Video Games as Pop Lit

Response Journal #1

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Uncanny Valley is a theory of robotics and computer animation in which as “non-humans” become more human like, human observers’ response is positive. However, when “non-humans” become indistinguishable for humans, the response becomes that of revulsion.
Uncanny Valley in practice
Posthumanism is a theory which states a hypothetical of humans "whose basic capacities so radically exceed those of present humans as to be no longer unambiguously human by our current standards." One facet of this is humanity transcends to become gods.

Kefka Palazzo is the main antagonist and final boss in Squaresoft’s Final Fantasy 6. As a court mage, Kefka is initially depicted as an underling to Emperor Gestahl. However, Kefka schemes and eventually steals Esper’s power for himself in order to become the God of Magic.
Singularity

Definition

- Singularity centers around destroying individualism as the next stage of human evolution. Individuality ceases to exist and is replaced by collective thought.

Example: Ermac

- **Ermac** is the “red ninja” in Midway/Netherrealm Studio’s *Mortal Kombat*. **Ermac** is a fusion of souls from dead warriors during Shao Khan’s invasion of Outworld. As a fusion of many souls, **Ermac** lacks any sort of individuality as he is apart of a collective and is incapable of referring to himself in the first person (I, me, my) but refers to himself as we, us, and ours.
In Medias Res is a Latin phrase meaning, “the middle of things”. How it is used is a story will begin the middle or towards the conclusion before reverting back towards the beginning of the story.

Squaresoft’s Chrono Cross uses In Medias Res by presenting a sequence where the main characters Serge and Kid will visit a dungeon as soon as the game is started. Upon finishing this dungeon, Serge will stab Kid in the abdomen with a knife. This dungeon will later be visited about a third through the game where the same events will occur.
Augmentation is the act of making something better in quality by adding to it. In the realm of technology, augmentation is used to give those who have lost limbs, new limbs in order to live life normally.

In *Deux Ex Human Revolution*, main character Adam Jensen is severely injured during a terrorist attack in the beginning sequence of the game. Many of Jensen’s vital organs are replaced by artificial ones as well as his arms in order to uncover the mystery of the attack.
Definition

“The prefix ‘nano’ itself refers to the length scale (one nanometer (nm) is one billionth of a metre), and the term nanotechnology refers to the engineering, measurement, and characterization of nano-scaled materials and devices”. Nanotechnology is represented as a way to fix current problems, improve human abilities, and human capacity.

Example: Metal Gear Solid

In Hideo Kojima’s Metal Gear Solid, nanomachines are injected directing into the operative’s body allowing for the support staff to monitor everything from physical health, mental health, and can be used as means of communication known as a “codec.”
Definition

- The character second in importance to the protagonist in classical Greek drama.

Example: Tales of Symphonia

- In Namco’s *Tales of Symphonia*, **Colette Brunel** is the Chosen, a servant and messiah of the **Goddess Martel**, who can reverse the ills of the world by completing the Journey of World Regeneration, which will restore the world’s flow of mana. **Colette’s journey** is what pushes protagonist, **Lloyd Irving**, to follow her and assist her with her journey.
Creepy dolls in the gallery have the same sort of representation as the Little Sisters in Bioshock. In Bioshock, the player is given the choice to save the Little Sisters or to harvest. As humans, we are moral agents so we feel it is expected of us to save children in need. It’s what I felt as I looked at Jeremy Hurd’s photographs. I felt I should have saved them as they look like real children in need.
In ancient Celtic legends, the prophetic "light of foresight." Several prophetesses in the epic Táin Bó Cuialnge possess this precognitive power, and it functions to drive the narrative plot by predicting or foreshadowing upcoming events.

Cole Macgrath, the main protagonist in Sucker Punch’s Infamous, is given visions of the future from antagonist Kessler. Kessler shows Cole these visions in order to prepare him for a calamity which will destroy everything dear to him. Accelerate his growth and force him to make decisions.
Video Games/Censorship?
Social Justice Games

- “There is no evidence that any social change has occurred or been made as a result of this play.” – Craig McKenney

You may have beat at the game but it hasn’t changed anything
Bildungsroman focuses on the moral and psychological growth of the protagonist. Coming of Age story.

Dante from *Devil May Cry* is regarded as a character who is very full of himself. During the events of *Devil May Cry 3*, Dante goes from no caring about the events happening around him to doing what is necessary to save the world from a demon-infested Earth. "Quite frankly, at first I didn’t give a damn. But because of you, I know what's important now. I know what I need to do"
Definition

Example: Grandia II

- Theism: The belief that a god or gods exist.

- The central plot around Game Art’s *Grandia II* is The god of light, Granas and the god of darkness, Valmar. The Church of Granas sends a songstress named Elena along with a mercenary, Ryudo, to gather the pieces of Valmar supposedly to destroy the god but instead Pope Zera uses the pieces in order to become Valmar.
Cyberpunk: Science fiction dealing with future urban dystopian societies dominated by computer technology in the post industrial world governed by mega-corporations.

Squaresoft’s Final Fantasy VII fits the mood of cyberpunk in a basic way as the Shinra Electric Company rules the world. The game’s beginning focuses on Cloud Strife and the members of AVALANCHE attempting to destroying Shinra’s iron grip on the world.
Bibliography

- [Court Mage Kefka].