Press X for Meaning: Interaction Leads to Identification in *Heavy Rain*

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ABSTRACT
Our phenomenological study of *Heavy Rain* reveals the pleasure found in the discovery of the game's interaction schema and the immersion into each character that this somewhat paradoxically enables. This schema is presented through diegetic quick time events presented in a way that is faithful to the conditions the game characters find themselves in. The match between player action and character action contributes to the process of identification and serves to make the choices feel more real to the player. A new type of "interaction-image" is theorized as a hybrid of game action and controller options that invites the contemplation of the virtual, further reinforcing the process of identification with the game's characters. The interaction-image evolves from Deleuze's categorization of cinema images and their relationship to space and time.

Keywords
Interaction scheme, phenomenology, Heavy Rain, Deleuze, character identification

INTRODUCTION
"How far are you prepared to go to save someone you love?" That is the question posed to Ethan Mars by his son's kidnapper in the game *Heavy Rain* (Quantic Dream 2010). It turns out that this question is more heavily loaded than its surface interpretation entails, due to its deeper implications for the player controlling him. *Heavy Rain*, produced by Quantic Dream and released for the PlayStation 3 in 2010, immerses players in a film noir-styled interactive narrative videogame with a plot that centers on investigating the "Origami Killer", and the difficult trials that the kidnapper forces upon Ethan to save his son. Players control the actions of four protagonists through the use of context sensitive commands during "quick time events" (QTE) with intricate controller combinations that represent a rich motion vocabulary. Besides Ethan, these characters are Scott Shelby, a private investigator making his own inquiries, Norman Jayden, an FBI profiler who arrives to assist the local police, and Madison Paige, an investigative journalist. The game is broken into scenes in which the player directs a pre-designated character. Player choices have lasting repercussions in this intricately branching plot, including meaningful character death (Wei and Calvert 2010). The richness of the interaction scheme and its tight coupling with the characters' actions leads this to become the site of interactive pleasure for players. In fact, the controller maneuvers required of players replicates the on-screen action in a kind of physical mimesis that contributes to players experiencing identificatory fusion (Waggoner 2009, 37) with the characters. We found that *Heavy Rain*

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uses cinematic, narrative, and interactive interface techniques to support this process of identification.

Styled as the next generation of "interactive movie" (Chester 2009), *Heavy Rain*'s cinematic qualities lend themselves to analysis by cinematic theory that explains how audiences respond to certain phenomena. Our analysis of *Heavy Rain* is grounded in Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 2002) and the research methodology derived from his work. It proceeds through three phases: phenomenological description, where we find a reflective distance to focus our attention on our conscious experience of a phenomena; phenomenological reduction, where we come to an understanding of the qualified essence of the phenomena; and phenomenological interpretation, where we attempt to understand how the phenomena is connected with our consciousness (Sobchack 1992). After progressing through these phases, we found the core themes that characterized interaction within *Heavy Rain* to be: "interaction-images" elegantly depicting character choices, a continual revelation of character and narrative potential as we mastered the interaction scheme, and the playful but often challenging identification process with the characters thereby facilitated. As we played, a tight feedback loop with the characters emerged that oscillated between potential interactions and the results of our choices. This process of enacting character actions led us back to the original question posed to Ethan, "how far am I prepared to go?" The narrative theme of moral choices that underscores *Heavy Rain* further facilitated this by presenting legitimately difficult situations.

Throughout the game, interactive possibilities are displayed in diegetic space using a third-person perspective camera that frames characters and their choices, inviting players to closely identify with the process. *Heavy Rain* tends to constrain the camera, although players can typically access a long shot for ease of navigation during movement. The game camera also changes angles periodically to break up the scene in the same way as the cinematic technique of editing. Certain scenes however, such as character interaction, fully constrain the shot for better framing. At those times, potential actions in the environment are represented by white glyphs resembling the controller action required to initiate them. Dialogue possibilities and their requisite button press orbit the character. When R2 is held, internal thought processes that reveal inclinations and misgivings replace these dialogue choices. Figure 1 is taken from an early scene (Chapter 9: Hassan's Shop) where Shelby is questioning the father of a previous victim when a robber bursts in. In this screenshot, the L1 and R1 shoulder buttons are held, keeping Shelby's hands in the air. Meanwhile, four mutually exclusive dialogue options dance around the screen, inviting the player to make a choice.

