Dissertation

How does engendering an emotional connection between the player and the video game world affect the overall playing experience?

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out whether engendering emotion between the player and the game world enhances the overall gameplay experience. Unless the player is emotionally connected to the narrative and gameplay, it is no more than a score based abstract video game with sophisticated graphics and physics. Narrative hooks, memorable moments and believable characters make the difference when shooting at the same enemy for the hundredth time.

I have carried out narrative and semiotic analysis to find out whether emotion is engendered in the key scenes of Final Fantasy 7 (SCE Europe 1997) and Metal Gear Solid (Konami 1999) and how this affects the gameplay in the later stages. Both texts heavily depend on narrative and memorable moments. I found out how different signs are used to convey emotional feelings to the player. The overall playing experience enhances dramatically if the player is emotionally connected to the game world. There are many video game genres and titles hence we cannot say if creating an emotional connection with the player and the game world would enhance the overall gameplay experience for all the video game titles/genres.

Table of Contents

Introduction

The aim of this research is to find out whether creating emotionally engendering scenes are necessary and how it affects the overall playing experience. Does emotionally connecting the player to the game world in a video game make poor narrative an excellent one? The main topic I will be looking at is the emotion between the player and the characters. I will not be looking at the emotion engendered such as getting players frustrated by bad level design and making the game too hard.

Engendering an emotional connection between the players and the game characters in video games is a new topic and it was the initial marketing hype of Sony's Playsation 2 (Sony 2000) before it was launched, but at the end Playstation 2 just was not powerful enough to create such an experience. (Berardini, 2005: http://editorials.teamxbox.com). Video games are becoming more advanced and complex with the introduction of new technology, these require game developers to come up with new ideas. Emotion in video games is a fairly new area compared to the history of video games and it has not yet been fully used. New technologies such as advanced artificial intelligence and facial animation makes it easier for game developers to create emotion but is it really necessary to use these technologies? Can all game genres benefit from the use of emotion to enhance the overall experience? As in artificial intelligence, photorealistic visuals and using professional sound, creating emotion is a new way of enhancing the experience, which will allow game developers to create an emotional connection between the player and the game characters. Is all these necessary to make a video game a memorable experience?

Video games are fairly new in the entertainment industry compared to movies and music. As the technology is advancing demand for complex video games in terms of visuals, sound and gameplay is also increasing by the industry. With the start of early abstract video games such as Pac Man (Midway 1980) and PONG (Atari 1972) and now movie like video games such as the Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty (Konami 2001), there have been many topics within the video games industry with the most obvious one being the ludology-narratology debate. Former argues that video games should not be treated as a form of narrative or as a text, but instead simply as a game, with the dynamics of play and interaction being the most important and fundamental part of the game, and the latter is the theory and study of narrative and narrative structure.

Video games industry is growing thanks to the new technologies which attract more gamers everyday, and with the introduction of new innovative handheld console from Nintendo which is named as Nintendo DS (Nintendo 2004) video games industry is grown 11 percent compared to last year (2005) in the United States. (Rodriguez, 2006: www.nintendoworldreport.com) Video games can also be educational and informative; an example of this would be students using the PC game called Myst 4: Revelations (Ubisoft 2004) to improve their creative writing by describing the beautifully rendered images by navigating through the game world (Edwards, 2005: p24 – 25). This tells us video games can be fun and educational at the same time which rarely happens most of the time.

The result of this study should underpin whether video games as a medium need to immerse the players to the game world emotionally in order to appeal to more gamers and improve its overall experience. It should be noted that this study will be concentrating only on two titles from thousands of available video games such as the first Half Life (Sierra Entertainment 1998) for the PC which revolutionized storytelling in its own genre and a typical shooter without or little narrative such as Unreal Tournament (Atari 2000). The below quote is an example of how much better the game is because of its narrative and presentation:

> Suffice it to say that Half-Life isn't a great game because of its story; it's a great game because of how it presents that story. From the opening moments of the game to the final showdown (and even beyond) all hell is continually breaking loose and there is never a moment where you are not seeing things through Freeman's eyes.

(Dulin, 1998: www.gamespot.com)

If using narrative and presenting it in a clear style makes an average game an excellent one, then engaging the player with the game world should make it even a better experience.

Literature review

Video games have gained popularity within the last decade. Technological advancements enabled game developers to experiment with new ideas and new ways of immersing the player to the game world. With the early abstract video games game developers mainly focused on score based gameplay. This was due to the technical limitations of the hardware. The hardware was not sophisticated enough to represent a game world with distinguishable characters. As technology improved game developers found many ways of utilising different techniques for creating rich worlds and characters.

Emotion is also a factor for video games based on some narrative context. Creating an emotional connection between the video game's diegetic world and the player is a complex task. As J.P Wolf states in his text:

> Although most video games still have a very narrow emotional range and rarely move players to deep emotions or tears, they nonetheless can bring about an emotional response, ranging from the primal reflex reactions required in fast-paced actions games to the more subtle melancholy and contemplative moods arising in Myst(1993) and Riven(1997).

