

Curiosity, Empathy and Body Language.
The importance of creating a connection between the
protagonists and player within Narrative games.

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Creative Computer Games Design

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has been submitted exclusively to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for the purpose of being marked. All research, studies, quotes and anything else from other people used in this dissertation have been acknowledged as the work of other people and referenced appropriately.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Date: 10/12/19

Abstract

The common debate between which medium allows for the best form of storytelling are often between books, television and film. However, games are slowly developing their ability to convey a narrative by adopting concepts found within written storytelling. Unlike these passive forms of narrative Games are interactive, which allows the audience to engage with the protagonist and give the player a new way to interact with a virtual world that cannot easily be translated in other mediums. According to 2019 statistics from the ESA we see that 75% of American households have at least one gamer, therefore suggesting that the medium of games is slowly rivalling that of Film and Television. The game industry is currently expanding significantly and is accumulating revenue that is comparable to that of blockbuster films. Due to the success of the industry, cross collaboration is increasingly common and professional scriptwriters are being employed by studios to increase the quality of their narratives. This research will discuss some of the concepts found in narrative writing, and how they have been applied successfully through games.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Table of Figures.....	5
Chapter 1 - Introduction	6
Chapter 2 - Literature Review - Narratives	7
Chapter 3 - Curiosity	11
Chapter 4 - Empathy	17
Chapter 5 - Body Language	23
Chapter 6 - Conclusion.....	30
Chapter 7 - Further work	31
References	32
Appendix	40
Bibliography	41

Table of Figures

Figure 2. 1 (Endacott, 2018) Different perspectives in which narratives are told in different mediums

..... 7

Figure 3. 1: *The Walking Dead* (Telltale Games, 2012) Dialogue choices..... 13

Figure 3. 2: *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009) Ahri “Charm” 14

Figure 3. 3: *God of War* (SIE, Santa Monica Studios, 2018) Midgard River Map 15

Figure 4. 1: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Male Millennial Gamers statistics 18

Figure 4. 2: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Female Millennial Gamers Statistics 19

Figure 4. 3: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Ratio of Male to Female gamers and ages . 20

Figure 4. 4: *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) Ellie and Joel 21

Figure 5. 1: (Morell, 2018) Primate gesture glossary..... 24

Figure 5. 2: (A *Overwatch* Animated Short | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Curious head tilt 25

Figure 5. 3: (A *Overwatch* Animated Short | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Offering stick to Ganymede.. 26

Figure 5. 4: (A *Overwatch* Animated Short | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Red eye indication 27

Figure 5. 5: (A *Overwatch* Animated Short | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Dropping body language 28

Figure 5. 6: (A *Overwatch* Animated Short | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Ganymede offering stick 28

Chapter 1 - Introduction

I think the best stories always end up being about the people rather than the event, which is to say character-driven.” — (Stephen King, 2000)

All good narratives start with engaging characters, and stories that are about people. This paper will go into detail on how the correct application of Curiosity, Empathy and the use of body language can assist in the developing the relationship between player and protagonist. We will be breaking down the concepts of curiosity and empathy to see how their importance and help the player connect to the characters they act as, engaging them on a deeper level and exploring the usage of such traits as those listed which make games today so successful and appeal to their audience.

Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the current state of narratives within the games industry

In chapter 3 the topic of how games induce curiosity, and where the origin of curiosity comes from.

We will then move onto the concept of empathy in chapter 4, and discuss the importance of having a protagonist that has empathetic qualities. Finally, the report will address how body language can be used to portray emotions and simultaneously encourage the player to feel aspects discussed in previous chapters.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review - Narratives

When we consider what aspects go into making a strong and immersive narrative and interesting characters, we can analyse five key topics Curiosity, Sympathy, Identification, Empathy and Transportation. However, for the sake of this analysis we will be targeting Curiosity, Empathy and the use of body language to assist in creating a connection between the player and protagonist.

However, for us to establish this we must first analyse the current state of narratives games and how they are perceived in the game industry. As suggested by the “British Academy of Film and Television Arts” (BAFTA) awards for games, we can derive from the “Game of the Year” category (A table of the award winners can be found in the appendix), to find it significantly dominated by narrative driven games. This does not mean that every game needs to have a strong sense of narrative or empathetic characters, as found in *Call of Duty* (Infinity Ward, 2003) was awarded Game of the Year. However, following this year we see several awards have been awarded to narrative driven titles.

When we use the word “Narrative” however, we cannot ignore the other mediums that have strong links to storytelling. Mediums such as, books, film and Television are all strong methods of conveying a story. Each also having their own perspective in which the audience views the story, as shown in Figure 2.1.

