

**A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF VIDEO GAMES:  
A LUDONARRATIVE MODEL**

**TOH WEIMIN**

*(MA, BA (Hons), NUS)*

**A THESIS SUBMITTED  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

**2015**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.



---

Toh Weimin

1 Sep 2015

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been a long but fruitful five years of my PhD research journey where I have gained valuable experience from interacting with many people who have contributed to the completion of this thesis.

I am most grateful to my thesis supervisor, Ismail S. Talib for his guidance throughout these many years. I have known my supervisor for almost a decade now. I first took his undergraduate module EL3221 Literary Stylistics in 2006, followed by EL3880B Cinematic Discourse and Language, and EL4221 Narrative Structures in 2007. These modules, especially the latter two introduced me to the semiotic and narrative frameworks which have been used in this thesis. I would like to thank my supervisor for spending his time reading through the thesis drafts and providing valuable insights and corrections to the chapters.

My supervisor's hands-off approach allowed me to pursue the topic of my interest with less restrictions and more importantly, taught me how to be an independent researcher. I learnt to create the experimental study for the video game subjects by myself and improve it through the dialogue with the subjects and other academics. I learnt how to apply for ethics clearance from the Institutional Review Board in NUS so that I can conduct research on human subjects. I also learnt how to apply for grants on my own. I wrote to several agencies via email before the National Youth Council (NYC) agreed to partially fund the empirical part of my research which involves interviews with video game players. I would like to thank NYC for their partial funding for this project.

Another important person I would like to thank is Alex Mitchell from the Communications and New Media Department. I see him as my unofficial co-supervisor or thesis committee member. I benefited greatly from the email exchanges in which we discussed about the various theoretical and experimental design issues. I also like to thank

him for loaning the CNM usability lab, the MacPro and the *Mass Effect* game discs to me for the PC game study, the Play Pod and *Beyond: Two Souls* for the PS3 game study. The English Language and English Literature Department does not have these facilities, especially the PS3 to conduct the study. Special thanks also to Alex Mitchell for helping me with the *International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling (ICIDS) 2014* article I submitted. He provided valuable feedback and insights which have been incorporated into the thesis writing. Finally, I would also like to thank him for organising the monthly informal Play Pod sessions which enabled me to have some time out from doing research.

A/P Michelle Lazar is on my thesis committee and I am grateful to her for providing valuable feedback during the oral component of the qualifying exam. I also benefited from our email exchanges where I consulted with her on various academic matters. I would also like to thank her support of my presentation on the article titled, “A Multimodal Framework for Tracking Narrative and Gameplay Development in Video Games” at the regional conference *Language in the Online and Offline World 4 (LOOW4)* held in Petra Christian University at Surabaya, Indonesia from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

I also received valuable feedback from the departmental seminar and conferences I attended. In the departmental seminar, I am grateful to Prof Lionel Wee for suggesting the inclusion of the criteria for the selection of the video games in the thesis. I would also like to thank Prof Bao Zhiming for questioning the separation of the two different modes, narrative and gameplay. I also thank A/P Joseph Park for suggesting that I attend the *7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Multimodality* at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014. I presented on chapter five of this thesis on the analysis of gameplay and received some feedback to improve the analysis. Special thanks to the various academics at the *Digital Games Research Association (DiGRA) 2015* who provided valuable feedback in relation to

the use of terminology such as the ludonarrative category, “ludonarrative alienation” which has been changed to “ludonarrative (ir)relevance”.

Another special mention is Dr David Kirschner who provided valuable feedback to the draft paper of my *ICIDS 2014* article on the ludonarrative categories. He also read several of my other articles and provided feedback to them.

To the other academics whom I met at the various conferences I attended, I truly enjoyed the interactions with you – Dr Aylanda Nata, Dr Setefanus Suprajitno at *LOOW4*; Carman Ng, Prof Len Unsworth, A/P Kay O’Halloran, Dr Christina DeCoursey, Dr William Feng, Dr Victor Lim, Dr Liu Yu, Dr Zhang Yiqiong, Tang Kok-Sing, Carmen Luz Maturana at *7-ICOM*; A/P John Sherry, Cherylann Edwards, Rachel Kowert, Alyea Sandovar, Prof Thorsten Quandt at *Multi.Player 2*; Christopher Yap, Prof Carrie Heeter, Brian Keilen, Kristopher Purzycki, Cody Mejeur at *Meaningful Play 2014*; and Dr Hartmut Koenitz, Carman Ng, Gerald Farca, Lars de Widt, Leif Penzendorfer, Matt Barr at *DiGRA 2015*.

I would also like to thank the participants in the game study as they constitute the core aspect of the empirical data. To the 11 participants who completed the entire study for the 5 video games in this thesis – Joseph Chen Zhenghan, Tack Poh, Jeannie, Loy, Azri, Andrew, Huan Ren, Vanessa, Benjamin, Mark Ang, and Boon Siang. I also appreciate the 37 participants who signed up for the study, and who have gone through the first interview session. Thank you Jia De and Peigen for offering suggestions to improve the game study.

For company and friendship on Facebook, I thank Cao Luwen, Mandy Lo, Jeffrey Wong, Sulin and Jessie Ng who also helped to proofread my *LOTRO* article which was presented at *Multi.Player 2*, and *Meaningful Play 2014*. The article was subsequently published at the online journal *Press Start*. Last but not least, I am deeply indebted to my parents who have always stood by me and supported me in everything I do.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
SUMMARY	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
ABBREVIATIONS	xix
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Definition of cybertext	2
1.3 Definition of multimodal	3
1.4 Traditional definitions of narrative	4
1.5 Video game narrative	9
1.5.1 Overview	9
1.5.2 Definitions of video game narrative	9
1.5.3 Some constituents of video game narrative	12
1.5.4 Types of video game narrative	13
1.5.4.1 Scripted story	14
1.5.4.2 World narrative	15
1.5.4.3 Emergent story and narrative	16
1.5.4.4 Designer versus player's story	16
1.5.4.5 Video game narrative structure	17

1.5.4.5.1	Linear video game narrative	17
1.5.4.5.2	Multi-linear video game narrative	19
1.6	Problems of applying traditional definitions of narrative to video games	23
1.7	Adopted definition and model for video game narrative analysis	29
1.8	Definitions and distinction between game and play	30
1.9	Definitions of gameplay and adopted definition	35
1.10	Research aims (main objectives)	37
1.11	Research questions	37
1.12	Brief overview of the ludonarrative model	38
1.13	Structure of thesis	39
<b>2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>41</b>
2.1	Introduction	41
2.2	The ludology versus narratology debate	41
2.3	Video gameplay – the gaming situation	49
2.4	Studies on the combination of video game narrative and gameplay	55
<b>3</b>	<b>ANALYSIS OF RELATED WORK</b>	<b>61</b>
3.0	Overview	61
3.1	Analysis of related work	61
3.2	Rationale of the thesis	63
<b>4</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>65</b>
4.1	Method	65
4.1.1	Participants	68
4.1.2	Participant observation and first session’s interview	70
4.1.3	Subsequent sessions	71

4.1.4	Multimodal discourse analysis of gameplay recordings	72
4.1.5	Final session's open-ended interview	75
4.1.6	Development of the ludonarrative model	79
4.1.7	Rationale for method	80
4.2	Coding	82
4.3	Overview of narrative and gameplay of selected games	84
4.4	Rationale for the choice of video games	86
<b>5</b>	<b>VIDEO GAME NARRATIVE</b>	<b>88</b>
5.0	Overview	88
5.1	Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps	89
5.1.1	Inventory	91
5.1.2	Spatial relations	94
5.1.3	Mapping style	96
5.1.4	Interactive character movement	102
5.1.5	Interactive character movement with action	105
5.1.6	Complication of cognitive maps	109
5.2	Multi-linear narrative	109
5.3	Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'natural' narratology and cognitive parameters	114
5.4	Answering research question one	128
5.5	Summary of chapter five	132
<b>6</b>	<b>VIDEO GAMEPLAY</b>	<b>137</b>
6.0	Overview	137
6.1	Montfort's (2003) interactional framework in interactive fiction	139



