choices referenced in the in-game survey: towards the end of the game, the player has access to a survey that is allegedly from CyberLife (the company creating androids in the game). This survey includes the following choices that I decided to keep for my questionnaire: "Which choice did you make when you had to accept Alice's identity with Kara?"; "Which choice did you make when you had to decide to be pacifist or violent with Markus?"; "During your first playthrough which choice did you make when you had to decide to shoot Chloe with Connor?" I first asked participants which choice they made during their first playthrough, and then asked the participants who had confirmed to have replayed the game, which choice they made during their second playthrough. This allows me to show how similar or dissimilar the choices made

by players are from one playthrough to another. This analysis is performed on the 221 participants who have replayed the game. I discarded the answers from participants who responded "I don't remember" for either the first or second playthrough. I asked participants to rate on a scale from 0-7, with 0 being very similar and 7 being very different, how similar or different their choices were compared to the first time they played. Participant rated the difference between their choices in the first and subsequent playthrough at 4.39 on average (SD: 1.92). They envision their choices to be quite different from the choices made during the first playthrough (Table 8). People mostly made similar choices during their second playthrough for Markus and Connor, but different choices for Kara.

Choice	Similar	Different
Close or distant Kara/Alice	59 (29%)	143 (71%)
Pacifist or violent Markus	160 (74%)	56 (26%)
Shoot or not shoot Chloe with Connor	119 (56%)	92 (44%)

Table 8: Similarity or difference between playthrough for different choices

However, we can wonder why the 47 participants who didn't replay the game chose to do so. Did they choose a specific path during their playthrough that can be considered as "more satisfying? I performed an Anova comparing participants who have replayed the game with participants who didn't for each of these three choices. As with the previous table, I excluded participants who didn't remember their choices.

Choice	Number of participants (No replay)	Number of participants (Replay)
Close to Alice	43 (98%)	210 (97%)
Distant to Alice	1 (2%)	7 (3%)
Pacifist Markus	43 (91%)	183 (83%)
Violent Markus	4 (9%)	38 (17%)
Not shoot Alice with Connor	42 (91%)	191 (87%)
Shoot Alice with Connor	4 (9%)	28 (13%)

Table 9: Similarity or difference between playthrough for different choices and between replay and no-replay participants

Interestingly, we can see that participants who replayed the game mostly made the same choices as those who didn't during their first playthrough. Furthermore, the choice that is the most similar between people who replayed and did not replay the game (being close or distant to Alice with Kara), is the one that varies the most during replay.

However, where those two groups vary is indeed in their implication in online communities. Participants who haven't replayed the game are almost equally not implicated and implicated in online communities (Figure 1), while participants who have replayed the game are widely implicated in online communities (Figure 2).
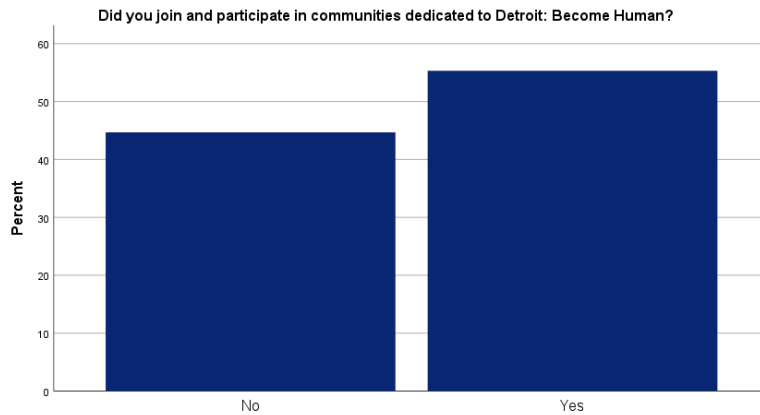
Figure 1: Implication of no-replay participants in online communities.
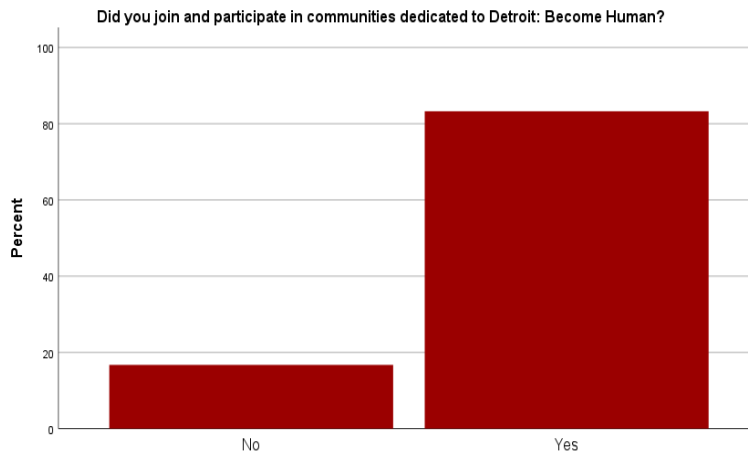
Figure 2: Implication of replay participants in online communities.