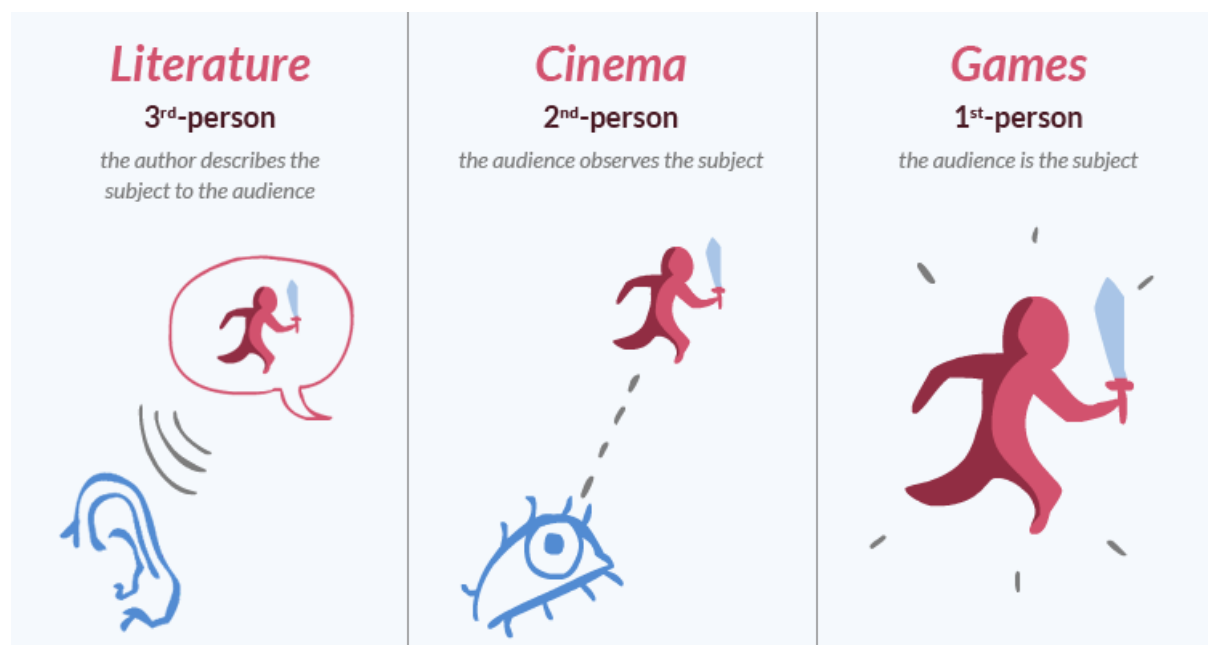


Figure 2. 1 (Endacott, 2018) Different perspectives in which narratives are told in different mediums

However, unique to games, the player is the protagonist and therefore gives them agency within the interactive world, allowing them to act on their curiosity and explore the world themselves. This is a power not translatable through books or film and is what sets video games apart from other mediums. In addition, games can inhabit both literature and films within it, allowing some of the techniques used within these mediums to be transferred into games, this however cannot be said for the reverse (Apocalypse Studios Inc, 2016). This does not mean that games are the superior medium, but it does suggest that it is the most diverse and flexible of the platforms. The ability to integrate these other mediums allows games the potential to create strong narrative plots and empathetic characters like those found in books and films.

Video games, especially as graphics become increasingly sophisticated, they become a viable form of media that can very meaningfully compete with film and TV - Endacott, 2018

Suggested by Endacott, we learn that games as a genre is only set to grow simultaneously as technology increases, and as well as the graphics increasing in its sophistication, we can expect the quality of the narrative writing and structure also increasing. (Endacott, 2018)

There is no disputing that the quality in the narrative structure and scripts, is not on the same production quality when compared to film and books. In fact, it is suggested by Gaider that the job of narrative writer usually a secondary job of someone on the team (Gaider, 2016), whereas it is suggested in this article that usually (depending on film budget) that at least one person is allocated to the production of the script; in addition, it is rumoured that the film industry have up to sixteen writers working on the script (Miyamoto, 2015). However due to the breakthrough and popularity growth of games, we find that the audience is always hungry for more complex adventures to go on. It has been noted that “a single video game’s revenue outmatches the latest box office theatrical blockbuster by unbelievable amounts” (Miyamoto, 2018) and as so, the appeal for cross-collaboration and writers joining the game design process, we can project that the quality in script, cinematics and

storytelling within narrative games to significantly increase in the future, and potentially rival that of other mainstream mediums.

However, this is not to say games are unable to write a strong narrative now. A prime example is that of *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013). Its linear yet curiosity inducing plot, had significant moments that had players experiencing an array of emotions, as well as characters that players could sympathise and empathise with. The game had many people considering it as “a masterpiece of storytelling” (Horti, 2018). This statement does not specify the medium, but puts us within the realm of film, books and tv for a source of a story. If we look at the quality of games around a decade ago, we would find games like BAFTA winning games like *Bioshock* (2K Boston, 2007), which despite it’s time “combined several writing techniques to form a coherent, believable world and was not only met with critical acclaim, but was a commercial surprise-hit that spawned several sequels.” (Kreuch, 2011). Such success of this title led the creator of the games to strive to keep increasing the quality of narrative each release. (Suellentrop, 2012) Games such as *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) and *Bioshock* (2K Boston, 2007) come under game genres such “action” and “first person shooters” which “typically put emphasis on challenge the player’s reflexes, hand-eye coordination, and reaction time” (Oxford, 2018). When the player then overcomes or completes their challenge the game usually rewards them with progression from level to level. (Oxford, 2018) When regarding narrative games however, the reward and progression for the player is not always an interactive item, but usually comes in the form of progressing the story, this also plays as form of motivation for the player to keep playing. (Ghozland, n.d.)

