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SUBJECTIVE AND AFFECTIVE ADAPTATIONS: REMEDIATION AND THE PLAYSTATION 2 VIDEOGAME¹

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Abstract: This essay looks to Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin's theory of remediation to understand the process of adapting intellectual property from film to game during the Playstation 2 era. The essay looks to *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* and *Minority Report: Everybody Runs* to identify two forms of adaptation: subjective and affective. Subjective adaptations place players in particular adapted subject position, and affective adaptations place them within a generalized, tonal subjectivity that is not adapted directly from the source material. This is argued through both remediation theory and an intertwined strain of Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory.

I.

This essay approaches the concept of videogame adaptation from two angles: remediation theory as articulated by Richard Grusin and Jay Bolter and assemblage theory as developed by Manuel DeLanda. Both of these approaches attend to the material reality of how specific objects are created and changed over time, and I will explore the contributions that these theories can make to the understanding of how videogame adaptations function through two examples. The first is *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* for the Playstation 2; the second is *Minority Report: Everybody Runs*, also for the Playstation 2. My argument is that these Playstation 2 videogame adaptations of film properties operate through two registers: a *subjective* method that places players within a particular subject position based on immersion

¹ This essay in itself is an adaptation of a short YouTube video that I produced in July of 2015 titled "Adaptation and Remediation on the Playstation 2." You can see that video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rdPRwN7xMM0>.

and an *affective* translation that replicates the particular feeling of a film object rather than the specifics of it. While these two registers are not mutually exclusive, they do tend to depend on different modes of expression to operate. Thus, in the following I will read each of my objects through each of the two registers rather than reading either of the objects comprehensively through both.

The two games that I have chosen to explore in this essay fit into the timeline of film-to-game adaptation in a particular way. Both were released for the sixth generation of consumer videogame hardware, which includes the Playstation 2, Xbox, and Gamecube. Both were released during the holiday window for 2002 (October for *The Two Towers* and November for *Minority Report*). Both are adaptations of blockbuster films of that year, with *Minority Report: Everybody Runs* being post-promotion following the June release of its film and *The Two Towers* being pre-promotion for the film release in the following December. The adaptive techniques of these games are radically different from one another for reasons that I will explore later in this essay, but suffice to say at this point that *Minority Report* diverges wildly from its film source in all possible ways while *The Two Towers* cleaves incredibly close to its film source in very specific ways.

The question of games has not gone unheeded within adaptation studies. Jonathan Mack has noted how the film industry and the videogame industry have crossed paths and produced transmedial content that cuts across specific media.² Linda Hutcheon has also understood game adaptations as possessing a transmedia relationship with their predecessor films, suggesting that we can industrially understand them as an edifice of integrated intellectual property alongside a more traditional adaptation studies approach.³ Costas Constandinides' conception of post-celluloid adaptation accounts for game adaptations in an even wider way, suggesting that they are a part of a large assemblage of variable media that oscillate in their ability to be experienced in the network of contemporary media.⁴

While all of these perspectives are valuable from the position of attempting to understand videogame adaptations as a totality, in this essay I am specifically concerned with understanding how remediation as a theoretical construct can help us understand the particular

² Jonathan Mack, "Evoking Interactivity: Film and Videogame Intermediality Since the 1980s," *Adaptation* 9, no. 1 (2016): 98-112, <http://adaptation.oxfordjournals.org/content/9/1/98>.

³ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 11.

⁴ Costas Constandinides, *From Film Adaptation To Post-Celluloid Adaptation: Rethinking the Transition of Popular Narratives and Characters Across Old and New Media* (New York, NY: Continuum, 2010).

subjective (in placing players within a specific subject position from a film) and *affective* (in delivering a particular ephemeral feeling rather than a specific subject position) adaptation strategies that I have highlighted above. It is readily apparent that adaptation (as a general strategy of transformation of certain concepts from media to media) is not the same as remediation. However, as I will show here, the interplay of contemporary media is such that adaptation across digital media often requires some of the strategies that remediation gives language to. They are not identical, but they certainly share elements. In the next section, I will outline how adaptation functions within the general theory of remediation as well as DeLandan assemblage theory in order to provide a framework from which to build an understanding of these two types of adaptation.