Enjoyment

I asked participants to rate on a scale from 0-7 each factor that contributed to their enjoyment (Table 10). I performed a T-test, comparing these distinct factors. According to participants' answers, the principal factors contributing to their enjoyment of the game were the empathy for the characters (6.25), the interactive design of the game (6.25) and the different storypaths (6.12). However, all the factors were rated highly. Therefore, it appears that it is a combination of factors that contribute to the players' enjoyment.

Factors contributing to player's enjoyment	Mean	Standard Deviation	P-value
Immersion	6.07	1.36	<.001

Identification with the characters	5.44	1.71	<.001
Empathy for the characters	6.28	1.39	<.001
Interactive design	6.25	1.28	<.001
Universe	5.87	1.48	<.001
Difficulty of choices	5.31	1.63	<.001
Different storypaths	6.12	1.32	<.001

Table 10: Factors contributing to player's enjoyment in *Detroit: Become Human*

Real-life impact

I asked participants a series of three questions regarding the impact the game has had on their own life: "After playing Detroit, in your real life, have you felt like…" 1)"You could see your own choice map in your head while making important decisions?" 2) "The different choices appeared more clearly to you?" 3) "You wished you could have made a different choice?". Participants rated each of these choices on a scale from 0-7, 0 being "Not at all" and 7 "Very much."

After playing, participants felt like	Mean	Standard Deviation
They could see their own choice map while making important decisions	2.57	2.28
The different choices appeared more clearly to them	2.84	2.15
They wished they had made a different choice	3.51	2.39

Table 11: Real-life impact of choice-making in the game.

There is a slight effect of the game on participants' real-life choice-making. Mostly, what we see here is that the impact does differ from participant to participant, since the standard deviation is high. In other words, while playing the game has a real impact on choice-making in some participants' lives, it has no impact at all on other participants. To see if this effect is due to replaying the game or not, we performed an Anova comparing the replay to the no-replay group.

	No replay		Replay		
After playing, participants felt like	M	SD	M	SD	P-value
They could see their own choice map while making important decisions	2.57	2.33	2.57	2.27	<.001
The different choices appeared more clearly to them	3.21	2.21	2.76	2.10	<.001
They wished they had made a different choice	3.49	2.37	3.52	2.40	<.001

Table 12: Real-life impact of choice-making in the game between no replay and replay participants.

Overall, there is no clear trend showing that replaying the game affects the real-life impact of choices on users. However, participants who haven't replayed the game see their own choices more clearly after playing the game only once.

DISCUSSION

This study has three main findings. Firstly, *Detroit: Become Human* promotes high immersion for players. Secondly, players experience a paradoxical individualized communal experience, in which the story changes according to their choices, and they also compare their choices to those others have made in online communities, or those made by their friends, which incentivizes them to replay the game. Finally, *Detroit: Become Human* promotes inbalanced empathy, since participants show more empathy for Connor than for any of the other playable characters. More precisely:

Participants rate their immersion in the game as remarkably high. This can be explained by the interactive nature of the narrative (rated first as the reason for enjoyment by participants) and the control they exert over it, as well as the fact that they feel like their choices matter since all the characters can die and not come back in the narrative.