However, despite an incredible environment and interactable worlds we are must remember what truly makes a story.

*All Stories Are About People: The relationship between character and action –
John Franklin*

Franklin suggests that “every emotional story has a sympathetic character, and characters are important to the stories of experience.”(Mitchell, 2002) This suggests that even with an in-depth world and lore, unless the audience has a character in which they can empathise with, the story will feel empty and without emotion. This paper will be investigating the importance of having a character that brings curiosity and empathy to the player, and how the use of body language is used emphasize these emotions into a narrative game.

Chapter 3 - Curiosity

In terms of what narratives play on to engage us we must first break down a few aspects that are associated with keeping us interested and engaged. As mentioned above we will be analysing Curiosity, empathy and body language. First of those we will breaking down is Curiosity.

According to Andrew Glassner's view on narrative story telling he states, "Curiosity is the weakest, most distant form of connection." (Glassner, 2017). Even though it is regarded as a low form of engagement between the writer and audience we must still investigate forms in which we may play on the term "Curiosity", as even though it is not applied in the sense of connection from the writer, curiosity plays an important factor in the player's choice to continue to play the game.

"Humans are driven by curiosity" (Kadowaki, 2016). We find ourselves always in search of more and more answers. Games providing us the perfect medium as each game gives us new experiences and new worlds to explore. Games gives the player the option to go out and find information themselves if they so wish and look for the fine details scattered across the virtual world. (Kadowaki, 2016). As we explore, we cannot help but ask questions about our surroundings. Questions such as, how do we defeat that boss? What item will we get for completing my objective? What will happen next? All these questions spark the curiosity within us as we progress through the game and hope to gain the information to answer our questions and fill our gaps in knowledge within the game world.

According to a lecture conducted by Susan Engel in the William's college psychology, we learn that curiosity is something we develop as children. She states, "Every study has shown, that kids learn best, when they are trying to get the answer to their own question". Engel goes on to use the example of every baby is born with a "huge and powerful urge to find things out". So, the concept of asking questions is something we have always had, it is just a matter of being curious about something enough to ask questions. Engel then discusses the tool that children use as a key form of gathering information, and that is the use of "WH questions". Who? What? Where? When? Why? For a child this is then used on the medium of adults or older siblings to find out answers about the world around

them. In fact, Engel then goes on to state that once a child receives the “WH?” question tools, they begin to ask questions and found that in an experiment where a child wears a tape recorder at home to track how many questions they ask, it was staggering to discover that “most children ask between 25-50 questions an hour, once they have figured out the WH questions”. This kind of curiosity can be applied to the situation when the player comes into first contact with a character, and/or when they discover something about the character they are playing as. We want them to be using the “WH questions” to seek answers about the characters we create, questioning a character’s motives and decisions, keeping the player interested in learning about them (Kadowaki, 2016). She then investigates why children seemed to stop asking questions in school when comparing to that of home, and that could be as simple as the stress of time. (The Hungry Mind: The Origins of Curiosity, 2011). Games provide a means to explore our curiosity and gives us time to relax and not have to worry about the aspect of time running out. The ability to ask questions and learn more and more about a world at your own pace. This concept gives the player a sense of “Autonomy”, which is a term given to encourage the digestion of information at the individuals’ own pace. (Growth Engineering, 2019) This is a key aspect in games and really allows the player to encapsulate and learn about the character they play, and the situation they find themselves in.

I have no special talent; I am only passionately curious – Albert Einstein

There are many different forms of “curiosity”, however for the sake of this document we will only be investigating Perceptual Curiosity and Manipulatory Curiosity.

Perceptual curiosity is the type of curiosity that feels like an itch in the back of our mind. Finding out who was behind the murder mystery, or what that symbol means. This specific type of curiosity is related to problem-solving and the closing of knowledge gaps. Suggested by (Collins, 2004), people exposed to discovering new places, hearing new or interesting music, experiencing a new smell, and exploring their surroundings react positively if they have high perceptual curiosity. (To, 2016)

When applying perceptual curiosity to a character an example can be found in *The Walking Dead* (Telltale Games, 2012). The development and introduction of new characters plays a large part in this post-apocalyptic world. The player is constantly posed with questions that make them wonder if they can trust any of their companions. With everyone set on keeping their families and loved ones safe, the player is caught also doing the same; you are continuously reminded of the world you are in and what people do to stay alive. These questions of how the player's character will interact with other characters keep the player engaged as the narrative progresses. In addition, we see examples of "Manipulatory curiosity" in *The Walking Dead* (Telltale Games, 2012) in the form of being confronted with multiple dialogue options Figure 3.1, and physically choosing one to see the narrative outcome between characters.



Figure 3. 1: *The Walking Dead* (Telltale Games, 2012) Dialogue choices

"Manipulatory curiosity" is derived from the curiosity people feel when confronted by an object that can be explored manually. (Kreitler, 1975) This form of curiosity comes from human's instinctive urge to resolve an information gap by physically interacting with an object.