> Wolf (2003:93)

He also states that 'as the video games matures, so, too its emotional range and articulation will likely broaden and deepen, just as early cinema took time to develop

storytelling with pathos'. (Wolf 2003: 93-94)**.** This is important because the days of abstract video games are gone. Current technology allows game developers to produce near photorealistic diegetic game worlds with sophisticated character models. Market asks for the latest cutting edge visuals with the latest graphical effects with complex narrative elements which can only be achieved by emotionally bonding the players with the vide game's diegetic world.

It is important for video games to utilise emotion techniques in order to compete with the movie industry as it will always be compared with films and television. There isn't much that could be done in terms of visuals as the current hardware is more than enough to create diegetic video games worlds. It is now time to concentrate on the narrative context and how emotion can be used to bond the players to the game world. In the early days of the video games it was the hardware limitation that stopped game developers fully utilising emotion and narrative context in video games but that been changed in the last decade with the games like Metal Gear Solid (Konami 1999) and Final Fantasy 7 (SCE Europe 1997). These two games are fine examples of using emotion and narrative context in video games.

David Freeman's Creating Emotion in Games: The Art and Craft of Emotioneering (New Riders 2004) is a list of techniques which explains how to convey emotion to the video game players. David Freeman explains his trademarked 'emotioneering' techniques using simple examples. Freeman discusses how to add emotion when writing for interactive media such as video games and how it's not the same for writing for Hollywood/TV. In

his book, Freeman categorises different techniques for different purposes, for example techniques which make major NPCs (non-player characters) dimensional and fresh, and thus interesting. Other categories include techniques which give major NPCs emotion depth and complexity. There are many other categories in his book using different techniques to address different types of emotion. These techniques are explained using different images representing a possible video game scenario.

David Freeman discusses how to create these emotions using examples. He also argues that putting emotion into video games will result in greater profits, better press comments, games wouldn't seem amateurish, consumer loyalty to the brand, competitive advantage and better creative team. David Freeman explains his emotioneering techniques based on some sort of narrative content. He uses real life scenarios that could possibly happen in real life such as taking care of an NPC, and states that protecting her/him from possible threats makes the player bond with the characters. He calls this the "Player Toward NPC Chemistry Techniques". The other key point he brings up is that if the video games industry is going to compete with the movie industry it needs to create emotion. He explains how people find playing games have no meaning; rather they choose to watch a movie because they feel part of it. This brings up the ludology – narratology debate whether games are only experimental or/can convey a narrative?

Nonetheless Freeman explains his points in a clear manner. Video game developers have much more power with today's tools it is a requirement for video games that convey narrative to create emotion. The market has grown and productions costs rival movie

costs. Video game developers always tried to push the graphical limits of their target platform. The industry seeks more than a graphical upgrade as Freeman explains engendering emotion will make games compete with the movie industry. The days of abstract games are gone therefore most graphical games convey some sort of narrative context. Video games are not only based on score but the player is given a purpose to play the game or proceed to the next level. There must be a reason for the player to kill the bad guys or protect a NPC. Some video games still use the scoring system as an incentive for the player but these are mainly racing and simulation games, and most of the time those games also convey narrative such as the career game modes. Engendering emotion in a video game that conveys narrative context is the next step in the industry. With today's hardware, it is possible to have complex character relationship similar to films and David Freeman has extensive techniques with also examples from typical movie scenarios.

Dialogue also plays a big role in creation of emotionally engaged characters. In his article titled Computer Games Have Words, Too: Dialogue Conventions in Final Fantasy VII, Greg M. Smith talks about dialogue in video games specifically looking at the dialogue inside the video game Final Fantasy 7. (Smith, 2001: www.gamestudies.org). He talks about how narrative is constructed and how the relationships between the characters are created. He also analyses the narration opposed to films and television and how Final Fantasy 7 differs from a movie or other digital media in its storytelling style.

Engendering emotion in video games is a bit different compared to films and television. As Greg M. Smith explains in his article there are extra elements that help video games move forward the story hence dialogue isn't one of the biggest requirements to make video games work. In terms of Final Fantasy 7 he talks about how narrative is used to tell more about the characters rather than moving the story forward. He also states that there are gameplay elements such as battles that help the story move forward where films and television relies on the dialogue to make the story keep going and interesting.

In his article he explains the connection between characters in the video game Final Fantasy 7 and how it is created and how it affects the player's approach towards the game world. Simple background story can be told via use of dialogue in one sentence such as two of the main characters from Final Fantasy 7 revealing their past to the player for the first time which affects the emotional sympathy the player is having towards those characters. For the player those two characters are not just two people in a video game world but rather two people which have memories of living their childhood together.

