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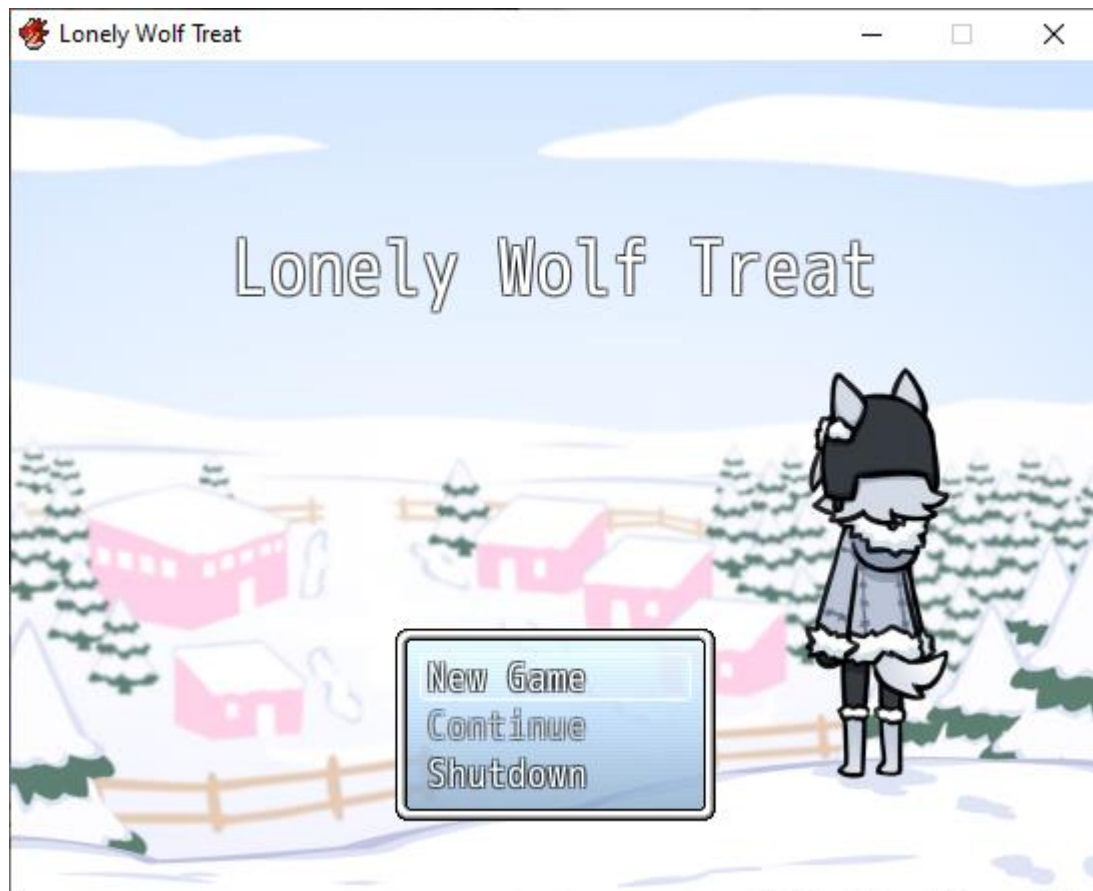
Module: M4X01560

Task One: Ryan Moule - Semiotic Analysis = 464 words

Task Two: Julia Lockheart - Manifesto = 523 words

Task Three. Jon Pugh – Reflective writing = 504 words

Task One: Semiotic Analysis



(Lonely Wolf Treat, 2016)

For my semiotic analysis, I will be looking at the image that Lonely Wolf Treat uses for the main title screen. "Lonely Wolf Treat" is a video game that is created, and developed, by independent game developer NomNomNami and is available on her itch.io (itch.io, n.d.). On first glance, the events that this image depicts may just look like someone standing on a hill and looking towards a nearby town, however, this image gets new meaning when you look at it with the plot of the games in mind; Treat, the titular character of the game and also an anthropomorphic wolf, ends up getting cut off from her home after she ran away from her pack due to a disagreement over her future and ends up going to live on the outskirts of a nearby town inhabited by bunnies, although she ends up facing discrimination from them due to the harmful false stereotypes that the bunnies believe about predators. Now, when looking at the image with this in mind, it becomes clear that NomNomNami decided to design it in such a way that would reflect the narrative of the game with Treat having her back turned to where the avalanche and her old home would be in the game to represent her leaving both her past and everything else in her life behind and having her look down to the town that she plans to move to, and where the bunnies also live, to represent her looking to the future and not looking back. The town also being slightly blurred in the image can be seen as a metaphor to represent how she is unsure of what her future will be like and how the events in it will play out. The image may have also been drawn like this as a means to be vague and so that it would merely come across as nothing more than a drawing of the opening of the game to anyone that has not played the game before as to not spoil it

for people that are playing the games for the first time while returning players would be able to recognise the subtle references within it.