6.2	Heaton's (2006) circular model of gameplay	141
6.3	The player's motive(s)	145
6.4	Manninen's (2003) interaction forms and communicative actions	148
6.4.1	Instrumental actions	149
6.4.1.1	Environmental details and setting modifications	150
6.4.1.2	PC upgrades	152
6.4.1.3	Kinesics and spatial behaviour	153
6.4.1.4	Language-based communication	154
6.4.2	Strategic actions	156
6.4.2.1	Environmental details and setting modifications	157
6.4.2.2	PC Customisation	158
6.4.2.3	Kinesics and spatial behaviour	159
6.4.2.4	Language-based communication	160
6.5	Fabricatore's (2007) model of gameplay mechanics	162
6.6	Integrated gameplay model for the analysis of player's gameplay interaction	172
6.6.1	The move	173
6.6.2	The exchange	177
6.6.2.1	Feedback types	179
6.6.3	Gameplay phase types	181
6.6.3.1	Gameplay session introduction	187
6.6.3.2	Monster group n	187
6.6.3.3	Boss	188
6.6.3.4	Comment	188
6.6.3.5	Reflection	188

6.6.3.6	Player effectance	189
6.6.4	Gameplay stages	190
6.7	Multi-linear gameplay	191
6.8	Application of gameplay analysis model	195
6.9	Answering research question two	201
6.10	Summary of chapter six	202
<b>7</b>	<b>THE LUDONARRATIVE MODEL</b>	<b>209</b>
7.0	Overview	209
7.1	The ludonarrative model	209
7.2	Justification of ludonarrative model	220
7.3	Ludonarrative relationships	221
7.3.1	Ludonarrative dissonance	226
7.3.1.1	Ludonarrative dissonance contrast	233
7.3.1.1.1	Incomplete information problems	233
7.3.1.1.2	Anagnorisis	234
7.3.1.1.3	Player-(game designers') character dissonance	236
7.3.1.2	Ludonarrative dissonance negotiation	239
7.3.1.3	Ludonarrative dissonance demotivation	240
7.3.1.4	Ludonarrative dissonance imbalance	241
7.3.2	Ludonarrative resonance	241
7.3.2.1	Motivation	245
7.3.2.2	Guidance	249
7.3.2.3	Metaphor	249
7.3.2.4	Semiotic metaphor	254

7.3.2.5	Balance	256
7.3.2.6	Consequence/contingency	258
7.3.2.7	Causality	260
7.3.2.8	Succession	262
7.3.2.9	Parallelism integration	263
7.3.2.10	Prominence	265
7.3.2.11	Player-(game designers') character resonance	267
7.3.2.12	Information solutions	267
7.3.3	Ludonarrative (ir)relevance	268
7.3.3.1	Gameplay focus	269
7.3.3.2	Narrative focus	270
7.3.3.3	Incomplete information problems	271
7.3.3.4	Metaphor	272
7.3.3.5	Consequence	273
7.3.3.6	Guidance	275
7.3.3.7	Prominence	276
7.3.4	The player's experience as a contextual factor	277
7.4	Application of ludonarrative model	281
7.5	Summary of chapter seven & answering research question three	290
<b>8</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	297
8.0	Overview	297
8.1	Discussion	297
8.2	Limitations	307

8.3	Implications and future research	310
8.4	Conclusion	313
<b>REFERENCES</b>		315
<b>APPENDIX A: Selected interview transcriptions</b>		338
<b>APPENDIX B: Questionnaires</b>		676
<b>APPENDIX C: Session 1's open-ended interview questions</b>		715
<b>APPENDIX D: Coding</b>		716

## SUMMARY

The main research question investigates players' understanding of *how* the different video game modes combine to create meaning. The modes analysed using multimodal discourse analysis include the linguistic and visual which convey the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative meaning. This exploratory study aims to investigate *how* players understand the relationships between narrative and gameplay and modifies Dena's (2010) model.

The rationale for the study of the ludonarrative relationships in video games is that prior research conducted on ludonarrative relationships in video games are primarily theoretical (e.g. Eskelinen, 2012 and Aarseth, 2012). Although previous studies have analysed how players make narrative choices (Bryan, 2013), other studies analyse the video game itself. For instance, Pinchbeck (2009) studied how story is conceptualised as a function of gameplay in FPS games, and Linderoth (2013) investigated how different types of gameplay mechanics are suitable for some narrative themes and narrative elements but not others. Furthermore, when terms such as "ludonarrative dissonance" are used by game designers such as Clint Hocking, they are not validated by studies that take into account the different players' varied gameplay experience and motivation. This thesis hence aims to fill in the research gap by proposing a ludonarrative model with the different ludonarrative (sub)categories, grounded by the empirical study of players.

Three research questions are proposed to facilitate the research aim of the thesis. The first question asks *what* the players' cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative is. This interpretation is analysed using the proposed multimodal discourse analysis framework, and will be discussed in Chapter Five. The second question asks *what* specific players' instrumental and strategic actions are involved during the players' interaction with the video game and *how* the actions build up to form the gameplay. These actions are discussed and

analysed in Chapter Six. The third (main) question asks what the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games are. This question is discussed in Chapter Seven where the multimodal discourse analysis conducted in Chapters Five and Six is used to create the ludonarrative (sub)categories.

To address the three research questions, a ludonarrative model is first created from literature review and integrates different theories from Bycer (2013), Pynenburg (2013), Calleja (2011), Watssman (2012), O'Halloran (2007, 2008), and Liu and O'Halloran (2009). Based on the researcher's gameplay experience, these theories are further modified to enable their application to the proposed ludonarrative model. The proposed model is finally tested and refined based on an empirical study of 11 gamers.

The key contribution of this thesis is the refinement of the concepts of "ludonarrative resonance", "ludonarrative dissonance", and the introduction of the concept of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance". In particular, Watssman's (2012) concept of "ludonarrative resonance" is refined with empirical data and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative resonance" are expanded based on the study of the players' experience. Hocking's (2007) concept of "ludonarrative dissonance" is refined using empirical data and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative dissonance" are expanded based on the players' experience. The new concept of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" is introduced and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" are expanded using the empirical data. The refinement of the concepts are conducted using 5 different video games and the different personality types of players are taken into account using Yee's (2007) and Mett and Nils' (2013) player's motives. The proposed ludonarrative model is important as it provides a framework for researchers, game developers, industry professionals and gamers to discuss and understand their subjective experience when playing the game.

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Space-time matrix (Walther, 2003)	32
2	Eskelinen's (2001) distinction between the four major modes	50
3	A simplification of Aarseth's (2012) four dimension model	58
4	A more developed version of Aarseth's (2012) four dimensional model	59
5	Participants' profile (pseudonym have been given)	70
6	Coded Features	84
7	Fludernik's (2003) model adapted for video game narrative analysis	122
8	The video game narrative analysis model	133
9	Montfort's (2003) two level of diegesis	140
10	Mette & Nils' (2013) Interactive, Goal, Motivation and Conflict (IGMC) framework	146
11	Instrumental actions	162
12	Strategic actions	162
13	Some core gameplay actions and challenges (PC games)	165
14	Some core gameplay actions and challenges (PS3 games)	166
15	Some functions of core mechanics (Adams, 2010: 289)	176
16	Player's instrumental and strategic actions	182
17	Fabricatore's (2007) gameplay mechanics	183
18	Common story phase types and their functions (Martin and Rose, 2008: 82)	185
19	Common gameplay phase types and their functions	186
20	Matt's gameplay	200
21	The gameplay exchange structure	203
22	Comparison with other models	226

23	New concepts introduced	254
24	The subcategories of ludonarrative dissonance	292
25	The subcategories of ludonarrative resonance	294
26	The subcategories of ludonarrative (ir)relevance	296