Although dialogue can be a powerful tool for engendering emotionally intense video game worlds there are issues with the concept of how characters live throughout the whole narrative. What I mean by this is the fact that in nearly all video games characters can be revived once they are dead or a level can be restarted. This takes away the fear of loosing your characters. No matter how emotionally a player gets connected with the video game world and the characters, there will never be the fear of loosing your cared

characters. This is another area where cinema has advantage over engendering emotion and bonding the audience with the characters which the audience will care for.

But one of the most memorable scenes in the video games history is the moment when Aeris, a character from Final Fantasy 7 in which the player has the responsibility of taking care of is killed. This is one of the memorable moments which the protagonist's motivation other than destroying the corporations that wants to destroy the world is now also to avenge the girl's death that he promised he would take care of. The dialogue between Aeris and the protagonist up until her death builds up the emotional connection between the player and the characters and when she dies there is no way of bringing her back thus creates an emotional failure of not protecting her. This kind of dramatic events create emotional connection with the players and add new incentive for moving the story. Dialogue is very important in terms of engendering the relationship between the game characters and conveying the required information to the player regarding past incidents, and back story.

Methods

For this study I will be carrying out narrative and semiotic analysis on two of the biggest video game titles in the video games history. The two video game titles I will be analysing are the Metal Gear Solid (Konami 1999) and Final Fantasy 7 (SCE Europe 1997). Both games were developed for Sony's first home console Playstation. I will look at each text individually and analyse the relationship between its narrative structure and emotion techniques used and how this affects the overall experience. I will look at how players are emotionally connected to the game world via the use of language, images and sound. This is where affective semiotics will allow me to analyse the images and sound used and what mental images are conveyed to the player within its context. This will allow me to find out how meaning is constructed according to its narrative construction, sound and visuals.

I will start by analysing the opening scenes to find out what kind of emotional connection (if there is any) is made between the video game characters and the player in the early stages of the game. I will look at each title's gameplay mechanics and analyse whether engendering emotion improves the overall experience and how much superior or inferior it would have been with or without the use of emotion in that particular title. I will analyse the key scenes from both titles to see how it affects the player's insight regarding the game world and the characters.

I would like to briefly explain what semiotics is. Semiotic is the study of signs. For example, language is a system of signs. Signs are not limited to words but also include images, gestures, sound essentially all of the ways in which information can be processed and communicated. In semiological system there are three terms; signifier, signified and sign. Signifier is the actual mental image, signified is the concept and sign is the actual object (Barthes, 1996: 111).

Semiology consists of two orders; denotation and connotation. Denotation is the first order of signification and connotation is the second order of signification. First one operates at the level of language and the second one operates at the level of myth. The signified at the level of language becomes a new signifier at the level of myth, and then we have the second order with signifier, signified and sign. So, at the level of myth we have signifier 2, signified 2 and sign 2.

There are advantages and disadvantages of using this method. One of the advantages of carrying out semiotic analysis is that it will help me find out the purposes of any images, sound or language (signs) used within the game world. What kinds of messages are given to the player and what kind of meaning and mental images are conveyed. Once we find out what kind of messages, meanings and the type of mental images are conveyed to the player then we can analyse whether those signs are used to emotionally engage the player to the game world. This will help us identify the most effective signs and whether it is more effective in a cut scene than a gameplay or vice versa.

Once we find out how emotion is engendered by analysing those signs, then we will look at the same scenes without considering those signs that convey emotional meanings to the player. This will allow us to find out whether emotion (if there is any) enhances the overall gaming experience and encourages the player for playing the game until the end.

There will be some drawbacks to using semiotic analysis in this study. The biggest drawback will be the fact that not every individual will perceive the same mental image or meaning from the same sign. The mental images conveyed by the same sign can become a different meaning for different individuals. Each individual will perceive the mental image of each sign in unique ways. This could be a problem as those signs that emotionally engage the player to the game world might convey a different mental image for certain individuals and it will not be engendering an emotional link between those individuals and the game world. This is because there is no direct relationship between the signs and the mental concept it conveys in our minds. Therefore, it is up to each individual and his/her experiences throughout life which will determine the kind of mental images the signs will convey in his/her mind. But most of the time most people will get the same mental concept when they analyse the same piece of sign.

I will analyse the narrative structure of each title and see how meaning is created. How characters within the game world are distinguished and how a connection between the characters and the player is created. I will apply the theory of Claude Levi-Strauss, 'Constant creation of conflict/opposition propels narrative. Narrative can only end on a resolution of conflict'. (Claude Levi-Strauss, www.mediaknowall.com).

I will look at any narrative based memorable moments in each text. Henry Jenkins explains the theory behind of what contemporary game designers call "memorable moments" and gives examples as how some memorable moments in games depend on sensations (the sense of speed in a racing game) or perceptions (the sudden expanse of sky in a snowboarding game) as well as narrative hooks. (Jenkins, http://web.mit.edu/cms/People/henry3/).