Figure 1: Shelby confronts a robber (Source: Heavy Rain; Copyright: Sony Computer Entertainment 2010)

We extend the framework of the cinema theorist Deleuze and call these composite images that characterize play in *Heavy Rain* "interaction-images". Their overall function is to establish a connection between character and player, based on how they reveal possibilities. The interactive choices available to players are blended into the game environment, fundamentally complicating their relationship. This effect captures a character's mental and physical state on screen and replicates the effect in a player's vision using fundamental cues such as motion. For example, in urgent situations, such as the one displayed in Figure 1, the options orbit the character faster and shake and become less legible. The diegetic nature of these interaction-images produces a strong connection between character and player action.

DELEUZE, CINEMA, AND GAMES

Deleuze's theories provide insight into the process of audiences relating to on-screen events as it occurs in cinema. In *Cinema 1*, Deleuze discusses how classical narrative cinema is dominated by the "normal" functioning of the sensory-motor schema, which results in the primacy of what he calls the movement-image (Deleuze 1987). The "movement-image" is consistent with the classic Hollywood aesthetic that dominated theatrical cinema until its hegemony began to erode after World War II. This aesthetic privileged seamless narrative above all other cinematic variables. Film craft was dedicated to an absolute commitment to suspension of disbelief and transparent experience of plot and story. The constructive vehicle was the traditional continuity editing system, which provides rules for editing shots including when to cut and from which angles to film actors. The purpose of this system was to create a "realistic" and naturalist time and space, within which the development of plot events could be observed with minimal ambiguity. Deleuze states that this mode of cinema is filled with direct representations of human activity that are captured and displayed rationally. Audiences understand them accordingly, expecting naturalistic causal relationships to apply.

After the Second World War, an alternative cinematic aesthetic was developed - particularly in the international cinemas such as those in France and Italy. Bordwell refers to this alternative aesthetic as "art cinema", a form that privileges the internal psychology of character and an associated ambiguity of plot over the determined and deterministic narrative of the classical Hollywood cinema. The art cinema "… defines itself explicitly against the classical narrative mode, and especially against the cause-effect linkage of events." (Bordwell, 2002, pg. 95) In this context, this is consistent with Deleuze's conception of the “time-image”. The time-image describes scenes involving an interval that “provokes undecidable alternatives” (2003, 84) and opens the viewer up to the “virtual” – the realm of possibility. In them, the normal flow of time, chronos, is “destroyed” (p. 81), or at the least, “sick” (p. 120). This is contrasted with the movement-image, where “time is presented in its empiric form; successive moments.” The intervals found within time-images are a “time of becoming, which does not so much follow empiric reality as have a profound connection with thought. The time-image forces one to think the unthinkable, the impossible, the illogical and the irrational” (2003, 120).

Time-images are not sequentially determined like the traditional "movement-image", but dynamically situated at what Deleuze terms the “plane of immanence”, where many divergent possibilities arise. Rodowick describes the plane of immanence as a place where “a stone is not a solid object but a mass that vibrates with molecular motion, absorbing or reflecting light, expanding with heat and contracting with cold” (1997, 31). Pisters identifies the power of the “molecular” to reveal important character attributes, especially those that may contrast with what she calls the molar or normative reading (2003, 58). The fluid quality of the "time-image" and its placement at the plane of immanence decouple the portrayal of character from the determinism of the classic narrative plot. This cinematic form places character at successive moments of choice, allowing for unexpected plot progression and outcomes. Closure is often refused, leaving the viewer to imagine the future choices the protagonist will face, and the open set of outcomes they may experience. This cinematic technique disconnects the player from the constant drive to move forward and achieve ludic supremacy and reconnects the player to the character’s internal, narrative goals.