II.

In their now-famous 1999 book *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin conceive a triumvirate of terms in order to fashion a theory of what they call remediation and how it functions in the daily existence of new media objects. These three terms are immediacy, hypermediacy, and remediation, and all three are attempts at cutting the knot of how new media objects exist and how humans experience those objects.

Immediacy and hypermediacy exist on a spectrum with one another. Immediacy, put succinctly, is “the belief that there is some necessary contact point between the medium and what it represents.”⁵ This concept holds that there is some kind of relay that occurs between the object being mediated and the media representation of that object. Immediacy is not a way of categorizing some media as “windows” to a real object, but rather a relationship between a viewer and what they are viewing. Bolter and Grusin lean into Tom Gunning’s elucidation of the cinema of attractions to clarify this point, arguing that immediacy has less to do with a naive belief that an audience member might believe they are seeing the “real” thing than it has to do with a “historical desire” that holds what they know about what they are seeing in check.⁶ Immediacy is the word for the desires of media objects and their viewers to animate the connections between those objects and the things they mediate.

⁵ Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 30.

⁶ Ibid 31.

Hypermediacy, on the other end of the spectrum from immediacy, holds the opposite. Rather than erasing the gap between representation and the thing being represented, hypermediacy dilates that gap and proliferates others. As Bolter and Grusin explain, “if the logic of immediacy leads one to either erase or to render automatic the act of representation, the logic of hypermediacy acknowledges acts of representation and makes them visible.”⁷ The example that the authors often return to is the interface of the computer screen: multiple windows overlap, tabs operate in tandem, and hundreds of different representations repeatedly appear and disappear over the course of the average moment of computer use. In contrast to immediacy, which would see these representations overtaking one another in a game of supremacy and connection to their mediated object, these windows and tabs are hypermediated precisely because they all exist in tandem. They do not defer to an originating object, but instead they merely express themselves on the surface of the interface; many things coexist, and that coexistence is on the surface of things.

Plotted between immediacy and hypermediacy is remediation. While the former two terms form a kind of stable dialectical dyad in which one needs the other to both function and be understood, remediation is less a distinct term and more a flavorful combination of immediacy and hypermediacy that we can identify when it appears. Remediation, or “the representation of one medium within another,” has so many faces and potentialities that the entire latter half of *Remediation* is devoted to highlighting moments where it crops up.⁸ As a theoretical term, it functions much like many other things in our hypermediated world: you know it when you see it.

Oscillating as it does between immediacy and hypermediacy, remediation is most apparent when it is far along either points of this spectrum. When leaning toward immediacy, remediation has the quality of “trying to absorb the older medium entirely,” such as the example of a game like *Myst* often being talked about in terms of “interactive cinema.”⁹ On the other side, when further along toward hypermediacy, a media object can purposefully adopt the aesthetic stylings of a another medium in order to point out the discontinuities between those media and the objects that they are representing. Within this paradigm, something like *Her Story*’s use of 21st century game technology to remediate 1990s computer technology in order

⁷ Ibid, 33-34.

⁸ Ibid, 45.

⁹ Ibid, 47.

to remediate camcorder footage from the same time period demonstrates the on-the-surface heterogeneity that hypermediacy focuses on.

What we call remediation is a purposeful mimicry. Immediacy is when that mimicry is attempted to the fullest while at the same time producing inevitable gaps between the remediating media and the originator. Hypermediacy is when those gaps are widened and remarked upon, pointing to the incommensurability and difference between the representative abilities of different media.