While most participants claim to have played the game alone, many of them also played while their friends were watching and watched online playthroughs of the game. In the introduction, I argued that interactive fiction leads the way for an individualized communal experience. This finding may support the previous hypothesis. Players of *Detroit: Become Human* enjoy making choices in the narrative with a community of other players (48% of players affirm having played the game with friends or having watched their friends play). 83% of participants replayed *Detroit: Become Human*, 5 times on average. Participants who replay the game are also usually involved in online communities. People who replayed the game reported wanting to discover the parts they missed from the flowchart and changing a few key decisions to experience a different story. These two factors are linked to the communal experience and narrative exploration we hypothesized: users see on the flowchart the choices they have missed and discuss them on dedicated online forums. Users who replay the game tend to be much more involved in online communities than people who don't. There are two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, participants could have played the game, replayed it and wanted to continue their narrative experience by joining online communities. On the other hand, it is possible that players discuss the experience they had with the game on online forums and compare the narrative they experienced to the ones that other people have experienced. This could have incited them to make different choices with a focus on narrative exploration. There is a correlation, but it is unclear at this stage if replaying causes implication in online communities or the contrary. However, this communal experience is key to users reexperiencing the game.

There is no perfect playthrough in the narrative: most users who have replayed the game do not tend to make vastly different choices from people who haven't replayed it. Furthermore, when they do replay the game, their major choices rarely vary. This can be explained by the selection of choices the designers of the game have made in the questionnaire. Kara being close to Alice is an ongoing choice in the game, meaning that several different choices lead to Kara being close or distant to Alice. Markus being pacifist or violent during the rise of androids is confined to several chapters at the end of the game, while Connor's choice to shoot or not shoot Alice to prove that he has developed empathy is a one-time choice. There is, however, also another explanation: participants claim that they empathize with Kara the least, therefore changing their choice during the second playthrough could be easier for them, since there are less

emotional stakes at changing her behavior. Another result that favors this hypothesis is that people claim to make choices to benefit their favored character.

When users make choices inside the game, they tend to evaluate the possible outcomes of the choice they are about to make. They mostly make choices that they would make for themselves, but they also make choices that benefit their favored character. However, they often feel like the actual outcome doesn't match their projected outcome, while still very much enjoying these choices. This result may appear surprising. However, it can be explained by the fact that if the actual outcome perfectly matched their expected outcome, then there would be no surprise, and therefore less enjoyment.

Empathy for the characters is not necessarily one-sided, but it is not balanced. Users tend to experience more empathy for Connor (5.61) in the game and less for Kara (4.84). This might be explained by the fact that Connor is one of the only characters that can or cannot become a deviant by developing empathy. Another explanation is that Connor is the only white male protagonist in the game, while Kara, the only playable female character, is mostly defined by care: she takes care of Alice. Empathy in *Detroit: Become Human* is not balanced: users tend to care more about one character instead of caring equally for all of them.

Finally, I was interested to see if playing an interactive fiction game has any impact on the way people envision choice-making in their real life. Building on the Proteus effect (Yee and Bailenson 2007), I hypothesized that it did. However, the results are mixed. While it has no impact on some participants, other participants report it influencing how they view their own choices in real life. This effect should be studied in future research.

Limitations and future directions

In this study, I chose to use a post-experience questionnaire that I advertised both on private accounts and on social media accounts dedicated to *Detroit: Become Human*. Since many participants came from social media accounts that focused on the video game, there is a clear bias towards the fandom. It would be interesting to reproduce a similar study that is not necessarily targeted towards the fandom to see if the results are consistent.

The post-experience questionnaire (instead of a series of interviews or the study of the game's data) allowed consistency in the questions asked and high participation – which is also linked to the study being advertised in online fandoms. To my knowledge, this is the highest sample of players' responses regarding Quantic Dream's *Detroit: Become Human*. I tried to palliate some of the known limits of post experience surveys (difference between the real experience and the recollected experience, social desirability bias, bias related to the context of questionnaire answering and the literacy level, etc.). I offered participants the option to choose "I don't remember" if they did not recollect certain elements of their gameplay. By adding open-entry questions, I was also able to identify that the literacy level of participants allowed all of them to understand and participate in the questionnaire. While it is difficult to get rid of the social desirability bias, especially in the context of a fandom study where participants might want to be perceived as "the best fan," I believe that the number of participants might help palliate this limitation.