Heavy Rain similarly complicates temporal progression, particularly at the point of character interaction. Then, the on-screen action waits, briefly, as if the game is holding its breath in anticipation. This is what we see as the "interaction-image", a logical extension of Deleuze's cinematic constructs into an explicitly interactive environment. At these times, the characters’ sensory-motor functions are distorted and they hold still as they await guidance. This works since gamers are already used to the gaps caused by waiting for interaction since many games apply different kinds of temporal logic. To explain these different logics, Waggoner supplements chronos – linear time – with kairos, a humanly constructed sense of time based on subjective importance; in this system, “staged kairotic moments can be far apart in chronos” (2009, 60). Therefore, players’ wanderings and delays need not affect major plot events, which are triggered when players confront them. The result is narrative freedom to pursue individual goals without disrupting the nasty fate that no doubt waits in natural chronological time.

This “kairotic” temporal logic frequently governs scenes in *Heavy Rain*. For example, in the first scene (Chapter 1: The Mall), shown in Figure 2, Ethan loses track of one of his sons, and runs through the mall, searching for Jason and his red balloon. The screen

becomes blurry, and the sounds of footsteps and a quick heartbeat predominate as adrenaline surges through Ethan. We are given the option to call out for him, and we repeatedly press the button, uncertain whether it will make a difference, but feeling like it's the right thing to do. This goes on for an indefinite period of time as Ethan bumps into strangers and other children that he mistakes for Jason. The plot only progresses when we force Ethan to leave the mall, but this process stretches the moments of loss and frantic search in a compelling way.

Figure 2: Ethan searches for his son (Source: Heavy Rain; Copyright: Sony Computer Entertainment 2010)

HEAVY RAIN, GAMEPLAY, AND STORY

Bogost calls this sense of prolonging one of the main strengths of *Heavy Rain*, even as it distances it from linear cinematic narrative editing (2010). Instead, it captures the "central sensations" of the experience – in this case, of losing a child in the mall. Later, in Chapter 3: Father and Son, it's Ethan's turn to take care of Shaun after the divorce that followed the loss of Jason. In the periods between helping Shaun with homework or preparing him food, Ethan sits and stares until the player uses the controller to make him stand up. Bogost claims, "the silent time between sitting and standing offers one of the only emotionally powerful moments in the entire game." For him, these moments invite the player to consider what Ethan might be thinking about, "to linger on the mundane instead of cutting to the consequential." For Bogost, then, this gap is filled through empathy for and contemplation of characters. This emotional weight was likewise present for us while watching Ethan brood. In this way, *Heavy Rain* resists linking narrative advancement entirely to movement, which Manovich states is frequently the case in contemporary video games, resulting in the transformation of the player into a kind of flaneur exploring the digital wilds (2001, 268). Instead, *Heavy Rain* complicates the position of the player by mingling it with the cinematic tradition of the spectator as voyeur, resulting in a complex hybrid.

This alternative temporal logic disrupts, but does not endlessly delay, which is critical to maintaining tension. In the scene displayed in Figure 1, Shelby may get shot if we wait too long to command him! According to Massumi, these moments are governed by affect (unqualified intensity) rather than specific emotion. This is the sensation that accompanies the beginning of a selection: "the incipience of mutually exclusive pathways

of action and expression, all but one of which will be inhibited" (2002, 28). These buzzing options represent the "pressing crowd" of incipiencies and tendencies, the realm of potential. Massumi identifies this as Spinoza's "passional suspension" (2002, 31) or Deleuze's "emergence" (2002, 32). These affective moments are akin to a "critical point" or bifurcation point in quantum physics that "paradoxically embodies multiple and mutually exclusive potentials, only one of which is selected" (2002, 32). With this presentation of options, *Heavy Rain* makes literal what is usually left implicit in cinema.