When regarding Manipulatory curiosity in characters, an example would be the abilities you obtain when playing a new character in *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009). When exposing the player to a new character, the player has a set of four abilities. Usually the player will have to experiment with the abilities and have the curiosity to learn how they work together. In addition to this, the abilities usually describe what kind of personality or trait the champion has. For example, the character "Ahri"

has a “Charm” ability, where she blows a kiss to an enemy and charms them. This could cause curiosity in the player to wonder what kind of character/creature uses seduction to overcome her foes.



Figure 3. 2: *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009) Ahri “Charm”

Ahri showcases her spells and personality in the *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009) cinematic where we get visual and auditory cues that she uses her “charm”, Figure 3.2 to lure her enemies follow her. (*A New Dawn | Cinematic – League of Legends*, 2014)

A study was conducted by the University of California with an MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging) scanner, where the participants were asked 100 general knowledge questions. Following the test, the volunteers were asked to rate their curiosity in find out the answers to each question. (Growth Engineering, 2019).

The results of the tests showed that when the participants were at their most curious, the scan showed increased activity in the hippocampus. This part of the brain regulates emotion and is also where memories are stored. This is also linked to why people learn more efficiently when they are interested or passionate about a subject. (Growth Engineering, 2019). In conjunction with the activity in this part of the brain, the study found that when the participants were curious, a brain chemical called “Dopamine” is release. This chemical is a neurotransmitter that’s released when someone experiences

something pleasurable. (Sulzer, 2003). From this we can gather that we link the closing of knowledge gap to be pleasurable and enjoyable for the participants, and this is what games aim to translate in their virtual world, when the player discovers information that provide answers to their questions. This could come from the satisfaction of the player discovering a question that was posed from the very start of a game as seen in the game *Until Dawn* (Supermassive Games, 2015), and only near the end begins to connect the pieces to explain why they were in the situation, and, who they are. (Kollar, 2015).

Another example that showcases some of these forms of curiosity can be found in *God of War* (SIE, Santa Monica Studios, 2018) This game is a narrative driven game developed out of Santa Monica and is the winner of a Game of the Year BAFTA in 2018. Within the game, there is a section where the player is given a boat and freedom to explore a river, Figure 3.3. Scattered around the vast river the player will find numerous small islands which homes numerous challenges, treasures, side quests and rewards in the form of story pieces (Ku, 2018).



Figure 3. 3: *God of War* (SIE, Santa Monica Studios, 2018) Midgard River Map

We find the game designers allow the player the freedom to explore around the lake and their curiosity. Once the player establishes that they receive a reward for their exploration we see examples of perceptual curiosity as discussed above (Ku, 2018). We find the concept of autonomy being shown

as there is no restriction of time, and the player can explore the world at their own pace. During the travel between each of the islands the player being rewarded with small snippets of dialogue between Kratos and Kratos' son Artemis, which assists the player to learn about the relationship between them. This plays into empathy which will be discussed later in the document, as the interaction between the two characters draws the player and allows them to play the game in the shoes of Kratos looking after his son. (Ku, 2018)

Chapter 4 - Empathy

Psychologist Edward Tichiner translated the German word “Einfuhlung” meaning “feeling into” into English in 1909, which is what people most commonly known as today as “Empathy”. Not to be mistaken with “Sympathy”; Sympathy is the physical display of pity towards someone else’s misfortune. It is the caring of the person’s wellbeing without knowing the struggle themselves. We try to understand the situation by putting ourselves in their shoes. (Psych2Go, 2018). Empathy on the other hand is a development of sympathy. Empathy is both caring and personally knowing the struggle of the character. (Psych2Go, 2018) When applied to games which follow a character’s story, it could be suggested that “games foster empathy” (Muncy, 2018).

Regardless of genre, novelists must create empathy for protagonists at their first appearance. Mere action isn’t enough! The most interesting plot won’t matter to readers if they don’t care about your main character. – Brandilyn Collins

This statement from the multiple best-selling author, and winner of numerous writing awards, stresses the importance of having empathetic characters throughout narratives across all mediums (Collins, n.d.). According to Tim Schaefer, a game designer, we find that good game characters are about “wish fulfilment”. They give the player a chance to be something they aren’t in the real world. (Rogers, 2014) From this we learn that when considering game character design, most players want to play someone they are not. This is shown by the ESA (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) findings on the millennial’s favourite games. However, we see that gender respectively show difference in their “favourite games” category. (Belman, 2010) - “creating games that affirm human values like tolerance, equity, and justice” – This is supported with the ESA (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) findings that both male and female millennial gamers enjoying action games with a narrative aspect.