This is the extent of remediation's theoretical edifice, and I believe that a slight extension of this theory could be made with the help of Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory. While it seems to me that assemblage theory would certainly have an extensive counter-explanation to the genealogy of theory that supports and produces remediation as a concept, I believe there is something to be gained through a generative combination of the two. It is important to note here that while assemblage theory as a theory of media has received some attention within game studies, that attention has largely been focused on either the cybernetic relationships forged between humans and their games or as an additional element for elaboration of political economy.¹⁰ In this instance, I will instead look to how assemblage theory can be used to shore up an existing theory of how media operates on, and with, its interlocuting humans.

While the entirety of this essay could be spent elucidating the smallest details of assemblage theory, here I merely want to supplement remediation theory with assemblage theory's anti-essentialist and historically-based understanding of how a media object comes to be formed. I am not suggesting that we bolt these two theories together to form some kind of Swiss Army Knife theory of the media, but rather that we think through remediation with some of the analytic sensibilities that assemblage theory understands as critical to its project. As DeLanda explains, "analysis in assemblage theory is not conceptual but causal, concerned with the discovery of of the *actual mechanisms* operating at a given spatial scale."¹¹ Additionally, the project of assemblage theory necessitates an act of looking across organization of media rather than up or down in a hierarchy as "organizations can exist in a wide range of scales" from "a

¹⁰ See T.L. Taylor "The Assemblage of Play," *Games and Culture* 4.4 (2009): 331-339 and Daniel Joseph "The Toronto Indies: Some Assemblage Required," *Loading...: The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 7.11: 92-105 for these perspectives.

¹¹ Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Continuum, 2006), 31.

nuclear family of three to a transnational corporation employing half a million people.”¹² While the latter number is quite a bit larger than even the most liberal estimates of the number of types of media we have access to, the sentiment of recognizing the kinds of connections that remediation might afford in the *scale* of that remediation is important to hone in on. DeLanda promotes this line of argument of understanding assemblages across their structure and scale in order to push back against traditional theories that might understand the relationship between a discrete object and the assemblage it is a part of as “a simple Russian-doll relation.”¹³ Thinking through remediation in light of assemblage theory means understanding adaptation as both a relationship between two objects (the original and the adaptation) and a relationship between those two things and an entire realm of objects that press upon them. This means that the Playstation 2 as a platform, the media industries and their intellectual property rights management, and Viggo Mortensen himself be understood as things that can impress upon how the adaptation of a film into a videogame might come into being and be experienced by players.

It is important to note before moving forward that there is nothing in Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation that precludes this additional dimension via DeLanda’s work. In fact, there are moments within *Remediation* that actively hint at the larger assemblage of remediation that resists a linear “object X in medium Y remediates medium Z” understanding of their theory. An entire chapter titled “Networks of Remediation” is devoted to outlining the vectors of relation between people, media objects, and media that actively connect with others via remediation. However, this chapter is mostly dedicated to the social function of how humans understand media, and it does not often plot across multiple domains and boundaries in the way that DeLanda’s assemblage theory asks us to do.

III.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers and *Minority Report: Everybody Runs*, as I have suggested above, occupy interesting places in the history of videogame adaptation as it is related to remediation. In this section I will plot both of these games on that spectrum of immediacy and hypermediacy before complicating those positions and delving into the adaptive strategies that are made possible by each game’s particular mode of remediation.

¹² Ibid, 33.

¹³ Ibid, 33.

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers is a 3D action game that puts players in many different roles, locations, and plot points from the first two films in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. *The Two Towers* game breaks these films up into discrete levels, or scenes, and in most instances players have the option of taking on the role of Aragorn, Legolas, or another principle character from the films in order to defeat challenges that are either directly lifted from the films or inspired by scenes from the films. In some cases, such as Aragorn's fight against the Ringwraiths at Weathertop, the entire sequence is lifted directly from the *The Fellowship of the Ring*. In other cases, such as the shared opening battle between Isildur and Sauron, the game takes extreme liberties in fleshing out the content of the scene in order to make it fit with the gameplay demands of an action game in the early 2000s.

