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An investigation into the importance of a cohesive quest line in Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games

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Introduction

I would like to introduce the topic of coherency in videogame questlines, mainly to those games that fall under the MMORPG category. I found this most interesting due to the current struggles that I am going through with games in my own life. I am constantly drawn into games that I can sink many hours into and feel a sort of development progress through my characters actions. I just find that within some of these games the questing can get tiresome, tedious and sometimes even confusing because there is no cohesive narrative to the quest line. I started to come to the understanding that it is a possibility that these games that are constantly evolving with no cohesive narrative are just time dumpsters that you just need to numbly play. I really do not want to believe this, so that is why I am venturing out to try and see if some more consistency and coherence in a games' questing system might help the users experience, and that therefore the current way of writing quests is possibly not done for a specific reason to make the game successful, but could just be lazy game design.

There are many genres of games, and not all are alike, I would not imply that all games need a narrative. There are Looter Shooters, Bullet Hells, Rougelikes, and Sandbox games, with examples of each being Risk of Rain as a Looter Shooter/Rougelike, Nova Drift as a Bullet Hell, and one of the best examples of Sandbox: Minecraft. These games, although they might have a narrative added to them, the narrative itself was not behind the success of the game, for they offer gameplay that is enjoyable for other reasons and do not hinge on a quest line as the reason for playing the game, although it is important to note that several of these games have benefited from adding a cohesive narrative.

One interesting game to take note of is Roblox. Even though it could be classified as a MMORPG, it has little to no narrative, but still succeeds. I believe this is due to the narrative that is created by the users of the game. A game filled with mindless mini games, and complex role-playing mini games, that are both created by the user and then developed narratively by the creator and the adopting community.

I believe that cohesion in a game is important, but the game doesn't hinge on its cohesive narrative. I feel that too many games have proven that they can do well

financially without having a fleshed out, cohesive narrative storyline. If a game's achievement of "making it" falls under being studied, written about, and being a pioneer in propelling game development, then a lot of games aren't "making it." I just feel that these are not the criteria of a game being successful. I feel more importance is currently put on a game making financial profit, than making gaming better for the community, and this is where you can see mistakes and bugs in games. When players read about how much a game is making annually from their player-bases, that incentivises other players to migrate to that game. Which I get, a game having good financial income, stipulates that the game will be able to make more content which will give you more to do in said game. Making that purchase of the game worth it, for you get to experience the current content and then have this idea of, since this game is doing well, I will get more content. So far that does seem to be how most games carry out, the more the company, or creator makes off of the game, the higher possibility that games will release more content in the future. I just wish this wasn't so, so that the user experience was put first and making sure that, like each book that gets the title of best novel that propels the way books are written, so can games. Not just an achievement of, most sold copies, or more pre-ordered. More a game that changed the way we game, a game that shook the video game community. An emphasis on the quality of games created. I hope to take this into how I create games in the future, and I aim to investigate in this paper whether it is important to have a cohesive narrative questline in order to improve the quality, and therefore the success, of the game.

Definitions

Before we can delve into the topics that I would like to discuss I would first like to define every acronym, phrase or topic that I will be discussing so that we can start in the same mindset when discussing this any further.

Definition of the MMORPG genre

The main genre of games we will be discussing will be MMO games, which are "Massive Multiplayer Online"[1] games, but we will more specifically be focussing on a subclass within the genre: MMORPG which are "Massive Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Games."[2] Questing is a long search for something that is difficult to find, by its broad meaning, but within a role playing game, a quest, "is a task that a player-controlled character or group of characters may complete in order to gain a reward."[3] It is also a "tool used in role-playing games to avoid putting players in a position where they only perform a repetitive action, such as killing creatures."[4]