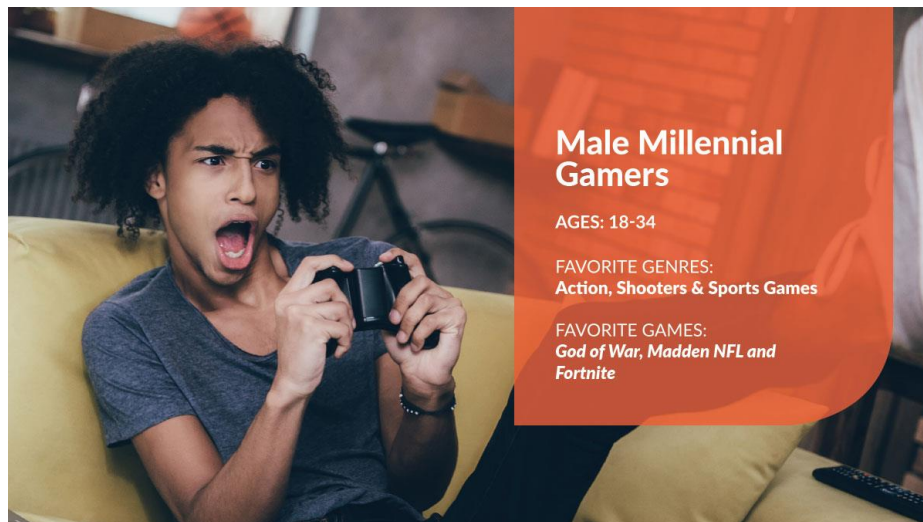


Figure 4. 1: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Male Millennial Gamers statistics

From Figure 4.1, we can see that males preferred *God of War* (SIE, Santa Monica Studios, 2018), a game where the player controls Kratos, a power-hungry Spartan, this gives the player a “sensation that we are the most powerful God in the room” (Shepard, 2016). It is suggested that the desire to be powerful can come from “men’s strong sense of masculine roles and responsibility as a provider and protector” (University of British Columbia, 2010) as suggested by Oliffe. In addition to this, the player may also find empathy in the appearance of Kratos, previous shown as an unstoppable force of nature, suddenly “evokes the strictest of father figures” (Shepard, 2016). This is done by showing the player clear motive to teach his son how to survive rather than just serve as a protector. Additionally, this may also induce a level of sympathy for either Kratos or Artemis as we see a level of commonality – The state of sharing features or attributes (Limyaael, n.d.) as the player may experience a sense of Artemis not meeting the expectations of Kratos, which is supported by Darius Cikanavicius, an author (Cikanavicius, 2018). This is significant as the age group in which this game has gained popularity according to ESA’s (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) findings, also shares the average age group in which men similarly start to take on fatherhood (Haines, 2016). This will be discussed in further detail later in the document. Given the change of motives displayed by Kratos from previous games, the player sees “Kratos as a man rather than a God” (Shepard, 2016) allowing the player someone to empathise with stronger. These factors and application of empathy could be the source of this game’s success.

On the other hand, female millennials preferred *Tomb Raider* (Crystal Dynamics, 2013), where you play as Lara Croft, a smart, athletic English archaeologist who explores ancient tombs and hazardous ruins. Figure 4.2 suggests that females like action games but different titles.



Figure 4. 2: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Female Millennial Gamers Statistics

The females play a character who is both smart and athletic and can take on the world, which could encourage empathy and a sense of empowerment. This is supported in the article (Groskaufmanis and Greenberg, 2018). In current society, the equity between man and woman is controversial, and the female character can come across as weak, frail or vulnerable. But within this game, we find that the female character is more than capable of being strong, sustainable and independent character. (Romano, 2018) Being able to play as this character empathises to the female audience as it allows them to be the kind of person they want to be or are working towards becoming. This is supported in Ze's paper (Ze, 2018) where it is discussed that first exposure to the Lara Croft character, many female viewers begin to idolise Lara Croft as the "Ideal woman" and "dream being an beautiful, skilful and rich woman when I grow up". From this we learn that the characters we inhabit in games are often people that we aspire to be or look up to, and therefore induces a level of empathy as we are then embodying the character we idolise. This is also transferred over through the game as it brought a female action heroine into an otherwise male dominated area. According to a study that was shared with gaming sites in 2012, held data showed research that "3.6 percent of nearly 700 games it

surveyed had playable characters that were exclusively women” and games where the player had a male-only playable character reportedly sold better. (Romano, 2018) Whereas back in 2012, the games industry was male dominated as suggested by Romano. However, as suggested by the ESA (Entertainment software association) 2019 Essential facts (Entertainment Software Association, 2019), we can see that the population of gamers in America is split almost evenly. So, we can suggest that the appeal for a “extraordinary example of female empowerment” (Romano, 2018) will be well received and accepted without a gender-biased demographic.

In addition to players empathising with the characters in terms of gender, games now allow the player to empathise with their title. The title specifically towards being a father or mother. In 2016, “The average age of fathers increased to 33.3 years... from 28.6 in 2015” and respectfully “The average age of first-time mothers increased to 28.8 years in 2016, from 28.6 years in 2015”. (Haines, 2016) If we apply this statistic then we can see from the average gamer age in the United States, Figure 4.3, and the average age of a parents (United Kingdom statistics), are similar. Games like *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) play on this fact and want to allow the player to empathise with the parental aspect and caring for a child.