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
1	Äyrämö and Koskimaa's (2010) model of narrative definition	11
2	Linear narrative structure (Ip, 2010)	18
3	The "string of pearls" model (Sylvester, 2013: 98)	18
4	The "hub and spokes" model (Sylvester, 2013: 98)	21
5	The branching story structure (Sylvester, 2013: 99)	22
6	The "side quest and story convergence" model (Sylvester, 2013: 100)	23
7	Chatman's (1978) narrative communication situation	25
8	The feedback loop (my modification of Chatman (1978))	25
9	Walther's (2003) distinction between game and play	31
10	Typological approach of framing game and play (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003)	33
11	Conceptual approach of framing game and play (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003)	33
12	The ludonarrative model	39
13	The gaming situation as a combination of configurative elements (Eskelinen, 2001)	51
14	A taxonomy of gameplay events (Eskelinen, 2001)	54
15	Method	66
16	An <i>obligatory</i> object highlighted in the flashback of <i>Beyond: Two Souls</i>	92
17	Liar's side mission as an <i>optional</i> object for the player	93
18	Tracking the <i>spatial relations</i> of moving objects	94
19	Difficulty of evaluating spatial relations in <i>Beyond: Two Souls</i>	96
20	Colour coding as a mapping style	97
21	Sarah's photo with Joel as a <i>narrative iconic object</i>	99

22	<i>A narrative iconic object, the inhabitants' notes</i>	99
23	Wrex's armour as a narrative iconic object	100
24	A language and audio indexical prompt	101
25	A visual indexical prompt	102
26	Big Daddy fighting splicer	103
27	Character movement, action and progression challenges in relation to emergent narrative	103
28	Narrative pathway 1 – side plot	111
29	Narrative pathway 2 – side plot	111
30	Branching narrative structure with multiple endings	112
31	Divergent and convergent plot lines in <i>The Walking Dead Season 1</i>	113
32	The PC's goal to get the oil from the garage	123
33	Conventional/symbolic indicators	124
34	Conventional/symbolic indicators	125
35	The box of memories as a <i>narrative iconic object</i>	126
36	The VIEWING frame where the player watches Jodie	127
37	The narrative side of the ludonarrative model	134
38	Montfort's (2003) units of interaction with IF	141
39	Initial gameplay model (Heaton, 2006)	142
40	The updated gameplay model incorporating the player's observation, action and interface (Heaton, 2006)	143
41	Heaton's (2006) complete gameplay model incorporating the player's decision-making	144
42	Yee's (2007) taxonomy of player's motivation in online games	147
43	Environmental instrumental actions in <i>Bioshock</i>	151
44	Environmental instrumental actions in <i>TLOU</i>	151

45	PC upgrades	153
46	Crouching under cover in <i>Mass Effect</i>	154
47	Crouching under cover in <i>TLOU</i>	154
48	Language based instrumental actions in <i>The Walking Dead</i>	155
49	Strategic environmental action in <i>Bioshock</i> – using incinerate plasmid	157
50	Strategic environmental action in <i>Bioshock</i> – solving the puzzle	158
51	Language based strategic action in <i>Mass Effect</i>	161
52	Fabricatore’s (2007) modified model of gameplay mechanics	163
53	Immediate facilitating mechanic	170
54	Delayed facilitating mechanic	171
55	The relationship between the integrated frameworks and the player	173
56	The move for gameplay analysis (Adams, 2010)	174
57	The exchange structure for gameplay analysis	178
58	Oxland’s (2004) taxonomy of feedback types	180
59	Gameplay phases as pulses of effectance	190
60	Gameplay stages	191
61	Examples of multiple pathways through the gameplay in <i>Mass Effect</i>	193
62	The gameplay side of the ludonarrative model	207
63	Diagram illustrating the relations between principles, modes, and media, as espoused by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) (Reproduced from Dena (2010))	210
64	Modification of Dena (2010)	212
65	The proposed ludonarrative model for video game analysis	213
66	Interpreting the narrative of the dialogue option “calm down”	230
67	The gameplay (and narrative) outcome of the white coloured dialogue option	230

68	The ludonarrative model and the player's experience	281
69	From top left clockwise – birthday card, newspaper, fridge's note, and handphone	283
70	Infected's gameplay characteristic – increased aggression	284
71	Simultaneous explosion at nearby building	285
72	Joel shoots the Runner without remorse	286
73	Freeplay movement in the car	287
74	Sarah's injured leg	288
75	Subtle narrative tricks	288
76	Environmental indicators	289

## ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CNM	Communications and New Media
FPS	First-Person Shooter
<i>LOTRO</i>	<i>The Lord of the Rings Online</i>
MMOG	Massively Multiplayer Online Game
MMORPG	Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game
NPC	Non-Player Character
PC	Player Character
QTE	Quick-time event
RPG	Role Playing Game
<i>TLOU</i>	<i>The Last of Us</i>
UI	User Interface

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This thesis is a move towards uncovering the internal workings of computer and video games and contributing to our understanding of how the different relationships between the multimodal (section 1.3) modes in a video game influence the players' experience when playing the game. Video games are multimodal products. Because video games are new media and have been around for merely a few decades, the academic study, especially the research on the multimodal aspects of computer and video games, has not been extensive. This study proposes a ludonarrative model to analyse video games by focusing on the different relationships between narrative and gameplay. The three research questions asked to facilitate the research aims of this thesis are as follows.

- i. Firstly, what is the players' cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative? This interpretation will be analysed using the multimodal discourse analysis framework, and will be discussed in Chapter Five.
- ii. Secondly, what specific players' instrumental and strategic actions are involved during the players' interaction with the video game and how do these actions build up to form the gameplay? This research question is discussed in Chapter Six.
- iii. Thirdly, what are the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games? This research question is discussed in Chapter Seven.

The proposed framework is created by using both the analysis of the gameplay recordings and the players' experience. The analysis of the gameplay recordings is undertaken by viewing video games as an actualised semiotic product consisting of linguistic and visual resources. The analysis of the players' experience is performed via the retrospective protocol analysis where post gameplay interviews have been conducted to elicit the participants' narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative interpretations.

## **1.2 Definition of cybertext**

This section discusses the definition of "cybertext" to foreground the unique property of video games which is their interactivity. The definition is provided here to contextualise the understanding of video games as a medium which requires non-trivial effort to transverse the text. The non-trivial effort undertaken is most apparent during the gameplay and is highlighted by the analyses conducted in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Aarseth (1997: 1) introduces the concept of the "cybertext" to describe the intricate feedback system that exists in certain types of texts that are characterised by a "mechanical organisation" and an "integrated reader". He then coins the term *ergodic* to describe the role of the human actor in their process of creating the cybertext. *Ergodic* specifically refers to the "non-trivial effort required to allow the reader to transverse the text" (Aarseth, 1997: 1). Although Aarseth's (1997) formulation of the terms "cybertext" and "ergodic" are not medium specific, in the context of this study, video games are considered as a form of cybertext and the player is required to carry out ergodic actions to play a video game. The player's ergodic actions are core features of video games as they are required to progress both the narrative and gameplay of video games. For instance, Butler (2013b) argues that "the unique narrative dimension of games, that

which differentiates them from all other storytelling media, is to be found in the actions that the player can and must perform to make progress in the game and unfold the narrative.” The media theorist Alexander Galloway (2006) also argues that the key element in video games is the gamic action. Gamic action is defined as the four moments of operator (user) and machine (computer and playstation) acts where the acting agent (the PC) is coupled with the actionable object (Galloway, 2006: 24).

Drawing upon Manninen (2003), the types of player’s gameplay actions are defined in the two main categories of instrumental and strategic actions. Instrumental actions are defined as actions which are more instinctive and usually do not require preplanning by the player. Strategic actions are defined as actions which require preplanning and hence take more time to implement. The taxonomy of gameplay actions will be discussed in Chapter Six Section 6.4 and the types of player’s narrative actions will be discussed in Chapter Five, defined here briefly as a cognitive interpretation.