Additionally, since this study only focused on Quantic Dream's *Detroit: Become Human*, it is not possible to generalize the results to all digital interactive narratives. In order to do so, one would have to perform a similar study on other story-driven games such as Dontnod Entertainment and Square Enix' *Life is Strange* series (2015-2021) or

Telltale Games and Skybound Games' *The Walking Dead* (2012-2018). By looking at the results for the questionnaire across games, we would get a better understanding of players' experiences in digital interactive narratives. This would help develop both our academic understanding of the field and help drive the creation of game narratives by identifying the elements that forge this individualized communal experience of digital interactive fiction.

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APPENDIX A – QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE STUDY OF RECEPTION OF *DETROIT: BECOME HUMAN*.

Question	Answer
In which context did you play Detroit?	Multiple choice (check all that apply) - Alone - Watching a playthrough online - Watching friends playing - I played and my friends were watching
How did you make your choices in your first playthrough of Detroit?	0-7 (Not at all – All the time) - I made my choices according to the characters' personality. - I made my choices because I thought they would be the most interesting for the story. - I made my choices because they corresponded to what I would do.

	- I made my choices to benefit my favorite character. - I made the worst possible choice to see what would happen.
Each time you made a choice, did you think about what the outcome could be?	0-7 (Not at all – Of course)
Did the choice seem to lead to predictable outcomes according to you?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
How long did you approximately spend looking at the choice-tree at the end of each chapter?	0-7 (I skipped directly to the next chapter – I studied carefully which choices I missed)
Did you ever use the pause function before making choices?	0-7 (Never – All the time)
If yes, why?	Multiple choice (check all that apply) - Because I needed more time before making my decision. - Because I looked for the consequence of these specific choices on YouTube - Because I looked for the consequence of these specific choices on Twitch. - Because I looked for the consequence of these specific choices on forums (such as Reddit).
Do you think the fact that all characters can die altered the way you played?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
How?	Textbox entry
During your first playthrough which choice did you make when you had to accept Alice's identity with Kara?	Multiple choice: - Distant to Alice - Close to Alice - I don't remember
During your first playthrough which choice did you make when you had to decide to be pacifist or violent with Markus?	Multiple choice: - Pacifist - Violent - I don't remember
During your first playthrough which choice did you make when you had to decide to shoot Chloe with Connor?	Multiple choice: - Shoot - Not shoot - I don't remember
How strongly were you immersed in the story?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
Did you feel like you were in control of the story?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
Did you feel like you were sometimes getting tricked by the choices and their outcomes?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
Did you feel like you were in the shoes of …?	Three 0-7 scales (Not at all – Very much) - Connor - Kara

	- Markus
How much did you fear for…?	Three 0-7 scales (Not at all – Very much) - Connor - Kara - Markus
Did you feel like you sided with one character more? Which one(s)?	Three 0-7 scales (Not at all – Very much) - Connor - Kara - Markus
Can you explain what guided you to side with this/these character(s)?	Textbox entry
To which degree did you enjoy the hard moral choices?	0-7 (Not at all – Very much)
If you made an immoral choice (such as taking the bus ticket and lying or sacrificing your friend), how did you feel about that?	Textbox entry
Why do you think that the game forces you to make such decisions?	Textbox entry
Did you read the articles in the magazines in the game?	0-7 (Not at all – All that I could find)
To which degree was the interface with Chloe a positive part of your game experience?	0-7 (Not at all – Very positive)
Did you check…?	Two 0-7 scales (Not at all – All of them) - the bonuses? - the answers to the questionnaire?
Did you ever stop playing a version of the game before it was saved?	Multiple choice: - Yes - No
Why?	Multiple choice (check all that apply): - I felt like I didn't like the consequence of the choices I made and I wanted to start again. - I didn't want to play the game any longer. - I had to stop because I had something else to do.
Did you replay the game?	Multiple choice: - Yes - No
If yes, how many times?	0-20
Did you replay specific chapters?	Multiple choice: - Yes - No
If yes, which ones and why? (If you remember the title of the chapter, please include it, otherwise no need for precise title, just describe quickly what the chapter was about).	Textbox entry
Why did you decide to play the game again?	Multiple choice (check all that apply): - I wanted to discover the parts I had missed from the choice-tree.

