

New Extremity, affect theory and the early digital games directed by David Cage

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INTRODUCTION

After 20 years of his career in the field of digital games, David Cage remains a very controversial person. The creator of the Quantic Dream studio based in France, and the director of five digital games, sparked a polarized criticism of his activity. Once revered for his innovative approach to the medium of the digital games (see for example Marak, 2015, p. 117), and even for the revival of so-called “interactive film” concept (Lessard, 2009), he has been recently facing accusations of racism, misogyny, and clumsy writing of games directed by him (Alexandra, 2018; Wiggins, 2017; Yin-Poole, 2017). Nevertheless, games such as *The Nomad Soul* (Quantic Dream, 1999), *Fahrenheit* (Quantic Dream, 2005), and *Heavy Rain* (Quantic Dream, 2010) were extensively cited by numerous game scholars in terms of blurring the boundaries between digital games and films, as well as delivering numerous variants of the player characters’ fate (Nixon & Bizzocchi, 2014; Pitrus, 2012; Pitrus, 2015, pp. 144-146; Wei, 2011).

This paper aims to give an insight into the aesthetics of the three mentioned early games directed by Cage which made them successful. As the theoretical approach, the affect theory of Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi was chosen. Although such an approach has been applied to *Heavy Rain* (Nixon & Bizzocchi, 2014), the paper also intends to put *The Nomad Soul*, *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain*’s aesthetics in the context of the larger simultaneous international cinematic phenomenon called the “New Extremity” (Quandt, 2004) or — for French films — *cinéma du corps* (Palmer, 2011, pp. 57-70). This movement has been discussed as responding to the affective turn in the cinema of 1990s and 2000s, which emphasized the role of sensory experience in the viewer’s exposure to the medium. Because Cage’s games were ostensibly marketed as “interactive films” or “interactive dramas” — not without success (Diver, 2015) — their connections with the cinematography of the time turn out to be inevitable.

Here, it should be noted that the paper concentrates only on Cage’s games, though affective violence on the computer/television screens exploded yet in the mid-1990s with the emergence of such titles as *Harvester* (DigiFX Interactive, 1996), *Phantasmagoria* (Sierra On-Line, 1996), *Postal* (Running with Scissors, 1997). These titles could also potentially contribute to the ludic equivalent of New Extremity, yet this paper includes only a narrow number of examples which more clearly reflect the dominance of this tendency not only in films but also digital games. Also, though in the 2010s Quantic Dream produced two post-

humanist games: *Beyond: Two Souls* (Quantic Dream, 2013) and *Detroit: Become Human* (Quantic Dream, 2018), this paper focuses on three games potentially fitting to the cinematic New Extremity: *The Nomad Soul*, marking similarities to the early stage of the movement; *Fahrenheit*, being its most important contribution to digital game language; and *Heavy Rain*, which serves here as the borderline example of the linkages to the cinematic movement.

MATERIALS

Affect theory and the New Extremity

Although James Quandt (2004) used the “New Extremity” term to describe the contemporary movement in French cinema between the 1990s and 2000s (for example the films of Bruno Dumont, Catherine Breillat and Gaspar No  ), the newest publications suggest that this term can be also easily applied to a broad range of the European films of the aforementioned period, featuring “explicit and often violent sex, actual sexual violence [...] and brutal physical violence” (Archer, 2011, p. 57). Some film historians, such as Alexandra West (2016), observe that the New Extremity which Quandt labels as deeply French is, in fact, an “intellectual sibling to the emerging trend of Torture Porn” (p. 6), in the manner of James Wan’s *Saw* (Wan, 2004). As Tina Kendall (2011) remarks, the New Extremity was a regressive movement which demonstrated the weariness of the sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by Georges Bataille’s works about the liberating potential of transgression as breaking the taboo (for example, see Bataille, 1962, pp. 35-39). Citing Steven Shaviro, Kendall writes that “discourses of ‘sex and transgression’ once championed by Bataille and other avant-garde cultural dissidents are now central to the functioning of the global capitalist marketplace” (Kendall, 2011, p. 45), and the directors of the New Extremity were ‘nostalgic for a time when transgression really seemed to mean something’ (ibid.). Nevertheless, as Asbj  rn Gr  nstad notes, “This wave of transgressive cinema altered the landscape of contemporary art cinema. It brought a new kind of viscerality to the form, a physicality more readily associated with mainstream movies and with pornography. It put the body-more often than not in states of agony, ecstasy or abjection-center stage, and it seemed mischievously intent on triggering scandals” (Gr  nstad, 2012, p. 3).