### **1.3 Definition of multimodal**

This section discusses the definition of “multimodal” to highlight the property of video games as consisting of multiple modes such as the linguistic and the visual to convey the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative meanings. The definition is provided here to ground the understanding of video games as a medium which requires multiple modes for interaction and feedback. The definition of “multimodal” is included here as it is an important concept utilised in the proposed frameworks for the analyses conducted in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

The term “mode” refers to semiotic resources which are socioculturally shaped for meaning making (Mavers & Gibson, unknown date). Mode categorises a ‘channel’ of



representation or communication for which previously no overarching name is proposed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The multimodal perspective involves the approach of multimodality, which is inter-disciplinary. It understands that communication and representation are about more than language (Jewitt, 2013). Three interconnected theoretical assumptions underpin multimodality. First, multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a variety of modes, all of which contribute to meaning (Jewitt, 2013). Second, multimodality assumes that resources are socially shaped over time to become meaning making resources that articulate the (social, individual/affective) meanings required by the needs of different communities (Jewitt, 2013). Third, people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes, foregrounding the significance of the interaction between modes (Jewitt, 2013).

The multimodal perspective consists of the linguistic and visual aspects of the game. The multimodal analysis will involve the analyst's understanding of how the linguistic and visual elements of the game convey (narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative) meaning to the player. The linguistic resource is present in the characters' dialogue, the quest objectives, and the description of specific objects in the gameworld initiated through the player's gameplay actions, etc. The visual resource is present in both the cutscenes and the gameplay to portray the characters, objects, settings, etc in the gameworld. The various relationships between narrative and gameplay are discussed in Chapter Seven under the proposed ludonarrative model.

#### **1.4 Traditional Definitions of Narrative**

This section discusses some traditional definitions of "narrative". The purpose is to highlight the different features of narrative from the traditional definitions. The definitions are

important for us to understand the distinction between narrative in printed texts such as novels and cybertexts such as video games which would inform the method I design to create the ludonarrative model. I first discuss traditional narrative definitions which view narrative in terms of its components. These definitions include those by Barthes (1966), Mallon and Webb (2000), Aristotle (1999), Labov and Waletzky (1967), Fisher (1984), Lowe (2000), Abbott (2002), Ryan (2001), Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Chatman (1987) and Bal (1985). Following that, I provide Labov (1972) and Bal's (1985) definitions which looks at narrative from various angles. Then, I discuss Chatman's (1978) definition of narrative in terms of a communication framework. Genette's (1980) three diegetic levels and narrator is then discussed. This section ends by highlighting the different features of traditional narrative from video game narrative with implications for the method I employ to study the players.

Narrative has a long history. Barthes (1966: 1) states that narrative starts with the very history of mankind and nowhere has there been a people without narrative. Similarly, Mallon and Webb (2000) argue that narrative is one of the oldest constructs we use to understand and provide meanings to the world. There have been many theoretical explorations into the conceptual understanding of narrative. However, the explanations contribute to considerable disagreements as to narrative's definition. Aristotle (1999) sees narrative as a whole that has a beginning, middle, and an end. Labov and Waletzky (1967: 21) define narrative as "a story that follows a chronological sequence". Fisher (1984: 6) defines narratives as "stories we tell ourselves and each other to establish a meaningful life-world". Narrative is defined by Lowe (2000: 18) as "a recounted story". Abbott (2002: 12) defines narrative as "the representation of an event or a series of events".

Ryan (1997, 2001) suggests that narrative is a sign with a signifier (discourse) and a signified (story, mental image, semantic representation), although the notion of a sign does not merely refer to narrative but also to other entities as well. Since the notion of a sign is not restricted to narratives, Ryan (2001) defines narrative to be a matter of degree where some texts such as postmodern novels are less narrative than simple forms such as fairy tales. More importantly, Ryan (2001) emphasises the reader's cognitive interpretation, where the reader constructs the narrative based on the text. Ryan's (2001) cognitive framework and how it is extended for analysing video game narrative is discussed in Chapter Five.

Narrative fiction consists of a "narration of a succession of fictional events" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 2). The circularity in the definition of narrative is seen in her definition where she uses the similar term "narration" to define "narrative fiction" (Talib, 2011). She provides a three-level conception of narrative to define narrative. Rimmon-Kenan's (1983: 3-4) three-level conception of *narrative* consists of *story*, *text* and *narration*. The *story* is an abstraction of text events (Talib, 2011). *Text* consists of what we read or hear (Talib, 2011). The *text* is spoken or written discourse *as it is told*; and the *events* of a *text* need not be arranged in chronological order (Talib, 2011). *Narration* is the process of production, and involves an agent who produces the text (Talib, 2011). Chatman (1987) views narrative in terms of two categories - *story* and *discourse*. *Story* refers to the narrative content, consisting of character, events, conflict, plot, actions, time and location/setting. *Discourse* refers to the arrangement, emphasis/de-emphasis, magnification/diminution of any of the elements of the content (Talib, 2011).

Bal (1985: 7-9) distinguishes between the *fabula*, the *story* and the *text*. She defines the *fabula* as a series of logically and chronologically related events, caused or experienced by actors. Bal calls this the deep or abstract structure of the text (Bal, 1985). The *story* is the way the *fabula*

is looked at, and consists of the ‘aspects’ or ‘traits’ peculiar to a given story. The *text* is produced by an agent who uses language signs to relate a story.

Besides defining narrative in terms of its components as discussed above, narrative has also been defined by looking at it from various angles. Labov (1972: 361) and Prince (1973: 31) suggest that one way to look at narrative is in terms of a *minimal narrative*. A minimalist definition looks at narrative in terms of two states and a transition between the two states and anything which has this movement is considered a narrative (Talib, 2013). Bal’s (1985) narrative definition is slightly more complex, which involves three phases, as consisting of the possibility (or virtuality), the event (or realization), and the result (or conclusion).

Chatman (1978) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) define narrative as a communication, which presupposes two parties, a sender and a receiver. They envisaged the communication in narratives as a *message* transmitted by *addressor* to *addressee* (Chatman, 1978; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). However, it is also noted by Talib (2011) that communication is not a distinctive feature of narrative.

There are also two ways of looking at narrative, *diegesis* and *mimesis*. *Diegesis* is a way of fiction storytelling which presents an interior view of a world and is the world itself experienced by the characters in the narrative situations and events. *Mimesis* is the representation of aspects of the real world, especially human actions, in literature and art. In *diegesis*, there is also the presence of a narrator who tells and recounts the story, presenting the character’s actions or thoughts to the audience. For narratologists, all narrative elements, the characters, narrators, existents, actors are characterised in terms of diegesis. According to Genette, all narrative is necessarily diegesis (telling). For Genette, a narrative cannot imitate reality, no matter how

realistic and it is intended to be a fictional act of language arising from a narrative instance (Guillemette and Lévesque, 2006). Genette (1980) distinguishes between three diegetic levels. The *extradiegetic* level is according to Prince (1973), “external to any diegesis”. It is commonly understood to be the narrator’s level, in which exists the narrator who is not part of the story s/he tells. The *diegetic* level is the level of the characters, their thoughts and actions. The *metadiegetic* level or *hypodiegetic* level is the part of the diegesis embedded in another. It is usually understood as a story within another, when a diegetic narrator tells a story.

In place of the two main traditional ways of looking at narrative, diegesis and mimesis, Genette contends that there are simply varying degrees of diegesis, with the narrator either more or less involved in the narrative (Guillemette and Lévesque, 2006). Genette insists that in no case is the narrator completely absent (Guillemette and Lévesque, 2006).

By discussing the traditional definitions of narrative such as Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Chatman (1987), I highlight the specific differences between traditional narrative and video game narrative, by comparing traditional narrative definitions with game studies’ definitions. In Section 1.2, I have discussed Aarseth’s (1997) “cybertext” which includes the feedback system in video games but absent in printed text. The presence of a feedback system in video games has implications in the method used to create the ludonarrative model where the players’ experience is taken into account. In Chapter Four, I discuss the method of analysing the player’s experience.