Definition of ludology

I would like to discuss the two main areas of focus: ludology and narratology. Let us first start with ludology. The term ludology comes "from ludus, the Latin word for 'game'."[5] This term refers to the discipline that studies game and play activities. It was first proposed to call the study of games and play activities by Parnasso, Helsinki, in 1999, in his paper "LUDOLOGY MEETS NARRATOLOGY". Ludology is the study of games as their own field, standalone from, and not compared to other fields. There have been many debates within the ludology ranks on what should be the focus of this study, without going into too much detail here, since we will talk about this later on, we can discuss briefly the side of the Ludologists, they assert that "games should be understood on their own terms rather than as narratives which can be studied using traditional forms of narrative analysis."[6] I agree with this statement, since I believe games take a lot of different forms of media, and turn it into one large interactive media, so it's difficult to study games from the perspective or view of only one type of media and it should be studied in a way that encompasses all different types of media use in the game.

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[1] Dictionary.com, Define MMO, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/mmo>
[2] Dictionary.com, Define MMORPG, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/mmorpg>
[3] SensAgent provided by Wordnet, Define Quest, <http://dictionary.sensagent.com/Quest%20(gaming)/en-en/>
[4] Wikipedia.org, Define Quest, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quest_(video_games)>
[5] Gonzalo Frasca, Ludology Meets Narratology, <https://ludology.typepad.com/weblog/articles/ludology.htm>
[6] Game studies Wiki, Define Ludology, <https://game-studies.fandom.com/wiki/Ludology>

Definition of narratology

Now let us discuss and define, Narratology. Narratology is the study of the written word. In "literary theory, the study of narrative structure. Narratology looks at what narratives have in common and what makes one different from another."[7] Narratology is mostly used in the studies of literature: books, novels, screen scripts, and short stories. The implantation of narratology in video games, and merely focuses on one aspect of a game, it's narrative. This is one of the key areas where narratology and ludology differ and come to an argument. Since narratology is focused on one aspect of a game where ludology wants to focus on the game as a whole. "Narratologists place the importance of computer and video games on telling a story or 'cyberdrama' rather than simply entertainment."[8]

Definition of cohesion

I would also like to define what coherence is in its overarching meaning; cohesion is "words and expressions that show relationships between parts of text and ideas, such as cause and effect, and time."[9]

To delve a little deeper into how we define cohesion: cohesion refers to the way we use "vocabulary and grammatical structures to make connections between the ideas within a text."[10] It provides "flow and sequence to your work and helps make your paragraphs clear for the reader."[11] Cohesive devices are "words and expressions that show relationships between parts of text and ideas, such as cause and effect, time, addition, or comparison and contrast."[12] Cohesion in video games does take this approach, but also implements it into the "using of the game". They way you interact with the world, the way you may craft, learn skills, use items, all ties into the way the game comes together and feels cohesive. I would like to explore cohesion as an aged form of media and within itself as a relatively new form of media.

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[7] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica.com, Define Narratology, 17th June 1999, <https://www.britannica.com/art/narratology>

[8] Mediawiki, Narratology in game studies by Noah Wardip-Fruin & Pat Harrigan (eds), 22nd May 2007, <https://mediawiki.middlebury.edu/MIDDMedia/Narratology_in_game_studies >

[9] The University of Melbourne, Improving Cohesion, <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/essay-writing/improving-cohesion>

[10] The University of Melbourne, Improving Cohesion, <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/essay-writing/improving-cohesion>

[11] The University of Melbourne, Improving Cohesion, <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/essay-writing/improving-cohesion>

[12] The University of Melbourne, Improving Cohesion, <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/essay-writing/improving-cohesion>

Background

A brief outline and examples of questing in video games

"Role-playing games need to offer more than a sequence of linked events toward a monumental finale."[13] This is where side quests come into play: the small stories that make the narrative journey fuller and more exciting. Something of recent, Elden Ring, takes side questing to a new standard. This game makes the ending unravel solely by completing some side quests, and even locking outside quests once completing the main quest, enticing the user to play the game again. Side quests allow the user to feel that they are healing this doom ridden world one interaction at a time, allowing us to discover friends, companions, pets, and in the case of Elden Ring, summons to aid us in battle. Side quests are not the only kind of quest, there are: main quest, subquest, side quest, and minigames.