Ironically enough, Bolter and Grusin call attention to J.R.R. Tolkien's work in with *The Lord of the Rings* to demonstrate the oscillation between immediacy and hypermediacy that exists within so many works. They write:

[Games borrowing from the text of *The Lord of the Rings*] seek the real, sometimes through transparency and sometimes through hypermediacy--sometimes by encouraging the player to look through the surface of the screen and sometimes by dwelling on the surface with its multiplicity of mediated objects. This combination is what makes Tolkien's trilogy of such an attractive model for game designers and players. Although the book describes a world of fantastic events and characters with a photorealistic attention to detail, the text calls attention to itself with its antiquated prose and poetry.¹⁴

This passage helps to draw a very clear picture of what is happening with *The Two Towers* videogame in relation to both remediation and adaptation. The film versions of *The Lord of the Rings* are both adaptations and remediations in the sense that they are actively translating the content from one media to another while recreating the book in the film via methods of lifted narrative voiceover, character speech, and the creation of physical locations like Hobbiton. *The Two Towers* videogame inherits some of those media artifacts in order to remediate them itself: the level selection page is a map of Middle Earth lifted from the novels and the focalization of the narrative floats freely between characters as it does in the books via a character selection screen that allows a player to experience missions as a different character each time she plays the game.

As Bolter and Grusin suggest, Tolkien's continual focus on the artifactual nature of his books, the mythology behind them, and the maps that represent their world relies on

¹⁴ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 94.

hypermediacy to make its argument about the pieced-together knowledge that readers of Tolkien's work have of his world. Douglas Brown and Tanya Krzywinska have noted that *The Lord of the Rings Online*, a different game adaptation of the same novels, relies heavily on the evocation of Tolkien's hand-drawn maps as a way of demonstrating the authenticity of the game.¹⁵ For those authors, the map is an extension of veracity. For Bolter and Grusin, the level-selection map of *The Two Towers* juxtaposed with the advanced-for-their-time 3D models generates a gap of expectations that produces a states of hypermediacy.

However, it is important to note *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* is not an adaptation of Tolkien's novels and the maps therein. It is expressly, from cover art to character models, an adaptation of the films of the first two *The Lord of the Rings* films directed by Peter Jackson, and it relies significantly more on the logic of immediacy to fulfill its remediative goals. As I demonstrated in the overview of remediation theory, a work can oscillate between the two poles of immediacy and hypermediacy, and it is the work of interpretation to actually plot works on that spectrum at particular moments when we experience them. To understand how *The Two Towers* relies of immediacy, let's consider the two examples I laid out earlier in this section: the encounter between Isildur and Sauron and the battle at Weathertop.

The film *The Fellowship of the Ring* opens with narration that sets the stakes of its stories before showing the most powerful evil in this fictional world wielding the most powerful weapon in that world. This is first shown through swooping computer-generated battles before cutting to characters like Elrond, Isildur, and Sauron. The scene focuses in even more closely and we see Isildur's father swept aside and killed by Sauron's mace. Isildur runs to his father's side and grabs his sword from the ground. Before he can take it up, Sauron breaks it by stepping on it, and as Sauron reaches for Isildur, the protagonist slashes with the broken sword and cuts the ring of power from the villain's hand. This entire sequence that I have outlined, from father-murder to finger-cutting, takes around thirty seconds of screen time.

Contrast this to the videogame *The Two Towers*' approach to the same scene. The game takes the footage from the film and places it at the opening, meaning that watching *The Fellowship of the Ring* film and playing *The Two Towers* game is exactly the same as far as the opening minute is concerned. However, traces of the medium of representation, and thus of

¹⁵ Douglas Brown and Tanya Krzywinska, "Following in the footsteps of fellowship: A tale of there and back again - text/translation/tolkienisation" in *Ring Bearers: The Lord of the Rings Online as intertextual narrative* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011).

remediation, are on the surface. In the Playstation 2 version of the game, the footage is cropped to a 4:3 ratio like the rest of the game, signaling the platform specificity of the representation and contrasting to the 16:9 “cinematic” ratio that would be familiar to a cinema-going audience. During the sweeping battle scene that takes place mere moments before the Isildur and Sauron confrontation in the film, the videogame neatly slides into a 3D rendering of the exact scene from the film. At this point the game is no longer using footage from the film, but it is representing that footage (and the medium of film) within the engine of the videogame.