To conclude, doing this analysis has now changed my understanding of this image as, while I was once under the impression that it had no real meaning and that NomNomNami had merely chosen to draw a scene of the game, I have now come to the realisation that there is so much more to the image than what there appears to be on a surface-level and the clever symbolism that went into the image and I also think that this image is a good metaphor for life since we are always working toward the future while leaving the past behind.

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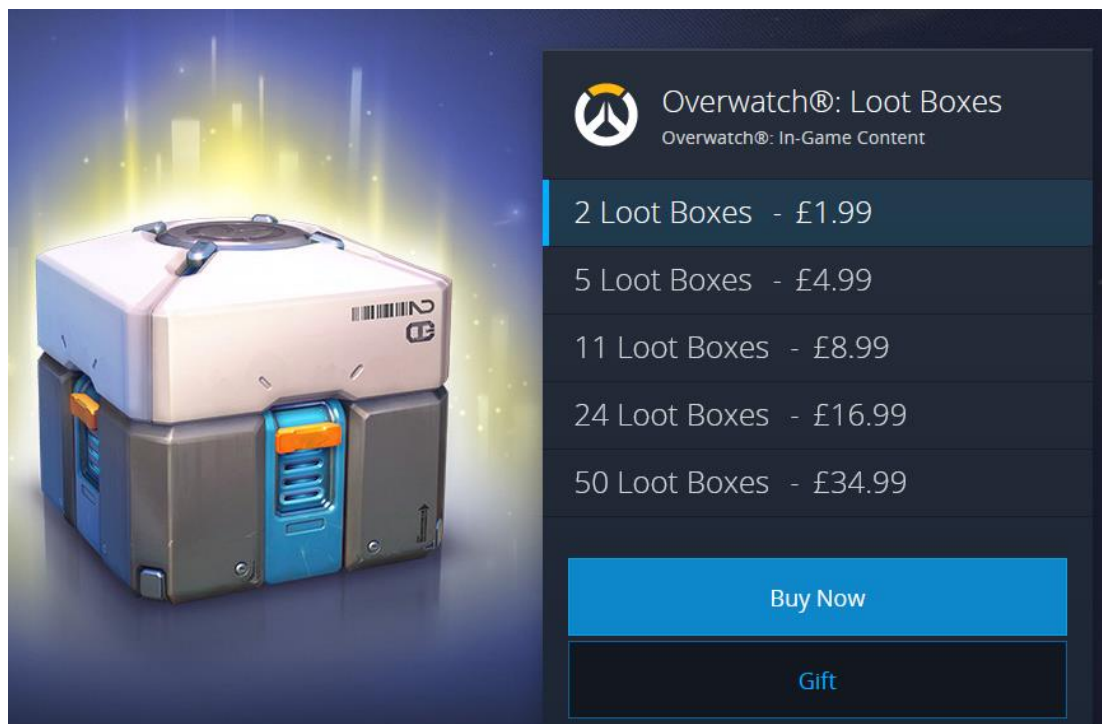
Lonely Wolf Treat. (2016). NomNomNami.

Task Two: Manifesto

- 1) Game developers should have flexible work hours and not be forced to sacrifice their wellbeing to ensure that a game is released by a certain deadline.
- 2) Gamers should be respected more by large companies and not be expected to spend more money beyond the retail price of a game to fully enjoy that game.
- 3) Loot boxes and microtransactions need to be better regulated so that they can not be abused by game companies.
- 4) Video games should not be subject to censorship by the manufacturers of video game consoles.
- 5) Video game roms in their original form should be provided for free once at least 20 years has passed since the end of their shelf life to ensure preservation and ease of access.
- 6) Game prototypes along with prototype assets should be released to the public after a significant of time has passed since the release to educate individuals on the development process of the games along with ensuring these kind of things see the light of day as they play a big part in video game history.
- 7) If a game console manufacturer is willing to host a game that includes cross-platform multiplayer with other video game consoles, then they should allow cross-platform multiplayer on that game rather than forcing the game developers to disable it for that specific console.
- 8) Companies should strive to greater bigger and better games rather than cut content just because it is easier.

Keywords & Images

Keywords: Better regulations of Loot boxes and microtransactions.



(Eu.shop.battle.net, n.d.) Overwatch's loot box prices.

3) Loot boxes and microtransactions need to be better regulated so that they cannot be abused by game companies.

Loot boxes and microtransactions have stirred up quite a bit of controversy in recent years, with a notable example being the microtransactions in Star Wars BattleFront II which Kotaku.com claims lead to “Days of zealous fan anger” (Schreier, 2017) and with the number of people with a gambling problem, or at risk of addiction, rising to more than 400,000 in the UK (Davies, 2017), loot boxes and microtransactions need to be better regulated as to combat the predatory behaviour of big companies looking to exploit consumers for money which companies tend to brush off whenever they are accused of such and try to hide their true intentions as was the case with EA’s Community team responding to a post on the popular message board site, Reddit.com, where a user displayed dissatisfaction with the handling of microtransactions within the game (Reddit.com, 2017) and the community team tried to claim that “The intent is to provide players with a sense of pride and accomplishment for unlocking different heroes.” (Reddit.com, 2017).