Let's briefly touch on **main quests**, since I am sure this one is broadly understood, the main quest within a game is the main story narrative of the game. These are the quests that are your character's "life purpose or mission."[14] The overarching main story quest will be the ultimate goal that you must eventually accomplish in order to complete the game.

A **subquest**, now I personally have not encountered main quest lines in games that refer to themselves as "subquests" so without practical examples from my own experience, we will just go by how subquests are defined in online literature. "A subquest is a smaller goal or project that directly supports your main quest."[15] So these could be classified as the quest which changes your ending within the game of Elden Ring.

We have already touched on **side quests** but just to round it out with its purpose: "A side quest is an optional side project that doesn't directly support your main quest,

[13] Sarah Maria Griffin, In video game stories it's often side quests that are most meaningful, 27th May 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2020/may/27/in-video-game-stories-its-often-side-quests-that-are-most-meaningful>

[14] Steve Pavlina, Main Quest, Subquest, Side Quest, or Minigame, 29th February 2020, <https://stevepavlina.com/blog/2020/02/main-quest-subquest-side-quest-or-minigame/>

[15] Steve Pavlina, Main Quest, Subquest, Side Quest, or Minigame, 29th February 2020, <https://stevepavlina.com/blog/2020/02/main-quest-subquest-side-quest-or-minigame/>

but completing a side quest could make it a little easier to tackle your main quest or a subquest, such as by building up your skills or gaining additional resources."[16]

The best place to find examples of **minigames** would be the game Grand Theft Auto, where you can hop into a video game arcade, in the video game, and play some knock-off arcade games in your video game. And this falls perfectly with the definition of a minigame: "a minigame is a small game within the larger game…A minigame is mostly a diversion."[17]

A brief history and examples of ludology

Where you can find ludology in gaming, is in the studies around Nuclear Throne, the pioneer of screen shake user feedback, Minecraft, the pioneer of open world sandbox gaming, arcade games such as Speed Race, being the springboard that simulation games bounced off, with notable mention to Forza coming directly from games of the like of Speed Race. Who cannot forget the impact of the Easter Egg, and the first recorded video game Easter Egg in the game Adventure. "Programmed by Warren Robinett in 1979 while working for Atari. In Atari's 1979 game Adventure, programmer Warren Robinett implemented one of the first Easter eggs in a video game."[18] To clarify what an Easter Egg (in a game) is a, "'hidden properties of games that can be revealed by button combinations or by accessing remote areas in the game or on the disc itself,' says Colin Oguro, writer for GameSpot in his post on The Greatest Easter Eggs in Gaming."[19]

A brief history and examples of narratology

Examples of Narratology are far easier to find, and are much more widely accepted, as novels, screenplays and literary pieces in general have been around for much longer than newer media such as games before technological advances, and thus people have been studying literary works for much longer than they have been studying games and game design. Many research papers have been written about narrative books, with classics such as "To Kill a Mockingbird", "Animal Farm", all the

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[16] Steve Pavlina, Main Quest, Subquest, Side Quest, or Minigame, 29th February 2020, <https://stevepavlina.com/blog/2020/02/main-quest-subquest-side-quest-or-minigame/>
[17] Steve Pavlina, Main Quest, Subquest, Side Quest, or Minigame, 29th February 2020, <https://stevepavlina.com/blog/2020/02/main-quest-subquest-side-quest-or-minigame/>
[18] Arizona State University, Ben Pincus, The Cake is a Lie: Easter Eggs in Video Games, <https://gamesandimpact.org/uncategorized/the-cake-is-a-lie-easter-eggs-in-video-games/>
[19] Arizona State University, Ben Pincus, The Cake is a Lie: Easter Eggs in Video Games, <https://gamesandimpact.org/uncategorized/the-cake-is-a-lie-easter-eggs-in-video-games/>