It is here that the game and the film diverge. While the film dispenses with the war action and moves to the confrontation mentioned above, *The Two Towers* game takes this opportunity to put the player in the role of Isildur. What follows is a short sequence where Isildur fights a number of orcs and goblins, and from a game design perspective this is a limited and controlled moment where the game is able to teach the player the controls that will be used throughout the rest of the game. While playing, I routinely just waggle the thumbsticks around, slashing at enemies willy-nilly

When the player has defeated a sufficient number of enemies in this limited arena, the game transitions to a cinematic shot of Sauron confronting Isildur and his father. Yet again, the game remediates the film, this time through a slight cropping of the top and the bottom of the screen to generate a “cinematic” visual aesthetic of a widescreen film being displayed on a standard definition screen. Sauron smashes the kingly father again, and when he reaches down to grab Isildur, the game seamlessly transitions back to film footage.

In these moments, *The Two Towers* is representing cinema both in its aesthetic choices of how to present its 3D models (the cropping) and in its choices to reproduce the footage from the *The Lord of the Rings* films. It is drawing a direct line of access between the film and the videogame representation of that, and it draws on the logic of immediacy to cleave those two things as closely together as possible. The goal here is explicit: *The Two Towers* wants to eliminate the gap between the player and the danger, excitement, and triumph of the characters in *The Lord of the Rings*. Simple identification is not sufficient in this expectation around player experience. Rather, there must be a collapse between player experience and the representation of action in Middle Earth within the framework of a specific subject or character, and each of these different media have to be grasped and brought into intimate contact with one another in this particular adaptive assemblage.

The fight between Aragorn and the Ringwraiths on Weathertop operates in the same way. The game seamlessly transitions between a shot of a Ringwraith from the film to an in-engine 3D model to an adaptation of the fight shown in the film with the game's player taking the role of Aragorn. The end of the level, which plays out in the same way as in the film, transitions the player-as-Aragorn back into Aragorn-the-hero who saves Frodo and ensures that the hobbits reach their destination with the help of Arwen, an Elven woman sent to expedite the group's journey to their destination at Rivendell.

While we have perhaps entered the weeds of *The Lord of the Rings* plot trivia, the point I want to make here is simple. The game deploys remediation to create a very specific experience for the player that resides on the side of immediacy more than it does on the side of hypermediacy. The gap between the cinematic medium and the videogame medium is purposefully eliminated through the use of film's aesthetics and actual film footage in order to generate a particular subjectivity on the part of the player of *The Two Towers*.

This use of remediation to staple the experiential identity of a player onto the textual identity of an adapted character is what I call a *subjective adaptation* of a film into a videogame. The fight at Weathertop mission lays this bare in that the point of its remediation is to impart a particular mode of understanding one's relationship with the world onto the player of the game. We could reductively call this a "power fantasy," but that term does not do justice to the way that remediation is used here to elide any and all differences between *my* epic achievements in a game and *Aragorn's* epic achievements in a film. From the perspective of assemblage theory, we can see this as a moment where the networked alliance of technological platform, player interaction, and character are so tightly interwoven that they are flattened into an interchangeable relationship. We identify *as* Aragorn, and we are able to do so because the adaptation is explicitly placed across the player's body and the videogame machine equally. Aragorn here is a subject position with particular capacities and expectations, and the player elides their particular subjectivity in order to fulfill the expectations of action and plot activation that the fictional subject is knotted within.