Naturally, learning *Heavy Rain*'s system of interaction is necessary. At times, especially near the beginning of the game, it's easy to fail sequences or take undesired actions due to the combination of controller unfamiliarity and time pressure. Over time, however, completing the complex command sequences became enjoyable, such as when Ethan squirms between arcing electrical transformers as part of a trial in Chapter 22: The Butterfly. Mactavish identifies the "close relationship between the progression of visual and auditory effect and increasingly difficult obstacles" as a strong structural agent (2002, 39): the reward for emerging from one obstacle is another one, often accompanied by "dazzling spectacle." Mactavish borrows Aarseths's dialectic of aphoria (formal, localizable roadblocks) and epiphany (sudden solutions) to account for this pleasure, while stressing the role that audio-visual spectacle plays in reinforcing this cycle. In *Heavy Rain*, this pattern is also demonstrated in Chapter 17: The Bear, a trial in which Ethan must drive the wrong way down the highway. As Ethan sits on the on-ramp, a cloud of anxious thoughts circles him and prepares players for high-stakes action. After revving the engine, shifting the clutch, and hitting the gas, Ethan's car began to rush down the highway. Cars sped around him, and we had to make choices rapidly. The result was a reasonable albeit exaggerated replication of driving. We rotated the controller left to avoid a highway worker, then right to dodge an oncoming car. Each of these choices showed as a "time-limited" option, so unlike sequences in a calm setting, quick reaction is required. Each time a command sequence is performed successfully, Ethan's car evades some disaster with a spray of sparks or a screech of tires. We felt like we were in an emergency situation, immersed in a situation where the ability to quickly assess the situation and react accordingly was put to the test.

Weinbren (2002) identifies this kind of situational "role-play" as the drive for mastery, one that is based on the ability to understand consistent rules such as an implementation of physical laws. Adaptability and familiarity with the game's consistent rules are privileged over the arbitrary tests of hand-eye dexterity that sometimes characterize games using QTE interaction systems. *Heavy Rain*'s interaction model adds contextual action to familiar cinematic rules of scene construction, resulting in a uniquely paced experience. Exhilaration is one of the results that Weinbren identifies, and was something felt in Chapter 43: Face to Face, where Shelby gets his revenge on a mobster who ordered a hit by shooting his way into his mansion. The game features limited gun play, so it wasn't entirely clear a shoot-out was the inevitable result once Shelby burst in, gun drawn. In the previous chapters, the R2 button had sufficed for the occasional pistol shot, but here the game demanded timed presses of one of the four shoulder buttons, depending on where the enemy was located relative to Shelby. Unsure where the next foe would emerge, we perched over the controller; we positioned our fingers appropriately and blasted our way through. Shelby got winged a few times, but in the end he earned entrance to the goons' boss to ask his questions.

When it comes to action sequences, the deeply contextual nature of *Heavy Rain*'s interaction model comes to the forefront. In a given situation, the controller sequence players are required to perform is based on the relative physical positions of characters within the scene. These sequences are not random challenges to the players' capacity to react quickly. Instead, a mapping between the characters' positions and the physical controller is made. Our understanding of this was cemented in Chapter 26: The Golf Club, where Shelby plays golf with a man he is investigating. They discussed how skill in golf is based on the essential ability to grip the club properly. We then had to perform a combo sequence where we had to hold down buttons with both hands, then slowly raise the controller, then quickly yank the controller downward. The in-game dialogue mirrors what we must do to control Shelby's golfing – mimic essentials of grip control to make a successful shot.

The contextual nature of these controls can be demonstrated by comparing two action sequences involving journalist Madison Paige. In Chapter 10: Sleepless Night, we are first introduced to Paige as several intruders accost her in her apartment late at night. In the extended fight scene that ensues, the emphasis is on her attempt to escape and she only attacks out of opportunity or necessity, often using objects from her house to help her. In Figure 3, we have successfully gotten Paige's right arm loose and raised it (by holding the X button on the controller) and we must now free her left arm (using the Square button within the given time restriction).

Figure 3: Paige fights for her life (Source: Heavy Rain;
Copyright: Sony Computer Entertainment 2010)

In Chapter 39: Sexy Girl, Paige slaps a sleazy club owner during an interrogation and in this more controlled sequence, the buttons required alternate between the left square and the right circle, depending on the hand she's about to use. She is in control in this scene, and the inputs are not time-limited. Instead, they correspond to parts of her body rather than elements in the environment or an intruder's bodily attacks. Both physical and narrative context are therefore taken into account by the interaction scheme.