way to any "Harry Potter" books.[20] There are companies and communities that are built for the sole purpose of analytically studying the narrative of the written word. The most notable site where the study of narratology takes place is Goodreads, "is arguably the leading online community for book lovers. If you want some inspiration for which book to read next, this is the site to visit…You can participate in the community by…leaving reviews for other people to check out."[21] Notable mention to LibraryThing, which is the "self-proclaimed largest book club in the world. It has more than 2.3 million members."[22] There are even non-profit large organisations dedicated to reviewing the written word and educating about writing, leading organisation, American Library Association, where they are partnered with many print magazines/online portals, where "trusted experts from the American Library Association write all the reviews."[23]

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[20] Goodreads.com, Book Reports Books, <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/book-reports>
[21] makeuseof.com, Dan Price, The 10 Best Book Review Sites and Book Rating Sites, 28th June 2021, <https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/decide-what-to-read-next-with-the-best-book-review-sites/>
[22] makeuseof.com, Dan Price, The 10 Best Book Review Sites and Book Rating Sites, 28th June 2021, <https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/decide-what-to-read-next-with-the-best-book-review-sites/>
[23] American Library Association, About ALA, <https://www.ala.org/aboutala/>

Literature Review

Narrative design in MMO

Whilst researching I came across this article that talks about narrative design in MMO's, and this piqued my interest greatly since that is exactly what I am wanting to explore in my parallel project to this paper. It discussed how an MMO's story letting comes both from the game developers and the community itself, "it's a call and response where fan theories emerge, and the MMO responds to them."[24] Discussing examples of Club Penguin, World of Warcraft (classic) and Final Fantasy XIV. In this the writer uses Club Penguin as their main talking point, due to "its best, the game was co-authored by the player and the team."[25] These ideas were started via 'easter eggs' by either "message in a bottle on the Beach, or words on the screen in the background of an interview"[26] Through this the audience was engaged in creating their own narrative, coming up with what they believed to be the story. These engagements were monitored via social media accounts, and within the fan blogs/threads.

While the main aim of all MMO's (and such as extension, all games) is to turn all users into active participants, it can also be seen that in an MMO you might have vastly different game narratives to those made by players (their own player narrative). I personally have experienced this in World of Warcraft, where the game's narrative is that some demon hunter is trying to become all powerful, but then within your own nit group the narrative is that someone is another user's Dobby which is trying to gain his freedom by tricking his owner into giving him permanence. The best quote that I found in this article is that "as a narrative designer in an MMO, you dance the thin line between immersing the player, and not interrupting them when they are in the middle of something."[27]

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[24] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

[25] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

[26] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

[27] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

What makes games cohesive? This might be more difficult to explore than with narrative cohesion due to how new gaming cohesion is comparatively. When we discuss cohesion in video games let's rather discuss narrative design in video games since cohesion is the repercussion of good narrative design in a game. So what is narrative design? "Simply put, narrative design is the use of story to make sense of gameplay in a video game."[28] Narrative design is so new in gaming that the first recorded game designer to go under the title of a game narrative designer was "Stephen Dinehart back in 2006 during his time at American game publisher, THQ."[29] The narrative designer works with their team to "build a world, inventing characters and events, and reconciling mechanics or rules."[30] The first documented game to have a narrative was a "text-based game, Colossal Cave Adventure (developed by Will Crowther and released in 1975)."[31] In the game, you explore a cave using text inputs and earn points based on how much coin you find. It's a work of "interactive fiction where the player is given various choices at different parts of the game."[32]

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[28] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>
[29] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>
[30] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>
[31] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>
[32] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020, <https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

Cohesion and its importance in video games

Cohesion and narrative design in games

Sometimes cohesion in games is rather referred to as narrative design, stated in Mariah Beem article 'Narrative Design in Video Games' - "Narrative design is, in its most simple form, creating game cohesion."[33] In many cases game cohesion is rather referred to as narrative design, so when researching narrative design, I found that "if narrative is 'the story the game tells', narrative design is the creation of that story and the design of the mechanics through which the story is told."[34] stated by Jay Posely. Once you delve into narrative design in gaming, the line between it and immersion becomes too blurred to discuss in this paper alone, possibly an investigation on its own.