The theoreticians of the New Extremity have frequently underlined the role of affects in this international movement. Here, the notion of affect should be acknowledged. Gilles Deleuze treats affects as the opposition to emotions, a bodily meaning hard to interpret within the social framework (1997, p. 181). Brian Massumi adds that “affects are virtual synesthetic perspectives anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them” (Massumi, 2002, p. 35). Affects, which occur “too quickly to have happened” (p. 30), are — for Massumi — perceptions imminent for the human as the chattering animal. The boundaries between the immanence and transcendence which the Western European philosophers have established are re-conceptualized – which not only Massumi’s writing (p. 38) but also further research suggests (see Hemmings, 2005; Enderwitz, 2015).

Kendall argues that affect theory especially applies to the films of the New Extremity which would subvert “the legacy of Bataillean transgression,” smoothly adapted for the sexual marketplace of late capitalism (Kendall, 2011, p. 46). Adrienne Angelo also stressed out that the New Extremity’s corporeal and shocking depictions of sexual situations and violence are deeply rooted in Antoine Artaud’s concepts of the Theatre of Cruelty and André Breton’s Surrealist literature (Angelo, 2012, pp. 172-175). Citing the example of Noé’s *Seul contre tous* (Noé, 1998) — the film about a butcher leaving the prison for the murder of her daughter’s supposed rapist wants to take revenge on the world — Angelo points out especially the final sequence of the film. During this sequence, *Seul contre tous* shows respectively two endings: the first one ends with the butcher murdering his daughter and blowing his head out while using a gun (with flesh splattering on the floor), while the second one shows the butcher raping his child and then wandering about the grim future. Two different endings, representing both ‘the spectacle of sex’ and ‘the spectacle of violence,’ put the spectator in ‘a difficult position between passive witness to the crime and active observer of the butcher’s suicidal diatribe’ (Angelo, 2012, p. 175).

Affect theory and digital games

The example of *Seul contre tous* – the film representing two variants of the main character’s fate – is remarkable here because it blurs the boundaries between the New Extremity and digital games. While the films of the New Extremity, despite their corporeal potential, could not nevertheless allow the spectator to have an influence on their gruesome stories, digital games are generally perceived as affective because of their inherent ability to influence the player’s sensory experiences as such (Shaw & Warf, 2009), embedded in the player-interface-game circuit. As Aubrey Anable highlights, “video games are affective systems. [...] From pressing buttons on a controller to navigating through a virtual world, feeling pleasurably immersed in a landscape or mission, to tapping and swiping brightly colored candy on a mobile phone, [...] [v]ideo games ask us to make choices, and they ask us to operate within the sets of constraints or rules that govern those choices” (Aubrey, 2018, loc. 130-134). Therefore, one cannot deny that while we play games, the games also play us — play with our expectations about the content, even if immersion in some cases becomes emersion, breaking up the illusion of participating in the virtual spectacle (Kubiński, 2014). However, in early digital games directed by David Cage, the affect is especially underlined, as it will be shown.

METHODS

This research mixes the elements of comparative analysis and the framework of affect theory. During the research, three aspects of the games have been examined: the tactile, the corporeal, and the intermedial ones. Tactility is here understood as the “contact between perceiver and object represented” (Marks, 2000, p. xi), though as Laura Marks suggests, it can relate both to sensory and visual sensations in the situation where “the tactile memory is encoded audiovisually” (Marks, 2000, p. 130). Corporeality is defined as relation between bodies which stays in opposition to the spirit. Finally, intermediality is understood in a narrow sense of intermedial references as defined by Irina Rajewsky: “Rather than combining

different medial forms of articulation, the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means” (Rajewsky, 2005, pp. 53-54). This is an important notice because Cage’s early games in many aspects imitate the cinematic means of expression, not only in their references to specific films but also in their structures.