Figure 4. 3: (Entertainment Software Association, 2019) Ratio of Male to Female gamers and ages
This is suggested when Jon Mckellan, creative director of Stories Untold developer NoCode (Horti, 2018) comments on a scene Joel (the player) and Sarah (Joel’s Daughter) try to escape the town. Only

to be confronted by a soldier who was tasked to contain the situation opens fire on both, and to twisted outcome that has Joel watch his daughter pass away in his arms. He states

I'm a dad, and when you become a dad and see films and games that deal with children dying, it hits you a lot harder. It really took me by surprise and set the tone for the entire game in a way that I wasn't expecting - Mckellan

From this, it is suggested that this scene is something that pushes away from the thought of you being the most important thing in the game. With the sudden loss of this charismatic character in which we are only exposed to for a small section, the story becomes lonely with one of the two main characters leaving. We are drawn to Joel's journey of overcoming his loss and the sense of being alone. Gorman states "Empathy brings people closer, and makes others feel understood and less alone inside" (Gorman, 2018), translating this to Joel's situation, we the player, want to see Joel overcome his lonely situation. *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) offers the player hope for this problem, in the form of Ellie, Figure 4.4.



Figure 4. 4: *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) Ellie and Joel

Her primary purpose in the story is to provide a cure for the infection. A fix for the immediate problem within the story, however a secondary form of hope she gives is to provide Joel (the player) with the

emotions he lost when his daughter got taken from him. The relationship between the player and Ellie is built throughout the game as “She’s a companion with you for 99% of the game” and is always interreacting and speaking with Joel and building the relationship with him, and respectfully with the player. (Horti, 2018) However, as the relationship between the two grow, we find Joel begins to fight his “uneasiness at being given a second shot at fatherhood”. (Horti, 2018) This comes from the consistent theme throughout the game, of protecting a child. However, his drive to protect Ellie is hindered by the thought of her replacing his real daughter emotionally, and possibly doing what he could not for his real daughter, which plays a part in how he treats and talks to Ellie throughout the game. This could be derived from one of the several methods of inducing empathy as suggested by Collins above.

Attempting to overcome a fear or make a change - The character may be deciding whether to walk out on a relationship, or he may have conflicting desires. To make an inner struggle compelling in the opening scene, put it in the context of action - (Collins, n.d.)

This translates through to the battle we are fighting throughout the game with Joel and his relationship with Ellie. This keeps the player emotionally engaged and curious to how Joel will overcome and deal with the struggle.

McKellan comments on “the high contrast between the grim world and Ellie’s innocence” which could suggest Joel’s subconscious motive to protect seemingly vulnerable little girl Ellie, from the rugged and grim world the game is set in. The appearance of Ellie being a vulnerable little girl (Baines, 2017) encourages the player to take on a form of protector or parent for Ellie, which gives the player a sense of purpose and meaning when playing through the game (Garris, R, 2002).

Chapter 5 - Body Language

According to pioneering research by Dr. Albert Mehrabian, only seven percent of the meaning we derive from human communication comes from the actual spoken words used. An additional 38 percent comes from tone of voice while a whopping 55 percent comes from body language alone.

When considering expression and being able to gain a sense of emotion and personality from a character, we find that it is not always by the means of auditory communication. Instead, we read the character through “Body Language”, this term refers to the ability to communicate nonverbally. The use of body language is truly the universal language, no matter what kind of culture or country you are from. This kind of communication is derived from our “Facial expression to our body movements” (Cherry, 2019). Steven Gans suggest that “body language may account for between 60-65 percent of all communication” as supported by (Foley, 2010), and another study going on as far to state “90% of communication is considered to be nonverbal” (Price, 2013). Despite each study finding discrepancies in terms of the percentage of communication that comes through body language, we can gather that the overall conclusion suggests that there is a significant amount of communication conveyed through body language alone.

The term body language can be broken down into parts of the body that might aid in reading a person’s true emotion. First of which we will be looking at is that of “Facial Expression”. When analysing this specific part of body language, we find that despite how small the expression or detail, the audience can read the situation. From just facial expression alone we can portray an array of emotions from “Happiness, Confusion and Fear” and the concept of “universality of facial expression” (Ekman, 2009) has been supported by researcher Paul Ekman (Cherry, 2019). Facial expressions can also be manipulated to give the audience an impression on a character, for example one study suggests that one of the most trustworthy facial expressions that is digested to the audience includes a “Slight raise of the eyebrow and a slight smile” (Todorov, 2008). The two small details in the face, the audience reads this as both friendliness and confidence as supported by (Todorov, 2008).

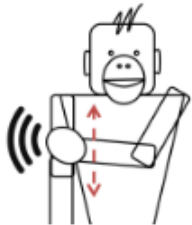
In addition to a more prominent body language, hand gestures such as the “Okay, made by touching the thumb and index finger in a circle while extending the other three fingers” has multiple interpretations dependant on culture. On one hand, one culture may see this gesture expressing the feeling of being “Okay”, could also have an opposite effect as some parts of Europe can use the same gesture to “imply you are nothing” (Cherry, 2019). In addition, Body language is not specific to only humans, body language provides a means of communication between species. (Millraney, n.d.). Millraney, discusses the use of gestures among primates and states that “they have a large repertoire of gestures”, Figure 5.1. (Morell, 2018)

Glossary



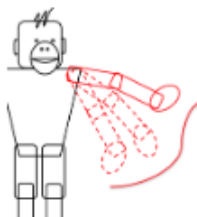
Arm raise

This gesture is used by both species, but it has different meanings for each. Chimpanzees raise an arm to say “Give it to me,” or to ask another chimpanzee to move closer or farther away. A bonobo uses the signal to ask whether they can climb aboard, or to initiate grooming or copulation.