From a narrative's point of view one of the most memorable moments in video games history is the moment when Aeris, a character from Final Fantasy 7 gets killed. This is one of the memorable moments which the protagonist's motivation other than destroying the corporation that wants to destroy the world is now also to avenge the girl's death that he promised he would take care of. This shows how little narrative hooks such as this can affect the player's motive.

I will also look at the narrative structure of both titles and analyse whether both titles use a binary opposition system. If there is a binary opposition system is used in one of the titles, I will analyse the binary opposition system to find out whether it aids in creating an emotion between the game world and the player.

> Binary opposition can be useful here because often the conflict is between a pair of opposing forces which are mutually exclusive. The hero is faced with a threat, a challenge, or a need which has to be met or satisfied.

Turner (1999:85)

This will allow me to find out the importance of narrative in each title and its influence on the emotional connection between the player and the game world. By analysing the narrative structure, I can also find out whether engendering emotion heavily depends on narrative as well as visuals. This is important as videogames are not recognised as a medium for storytelling in the industry by ludologists. If narrative is needed for creating emotion and if emotion enhances the gameplay and the overall experience then it will be necessary to use narrative to design better video games.

Advantages of carrying out narrative analysis in this study is that it will allow me to understand how and at what stage the emotion is engendered and how this affects the players' thoughts regarding the game world and the characters. It will help me answer questions such as whether it will be possible to create the same level of emotion in the same scene without the use of narrative. How does narrative differ when used in a cut scene compared to gameplay? Answers to these questions will enlighten us whether narrative is essential for creating video games that immerses the player emotionally to the game world including the characters.

A disadvantage of carrying out narrative analyses would be the fact that some video games do not use narrative. An easy example of this would be Tetris (Nintendo 1989). Therefore, it will not be possible to say whether creating emotion is necessary for video games that do not use narrative for encouraging the player to play the game. It will also not be possible to conclude that whether every video game out there needs narrative to

create emotion or does not need narrative at all to enhance its gameplay due to the fact that there are many genres of video games. The two video game titles I will be analysing are from the genres of action/adventure/rpg/stealth therefore we can not have the same conclusion for simulation, sport, or puzzle genres whether or not it uses narrative. This is because each genre has its own characteristics and requirements for a video game to meet in order to be associated with that genre as Mark J. P. Wolf states:

> The genres below take into consideration the dominant characteristics of the interactive experience and the games' goals and objectives, and the nature of the game's player-character and player controls.

> Wolf (2003:116)

Titles such as Metal Gear Solid and Final Fantasy 7 heavily depend on narrative content thus enabling developers to create believable characters that the player cares for. What would happen if we took out the key elements from those games that create emotion? Will it reduce the overall experience or will it not make any difference? Videogames tend to be compared with movies as a story telling medium and David Freeman makes direct comparisons between the two mediums and he states that there are many people who will never start playing games until games become as emotionally engaging as films and television. (Freeman, www.freemangames.com).

Videogames are a very complex medium. Their target group varies from children to adults, different players look for different gameplay elements within the same game. It is

very important to get the gameplay right the first time because it is very easy to get frustrated and bored if the gameplay is not rewarding and does not introduce new ideas. This is why David Freeman's emotioneering techniques can engage the player emotionally to the game world which will encourage the player to play the game regardless of the gameplay staying the same through out the game. Perhaps it can give a different meaning to a gameplay element e.g. shooting the same guy for the hundredth time can be boring and unwilling for the player but when we apply some of the emotioneering techniques, the player will be shooting the enemy for a reason, to save one of the characters live rather than trying to proceed to the next level, or to get the highest score. That should improve the overall experience of that particular title.

A disadvantage of David Freeman's emotioneering techniques is, as he states that are for games that contain either characters and/or stories, those which engage players emotionally have a towering advantage. (Freeman, www.freemangames.com). The videogame requires characters or narrative for his emotioneering techniques to work. This means his techniques can not be applied to all video game genres therefore it is not a universal emotioneering techniques for video games, rather it is a set of tools for video games that has some form of narrative or characters within its game world that can be used to engage the players emotionally to its game world.

<u>Analysis</u>

<u>Final Fantasy 7</u>

Final Fantasy 7 opens with a scene in which the camera slowly makes random moves to all directions. The background music plays at a steady intensity and the style of music makes the player wonder what is happening in the scene. The overall look of the first 40 seconds of the opening scene consists of a black background with bright tiny spheres which reminds the player of stars. With the aid of the background music it makes it very mystical. Then suddenly the bright spheres fade out and a beautiful young girl's face appears in the black background. The camera gradually zooms out and many bright green light particles start to move vertically. The young girl blinks her eyes while directly looking at the camera. Until this point in the scene we are giving the impression of a mystical world. The denoted bright green light particles we see at the front of the young girl's face connote the young girl as a fairy. The background music also changes to a much slower pace.