The tactile in Cage’s games

The Nomad Soul, developed in 1999, begins with the main character, a policeman Kay’l, emerging from the void during his escape and asking the player that he “must transfer your soul into my body” (Quantic Dream, 1999). After receiving the player’s positive answer, Kay’l performs a metempsychosis simulation and says, “Now your soul occupies my body” (Quantic Dream, 1999). Afterwards, Kay’l dies yet in the beginning, with his soul being possessed by an evil entity. When the monster leaves, the player takes control of the policeman’s body. Then, the player needs to find himself in the new situation that he perceives; the player’s dialogue lines with his wife Telis, his superior from the police station, and other characters are designed so that the player is put in the role of a person who lost his memory.

During an investigation about the death of his partner from police, the player is confronted with variable mechanics. For example, he explores the game world from the third-person perspective by walking around, but also fights with enemies in the manner of 1990s fighting games like *Tekken* (Namco, 1994), with the camera fixed from the side perspective, or even shoots the antagonists like in first-person shooters such as *Doom* (id Software, 1993). During the battle, the player can easily die, but in that case, the player does not end. Instead, the player’s “soul” is transferred to another body of new gender, appearance, and statistics. After that, the game continues, though it is possible to load the last save state. Even though, the player has to kill his character at least once, because a scripted core makes his avatar run over by a car. Moreover, transferring the player’s “soul” to other bodies is required to resolving numerous clues, for example to gaining access to restricted zones which only the specific avatars can penetrate. The body serves here as a useful proxy for performing the tasks assigned to the player, but also underlines the main recurring theme of the game; in *The Nomad Soul*, the linkage between tactile and spiritual entities is unstable, and the central idea of the game perhaps anticipated Noé’s *Enter the Void* (2007), where the main character’s soul wandered through the world after him being shot by the police. Noé was directly inspired by the Buddhist religion, despite declaring no faith in afterlife: “I don’t believe in life after death. But I still enjoyed the idea of doing a movie that would portray that collective dream, that collective need” (cf. Lambie, 2010).

Cage, despite declaring Atheism (cf. Kelly, 2012), explored in *The Nomad Soul* — just like Noé — some tropes of the Buddhist religion. In *Fahrenheit*, developed in 2004, he alluded also to the Nietzschean philosophy. One of the main characters in the game, Lucas Kane, during the first sequence ritually murders an innocent man in the coffee bar’s bathroom, jabbing him repeatedly, like in the cathartic ending of *Twenty-nine Palms* (Dumont, 2003). In

extremely short cinematic shots, the game shows the person who makes Kane his puppet and performs the killing himself with the candles in his room. Therefore, the player is persuaded that the member of a mysterious sect possessed Kane's soul. Here, the player has no control of Kane; it is after the crime that the player's agency can affect the further fate of the first person whom he controls.

Of course, when Kane escapes the bar, the player gains control of two other characters, police officers Carla Valenti and Tyler Miles, who pursue Lucas. The player's agency is then stretched into several persons. However, *Fahrenheit* — as Mirosław Filiciak suggests — emphasizes its attachment to cinema, giving the player only relative freedom of having influence on the main protagonists' decisions: "the impression of immersion in the diegesis that the title evokes comes mainly from the film techniques — so clear that one has the impression that the creators deliberately 'remind' the audience of the analogies to the film" (Filiciak, 2014, pp. 111-112). Rather than letting the player play freely, the game throws him into several situations that require spontaneous actions of him. For example, the casual activity of Kane — working in the office — becomes over-dramatized. In the level playfully named "Alternate Reality," the devilish powers suddenly attack him when he is at work. The quick-time events unfold during which Kane runs away from monsters, and the player needs to repeatedly push his controller's buttons to complete the sequence. Rapid close-ups to Kane's face (the visual affects) accompany the immersive mechanics (the procedural affects) that make the player aware of mental phantasms which cause Kane's suffering. The whole game relies on Kane's internal struggle between his nihilistic tactility and devilish spirituality. If the player reaches the end of the game, Kane — just like the titular Nomad Soul from Cage's previous game — dies only to be resurrected as the hardy warrior preparing to the last battle with the forces of evil.