Examples of "good and bad" narrative design in games

A good and bad example of cohesion in video games is the game series of Mass Effect, and Assassins Creed, respectively. Mass Effect is a great example of good narrative design even though it is a series because it allows the user to take already created characters and story arch choices with the user through all the games, play the first game, make choices, play the second game, load your first games save file into the second, bam, all your choices and your created character are now in the second game, and your choices from the first actually impact the gameplay of the second, such a great example of keeping the narrative inline within multiple games from the series. Now Assassins Creed, is the complete opposite, your choices from each game do not affect any of the other games and their choices within. Now this is opinionated, but not even most of the choices in the newer games within the series affect the game you're currently playing either. In my opinion, this is a great example of bad narrative design, or shows how better narrative design could have improved the user experience across the series.

Cohesion in video games: good examples I (Her Story)

I would like to look at games that are world renown for their narrative direction. I would just like to disclose that these games are looked at through not several opinions but through mine and the general, recent to this writing, public. Her Story,

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[33] gamnesia.com, Mariah Beem, Narrative Design in Video Games, 19th October 2013, <https://gamnesia.com/articles-narrative-design-in-video-games/>

[34] Book – Professional Techniques for Video Game Writing edited by Wendy Despain

by Sam Barlow, is a great example of the mystery genre game. The user goes through video logs of a woman, to try and figure out what has happened to her husband, but as you go through these video logs you find out that there is something more to this than just a simple crime. "Because you're searching for keywords in a police database, each player's experience is entirely different from each other."[35] Due to this game having several ending criteria, each user's journey is unique to themselves, but might meet somewhere in the middle with someone else's story, this is why I believe it is such a great example of well written narrative and game story cohesion.

Cohesion in video games: good examples II (Horizon Zero Down)

Horizon Zero Down, made by Guerrilla Games, is an action role-playing game where you play as a woman named Aloy in a fictional depiction of the human race's future. Where machines created to mimic wildlife have gone rogue and are now at the top of the food chain. You explore this open world where there are constant interactions to discover and clues to the overarching narrative to understand. Throughout the story you know that Aloy is part of something bigger than herself and you are, just like she is, trying to come to some sort of understanding of it all.

Cohesion in video games: good examples III (The Stanley Parable)

The Stanley Parable, with a delightfully written narrative by both Davey Wreden, and William Pugh. In this game you play as a character named Stanley whose job is to stare at screens and push buttons. "While the narrator tells you what he expects you to do, you don't have to listen, and that's where it starts to get smart."[36] The narrator often gets annoyed at the player if the story is not 'properly' told and punishes the player for not doing what they are told. Essentially this game becomes an opinion on how games allow player choice, even muddying the way players 'win' at the end of a game.

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[35] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020,
<https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>
[36] Emma Bullen, The Ultimate Guide to Narrative Design, 11th August 2020,
<https://www.nicelysaid.net/what-is-narrative-design/>

Cohesion and its importance in traditional media

Cohesion in print media

Let's start with the more aged form of media, print media. Cohesion in print media is essential. Good books are often praised solely because the writing is engaging, understandable, and "follow-along-able" or cohesive. Within writing there are "two things that truly matter in fiction—the two things that make or break whether an otherwise well-written story not just works, but kicks everything up to the next level—are cohesion and resonance."[37] Resonance is "to forge a relationship between writer and reader that produces a reading experience capable of inspiring creative production, ideas, vigour and action."[38]