The camera changes to a different view. We can see her looking at the sparkling green light pieces. She stands up and looks in the direction of the camera. Then she starts moving towards the camera and the camera also moves away from her simultaneously keeping its distance. We can hear the echo of her footsteps. This represents her being lonely. She is carrying a bucket full of red flowers. The main signifier in this scene that connotes the mental image regarding her personality is the red roses. This follows the

earlier signifiers used such as the bright star like shapes, the green light pieces and finally the red roses. All these signs convey the mental image of a beautiful young girl. The overall signified mental image of those signs makes us wonder who this girl is and what her relevance to the story.

As she continues walking in the direction of the camera we can hear motor vehicle noises. The camera slowly increases its distance with her and we can see other people walking in the streets. Suddenly she stops and more motor vehicles move between her and the camera. Smoke comes out from each vehicle. This gives us more information on the characteristics of the game world. The connoted mental image in our minds regarding the game world is mechanical and not that advanced. Also the other pedestrians on the road are dark coloured like shadows where the young girl we saw at the beginning can be seen in full colour. This distinguishes her from the game world and other people on the road. This tells us that she is not an ordinary girl and has some form of importance to the game world.

As the camera keeps moving away from her we can clearly see a billboard style advert with the text "LOVELESS" written on the building she's standing next to. This creates an emotional connection with the player and the game world, especially with the young girl. The linguistic sign "LOVELESS" can be conceived in many meanings by many individuals. But in many cultures, being loveless can convey two meanings. First one is being lonely, unhappy and sad. The second meaning is being cruel, unkind and mean towards others. In this case the earlier signs such as the red roses convey the mental

image of love which gives the former meaning to the linguistic sign "LOVELESS". This tells us that the young girl is sad, unhappy and lonely. Also, the movement of the camera, moving away from her gives us the feeling that she is lonely and friendless. But in general, the overall connoted mental image is that every individual is sad and unhappy in the game world. Therefore, the sign "LOVELESS" is very important in terms of giving an insight to the player regarding the game world and the characters.

The camera keeps moving away from her, flies through the streets and eventually we can see the whole city from above. Then the name of the video game is displayed with a sudden change in music. We can clearly see the whole city and the amount of smoke comes out from its six main buildings. Then again this conveys the mental image of this city being not very technologically advanced. An image of a moving train replaces the scene for a second then the camera starts moving towards the city again. As the camera moves towards the city we get to see the same train moving somewhere else in the city. Slowly the camera hovers above the train that we saw a few seconds ago and stops right beside it at the same level of the platform as the train comes to a complete halt. Then the protagonist comes out of the train by making acrobatic moves. This tells us he is not an ordinary person, he is strong and different.

The change from one location two another in real life in the opening scene and the linguistic sign "LOVELESS" builds up the link between the young girl and the protagonist. When these two game characters meet later on in the game, the player feels more connected with them due to their appearance in two different locations in the

opening scene which makes the player believe that when he/she was controlling the protagonist, the young girl was also living in the game world alone before they met. Therefore, the opening scene sets the basic background for the future events involving these two characters.

The player encounters his/her first battle as soon as the protagonist jumps of the train. The main character is named "Cloud". He has spiky, yellow hair. He also has an oversized sword. This conveys the mental image of sharpness, energy and quickness. This gives more information about his personality and his powers. When an enemy is encountered, the screen goes blurry and the music changes to connote that something bad has happened. The fighting type is turn based. First the player makes a move then the enemies. The fighting screen consists of linguistic and visual signs. The protagonist's name is displayed on the left-hand side of the screen and next to it his HP and MP points are displayed. There is also a "Limit" and a "Wait" box which fills up over time. The Hit Point is the most important information the player needs to keep an eye on. If it reaches zero the player dies. This builds up the tension and forces the player to look after his character by giving him potions in order to refill his Hit Points. Magic Points works in the same way but it is only for performing magic attacks. Without these signs the player wouldn't know when to refill the HP by giving potions therefore it forces the player to care for the characters in the battle. The other key importance of battle in terms of creating emotion is that the player can use an item called "Phoenix Down" to revive a fallen character. Sometimes the player must make a choice of reviving between more than one character. This creates many emotional moments as some characters die while

reviving others and each character is different with certain attack and magical powers. This also depends on each player's own experience and his/her favourite characters throughout the game.

One of the most memorable moments in video games history is when Aeris dies. Earlier in the game we find out that Aeris is the flower girl we saw in the opening scene. As the game progresses the protagonist promises he will take care of her no matter what. This builds up the emotional connection between the player and the game characters. The player feels like he/she has made that promise and feels responsible.