This contextual scheme is not without its weaknesses, and further demonstrates the necessity of mastering the system, or as Galloway (2006) puts it, learning the underlying algorithms of the game. Players must learn how *Heavy Rain* typically favours contextual consistency rather than object-based consistency. For example, some doors are opened with an upward motion on the control stick, while others require a downward motion, depending on where the characters hand is located or where the door's opening mechanism is located. The same motions can also used to put a car in gear or break a hold during a fight. The consistency is based on the required gesture as the game tries to map through to the real world. This mapping allows the game to create some expectations without pre-defining each character's total available actions as some games do (e.g. press X to Attack, press Y to Block). According to Galloway, games must be played to understand their grammar of action, whereby human activities are coded for machine parsing: video games create their own gestural grammars (2006, 3). The gestural grammar of *Heavy Rain* is deeply contextual and players must consider what is possible in the environment to respond to it. The rhythm of the game is created in *Heavy Rain's* equilibrium between diegetic machine and operator acts: the controller inputs are mapped and extended onto the environment.

Since *Heavy Rain* is designed as an interactive narrative, it's also vital that it conveys a rich and coherent story experience. *Heavy Rain* does so using a two-tiered branching structure, where decisions the player makes affect both the current scene and future scenes. Chapters are added or removed from the plot depending on player choices and whether a given character is alive or dead. The final interactive chapter, "The Old Warehouse", is the most complex and has at least 12 different potential scenarios (Wei and Calvert 2010) available. The epilogue of the game likewise selects from 18 cinematic cut-scenes (Wei and Calvert 2010). Learning how choices affect the narrative is also a significant aspect of learning the game's algorithmic nature. In fact, one of *Heavy Rain*'s strengths is its ability to handle player failure. We were unaccustomed to failure being an option that allows continued play, and therefore expected to "lose" the game multiple times. For example, when we failed Ethan's escape scene in Chapter 41: On the Loose and he was caught by the cops for the second time, Ethan was incarcerated as a suspect for the rest of the game. We then continued playing the game without him as a playable character.

This process of scene selection corresponds to what Manovich identifies as database narrative (2001, 218), a technique that pulls material from the available pool of possibilities and cuts it together appropriately. *Heavy Rain* operates in this fashion as it responds to player success and failure at the scene level. Manovich's take on algorithmic (2001, 222) logic also describes how failure is handled in a given scene. For Manovich, the loop is a narrative engine (2001, 314) that bridges linear narrative and interactive control and allows interactive narratives to become the sum of "multiple trajectories." *Heavy Rain* manages this bridging as well. In a sequence closely matching Manovich's "loop," we had to rock a baby to sleep as Shelby in Chapter 16: Suicide Baby. Given the delicate nature of the operation, we had to "smoothly unfold" the controller sequences, which we failed many times. In this case, although we were literally sent back to the start of the care-giving loop and experienced frustration, we were able to attribute it to Shelby's unfamiliarity with babies and thereby gave it narrative salience.

Dominic Arsenault applies Odin's theory of *narrative attunement* that leads the viewer to

“vibrate to the rhythm of the events told” (Odin 2000, 39 as translated in Arsenault 2008, 89) to video games in order to explain how this narrative salience is developed in the player’s mind. He describes two operations in this process. The first is fictionalization, which subordinates the techniques and mechanics in support of the narrative in the player’s mind. The second operation is the establishment of a strong parallel between the action performed by the audience and that performed within the on-screen action. “The relations created between the spectator and the filmic signifier (the filmic relations) are constructed as homologous to the relations existing between the elements of the diegesis that are prevalent in the unfolding of the story (the diegetic relations)” (Odin 2000, 42 as translated in Arsenault 2008, 89). Arsenault indicates that gameplay is inevitably linked to narrative as players thereby make meaning of the actions they undertake. This is because the “game loop” is not just a referee upholding the rules, but also the storyteller communicating the fictional world and the consequences of the player’s actions. We find this to be a fitting description of the way *Heavy Rain*’s control scheme creates a physical analogy between the filmic and diegetic relations to promote a strong connection between player and character.