By surveying the different narrative definitions, we would also have a better idea of which definitions are more appropriate for analysing video games. For instance, Ryan’s (1997, 2001) cognitive approach is drawn upon for the creation of the video game narrative framework in Chapter Five to understand the players’ interpretation of the video game narrative.

After highlighting the features of some traditional narrative definitions, Section 1.5 discusses video game narrative. Section 1.6 discusses the difficulties of applying traditional narrative definitions to analyse video games. Section 1.7 proposes the definition adopted in this thesis for analysing video game narrative.

## **1.5 Video Game Narrative**

### ***1.5.1 Overview***

Narrative is an important aspect of today's video games, especially when the complexity of the video games increase. In video games, narrative is present in cutscenes, dialogue and the video game graphics. However, narrative storytelling is present in a continuum of levels according to the video game genre. On the one hand, a minimum of narrative is present in *Space Invaders* (Taito Corporation, 1978) and the *Angry Birds* (Rovio Entertainment, 2009) games. On the other hand, a complex (lengthier) narrative is present in *Mass Effect* (Bioware, 2007) and *TLOU* (Naughty Dog, 2013). Therefore, this necessitates a more complex framework to be utilised for the analysis of their narrative structures. In this section, I will first look at how others define video game narrative. Then I will discuss the video game narrative types.

### ***1.5.2 Definitions of Video Game Narrative***

This section discusses some video game narrative definitions to understand the core features of video game narrative. The purpose is to provide the theoretical grounding for the development of my definition for analysing video game narrative.

There are various video game narrative definitions depending on the prior theories which the authors of game design and video game books draw upon. The prior theories can be broadly

classified into four groups. They are the traditional narrative, classical narrative, new theories, and psychoanalytical theories. Traditional theories cover theories ranging from Aristotle's theory of drama to Vladimir Propp's study of story functions, and Carl Gustav Jung's archetype theory. Classical theories encompass the field usually referred to as narratology. The roots of this approach rest on Ferdinand de Saussure's theories related to sign and language use and Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1978) way of using the structuralist paradigm in myth research in the field of anthropology. New theories involve those which take into account the characteristics of new media forms such as the absence of a narrator. New theories also draw upon cognitive psychology, and cognitive science. Psychoanalytical theories focus on the emphasis on the player's experience in the interaction with the gameworld.

McCarthy et al. (2005); Bateman (2007); and Chandler (2007) define video game narrative as a constant predetermined linear story (and its narration). Rollings and Morris (1999); McCarthy et al. (2005); Vuorela (2007); and Krawczyk and Novak (2006) define video game narrative as the player's own unique story and narrative that arises as a consequence of playing a video game. Bateman (2007); Chandler (2007); Crawford (2005); Krawczyk and Novak (2006) define video game narrative as partially preformed and partially potential based story content controlled by the designer and presented through narrative which arises from the potentiality that has been determined by the designer.

Iuppa and Borst (2007) define story as a mental model. They also define story as a situation, which includes a hero, a goal, and a challenge between them. Krawczyk and Novak (2006) define story as human experience, or series of experiences, which becomes concrete as an event or series of events. Glassner (2004) defines story as following the main character and events, while the character seeks a clear goal by addressing a set of difficulties. Lee et al. (2006:

265) provide a psychological definition where they define narrative in interactive media as “a representation of events that provides a cognitive structure whereby media users can tie causes to effects, convert the complexity of events to a story that makes sense, and thus satisfy their primitive urges to understand the physical and social worlds.”

Äyrämö and Koskimaa (2010) propose a composite model of narrative definition for the purposes of game narrative design. They developed a structuralised chart which recognises the division between content and expression. Their composite model of narrative definition is presented in Figure 1 below.

	<b>SIGNIFIED</b>	<b>SIGNIFIER</b>
<b>SUBSTANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• world</li> <li>• main character</li> <li>• events</li> <li>• goal</li> </ul> challenges on the level of content, i.e., in the fictional reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• narrative stimuli that result in the mental image or cognitive construction of story</li> <li>• witnessing</li> </ul>
<b>FORM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• story as a complex system of facts</li> <li>• story as a mental model containing its requirements, i.e., constructions of the substance components of story</li> </ul>	the multimodal discourse of a game, requiring both interpretative and constructive participation from the player

Figure 1 Äyrämö and Koskimaa's (2010) model of narrative definition

In the composite model of the narrative concept, there exist narrative stimuli that refer to some particular world, character(s), events, goal and challenges. On the level of content, story is a complex system, where meaning is understood only through its entirety. Their intention was to describe the relationships between the two ontologically separated stages of content (signified) and expression (signifier) so that their relationships can be described in a reasonable way (Äyrämö and Koskimaa, 2010). The narrative definition aspires to be comprehensive enough so that the levels of constant predesigned narrative/story, and the level of narrative/story achieved



by predetermined potential can be considered under the concept of narrative as defined by Äyrämö and Koskimaa (2010).

Some insights into the core features of video game narrative can be gleaned from the discussion in this section. Firstly, video game narrative contains a linear story when the designer's scripted story is present. Secondly, the player is a core feature of video game narrative who may create his/her own unique story and narrative during gameplay. Thirdly, both the player and the game designers can be seen as co-authors of the video game narrative. For example, the player can not only follow the game designer's scripted linear story, but she has the choice to create her narrative based on the potential story set in the video game.

### ***1.5.3 Some Constituents of Video Game Narrative***

Some constituents of video game narrative include *story*, *character*, *setting*, *backstory*, *cutscenes*, *scripted events* and *in-game artifacts* (Dansky, 2007). The *story* is what occurs, the game flow that can be separated from the game mechanics and retold as a narrative (Dansky, 2007). Characters are actors (or avatars) who exist in the gameworld and perform the in-game actions (Dansky, 2007). Every game character is designed to serve a purpose. Player controlled characters are known as PCs and *avatars*. Other characters are known as NPCs or occasionally as AI (Dansky, 2007). The *setting* defines the world of game action, including character races, languages, laws of physics and metaphysics (Dansky, 2007). *Backstory* is the history of the gameworld, the explanation of what has created the event that will be played through (Dansky, 2007). It is related to *setting* and can be defined as “who did what to whom, and what does the player have to do in order to fix it?” (Dansky, 2007: 3). The *backstory* cannot be interacted with directly by the player in the game, they bracket the game's narrative and action, providing the

player information s/he requires to immerse himself/herself in the fiction and proceed with the action (Dansky, 2007).

*Cutscenes* refer to in-game movies – noninteractive footage the player watches (Dansky, 2007). When many *cutscenes* are collected together, they form a noninteractive sequence called a *cinematic* (Dansky, 2007). Game introductory sequences are typically cinematic and explain the *setting* and *backstory* to contextualise the player’s choices (Dansky, 2007). Section 1.5.4.1 discusses more about *cutscenes*. A *scripted event* is a game section where some player control is taken away (Dansky, 2007). It is related to *cutscenes* but is different in how they are made and experienced. It can be simple or complex. A simple *scripted event* consists of a single scripted event. For instance, the camera angle is changed to emphasise a certain object in the game setting. A complex *scripted event* is a sequence of *scripted events*. For instance, multiple NPCs interact with each other in the complex *scripted event* to illustrate a game point. Scripted events are part of a scripted story which is defined in Section 1.5.4.1 below. *In-game artifacts* are game objects that progress the narrative (Dansky, 2007). They are defined as narrative that the character, not the player, finds. Examples of *in-game artifacts* include diaries, letters, books, etc. The player gains narrative and gameplay information about what is happening in the gameworld by interacting with these objects. *In-game artifacts* are considered as a form of *world narrative* which is discussed in Section 1.5.4.2.