Big loud scratch

Bonobos ask another bonobo to groom them by scratching a shoulder. Chimpanzees do the same, but the gesture may also be an invitation to travel together, follow, or climb aboard.



Hand fling

A kind of slapping motion used by both chimpanzees and bonobos to tell one another to move away. Bonobos also use it to tell one another to stop doing something.

Figure 5. 1: (Morell, 2018) Primate gesture glossary

Morell then suggests, we see that primates have array of gestures that allow them to convey their message towards humans and other species.

The ability to manipulate body language, and its power to convey a character’s emotion in video games can be seen by the following cinematic (*A Overwatch Animated Short | “The Last Bastion”*,

2016). This specific example is chosen as it is a story about the origin of a robot character – Bastion, found in *Overwatch* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2016). Unique to this cinematic however is the lack of a face on the character. Furthermore, even without the ability to read the character’s face, we are still able to extrapolate the emotion Bastion is feeling through body language and some audio cues.

Throughout the animation, we watch Bastion reboot and familiarise himself with the world again and seems to be set on a path towards the city. The audience is not given the purpose or reason why he needs to reach this destination and therefore leaving the viewer curious, but as the cinematic progresses we slowly see signs that Bastion was a soldier in a war.

Initially, we are shown Bastion waking up as a bird clears away moss from the visor of the robot, this suggesting that the vegetation has grown over him and thus suggesting he has been there incapacitated for a while. As Bastion begins to look around, he catches the sound and sight of a small bird called Ganyমেদে. We watch Ganyমেদে tilt his head, and then see Bastion imitating the head tilt and learning (Zentall, T.R., 2001) and giving a sense curiosity or confusion to the world around him. We see Bastion use the “head tilt” gesture, Figure 5.2 to show his curiosity at various parts through the cinematic.



Figure 5. 2: (A *Overwatch Animated Short* | “The Last Bastion”, 2016) Curious head tilt

Where we see signs of sympathy as Bastion offers a stick to assist the Ganymede with the building of a nest. This shows care and “Generosity with no thought of return” besides potentially companionship. (Limyaael, n.d.)

As Bastion ventures through the forest we see a growth of friendship between him and Ganymede. We eventually come to a scene where Ganymede builds a nest on Bastion which could suggest he finds it safe to build a home (Hediger, 1977). We then see signs of sympathy as Bastion offers a stick to assist the Ganymede with the building of a nest, Figure 5.3.



Figure 5. 3: (A Overwatch Animated Short | “The Last Bastion”, 2016) Offering stick to Ganymede

This shows care and “Generosity with no thought of return” besides potentially companionship (Limyaael, n.d.). Bastion then suddenly stops and gets alerted by the sound of a woodpecker. We notice his body language change to that of a human “feeling threatened”, by positioning his head to scout the danger and then moving his torso we watch him act as a human would in terms of rotating his torso after his head, as to protect his vital organs from potentially getting hurt (Inspiring Leadership Now, 2019). The sound of the woodpecker resembles that of a gun firing, evoking a reaction from Bastion that has PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) (Jakupcak, 2007). Bastion immediately reacts and begins to blindly fire around the forest in an almost reckless frenzy without thought, as well as the changing his eye colour from blue a potentially “trustworthy colour” (Su, 2019) to red, Figure 5.4.



Figure 5. 4: (A *Overwatch Animated Short* / *"The Last Bastion"*, 2016) Red eye indication

Suggesting anger or aggressiveness (Young, 2013). For such a radical reaction to be triggered by something so small, it gives the audience a sense that Bastion is heavily damaged and carries a sense of vulnerability (Elwood, 2009). After the frenzy we notice Bastion come back to his normal self as indicated by his light turning from red to blue, and we see his body language drop suggesting he is sad as we see he destroyed the nest that him and Ganymede made together. Bastion then begins to walk off screen, however we notice a contrast between the walk of current and earlier Bastion. We gain the impression that Bastion is sad, which is shown through his "drooping" body posture, Figure 5.5. (Changingminds.org, 2019)



Figure 5. 5: (A *Overwatch Animated Short* | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Dropping body language

After interacting with machines that resemble that of fallen bastions, he begins to have flashbacks of war, which is also a reference to symptoms of PTSD (Jones, 2003) and then adopts a march towards civilization, like that of soldiers going into battle.

As Bastion marches further, Ganymede the bird that has been the focus point of curiosity for Bastion, and his only companion; We see him bring a stick to Bastion’s arm. A similar stick that was earlier used to form a nest on Bastion’s armour, this invokes both sympathy and compassion to the audience, Figure 5.6.



Figure 5. 6: (A *Overwatch Animated Short* | “*The Last Bastion*”, 2016) Ganymede offering stick

Compassion being sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others as well as the ability to look past differences and see something worth responding to in another person (Limyaael, n.d.), potentially symbolising that Ganymede wants to urge Bastion home. Which goes further as Bastion picks up the stick and hesitates to continue his march, as Bastion once offered a stick to assist Ganymede in the making of his home, we find that the offering has been reversed and could suggest that the Ganymede wants Bastion to come back to his former self which could resemble home. In addition, as Bastion ponders at the stick, we notice the light flickering to the colour we had seen him with before he adopted his soldier persona. This could symbolise his internal struggle between personalities. The battle between his choice to seek war or peace. As his eye flickers from red to blue, we see it finally stabilise on blue and as it passes a very subtle jolt passes through the body as if to suggest he snapped out of his trance/episode (Yeager, 2003) and came the realisation of who he was again.