> Responsibility can promote depth because, to truly take responsibility for another, you must, to a lesser or greater degree, understand that person – who they are, their needs, their dreams. You need to expand beyond your own viewpoint and see the world the way they do. This causes depth.
>
> Freeman (2004: 281)

The cut sequence in which Aeris gets killed starts off showing Aeris on her knees making a wish with her eyes shut. Her body gestures totally convey the images of an innocent, helpless, week person. She then puts her head up and looks at the protagonist. The camera changes to a close-up view of Cloud's face and he just looks at her without any emotion. Aeris being on her knees with her eyes shut and making a wish then the camera changing from Aeris to Cloud gives the feeling of an emotional connection between them. The camera zooms back towards Aeris and we can clearly see from her face expression that she is worried and something bad is going to happen. From directly above

her the main antagonist descends towards her with his sword in his hand. While he descends towards Aeris, she is surrounded with bright colours and the antagonist is wearing a black costume which makes him standout as the bad guy. The light and dark coloured signs such as the blue light around Aeris and her dress and the antagonist's costume convey the mental images of good and bad. This mentally forces the player to feel sorry for Aeris and anger against the antagonist.

As soon as he comes close enough to Aeris he stabs her with his sword. We can clearly see the sword cutting through her skin and coming out from the other side of her body. This close-up shot of Aeris getting killed and becoming unconscious builds the drama and shows how cruelly she is killed. The player witnesses this event as if he/she was the protagonist watching her getting killed. The camera shows the antagonist's face looking at Cloud with a smile on his face. Then we see the antagonist pulling back his sword from Aeris's unconscious body as she lifelessly falls to the ground. This moment affects the player's emotion regarding Aeris and the anger against the antagonist. As she falls to the ground a sphere like object comes out of her hair. This object conveys the mental image of her life being taken away from her body, she is no longer alive.

In the next scene, Cloud lets her lifeless body sink to the bottom of the water. The camera shows Cloud moving away from her as she sinks and we see Aeris moving away from the camera towards the bottom of the water. This scene tells us how Cloud loved her and it is difficult for him to let her go. This clearly shows the emotional connection between the protagonist and Aeris. The player feels he has failed because Aeris will not be there

anymore. The main antagonist killing her makes the whole scene more dramatic. The player feels anger and wants to avenge Aeris's death.

After the cut scene we see a conversation going on between Cloud and the antagonist. Cloud tells him to shut up as Aeris will no longer talk, no longer laugh, cry or get angry. This sentence alone builds up the tension and the emotional link between Cloud and Aeris. This also clearly shows Cloud's anger. Then the antagonist replies and asks whether Cloud has feelings too. Cloud replies and tells him "of course! Who do you think I am!?" The antagonist laughs at him and tells him to stop acting like he is sad and angry. This conversation proves that Cloud is sad and angry which makes the whole scene of Aeris getting killed more real. This enables the player to believe in the game characters, especially in Cloud as he is the main character which represents the player in the game world.

From a narrative point of view Aeris's death scene is the climax in the story. It is the part where main objective of the game changes and becomes and emotional purpose for playing the game, for both the game characters and the player. After Aeris's murder the surviving characters resolve to defeat the antagonist and avenge her. Every random battle and boss battle becomes more important to the player. Every time the player gets closer to the antagonist the emotional feeling, the guilt and the anger builds up.

The ending cut scene starts with a close-up shot of the antagonist's face. We can clearly see his face is covered in blood looking at the camera. His face expression tells us that he

is shocked because of him getting defeated. This gives the player an emotional satisfaction as the antagonist does not have the same disrespectful smile he had when he killed Aeris. The camera zooms out and we can see white light beams coming out from his body. The white light beams represent the good in the scene therefore the mental image of good destroying evil is conveyed to the player. Finally we witness the antagonist getting destroyed, blown up into little light particles. We see Cloud looking at the direction of his destroyed enemy with an emotionless face expression. Suddenly a bright light appears above him and a hand moves towards him out of the bright light. Cloud also opens his hands trying to reach it. In this scene the hand represents Aeris and the bright light represents the gateway to heaven. This connotes the emotional feeling that Aeris is happy because the player has avenged her death. But their hands not reaching to each other represent the reality as Aeris is dead and no longer will be able to see Cloud again. Hence the scene changes, the bright light disappears and we see another character trying to reach Cloud and hold onto him before the platform Cloud is standing on falls. At the end the fight pays off but we can clearly see the protagonist still thinks about Aeris straight after the battle. This shows the emotional connection between them which emotionally connects the player to the game world and to the game characters.

Metal Gear Solid

Opposed to Final Fantasy 7, Metal Gear Solid starts with a calmer setting and an introduction to the mission the player will need to undertake. The first entity the player sees is a submarine moving towards the camera. Then we get to see the interior of the

submarine and the crew as the player is given information regarding his missions and some extra information about the location. This scene conveys the feeling that the mission briefing is real, our protagonist gets genuine information, and it's not just set of instructions given to the player to complete the game. The interior of the submarine shows a complex setup with maps and crew walking up and down, high-tech visualisations are also used for the mission briefing. The player is informed that his got only 24 hours to complete the mission else there is going to be a nuclear attack. This puts a certain level of emotional pressure to the player and makes the game objective seem more real.