#### ***1.5.4 Types of Video Game Narrative***

This section covers different ways of categorising video game narratives. In Section 1.5.4.1, I will first look at scripted story. Section 1.5.4.2 discusses world narrative. Section

1.5.4.3 discusses emergent story and narrative. Section 1.5.4.4 discusses the distinction between designer and player's story and Section 1.5.4.5 discusses video game narrative structure.

#### ***1.5.4.1 Scripted Story***

Sylvester (2013) divides video game narrative into three main classes. These are *scripted story*, *world narrative*, and *emergent story*. Although a distinction is made between them, there exists overlaps between them, such as a scripted story giving rise to an emergent story. A game's scripted story includes events encoded directly into the game so they always play out the same (Sylvester, 2013). The most basic scripted story is the *cutscene*. A *cutscene* is a non-interactive game element that progresses the game's storyline and is scene-setting (Thompson et al., 2007; Hancock, 2002). There are different types of cutscenes, namely, the cinematic and animated cutscenes. Cinematic cutscenes are films inside the game. Cinematic cutscenes can be live-action which use actual live actors who are filmed on a physical set or on a bluescreen or greenscreen and composited into other backgrounds. Animated cutscenes consist of fully-pre-rendered Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) as seen in the *Final Fantasy* series (Square Enix, 1987 – 2013). The video games in my study such as *Mass Effect*, *Bioshock*, and *The Walking Dead* use animated cutscenes. The cutscenes function to make the gameworld more real by providing the setting and background information and increase the importance of the player's action by reacting to the playing and showing the effects of his/her actions (Hancock, 2002).

However, Butler (2013a) argues that "cutscenes interrupt the flow of gameplay". As a result of this, "new forms of integrating narration and gameplay such as QTEs and scripted game scenes are being explored by contemporary game designers" (Butler, 2013a). In QTEs, the game's interactive affordances are limited where the players are prompted to give specific inputs

with the game's controls at a precise moment in order to successfully pass a scene and move on to the next one thereby unfolding the animated story (Butler, 2013a). More recent games "cue the players more subtly, and have a greater challenge for mistakes so that the necessity of having to interact with the game system and the reception of the non-interactive animated content don't clash with each other" (Butler, 2013a). This enables the player to transition smoothly between both gameplay and narrative experiences during these sequences as interaction and immersion no longer undermine each other but complement each other.

In scripted interactive game sequences, cutscenes are avoided altogether, and is implemented in such a way that the player has a reduced spectrum of action (Butler, 2013a). For instance, the player can only move his/her avatar and look at the surroundings. "Alternatively, these pre-scripted game sequences can be done in such a way as to allow the player their full range of possibilities" (Butler, 2013a).

#### ***1.5.4.2 World Narrative***

World narrative tells the story of a place, its past, and its people through the construction of a place and the objects within it (Sylvester, 2013). World narrative is environmental storytelling in which Jenkins (2005) distinguished between four types, which are evocative space, enacting stories, embedded narratives and emergent narratives. *Evocative space* provide concrete shape to our memories and imaginings of the storyworld, creating an immersive environment we can interact with (Jenkins, 2005). *Enacting stories* refer to the situation in games that either allow players to perform or view narrative events through broadly defined goals or on the level of localised incidents (Jenkins, 2005). *Embedded narratives* refer to the multiple information

channels in games which convey narrative information through the player's interaction with game objects.

#### ***1.5.4.3 Emergent Story and Narrative***

Emergent story is the story that is created during play by the interaction between game mechanics and players (Sylvester, 2013). Emergent story is not totally written by the game designers. It occurs via the interaction between game mechanics, player choices, and chance that affects the actual plot of each emergent story (Sylvester, 2013). A related term is an *emergent narrative*. “*Emergent narrative* is a term introduced by designer Marc LeBlanc in his lecture ‘Formal Design Tools’ at the 2000 Game Developers’ Conference, which refers to story-telling produced entirely by player actions and in-game events (LeBlanc, 2000). “Emergent narrative does not contain narrative blocks, such as, embedded narratives created by a writer” (Adams, 2010: 175). The story *emerges* from the act of playing (Jenkins, 2005). There is no separate storytelling engine and no preplanned story structure which is linear or branching (Jenkins, 2005). Anything can happen any time as long as the core mechanics allow it (Adams, 2010: 175).

#### ***1.5.4.4 Designer versus player's story***

Richard (2004: 203) distinguishes between a designer's story versus the player's story. The designer's stories are a predetermined series of dramatic series which are unchanging regardless of the players' actions in the gameworld. The story is usually conveyed to players between gameplay sections.

The player's story is generated through the player's gameplay or interaction with the game. It is the most important story to be found in the game, since it is the story the player will be most involved with. The player's story is also the emergent story in Section 1.5.4.3.

### ***1.5.4.5 Video Game Narrative Structure***

This section discusses about the two forms of video game narrative structure. Section 1.5.4.5.1 discusses about linear video game narrative and Section 1.5.4.5.2 discusses about multi-linear video game narrative.

#### ***1.5.4.5.1 Linear Video Game Narrative***

Traditional games possess a linear narrative structure. The typical type of linear narrative structure is levels positioned sequentially. As shown in Figure 2 below, the player starts at level 1 and experiences the narrative. As s/he progresses to levels 2, 3, and 4 in a linear sequence, the narrative is also revealed sequentially.

Polsinelli (2011) suggests that a common game story structure is linear story backbone with a sequence of local interactive episodes called levels separated by the (in)famous cutscenes. He asserts that interactive episodes can display recurring character's features. Episodes possess their own micro stories, with situational narratives, usually extremely simple (Polsinelli, 2011). Creating linear stories offer many advantages. Linear stories require less content than nonlinear ones (Adams, 2010: 168). Therefore, developing a game using a linear story requires less time and money. The storytelling engine is simpler (Adams, 2010: 168). The storytelling engine only needs to keep track of a single sequence of plot events as the player cannot change the course of events. "Linear stories are capable of greater emotional power" (Adams, 2010: 169). This is one of the greatest advantage of linear stories. As the game designers have greater control of the story path which the player takes to experience the game story, they can create an emotionally meaningful outcome for the player by restricting the story to a single linear path. Linear stories however have the disadvantage that they reduce the player's agency (Adams, 2010: 169). The

player has freedom to do many things in the game, but none of it influences the story apart from causing it to progress.

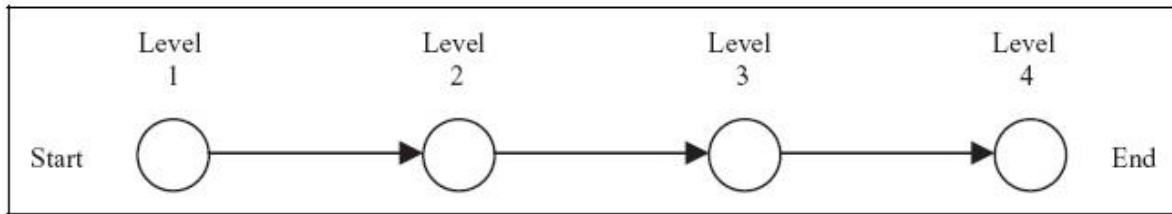


Figure 2 Linear Narrative Structure (Ip, 2010)

Another type of linear video game narrative is the “string of pearls” story structure. In this model (Figure 3), each pearl is an area where the player may move around freely and interact with game mechanics, while the string is a one-way transition to the next area (Sylvester, 2013).