While remediation is undoubtedly part of the development of new media, full stop, it is undeniable that this "live action to digital model" development strategy of the *The Two Towers* action game was chosen in order to squeeze the most value out of the intellectual property that it was both selling and previewing to the paying, filmgoing audience. Subjective adaptation

contains the requirement of explicit and delimited subject positions for players to inhabit in relation to the film objects that they are adapting, and it is crucial to note that *The Two Towers* avoids placing the player into the role of any character that might confuse or otherwise obfuscate the very clear plot that is being translated from *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy to *The Two Towers* game. We never inhabit a roaming Eye of Sauron or control a rotating, falling One Ring in a mock game of ring toss toward Frodo's finger; instead, we are always controlling and experiencing the game's events through specific subject positions. While subjective adaptation can easily add content and context that was not present in the original object, such as the battle scene before the Isildur scene mentioned above, it cannot fundamentally change the stakes of the intellectual property that it is adapting. In being a form of adaptation that fundamentally cares about putting X player within Y subject, it cannot break the bounds of the preexisting subjectivities.

Subjective adaptation relies on remediation as much as it relies on the logic of immediacy that allows for remediation to work so easily. Immediacy provides a ground for a subject position that exists in one media, and when remediation operates, it transposes that supposedly-transparent ground into the new medium that is remediation the original. When film aesthetics makes the leap from film to game, the assumptions and positions it affords come along for the ride. They are only heightened and expanded by the particular representative and control-centered strategies of the videogame.

IV.

Every adaptive strategy and assumption made by *The Two Towers* is reversed by *Minority Report: Everybody Runs*. Where the former game cleaves closely to the film it is adapting by mimicking and directly deploying its intellectual property throughout its runtime as a kind of continual reminder of the subjectivity that the player is meant to embody when playing the game, the latter drops nearly all of that apparatus.

The film *Minority Report* is a thriller film set in the near future where Washington D.C. has implemented a system for preventing crimes that are about to happen. Appropriately named Precrime, the system is based on a networked triumvirate of psychic sensitives who pick up fragments of the future. Each psychic only received a portion of the future event, however, and a algorithm compiles the three "mental images" produced by the psychics into a single, coherent

set of images to be analyzed by the Precog detectives. The plot that ensues is based on the veracity of those images and the nature of the future: Is time “solved”? Can a single image tell the whole truth? What is consensus in a world of contrasting interpretations?

Where the film is a cavalcade of excitement, itself adapted from a Philip K. Dick short story by Steven Spielberg with Tom Cruise in the lead, the videogame adaptation drops nearly all of those things. Tom Cruise is nowhere to be found, and his character John Anderton is morphed into a tall, militant blonde compared to Cruise's drug-addled wiry brunette of the film. The film's strong visual style of sweeping screens, rounded plastic, and strange-yet-familiar designs are dropped entirely in favor of a generic science fiction look that replicates the film's specific vehicles and weapons instead of its general style. The rather tight thriller plot of the film is radically rearticulated in the game and supplemented to be part of a larger, stranger conspiracy with many more characters.

If *The Two Towers* relies predominantly on *immediacy* to generate its remediation of film in the videogame form and to generate a subjective adaptation, then *Minority Report* relies on *hypermediacy* to generate what I will call an affective adaptation. Where a subjective adaptation is concerned with taking a particular subject position from a film and making it available for players of the videogame adaptation of that film to inhabit, an affective adaptation is concerned with recreating the affective dimensions of that film. Kamilla Elliott has suggested that we take seriously the biological antecedents of adaptation, thinking not only of adaptation-as-representation but as “dominant and recessive genes” that could help us better understand “intermedial hybridity.”¹⁶ That is to say that we can imagine familial resemblance as being a form of adaptation rather than the specifics of characters and plot points. Following Steven Shaviro's analysis in *Post-Cinematic Affect*, I understand affective adaptations as being more “expressive” in that they “give voice (or better, give sounds and images) to a kind of ambient, free-floating sensibility” that “cannot be attributed to any subject in particular.”¹⁷ While subjectivity implies affects, the Spinozan concept of affect on down through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* as translated by Brian Massumi is “a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage of one experiential state of the body to another and

¹⁶ Kamilla Elliott, “The Adaptation of Adaptation: A Dialogue Between the Arts and Sciences,” in *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation: Literature, Film, and the Arts*, ed. Pascal Nicklas and Oliver Lindner (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 157.