Cohesion in novels

Now that we understand how cohesion is used in all forms of print media, let's explore specifically cohesion in novels, and what makes novels cohesive. Firstly, it can be said that good cohesion in novels means that "action and reaction in primary characters' arcs"[39] are linked. More drawn-out moments of action and reaction in a written story help to create connections within the chapters and scenes. Example: your main character is a runner and loses a leg in chapter 1, how does he come to grips with this in chapter 2, is this event causing more strife in later chapters? "Plant the seeds of important story arcs in your exposition."[40] The exposition of a story is the introductory section that "gives the audience or reader the background of the characters and the present situation."[41] When you "write the exposition of your novel or short story, think about: Character development, Tension and conflict, Goals and motivations."[42] "Develop your story and themes from your exposition."[43] This is where it is mostly believed that writer run into "writer's block". There are many words of advice that get told on how to overcome being stuck in your writing. The main one I

[37] helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com, K.M. Weiland, Cohesion and Resonance!, 12th February 2018, <https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/cohesion-and-resonance/>

[38] Rose Deller, Writing with Resonance, 16th November 2016, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2016/11/16/the-materiality-of-research-writing-with-resonance-by-charlotte-wegener-and-ninna-meier/>

[39] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole, <https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>

[40] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole, <https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>

[41] Dictionary.com, Define Exposition, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/exposition>

[42] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole, <https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>

[43] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole, <https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>

find repeated is focus on expanding the character desires and goals that were brought out in your previous sections. Such as: "Themes linked to character goals and motivations…Obstacles and solutions created out of your starting scenario."[44] "Use subplots related to primary arcs and themes to create further cohesion"[45] A good way to grow your main characters story is to have secondary characters go through similar things but either not make it out as well, or be aided out of their turmoil by the main character. "subplots are a great tool for adding depth and variety to your story, bringing in extra tensions, intrigues and developments."[46] Last but not least, "Lead the parts of a story to a fitting end."[36] Though there are some noteworthy stories that have little to even non-existent endings, the majority of the time ending your writing off with a satisfying ending that brings closure to the reader works best. How do you decide to create an ending that fits and adds to your story's cohesion? "Bring characters' arcs to logical conclusions…Resolve primary conflicts…Use foreshadowing to suggest possible outcomes."[37] These are the ways that make book writing cohesive and allow for a great user reading experience.

[44] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole,
<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>
[45] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole,
<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>
[46] Jordan, The parts of a story: Creating a cohesive whole,
<https://www.nownovel.com/blog/parts-of-story-create-cohesion/>

Exploring narratives in games

Exploring the narrative of Escape from Tarkov

Why this is all too important to me, and my research goal is that of the "stuckness" that I am having within one of the most enjoyable games I have been filling my time with recently, Escape from Tarkov. A hardcore, realistic, first-person shooter game that takes a lot of inspiration from the current largest massive multiplayer online games. What makes this game amazing is the immense world that is created in this game, the statistics and fan theories on loot ratios and "god locations", the unmatched shooter experience, and character/gun customisation.

All this just falls flat when discussing the game's narrative questing experience. The world is this gritty waste land in Russia, where a faction of "Scavs" pollute the world, and run everything. They are a "if you're not with me, you're against me" and "shoot first and ask questions later" kind of mindset individuals. Where they have a hierarchy, with bosses that are mean, lean, killing machines, that drop good loot, but make you work for it. But with all of this there is no lore or narrative meaning behind it. Why are these bosses the way they are? Why do they look different from each other? Why does one carry this equipment and that one something else? Why does this boss have guards and that one doesn't?

The furthest the games narrative has gotten is a fan-built story on why a boss "Killa" is the way he is, he wears Adidas themed clothes and armour because he is the boss of a map "Interchange" which is a mall, that is all. There are traders in the game that have a three sentence write up about who they are, but not about how they became this trader in this war ridden Russia, not how they got these items for trade, not how they are unvisitable. How do we communicate to these traders, can't be by modern technology, that has all but been driven into the ground within this world. I find that even after all of this, this game still keeps me coming back, and not just me, this game does really well, with a dedicated, concurrent player-base.