Reincarnation is then linked to two Nietzschean concepts: the death of God and the overman. Nietzsche's famous statement urges to reevaluate the hierarchy between God and humans: "God remains dead! And we have killed him! [...] Is the magnitude of this deed not too great for us? Do we not ourselves have to become gods merely to appear worthy of it!" (Nietzsche, 2001 § 125) Let us return to the murder of the poor man at the beginning of *Fahrenheit*. Kane, as every human of the Nietzsche's Western world, commits a symbolic murder not only on the pedestrian but also on God whom this pedestrian seems to represent. Even though, Lucas cannot fully detach himself from Christian ethics, especially because his brother is a Roman Catholic priest. The game severely punishes the player for not helping a child drowning in an icy pond, which can even result in Kane's depression from grief and his suicide at the early stage of the game (see Fahey, 2010). Paradoxically, the player needs to convert Kane's initial amorality (one of the books which probably inspired Lucas to kill an innocent person is Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra* from his library) to keep him, if not an ordinary Christian, then at least the extraordinary Saviour.

In *Heavy Rain*, released in 2010 by Sony Computer Entertainment, the (anti-)religious tropes somehow return (in the persona of a devout Catholic), yet the sensibility of characters

becomes more emphasized than the spiritual motives. It is necessary to underline that every one of the four playable characters suffers from health problems. Ethan Mars, an architect, loses his son after a rapid blackout which returns later when his son is kidnapped. Madison Paige, a journalist, suffers from insomnia. Norman Jayden, an FBI agent, is addicted to liquid drugs and his virtual reality goggles which help him investigate for kidnapper known as the Origami Killer. Finally, Scott Shelby, a private detective, suffers from asthma. Therefore, each of the characters has — or had — traumatic experiences which affect the further gameplay.

The health problems of the playable characters are portrayed gruesomely which forces the player to identify with them. For example, Madison's first level "The Sleepless Night" constitutes a nightmare which the player is not initially aware of. In the sequence, the player steers Madison in her lingerie during the night, when suddenly several burglars enter the room and try to kill her. The level is so constructed that it ends with Madison sexually assaulted or killed in her nightmare before she wakes up. The quick-time event mechanics which accompany the sequence are improved in comparison with *Fahrenheit*; while defending Madison from the burglars, the player confronts the transparent interface consisting of pulsing or wobbling icons representing the buttons of the controller. Instead of *Fahrenheit*'s static camera movements, the virtual camera in *Heavy Rain* vibrates to increase the tension which the player feels. This process fully involves the player in the game to the point that makes him hardly aware of the mechanisms steering the player-interface-game circuit, regardless of the controller being used (Pitrus, 2012, pp. 220-221). Also, further levels allow the player to experience the health problems of the other characters. For example, in the level titled "Welcome, Norman," Norman suffers from vertigo because of his drug overdose; then, the camera blurs, the interface buttons displayed on the screen nod, and the character's movement itself is slowed down. Therefore, the player confronts himself with expressionist, subjective images of his characters' imagined unusual experiences.

In certain levels, the affective qualities of *Heavy Rain* become highly emphasized. For example, Ethan, to find his kidnapped son, needs to perform degrading tasks to receive scraps of the place when the son is trapped. In one of the levels, "The Lizard", Origami Killer demands Ethan to cut his finger. The level when the self-mutilation has to take place is rusty, like after the conflagration. In such an environment, the player has a limited amount of time to find a tool to cut Ethan's finger, as well as to alleviate his probable pain. Nevertheless, the act of self-mutilation is hard to take for the player, not only because he takes responsibility for the task accomplished, but also due to Ethan's expressive, even naturalistic utterance of the pain. Here, the affects serve as the means to cause the player's disgust and shuddering, even laughter resulting from strain, as several YouTube "let's play" videos show (farfromsubtle, 2012; Smolders, 2012). One can be sure, though, that *Heavy Rain* does not leave its players indifferent.

The corporeal in Cage's games

The second affective factor which contributes to gameplay in early Cage's games is an obsessive depiction of sexuality. During each of the mentioned titles, the player can engage in a sexual encounter with a woman. This is not an obligatory activity, and it has little impact on the player character's fate. Yet, if the player shows initiative, he can launch a scene which serves for the sexual stimulation purposes. In *The Nomad Soul*, the sex scene does not require any interim actions of the player and is clumsily staged (the characters make love in the clothing textures). Yet, during the scene, the player experiences a series of expressionist camera takes: rapid close-ups and wide-angle lens suggest that something is wrong during the act. Indeed, having achieved some progress during the work as a policeman, the player receives a message during which his wife, adorned with blood, ask him for help. Later, it turns out that the player character's love interest mutated into a monster.¹

Compared to the *The Nomad Soul*'s clumsy sex scene, the sexual encounter in *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain* requires mindful pressing the controller's buttons rhythmically, though there is a different approach to showing the act itself. In *Fahrenheit*, where Lucas has a chance to make love to his former girlfriend, the sexual act is animalistic; the male protagonist repetitively copulates entirely naked with his ex-love interest, taking the "missionary" position. On the contrary, the possible sexual encounter between Ethan and Madison is sanitized; the player initially spends time triggering buttons responsible for kissing and touching Madison, and only after such sensual foreplay he can observe the copulation between both characters, though without obscene details.