¹⁷ Steven Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect* (Hants, UK: 0-Books, 2010), 2.

implying an augmentation or diminution of that body's capacity to act" and it does not require a subject but merely a (drastically expanded) notion of a body.¹⁸

Affective adaptations, then, take us beyond the bounding box of a subject and put us into the realm of free-floating feelings, concepts, and interstitial states. A successful affective adaptation is not concerned with recreating the film, and the film's subject positions, with exacting detail. Rather, it requires that gestural and ephemeral qualities be captured and represented not within particular characters but within an assemblage made up of gameplay mechanics, scenes, and capacities that might be beyond the characters or fictions of the original intellectual property. This is inclusive of what we might call mood and tone, which is to say that an affective adaptation generates a set of conditions that communicates an almost ineffable experience of "feeling right" as opposed to the subjective adaptation of "being right" in relation to the adapted film.

Hypermediacy is critical here because of its lack of reverence of a connection between representation and that which it represents. The film *Minority Report* is, to some extent, about the play of screens and the human body, and hypermediacy marks it throughout. Home video, film, and television are constantly remediated within the film in order to demonstrate a kind of collapse into a homogenous new media of universal interface. The differences between those media are leveraged to create friction within the fictional universe: eye scanners become 3D advertising machines while home video holograms evoke the spectre of low-fi 1980s camcorders.

The videogame makes the same move, but less in relationship to its world and more in relationship to the connection points between its intellectual property and those who are experiencing the game. *Minority Report* does not remediate in the same way that the film it is adapting does. Instead of focusing on home video or advertising, *Everybody Runs* remediates the fictional media of its predecessor. It remediates *speculation of the future* in the form of representing the large, data-filled screens that wowed movie audiences in the film. Rather than replicating any specific plot points, it retains the cloud of concerns and concepts that animate the film.

¹⁸ Brian Massumi, "Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments" in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), xvi.

This remediation of a nonexistent technology is part of the affective adaptation that I am outlining here. It is less about relaying the specifics of a bounded media and more about adapting the experience of encountering these media in their contexts. The jetpacks, guns, precognitive characters, and technological apparatuses of the film all make their way into the videogame, and each of them help to generate an assemblage of connection to this world. This adaptation is not about generating specific content; it is about generating a specific affect in the player of the game. It is about attempting to reproduce the same anxieties and questions about the efficacy of telling the future as a crime method, but it is also about replicating the feeling that a gun that fires a blob of sound is cool. The specific plot points that connect those things are functionally irrelevant in this paradigm of adaptation. It is not the causal connections that matter here, but instead it is the evental nodes themselves.

The opening scene of the *Minority Report* film is a demonstration of that universe's Precog Crime Unit's capabilities. Tom Cruise's Anderton receives a "red ball," a chunk of data in physical form that predicts a murder, and composes a likely scenario from the fragments that are contained in that red ball. This scene cuts back and forth between Anderton and his team and the house where the crime will take place, and we see each piece of evidence appear on the screen that Anderton's character sees as they appear in the scene at the home. Racing against time, the Crime Unit accurately identifies the scene of the crime, races there, and prevents it from occurring. The day is saved.

The opening of *Minority Report: Everybody Runs* is significantly different. Instead of the razzle-dazzle of image manipulation that dominates the opening minutes of the film, the game gives us John Anderton as a man of action. He states the names of the victim and the perpetrator of the crime which will happen "in thirty seven seconds," and moments after that we are in the brawling world of action-packed gameplay where we will be punching, grabbing, and grappling our way through wave after wave of enemy on our way to pursue justice.

While these two ways of presenting what is ostensibly the same world are structurally far from one another, both contain similar affective registers. Both film and game communicate an expediency to the actions their respective John Andertons. Both give us a vague future where these kind of events can take place. And, most importantly, each of them evoke the "red ball" without fully explaining what it is. The important difference here is that the film will proceed to explicitly explain all of these factors in order to present us with as complete a model of the near-

future as it can. The film is clearly attempting to ground its speculations in a reality that we can recognize as similar to our own. *Everybody Runs* remains wholly gestural, relying less on a totalizing explanation of the future and more on an affective response to “a red ball situation.” The game recedes from explanation at all times, and it attempts to retain the magic of the feeling of the piece rather than create a totalizing narrative around it.