Keywords: Companies should strive to add more content in video game rather than cut it.



- 8) Companies should strive to create bigger and better games rather than cut content just because it is easier.

In our current gaming console generation, games consoles are more powerful than ever which means that game developers can now create bigger and better games than ever before but it seems that some game developers would rather take a safer approach to game development and cut content rather than being innovated and trying to push the boundaries of what is possible. An instance of this occurring is with how Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield for the Nintendo Switch were handled by their developer GameFreak where, in an event termed “Dexit” by the fans (Webb, 2019), they made the decision to only include 400 Pokémon within the game (Serebii.net, 2019), less than half of the entire cast of 890+ Pokémon (Bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net, n.d.) and less than half of the Pokémon included in the previous Pokémon Sun and Pokémon Moon games which included 802 Pokémon (Bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net, 2016). With an increasing price of video games for consumers as consoles advance, with Pokémon Moon costing £30 (Amazon, 2016) while Pokémon Sword costs almost double at the price of £49.95 (Amazon, 2019), cutting out content is simply unacceptable and unfair on the consumer.

Keywords: Old video game roms should be provided online for free to ensure preservation.



(Playstation, n.d.)

- 5) Video game roms in their original form should be provided for free once at least 20 years has passed since the end of their shelf live to ensure preservation and ease of access.

Video games are a form of art and should be preserved, however, current piracy laws are making it increasingly difficult and I feel that there should be an exception put in place for video games once a certain amount of years have passed since a game's release and the company that made it is not making money from its original release anymore to ensure that no game gets lost to time. A perfect example of this is "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World: The Game", a game that was only available digitally and was eventually removed from online stores (Delisted Games, n.d.) and had it not been for people making backup copies of the game then it would have disappeared for good which should not be allowed to happen to video games as it prevents anyone from ever being able to enjoy them again and is also an insult to the original creators and everyone that put work into the game as not only does the game disappear but so does their hard work as well.

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Task Three: Reflective writing

A practical reflection of Hyperdimension Neptunia



(Humble Bundle, n.d.)

Hyperdimension Neptunia is a game franchise inspired by the console wars, a “*battle that defined a generation*” (Harris, 2015), as evident from the official description of Hyperdimension Neptunia re;birth 1 “*Later, this battle would come to be known as the Console War.*” (Ideafintl.com, 2015), and is also inspired by the video game industry as a whole, which it does by anthropomorphising various video games consoles and game development companies as anime girls with the titular character Neptune, the super upbeat, self-proclaimed hero (SUPER NEPTUNIA RPG Sacred Tome of the Arts, 2019, p. 2), representing Sega and being based off of the unreleased Sega Neptune. Blanc, a girl who loves, and is loved by, books (SUPER NEPTUNIA RPG Sacred Tome of the Arts, 2019, p. 6), representing Nintendo and being based off of the Nintendo Wii. Noire, a tsundere girl (SUPER NEPTUNIA RPG Sacred Tome of the Arts, 2019, p. 4), representing PlayStation and being based off of the PlayStation 3, and finally Vert, A gamer determined to game (SUPER NEPTUNIA RPG Sacred Tome of the Arts, 2019, p. 8), representing Xbox and being based off of the Xbox 360.

Aside from the heavy influences from the console wars, the franchise is also influenced by game piracy, evident with the villains such as the reoccurring Arfoire, a blatant reference to the R4 flash cartridges used for game piracy on the Nintendo DS family of consoles (Ashcraft, 2010), and the “CFW” portion in the names of various enemies within the series being a direct reference to what “Custom Firmware” is often shortened to.

The Hyperdimension Neptunia franchise stuck out when the first game released in 2010, and still sticks out today, by being the only one game to utilise the unique concept of anthropomorphised video games consoles which is an idea that had not really been done anywhere before and would not see something similar until the later release of Hi-sCool! Seha Girls (Crunchyroll, n.d.), an anime series about various anthropomorphized Sega video game consoles which coincidentally had a crossover game with Hyperdimension

Neptunia in 2017 as Superdimension Neptune VS Sega Hard Girls
(Store.steampowered.com, 2017).

Hyperdimension Neptunia's impact when it first came out, and still to this day, was making it easier for individuals to get into the JRPG(Japanese role-playing game) genre as many JRPGs tend to be complex which end up intimidating newcomers, however, Hyperdimension Neptunia had the familiar premise of video games and video game culture, both of which the player would be familiar with if they were playing the game to begin with, which allows for the player to easily pick up and enjoy the game. This had a similar impact on me as, despite already being a fan of JRPGs, I often found myself disinterested in modern JRPGs due to how overly complex their story looked or how generic and similar they looked to each other but Hyperdimension Neptunia's themes really made it stick out from the rest and was ultimately a pleasant JRPG experience, and one of the best that I have had in a while.

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