At this point we get to see the main protagonist, Solid Snake. He is wearing an underwater suit, waiting inside the SDV (swimmer delivery vehicle) listening for the instructions. Snake is wearing an underwater mask and the overall look of his costume gives the feeling that Snake is trained for this kind of missions and he is an experienced soldier. The connotation of our hero's suit relies on the player's existing knowledge of a soldier/special ops and the type of situations they get into which conveys the mental image of Solid Snake being strong, confident and intelligent. Also at the beginning of the mission briefing we never see the protagonist hence it gives the feeling that mission briefing is given to the player. This sets the mood of the player for the mission. Once we see the protagonist for the first time player mentally takes the role of Solid Snake. He/she starts to feel like him and think like him which eventually makes the player share the same feelings as the protagonist. Then we realise that the briefing had been made earlier, the mission is already started and our hero is on his way to his target location. At the

same time we are given more information about the key enemies the player will face. Each of the key enemies, (bosses) are mentioned and very brief description is made for each one. But when the main antagonist's code name is mentioned Solid Snake open the SDV's door with a big banging sound. This connotes that he is the main antagonist and he is the one that is causing the nuclear attack threat. Therefore, whenever the main antagonists name gets mentioned in the game, the player will want to find him or kill him. The player will always be aware that he is the one responsible for all of these.

At the end of the opening scene, we hear Solid Snake asking whether there will be other men beside him, and the General tells him that this will be as usual, one-man infiltration mission. This dialogue alone explains more regarding Solid Snake's character as a soldier. From the General's reply we can come to conclusion that Solid Snake is an experienced soldier for this type of operations and he has gone through similar missions. The General also tells him it is top-secret black ops and there will be no official support. This sets the overall ambience to the missions and the gameplay as dark, quite and slow. Finally, we see Solid Snake swimming towards the surface of the water and it is where the gameplay takes over. The opening scene gives very brief introduction to the mission and other game characters the player will face. However, the use of linguistic signs such as the protagonist's codename Solid Snake connotes the mental image of being silent, deadly and quick. This also connotes the way missions will be completed such as being silent and undetected. Two objectives are given to the player. One of them is to rescue two important hostages and secondly is to investigate whether or not the terrorists have the ability to make a nuclear strike and if yes, to stop them. The objectives are real life

scenarios which can also happen in real life. Therefore, the setting feels very authentic which makes the game world and the characters believable.

The key moment in Metal Gear Solid is when a character named Meryl is shot by one of the bosses named Sniperwolf. The cut scene starts with Solid Snake trying to warn her by saying her name. Then we can see a red laser beam hitting her body. This tells the player that she is in danger. The camera follows the laser beam and we hear Solid Snake asking her to get down.. Then suddenly she gets shot on the stomach. A large amount of blood comes out as she gets shot and we can hear her scream. As soon as she gets shot she falls on to the ground and Solid Snake takes cover. This shows she is in pain and there is nothing the player can do to save her. She gets shot again before she falls to the ground. Solid Snake/the player is only watching her getting killed. Meryl tries to get her fallen gun but she gets shot again and she gives up. The camera shows Solid Snake behind a wall taking cover. Solid Snake tries to help her but he is forced to stay in cover by the Sniperworlf. This builds up the emotional connection between the player and the game characters. The player witnesses how helpless Meryl is and brutally gets killed. The player also witnesses Solid Snake's attempts at saving her and how helpless he is too. David Freeman states in one his emotioneering techniques that 'Powerlessness to help someone you care about creates an emotionally complex situation' (2004: 435). The emotional connection and the anger against Sniperwolf is grown by the use of dialogue and key linguistic signs. Meryl is on the floor covered in blood and she can hardly speak. She tells Solid Snake to leave her and run. She also tells him she is a rookie after all. This opening sentences are emotionally affects the player making him/her feel sorry and guilty

due to not being able to protect her. Solid Snake replies and tells her not to worry it's him they want. Then she tells him that she knows that and the Sniperwolf is using her as bait to get him. This connotes the mental image of Meryl getting shot because of the player. Then she asks Solid Snake to shoot her. This tells the player that she is in pain and it's entirely the player's fault. The player gets emotionally connected to the scene and this is maintained by the use of dialogue. She tells Solid Snake that she promised she wouldn't slow him down. The camera zooms in towards Solid Snake as he is listening what Meryl is saying. We can clearly see she is trying to help him by saying she wants to help by being bait. Solid Snake tells her to keep quite and save her strength. This shows Solid Snake cares for her but at the same time he is unable to help her. This makes the player feel sorry for both of them. At the end she asks him not to forget her and to get out of there. The use of camera angle, background music and the situation Meryl is in makes the scene much more dramatic. The background music compliments the scene perfectly in terms of setting the mood.

The opening scene introduced us the game world and the key enemies including Sniperwolf. The player already new who these people were and what kind of a threat they are giving to the world. The player was already emotionally engaged to the game world at the end of the opening scene. The player knew it was a difficult one-man infiltration therefore the appearance of Meryl was a surprise. This makes her special, as the only character on the battlefield helping the player. She becoming bait is a dramatic event which engages the player emotionally to the game world and characters. The feeling of

anger against Sniperwolf builds up which at the end affects the purpose of the battle between Solid Snake and Sniperwolf.