V.

In May of 2003, the videogame *Enter the Matrix* was released as part of an extensive media strategy in support of the second and third films in *The Matrix Trilogy*. The game tells the story of the events that occurred between 1999’s *The Matrix* and 2003’s *The Matrix Reloaded*, and while the story of the latter is certainly comprehensible to those who had not played the game, the world of the second and third films in the trilogy are fleshed out much more extensively if the viewer has the information communicated through the game. The same can be said of the animated film, comic books, and innumerable other artifacts produced in one of the largest transmedia rollouts of the early 2000s. The economic and storytelling methods on display in *Enter The Matrix* could be unraveled over hundreds of pages, but this essay swerves from the direct reference of that game’s adaptive mechanisms and instead focuses on games released one year earlier.

Enter The Matrix is firmly placed within the category of transmedia, an adaptive concept that tracks the creation of multimodal stories across many different media. It shares an economic impetus to exist with both *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* and *Minority Report: Everybody Runs* games in that it is a promotional tool that is meant to enliven the intellectual property that it remediates into videogame form. This remediation is part of a “stabilization of the identity” of the intellectual property, leading to a concrete integration of all media forms into a metadiscourse of the *The Matrix* franchise.¹⁹ It is important that *Enter The Matrix* appears directly after the two games I have discussed, as it demonstrates a sunset for some modes of subjective and affective adaptations that I have outlined above.

Subjective adaptation relies on immediacy to flatten the relationship between intellectual property and the player of a videogame adaptation. It is the construction of a particular subject position that the player is meant to take on and celebrate as part of the experience of the game

¹⁹ DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 82.

and the intellectual property simultaneously. Affective adaptation relies on hypermediacy to pull apart the originary work in order to comment on the gaps and differences in the adaptation itself. Affective adaptation is a bundle of feelings, tones, and stylistic effects that bring the player into an evocative situation instead of a specific subject position. Both of these strategies became available in 3D space with the advent of Playstation 2 adaptations and their graphical capabilities to represent the subject positions or affective situations with some level of visual attachment to the media that they are adapting.

Strangely, this we can already see this choice between two strategies coming to a close almost as soon as they appear. *Enter The Matrix* resolutely denies the divide between subjective and affective adaptation. You play as characters from the films who have very specific roles (subjective adaptation); you deal with a cluster of ideas, such as martial arts and computer hacking, that are less a direct adaptation and more a general stylistic touch (affective adaptation). It would seem that the rise of transmedia as a tool and a concept would supplant any theory of adaptation that relies on remediation's dyad of immediacy and hypermediacy to ground its logic.²⁰ At this early moment of the 2000s, we are able to see objects designed to approach and cover as many media channels as possible. One might even question the concept of adaptation at all within this paradigm, suggesting that all that was once distinct might now be melting into transmediality.

In this essay, I have attempted to look at a particular period where the horizon of adaptation shifted over a short time. Technology, industry practice, and game creation intermingled in such a way that two distinct forms of videogame adaptations emerged as distinct before melding into an even newer formation. At the same time, I do not think that subjective and affective adaptation have receded into nonexistence. Rather, they exist alongside many other strategies, no longer held as distinct. Much like remediation theory, subjective and affective adaptations are so ubiquitous as to not be remarked on as unique as often as they once were. It is my hope that this essay helps to give a methodology for unearthing them again.

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²⁰ Henry Jenkins and Richard Grusin's extensive conversation on the topic does little to solve this problem, but it provides context and answers to this argument from both sides of the debate: http://henryjenkins.org/2011/03/a_remediated_premediated_and_t.html.

and game development cultures. He is also an independent game designer and developer who has worked on artgames, commercial projects, and many things in between.

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