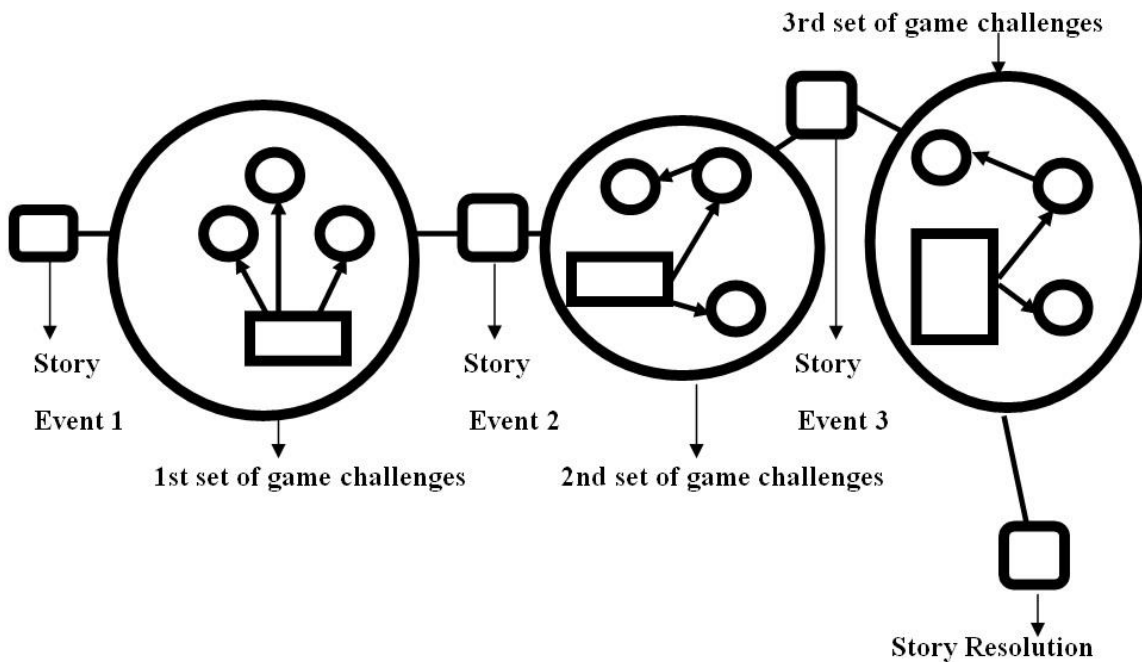


Figure 3 The “string of pearls” model (Sylvester, 2013: 98)

In the context of interactive narrative, the “string of pearls” model is an advanced way of merging a linear story with nonlinear gameplay. It is an approach which views the game as a series of challenges players can engage in any order (DeMarle, 2007). The game writer assumes that the player will be able to get through each challenge and maps the story’s linear progression over the progression of completed game challenges.

#### ***1.5.4.5.2 Multi-linear Video Game Narrative***

A different feature of video game narrative is its multi-linearity. The goal of game storytelling is to create a story in which players feel they can play a significant role that may affect the outcome, and multi-linearity is an essential way for accomplishing that goal (Richard, 2004: 223). Crawford (1984: 10) argues that “a story is a collection of facts in time sequenced order that suggest a cause and effect relationship...the cause and effect relationships suggested by the sequence of facts are the important part of the story”. The facts presented in the story are deliberately fictitious, because the facts of a story are intrinsically unimportant. (Crawford, 1984: 10). In contrast, in a game, the stories are presented in “a branching tree of sequences and allows the player to create his own story by making choices at each branch point” (Crawford, 1984: 10). While an “audience of a story must infer causal relationships from a single sequence of facts; the player of a game is encouraged to explore alternatives, contrapositives, and inversions. The gameplayer is free to explore the causal relationship from many different angles”. (Crawford, 1984: 10-11). Crawford (1984: 11) also suggests that the multi-linear feature of games does not mean that multi-linearity is necessarily better than linearity. A linear story is able to provide a greater intricacy and detail of the story by tracing a single sequence of causal development of the story. A multi-linear story, on the other hand, shows all the facets of a single truth of a story,



when the game designer creates a complex network of paths for the player to choose in a playthrough.

This shows that the crucial difference between multi-linear game stories and linear stories is that the player is expected to play the game many times, each time with different types of strategies. But a linear story is meant to be experienced once, and its representational value decreases with subsequent retellings as it presents no new information (Crawford, 1984). However, there is a counterposition where academics argue that one of the indicators of a good story is that people want to re-experience it (Calinescu, 1993; Bacon, 2007; Odden, 1998; Nell, 1988). “A game’s representational value [however] increases with each playing until the player has explored a representative subset of all the branches in the game net” (Crawford, 1984: 11). The feature of multi-linearity occurs in different types of video game narrative designs. Some examples of the multi-linear story structure include the “hub and spokes” model, the “branching story” structure, the “side quests and story convergence” structure, etc. These types of multi-linear story structures usually do not occur on their own, but combine with each other.

Murray argues that the term “non-linearity” connotes less specificity and is negative (Murray, n.d.). The flow of time also cannot be manipulated and every experience, however scrambled the presentation might be, regardless of the amount of jumps in the internal timeline, is always linear. A video game can provide multiple linear strands, in different forms. However, it cannot escape the restriction of the linear experience of time. She prefers the usage of terms such as “multiform” and “multisequentiality”. “Multiform” refers to having more than one type of configuration based on the same general components or framework and a “multisequential” story is one where there is more than one valid and coherent path through a set of segments (Murray, n.d.). Following Murray, I adopt the term “multi-linearity” to replace the term “non-

linearity” when used in video games. “Multi-linearity” in the context of this thesis refers to the narrative and gameplay pathways where many different linear routes can be taken between the beginning and the end. Different pathways taken by the players may foreground different story or gameplay elements or result in different narrative endings.

In the “hub and spokes” model (Figure 4), each spoke consists of its own content which does not interact with the other spoke’s contents (Sylvester, 2013).

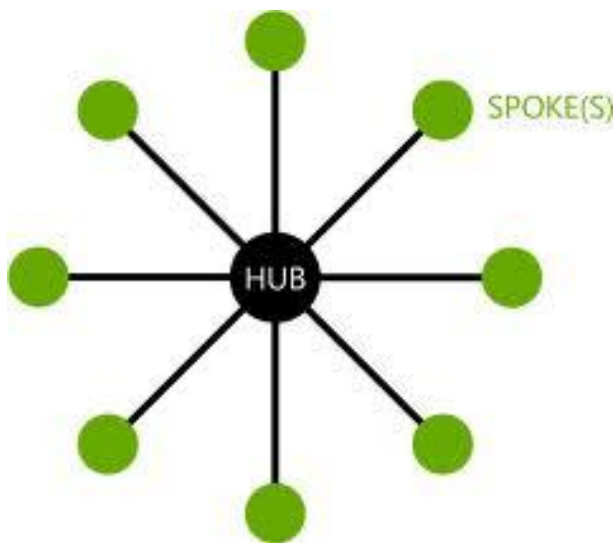


Figure 4 The “hub and spokes” model (Sylvester, 2013: 98)

The branching story structure (Figure 5) tries to simulate real-life choices by modeling every possible decision’s outcomes (Sylvester, 2005). The player’s choice of (narrative and/or gameplay) actions causes one or more aspects of the story to change. NPCs may reveal different information to the player depending on how the player chooses to interact with them (DeMarle, 2007). The branching story structure has a fatal drawback - the number of possible branches rapidly explodes. The player who experiences the story misses most of the content on a playthrough. However, this may also increase the replay value of the game.