To the conclusion where Bastion chooses peace. This is determined as his eye goes back to blue, and he places the stick offered by Ganymede back on his shoulder where the nest was built, suggesting they have resumed their companionship. From which he follows by interacting with Ganymede, spinning his upper body around to the point he almost loses his balance. Giving a strong sense of him being carefree, childlike and innocent as portrayed at the start of the cinematic.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

Through looking at curiosity, empathy and the application of these concepts through the use of body language, we can see that these are important concepts that must be executed well to create a successful narrative game. We can see a direct link between the success of narrative games, and the presence of a strong protagonist that both women and men can empathise with. We also find the use of body language is imperative with the portrayal of the emotions of the characters as it is not as simple as just being an open book with your character, and them telling you how they feel. It needs to show through physical movements of the body, and this form of communication can be translatable through both humans and animals.

Chapter 7 - Further work

Developing on current knowledge we could investigate how culture can affect the successful of a narrative. For example, the portrayal of a strong female protagonist may not be well received in the east compared to the west due to beliefs and religion.

In addition to this, the ability to carry out surveys within the United Kingdom, as ESA only provide resources taken from an American demographic.

Furthermore, a more comprehensive analysis on body language and the breakdown on what each part of the body can convey.

In continuation, we could also explore the different forms of curiosity such as “Complex or Ambiguous” and “Conceptual” to help us build an engaging character.

The use of iconography and composition to assist in emphasising emotion through body language.

Other narrative factors could be investigated such as “Identification” and “Transportation” and discuss how the implementation of a model narrative structures such as “The Hero’s Journey” can be applied to the game’s medium. In addition, to fully explore the concept of sympathy may be beyond the scope of this research, however there is potential to investigate how sympathy can create a stronger link between the audience and fictional characters.

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Appendix

List of BAFTA “Game of the Year” Award winners going back to 1998.

Year	Game	Genre	Platform(s)	Developer(s)
1998	<i>GoldenEye 007</i> ^[1]	First-person shooter	Nintendo 64	Rare
1999	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time</i> ^[2]	Action-adventure	Nintendo 64	Nintendo EAD
2000	Console: <i>MediEvil 2</i> ^[3]	Action-adventure	PlayStation	SCE Cambridge Studio
	Handheld: <i>Pokémon Yellow</i> ^[4]	Role-playing	Game Boy	Game Freak
	PC: <i>Deus Ex</i> ^[5]	Action role-playing	Microsoft Windows, Mac OS	Ion Storm
2001	Console: <i>Gran Turismo 3: A-Spec</i> ^[6]	Racing	PlayStation 2	Polyphony Digital
	Handheld: <i>Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2</i> ^[7]	Sports	Game Boy Advance	Vicarious Visions
	PC: <i>Max Payne</i> ^[8]	Third-person shooter	Microsoft Windows	Remedy Entertainment
2002	Console: <i>Halo: Combat Evolved</i> ^[9]	First-person shooter	Xbox	Bungie
	Handheld: <i>SMS Chess</i> ^[10]			Purple Software
	PC: <i>Neverwinter Nights</i> ^[11]	Role-playing	Microsoft Windows	BioWare
2003	<i>Call of Duty</i> ^[12]	First-person shooter	Microsoft Windows	Infinity Ward
2004	<i>Half-Life 2</i> ^[13]	First-person shooter	Microsoft Windows	Valve
2006	<i>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter</i> ^[14]	Tactical shooter	Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 2, Xbox, Xbox 360	Ubisoft Paris
2007	<i>BioShock</i> ^[15]	First-person shooter	Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360	Irrational Games
2008	<i>Super Mario Galaxy</i> ^[16]	Platformer	Wii	Nintendo EAD Tokyo
2009	<i>Batman: Arkham Asylum</i> ^[17]	Action-adventure	Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360	Rocksteady Studios
2010	<i>Mass Effect 2</i> ^[18]	Action role-playing	Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3	BioWare
2011	<i>Portal 2</i> ^[19]	Puzzle-platformer	Microsoft Windows, OS X, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360	Valve
2012	<i>Dishonored</i> ^[20]	Action-adventure	Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360	Arkane Studios
2013	<i>The Last of Us</i> ^[21]	Action-adventure	PlayStation 3	Naughty Dog
2014	<i>Destiny</i> ^[22]	Action role-playing	PlayStation 3, PlayStation 4, Xbox 360, Xbox One	Bungie
2015	<i>Fallout 4</i> ^[23]	Action role-playing	Microsoft Windows, PlayStation 4, Xbox One	Bethesda Game Studios
2016	<i>Uncharted 4: A Thief's End</i> ^[24]	Action-adventure	PlayStation 4	Naughty Dog
2017	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild</i> ^[25]	Adventure	Nintendo Switch, Wii U	Giant Sparrow
2018	<i>God of War</i> ^[26]	Action-adventure	PlayStation 4	SIE Santa Monica Studio

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