The player feels sorry for Meryl and Solid Snake and the next boss battle involves Solid Snake fighting Sniperwolf. Now, the purpose of the battle is to avenge Meryl's death as well as proceeding to the next area. The emotional engagement with Meryl's death gives the player an emotional purpose for defeating her. Every time the Sniperwolf gets shot it gives the player a certain level of emotional satisfaction. It gives much more meaning to the battle and for the next levels. If Meryl had not been shot by the Sniperwolf, then the boss battle would have only been a typical battle in order to proceed to the next section. But emotionally engaging the player to the game world and to certain characters affects the player mentally such as the purpose of the fight for the player becomes avenging Meryl's death where as it could have been just an ordinary boss battle.

The ending of the game is affected dramatically by the player's actions. The player can choose to save Meryl by resisting a torture session. If the player gives up Meryl dies, else she is saved and the ending cut sequence changes according to this. The player needs to resist the torturing by rapidly pressing one of the buttons on the control pad for certain amounts of time. This gets harder every time the player successfully manages to resist. The player also has the option of giving up at the cost of Meryl's life. This section of the game emotionally forces the player to resist the torturing until the time runs out. A green bar represents the player's health. A blue bar represents the time in which the player must rapidly press a button on the control pad, keeping the protagonist's health bar getting

empty before the time bar runs out. The player needs to make a choice, whether to fight and resist the torturing and save Meryl's life, or give up and let her get tortured and killed. When the torturing starts we can see the electrical currents flowing through the protagonist's body. We can also see he is in pain.

This gameplay element involves many dramatic decisions by the player. The player will need to decide whether to fight for Meryl or just give up and get her tortured and killed. The earlier memorable moment where Meryl got shot by the Sniperwolf and the dialogue between Meryl and Solid Snake built the emotional connection between the player and the game world. It was an emotional setup for this section of the game. Because the player witnessed the earlier event he/she now feels responsible of saving her life therefore tries to resist the torturing. This is why this session affects the ending of the game dramatically. It gives the player the option of selecting one of the available two endings. This shows the player can have a dramatic affect on the ending of the story. Therefore whether the player is emotionally engaged with the game world and characters is important else there is no point in this torturing session other than only affecting the game's ending cut sequence.

Both texts use similar binary opposition system in its narrative. The binary opposition system used in both texts is the fight between good and evil, weak and strong. In Final Fantasy 7 the protagonists fights a far superior legendary warrior named Sephiroth. The protagonist hardly resists Sephiroth's powers hence Aeris gets killed by Sephiroth and Cloud is unable to stop it. Also the battles in the game gradually become harder, so the

player is fighting stronger bosses every time. In Metal Gear Solid, the player also fights stronger bosses and the final boss battle is a tremendous war machine which is much stronger than the protagonist. Also, there is an opposition in the codename of the protagonist's being Solid Snake and the main antagonist's being Liquid Snake.

Both titles also use the theory of Claude Levi-Strauss where he states constant creation of conflict/opposition propels narrative and narrative can only end on a resolution of conflict. In both texts two major game characters gets killed and the story changes and new conflicts occurs in the narrative. Both titles' narratives end with the resolution of conflict. In Final Fantasy the main antagonist gets killed and the world is saved. In Metal Gear Solid the nuclear strike is prevented and the terrorist group's squad leader is killed. There is a happy ending in both titles with the resolution of conflict in the narrative.

In both texts the level of emotion and drama is developed by the use of dialogue. Greg M. Smith states that there are gameplay elements such as battles that help the story move forward where films and television relies on the dialogue to make the story keep going and interesting. (Smith, 2001: www.gamestudies.org). The use of dialogue allows the player to understand how the game characters are feeling and what kind of mood they are in. The dialogue between Meyl and Solid Snake for example tells us how Solid Snake is worried about her but at the same time he is unable to help her. We can also see Meryl is ready to give her life just to save Solid Snake's life. The conversation such as this dramatically sets the emotional level of the game very high thus enabling the player to feel sympathy for both characters. In Final Fantasy 7 the dialogue between Cloud and Sephiroth shows the player that Cloud is very upset and angry. It would have been very difficult to explain what the characters are feeling without the use of dialogue; hence it is vital in the process of creating emotionally engendered scenes.

I would like to conclude this study and note that engendering emotion between the game world and the player does enhance the gameplay up to a certain level. It adds an emotional purpose when progressing to the next section or fighting the next boss battle. It is essential for a video game to include some form of narrative in order to create emotionally engendered scenes. The both texts I have analysed heavily depend on narrative and memorable moments which are caused by narrative hooks. There are many genres that this study does not include hence we cannot say emotionally engendered scenes can enhance the gameplay for all the video games out there.

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