Heavy Rain’s successful integration of story and control scheme can also be understood using the concept of “narrative interface” (Bizzocchi, Lin, and Tanenbaum 2011). Nominally, interface controls are hyper-mediated (Bolter and Grusin 1999) and reduce the immersion the player experiences. However, with appropriately designed interfaces, integrating narrative salience can play an active role in counterbalancing this reduction. Bizzocchi et al identify four design approaches, of which *Heavy Rain* uses three. First, the aesthetic design of the game contributes to a highly naturalistic “look and feel.” Typical reminders of character and game status are not present, and the interface commands that are there are presented in a very meaningful way, as we have discussed. Second, the third-person perspective of the camera is also chosen to frame the current character in a way necessary to the cinematic aesthetic of the game. From this distance, the player can view the environment and the ways the character can interact with it, as well as the results on the character’s body, something a first-person perspective would mask. Third, *Heavy Rain* relies strongly on behavioural mimicking in its controls. The sequences the player engages in correspond in direction and type to the physical actions required of the character. The resulting synergy along these three axes results in a "narrativized interface" - one that directly supports and incorporates narrative experience. We also believe that this interface provides an example of what Deleuze’s “plane of immanence” looks like in a game. These interaction-images present vibrating dilemmas for the player to consider, frozen in time.

PLAYER, CHARACTER, AND IDENTIFICATION

A critical result of combining *Heavy Rain*’s deeply contextual and visually involved interaction scheme within an intricate branching narrative is player identification with the characters. Murray Smith delineates the limits of identification with character in the cinema. He first cites Noel Carroll, who disagrees with even the use of the term "identification" because it implies a 'fusion' between spectator and character (Smith 1995). Smith goes on to build his own dynamic for the construction of engaging characters, which he calls “the structure of sympathy”. He identifies three distinct phases in this dynamic: first the "recognition" of the uniqueness of a character by the viewer, second the "alignment" phase where viewer builds her narrative knowledge of the character's actions and motivations, and finally the "allegiance" phase where the

viewer makes a moral evaluation of the character.

Smith's dynamic structure of engagement with character is more actively instantiated during the playing of a videogame. In the case of player-avatars, the process is driven directly by player choice, and may overcome Carroll's reservations from the world of cinema. This is Waggoner's position, drawing on Gee's identity theory concepts to highlight the importance of projective identity (2009, 15) in game-play. Through immersion, players experience identificatory fusion (2009, 37) with the characters they control and develop a complex contextual identity through "being and not-being" the character. In *Heavy Rain*, one can see a much more robust version of Smith's "structure of sympathy", with the game player directly implicated in the moral and ethical evaluation of characters whose actions she herself chooses.

Figure 4: Ethan prepares himself (Source: Heavy Rain; Copyright: Sony Computer Entertainment 2010)

This process is further intensified through what Massumi calls viscerality: a "rupture in the stimulus-response paths, a leap in place into a space outside action-reaction circuits. Viscerality is the perception of suspense. […] The space of passion" (2002, 61). This experience leads the body to bridge the gap and identify with the perceived consequences. We experienced this first-hand in Chapter 27: The Lizard. In this trial, Ethan is instructed to chop off a finger using one of the rusty implements in an abandoned apartment, as shown in Figure 4. We felt his hesitation when we held down the square button to force his left hand to the table, and took deep breaths with him when we held down the control stick to force him to exhale. Sobchack refers to the synesthesia present in cinematic images of sensation as our dominant senses of vision and hearing speak to our other senses (2004, 67). Marks calls this a "haptic visuality" that makes a visual connection between our skin and the "skin of the film" (2000, 132). This process explains the visceral discomfort we felt as we jerked the controller down to use the saw Ethan found lying around and experienced the horrifying results. While involving the controller goes beyond Sobchack and Marks' original intent of demonstrating the power of the image, in fact, doing so reinforces the strong visceral connection that is made by the player's complicity in enacting the appropriate controller gesture.

This highlights the nature of these moments of moral choice within *Heavy Rain*. The coupling between interaction-image and player perception (and visceral

reception) of consequence becomes the site of oscillatory pleasure within the work. At these times, players make choices that nominally disrupt the narrative of the game and create change within the interactive environment. However, upon closer examination, this interaction provides a powerful tool for reaffirming players' connections to the character they are controlling and their immersion within the virtual world through the arousal of affect and interest.