Constant depictions of sexual behaviours in early Cage's games unavoidably connote the landmark films of the New Extremity. These are not only the titles by French directors like Bruno Dumont, particularly known for explicitly graphic films such as *La Vie de Jésus* (1997) and aforementioned *Twentynine Palms*; but also by the foreign ones like Lars von Trier, especially *Idiots* (1998), and *Antichrist* (2009), with scenes of graphic violence and naturalist sex owing a debt to French surrealist art (Hobbs, 2015, p. 37). Of course, one can dismiss an argument that sexual encounters in Cage's games link them to the New Extremity as too risky. However, the mechanics of the aforementioned titles contains another remarkable feature revolving about the biological needs of humans — the possibility of urination. In *The Nomad Soul*, *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain*, the player can use a urinal, with the camera taking several shots from different angles, depicting the male character pouring, though without showing the details. Again, this is not an obligatory activity, and one can easily skip it during the gameplay. However, urination as a biological action was the characteristic feature of the early cinema of Bruno Dumont, whose aim was, as Aleksander Kmak says, to "emphasize the presence of the viewer's body, which does not passively

1 One can here note that David Bowie, the author of *The Nomad Soul*'s soundtrack who falsely called himself a bisexual, was deeply involved in the project (Edge Staff, 2013). This shows in provocative sexual references. *The Nomad Soul*'s world is filled with characters wearing clothes revealing the abdomen, regardless of their assigned gender; also, the sexuality of in-game personalities singing Bowie's songs in underground bars is put into question. The blurring of clear sexual partitions goes along with uncertainty about the presence of aliens, though. In this case, the disruptive mutation of the player character's wife would allude to the AIDS epidemic, and thus link *The Nomad Soul* not only to the New Extremity but also the New Queer Cinema.

perceive film stimuli, but at a very fundamental level — excitement or looking away — is involved in what the film depicts” (Kmak, 2018, p. 213). These actions help the player identify with the playable characters whose possible actions make them more affective, closer to the (pre-)human behaviour (even though these behaviours are scripted and embedded in the ostentatiously cinematic style of Cage).

The intermedial in Cage’s games, or: are these European or U.S. works?

In the previous sections of the paper, the European film directors were the main objects of references. However, as it had been said before, Cage’s early games paid homage not only to the European cinema but also — or foremost — to the U.S. For example, in *Fahrenheit*, there are obvious references to particular scenes from the U.S. films. These included Kane’s struggle for life in a corporate bureau, directly borrowed from *Matrix* (Wachowskis, 1999), or Carla’s walk through the prison’s corridor which Cage stole from *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991). *Heavy Rain* is a more problematic example, though. Of course, *Se7en* (Fincher, 1995) and *The Usual Suspects* (Singer, 1995) were among the sources Cage officially admitted to using during its development (cf. Gadiano, 2016). However, Cage was also inspired by South Korean art crime film *Memories of Murder* (2003) by Bong Joon-ho, which complicates the liaisons between Cage and U.S. cinema. Also, while the aforementioned finger-cutting scene seems to be inspired at first by Torture Porn films in the manner of *Saw*, Cage took it from real life:

There are two specific moments. The initial idea for the game came from when I lost my son in a crowded mall, so that was a very strong personal event. The second moment was when I was a kid I had my two fingers cut... so that’s actually happened to me and I know what it feels like (Cage, 2010).