	- I regretted some of my choices and I wanted a perfect playthrough. - My choices were made by a majority of people, and I wanted to see what happened when I picked the least selected choices. - My choices were made by a minority of people, and I wanted to see what happened when I picked the most selected choices. - I wanted to see what happened if one or more of my character(s) died. - I wanted all the characters to survive. - I wanted to experience the story from the point of view of another character. - I wanted to make the same choices and rewatch the story unfold. - I wanted to change a few key decisions to experience a different story.
When you replayed the game again, how similar or different were your choices compared to the first time?	0-7 (Very similar – Very different)
To which degree were you comparing the choices made the first time to those made subsequently during the other playthroughs?	0-7 (Not at all – Constantly)
During your second playthrough which choice did you make when you had to accept Alice's identity with Kara?	Multiple choice: - Distant to Alice - Close to Alice - I don't remember
During your second playthrough which choice did you make when you had to decide to be pacifist or violent with Markus?	Multiple choice: - Pacifist - Violent - I don't remember
During your second playthrough which choice did you make when you had to decide to shoot Chloe with Connor?	Multiple choice: - Shoot - Not shoot - I don't remember
Please explain your motivation for changing or not your choices.	Textbox entry
Do you feel like the game made you more sensitive about certain issues? Which ones and why?	Textbox entry
After playing *Detroit*, in your real life, have you felt like…	Three 0-7 scales (Not at all – Very much) - you could see your own choice map in your head while making important decisions? - the different choices appeared more clearly to you? - you wished you could have made a different choice?
Please explain in a few sentences	Textbox entry
Did you join and participate in communities dedicated to *Detroit: Become Human*?	0-7 (None – I am an active participant)

What were you looking for in these communities? And what did you find?	Textbox entry
Which of the following contributed to your enjoyment?	Seven 0-7 scales (Not at all – Very much) - Immersion - Identification with the characters - Empathy for the characters - The interactive design of the story - The universe - The difficulty of the choices - The different storypaths
What attracted you to *Detroit: Become Human* specifically?	Textbox entry
Now a few questions on your habits. Have you read/played/watched…?	Multiple choice (check all that apply): - *Adventure*? - *Choose your own adventure* books? - Netflix's *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*? - Netflix's *Minecraft: Story Mode*? - Netflix's *You vs. Wild*? - Netflix's *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. the Reverend*? - Netflix's *Animals on the Loose: A You vs. Wild movie*? - Quantic Dreams' *The Indigo Prophecy*? - Quantic Dreams' *Heavy Rain*? - Quantic Dreams' *Beyond: Two Souls*? - Dontnod Entertainment's *Life is Strange?* - Dontnod Entertainment's *Life is Strange, Before the Storm*? - Dontnod Entertainment's *Life is Strange 2*? - Dontnod Entertainment's *Twin Mirror*? - Telltale Games' *The Walking Dead?* - Telltale Games' *The Wolf Among Us*? - Telltale Games' *Game of Thrones: A Telltale Games Series*? - Telltale Games' *Batman*?
How old are you?	Number entry
How do you identify?	Multiple choice: - Male - Female - Non-binary / third gender - Prefer not to say
How many hours on average per day do you play video games?	0-15 (hours/day)
How many hours total have you spent on Detroit?	0-40
How many hours on average per day do you watch streaming services?	0-15

ENDNOTES

[1] Victoria Lagrange, "Interview with David Cage," July 13, 2021.Translated from French: « Ce qu'on sait c'est qu'il y a un pourcentage très élevé de gens qui finissent les jeux. On a toujours été au-delà de 75%, ce qui est un pourcentage très élevé, puisque l'industrie en moyenne est autour de 20%. 15 à 20% des gens qui commencent un jeu le finissent, c'est plus de 75% sur nos jeux. Donc c'est une vraie fierté, et c'est l'histoire qui fait ça, c'est le fait que les gens veulent savoir où se termine l'histoire, où ça va. On regarde, on traque aussi les gens qui recommencent et on sait qu'il y a un peu plus de 50 à 60% des joueurs qui rejouent au moins une branche, et on sait qu'il y a à peu près 3 à 5% des joueurs qui platinent le jeu, c'est-à-dire qu'ils ont vu absolument tout. ».