In Chapter 32: The Shark, Ethan's trial is to shoot a man in cold blood. While we are presented with the likelihood that this man is a drug-dealing lowlife, when Ethan bursts into his apartment with a gun, the dealer is reduced to begging for his life while proffering pictures of his children. We ended up pulling the trigger following some dubious internal moral mathematics, and the result was a gun blast, followed by Ethan vomiting. The camera then cut to the fallen photo of the murdered man's children. The spectacle of the killing engaged us with Ethan's decision-making process and his own visceral response, while furthering the narrative through the decision we had made. Another example occurs in Chapter 39: Sexy Girl, when Paige pretends to be an applicant dancer for a club to get an interview with the sleazy owner. She muses that this is the worst decision of her life, and this is quickly affirmed when the owner forces her to perform a strip tease at gunpoint. However, it is up to the player to decide how far she goes before distracting the man with a dance and subduing him with a lamp. The moral dilemma of the situation is emphasized when her nature as literal "animated fetish" becomes the "solution to an unbearable situation" (del Rio 2008, 36).

Since *Heavy Rain* incorporates what Elsaesser calls "productive pathologies" (Elsaesser 2009, 24) in its character design, this ability to highlight mental states is vital. The protagonists frequently experience altered mental states: Paige suffers from insomnia, Shelby is an alcoholic schizophrenic, Jayden is addicted to a drug that facilitates his high-tech augmented reality glasses, and Ethan suffers from morbid neuroses. While these pathologies aren't necessarily productive in the sense of helping their victims the way paranoia does in conspiracy films, they allow the game to disorient players and thereby set up compelling scenarios. The character of Paige is first introduced in Chapter 10: Sleepless Night and the player leads her through a terrifying fight sequence that eventually results in her death, unaware it is a nightmare brought on by the use of sleeping pills. This immediately sets up her insomnia as well as some of her other character traits. Jayden's withdrawal attacks also must be managed: misuse of the drug can lead to his death. Properly managed, his augmented reality glasses allow the player access to an investigative "mini-game" as seen at a crime scene in Figure 5. When using augmented reality, Jayden is in fact viewing the world of *Heavy Rain* in the same way as the player: a complex overlay of information and potential action requiring complex gestural interactions.

Figure 5: Jayden investigates clues in augmented reality (Source: Heavy Rain; Copyright: Sony Computer Entertainment 2010)

Ethan's phobia of crowds, similar to the mall where he lost his son, is also easily facilitated through the game's interaction schema. When he has to visit a bus station to retrieve the Origami Killer's instructions in Chapter 12: Lexington Station, we experienced Ethan's shaky vision and the game required complex control sequences to walk even a step farther. More than once, Ethan collapsed and had start over. Eventually, the people around him freeze into timelessness, and Ethan chases a vision of his dead son Jason and his red balloon, bowling over people as he goes. While Ethan chased after Jason in a scene that mirrors the opening chapter, we felt the depth of his longing and loss. This shaky mental state ties into the overall narrative and as a result of his occasional blackouts (one leads to Shaun being kidnapped in the first place), Ethan comes to believe he is somehow the Origami Killer, a red herring that helps to complicate the player's understanding of the character and their actual control over him.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have extended Deleuze's concepts of the movement-image and time-image to apply more directly to the images within games that are complicated by the inclusion of interfaces. These interaction-images contribute to an important phenomenon with the potential to reinforce the process whereby players identify with characters. They do so by first connecting players with the realm of potential as they are invited to make exclusionary selections, and then making them complicit in their intentions and actions. These intervals of emergence provide room for two layers of reactions: the visceral connection with characters that arouses affect, and the cognitive understanding of the character that develops into an emotional response. Both play a role in strengthening identification with each character and engage players in a process of becoming. Once players learn these "rules of the game," they are ready to play. The remaining question is,

"how far do they want to go?" Our analysis of *Heavy Rain* leads us to believe that it encodes a meaningful gestural vocabulary for interacting within the diegetic game world that is a hybrid of meaningful cinematic and videogame techniques. As a result, interaction-images become a primary site of meaning and pleasure as players are thereby challenged to understand and to enact.

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