This is a very important quote because it shows that Cage had been himself put in very affective, borderline situations (accidental self-mutilation, a loss of son) which contribute to his further understanding of digital games as the affective medium. One has also to notice that just like von Trier in *Dancer in the Dark* (2000) and *Dogville* (2003), Cage turned his traumatic experiences into exaggerated phantasmagorias about such places as the United States. Surely, *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain* take places in the United States, their heroes are of American nationality, and most of all, these games were primarily intended for the North American audiences. Nevertheless, these games portray the U.S. as phantasmal nightmarish place, where bigotry and religious fanaticism dominate (the sects in *Fahrenheit*), violence is the primary argument in human relationship (the psychopathic policeman Carter Blake who accompanies Norman while pursuing Origami Killer in *Heavy Rain*), and even the spaces of detached houses conceal criminal personalities (the sadistic doctor Adrian Baker in *Heavy Rain*). As one can imagine, such a grim portrayal of the United States was unacceptable for the North American audiences. Having been confronted with the works of Cage, reviewers said, for example, that David Bowie’s enigmatic performance, together with his soundtrack, was the only virtue of *The Nomad Soul* (Bell, 2018); or, that the voice acting in the English-language version is of poor quality, as *Heavy Rain*’s example shows:

Though the technical execution of his attempt is very precise, it's the voice acting that so often lets him down, as he made the ill-informed decision to cast several French voice actors and then ask them to impersonate Americans (Munro, 2012).

In such an accusation, there do sound somewhat schizophrenic voices. On the one hand, the game has to be about Americans because such are the needs of co-production (let us remind that *Heavy Rain* was released at first by Sony Computer Entertainment, a multinational digital game company); on the other hand, there are complaints that *Heavy Rain* is not enough “American,” because of the voice acting sounding “too French.” This situation invokes Walter Mignolo’s category of “epistemic privilege” which describes how since the Enlightenment, and in this example, the U.S. epistemology dominated the belief that there is a neutral and universal perspective on the world. Mignolo indicates that to be heard in dominant Western European and North American discourses, “you will have to get your work translated into French, German or English,” because the epistemic voices in other languages will be marginalized (Mignolo, 2009, p. 166). The point is that the United States’ global domination, where the epistemic centre moved after the Second World War in Europe, imposed the need (for example, for game developers) to embrace mainly the U.S. values and culture. Tomasz Majkowski, commenting Mignolo’s concept, remarks that:

People who do not use the dominant languages of Western Europe to produce knowledge have only two solutions: they can either assume the authority of English-language perception while submitting to the rules of Anglo-Saxon culture and locating themselves on the deadlock relating to people who had adopted English as the primary language, or perform acts of epistemic disobedience while rejecting the supremacy of knowledge produced from the privileged position (Majkowski, 2019, p. 257).

From these two solutions, Cage chose only the first one, which exposed him to the criticism of American citizens who could easily point out the European-style building architecture or European-style car licence plates in the supposed U.S. environment of *Heavy Rain* (TV Tropes’ Contributors, n.d.; IMDb Contributors, n.d.). Especially the polarized debate on *Heavy Rain* proves that Cage’s controversial works can provide affective reactions not only due to their tactile or corporeal qualities but also because of their mistakes.

RESULTS

The research proved that there are strong liaisons between the early digital games directed by David Cage and the cinematic New Extremity. Both Cage’s games and the aforementioned cinematic movement links the use of affect theory. On the one level, *The Nomad Soul*, *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain* demonstrate Cage’s gradual awareness of using both ludic and cinematic means of expression to deliver a very tactile experience. On the second level, these

games expose the bodily (sexual, urinary) properties of the controlled characters. On the third level, Cage's early games fluctuate between the European and non-European sources of inspiration. Thus, they drew the players' attention to the affective potential of the medium. Especially *Fahrenheit* and *Heavy Rain*, mixing tactile and corporeal qualities attached to the medium with more serious tones than the majority of digital games (sombre atmosphere, recurring motives of losing relatives or lovers etc.), were subjects of tense debates on the state of games as parts of higher culture.

DISCUSSION

Although this paper sheds the light on Cage's early games, there are still some questions that arise from the findings. First of all, one needs to discuss the possible ludic phenomenon of the New Extremity on more digital game examples. Secondly, one can ask the question whether the cinematic New Extremity, as well as the ludic one, expired at the end of the first decade of the 21st century or it can be stretched further (though there is no consensus about the possible outreach of the movement). Thirdly, the post-humanist games of David Cage, more mainstream than their forerunners, deserve a separate analysis to summarize his oeuvre. There is a hope that this paper will be helpful as a contribution to further research in this area.

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