Why? I have come up with some of my own theories. That maybe a game can have bad narrative/cohesion and still be a good game. That could be it, but I believe there is something stronger keeping this game afloat. That is, competition, it has none. There is no other game currently on the market that competes with this game on scale, realism, immersion, and competitiveness. Due to there being no competition,

where else are these users going to go when they want to play a hardcore, highstates, realistic shooter? They cannot go anywhere. Looking at other games in other leading genres, when the next big title in the Call of Duty game comes out and it is not up to scratch, where can the community go, well Battlefield, Apex, DayZ, and even Rust. These games in some way compete with Call of Duty within its player-base. This is the main reason I find that this game, Escape from Tarkov, can make lazy choices, and several mistakes, but players will still come back and play it, because they have nothing else that competes with it.

Narrative in the future of gaming

How will the impact of cohesive narratives change in the future of gaming? I do believe that things will change in the future. I do find that many more gamers are starting to realise how great small development team made games are and why they are so much better, and then ask for that from these big conglomerate gaming companies. I am finding that more intellectual conversations are happening around games and gaming, not just only video games but also tabletop, and card-based games. Users are wanting more for their beloved games, and I think that this is answered with cohesive, full narrative gameplay, a robust narrative design. Give the user not only fluid user interactions, solid mechanics but also lore that they can sink their mind into, not just their eyes and arms. We have seen a lot of big gaming companies fall flat on their products due to a more financial desire and not a community care desire, best example of current EA/Dice with Battlefield 2042. I believe that these more "at home times" have allowed users to sit down and think about the entertainment they are purchasing, and realise that maybe they are being short changed by games that they didn't realise pre-covid, because they were spending less time on these games and less time considering it because of other influences of real life before they were locked down and had to remain at home. Remembering what gaming was, and is supposed to be, an entertainment, and escape from real life. Realising that the current state of most games are crash grabbing, carrot dangling, endless buckets that you pour your money into and don't get much back from in the sense of in depth, well thought out game design.

Conclusion

I believe that the trends of current gaming are tending to change towards getting more from the time you invest. More and more large world, massive multiplayer online games, with a role-playing aspect, are becoming popular, due to the case of watching your in-game character evolve and mature both strength wise but also visually, and you as the user with game knowledge. Just looking at the current market with more and more MMORPGs being released, with the likes of New World, Lost Arch (to the Western audience), and the growing popularity with games such as Final Fantasy XIV, GTA No Pixel, and Destiny 2. More people are adopting one game that they will sink many hours into and take it for years with them. So that they can feel knowledgeable, skilled and valued in the game. Collaborating with like minded gamers, who not only are doing this themselves, but as well as aiding in the growth of the piers around them. Many of these communities become intertwined with real-life, becoming long friends, co-workers, even best man as their wedding, you see many a story about how "my best man started out as my Hallo clam mate." So I have hope for the future of gaming, and the gaming industry, for I feel we were at a golden age, we let it slip and we are now returning to placing importance on the gameplay experience. And I have found that gameplay experience is significantly improved by cohesive, narrative questlines.

To answer the question that I sought out to discover in this paper. How important is a cohesive quest line to a Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game? Based on my research and my personal observations, I believe we can come to the conclusion that cohesive quest lines are massively important and do improve the success of the game. The only time where games without cohesive quest lines do really well is when there is no other similar or comparative game in the market that has a better cohesive quest line. Let's take Escape From Tarkov as an example. I believe that if there was another game in the market like Escape From Tarkov, that had a similar difficulty level and was just as hardcore as this came, but it had a more cohesive quest line, everyone would play that game instead of Escape From Tarkov. This means that the success of Escape From Tarkov would be based on whether or not it had a cohesive quest line, and games like this can only be successful if there is no other game in the market with a better cohesive quest line.

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