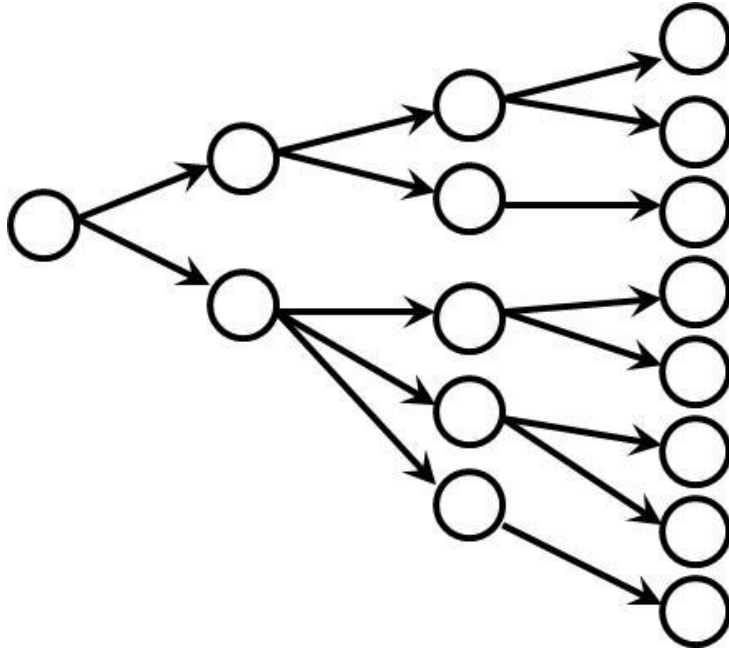


Figure 5 The branching story structure (Sylvester, 2013: 99)

The branching story structure’s fatal drawback can be resolved by changing it to a “side quest and story convergence” model (Figure 6). This will enable the number of branches to be reduced. This model has a branching story in which the branches recombine in certain key story points. Players must pass through every reconnected point in a certain order, but they have some freedom to choose how they get there (DeMarle, 2007). This model is also called *parallel paths* and it balances linear and branching structures (DeMarle, 2007: 76). The benefit of this model is that the player’s involvement in the game’s story can be greatly increased as it grants the player some *agency* in the development of the story (DeMarle, 2007).

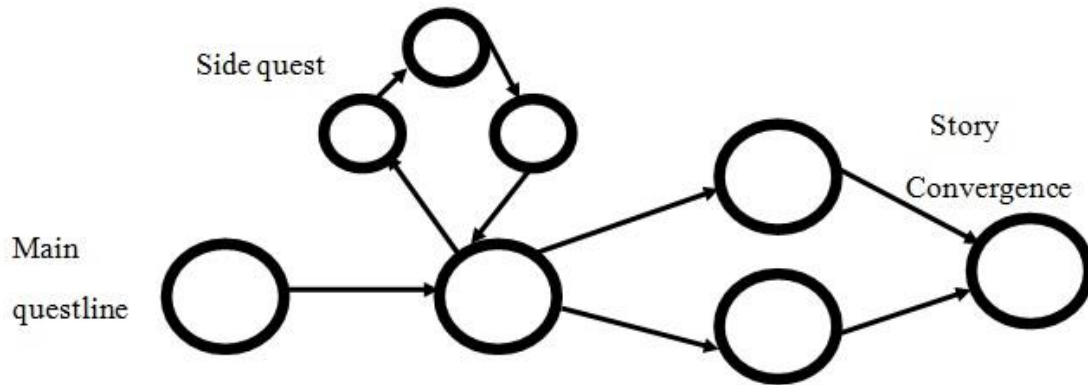


Figure 6 The “side quest and story convergence” model (Sylvester, 2013: 100)

### 1.6 Problems of Applying Traditional Definitions of Narrative to Video Games

Narrative theory has been mainly developed for the analysis of literary texts, so one needs to understand the specific ways in which video games are different from literary texts before one could develop the framework to analyse video games. Aarseth (2012: 129) brings out the following important point:

When we apply the perspectives and models from one form onto another, our ability to assess the incongruities as well as the similarities between the two forms becomes critical. Man is a pattern-finding animal. It is extremely easy to find parallels, precursors, and points of overlap, and thus seduce oneself to conclude that A is a form of B. The responsible theorist, therefore, should take the opposite position as their null-hypothesis: A is not a form of B unless proven otherwise.

Therefore, before we embark on the discussion of the applicability of narrative theory for the analysis of video games, a discussion of the differences of the narrative in video games from literary texts is important for us to understand the underlying causes of the difficulties related to analysing storytelling in video games from a narrative point of view. The knowledge of the

difference of video game narrative would also inform us of the suitable analytical frameworks which would be used for its analysis. Aarseth (2004a: 52) argues that video games should be understood as a particular genre of simulation in *Genre Trouble: Narrativism and the Art of Simulation*. Frasca (2003b: 222) also argues that it is video games' roots in simulation which constitutes a break with prior media forms, as simulation has a different semiotic system from that of orthodox narrative media.

In contrast to Aarseth (2004a) and Frasca (2003b), Myers (2003) notes that there is a conflict between simulation and play in video games. Depending on the target players, certain games provide a more authentic simulation while other games are deliberately simplified in accordance with the demands of entertainment. As I have also discussed in Section 1.2, video games are cybertexts which require *ergodic* actions (Aarseth, 1997: 1) on the part of the player to transverse the text. Therefore, video games also require the *active participation* of the player in the gameworld in addition to the “*passive*” interpretation of the (non)-scripted narrative sequences.

Video game narratives involve a fundamental shift in the narrative communication situation, as articulated by Seymour Chatman (1978). Chatman's (1978) narrative communication situation is unidirectional, as shown in Figure 7 below. Chatman's (1978) model is also interpretative rather than configurative. In Aarseth's (1997: 64) typology of cybertexts, there are four user functions. These four are textonic, configurative, explorative, and interpretative. The *textonic user function* refers to the case when textons, which refers to strings of signs existing in the game or traversal functions can be permanently added by the user (Aarseth, 1997: 64). The *configurative user function* occurs when scriptons, which refers to strings of signs presented to the user, are in part chosen or created by the user (Aarseth, 1997:

64). The *configurative user function* refers to the case when the user is allowed to configure the scriptons by rearranging textons or changing variables (Aarseth, 1997: 64). The *explorative user function* refers to the case where the user can decide which path to take (Aarseth, 1997: 64). Finally, the *interpretative user function* is present in all texts, and it refers to the hermeneutic activity which involves the user filling in gaps and empty spaces, coming to terms with indeterminacies by activating the readers' previous experience, their knowledge of the world, and their knowledge of texts and how they make meaning (Tønnessen, 2005).

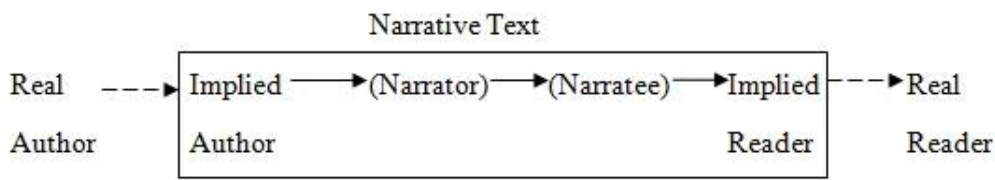


Figure 7 Chatman's (1978) narrative communication situation

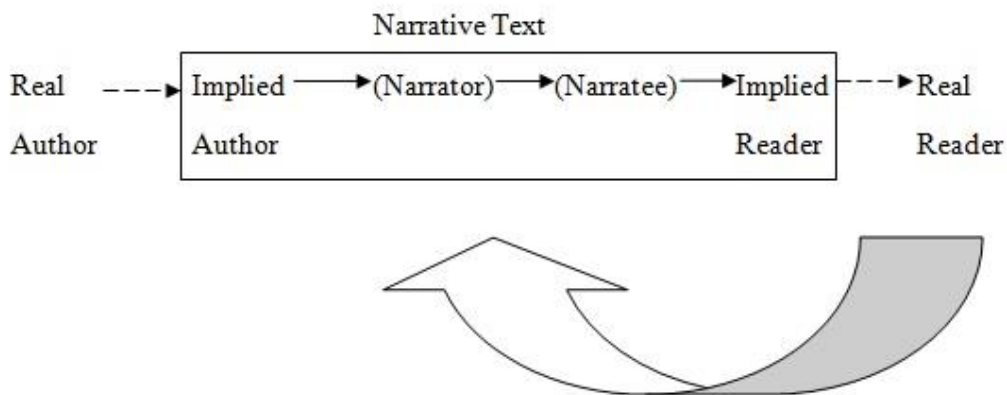


Figure 8 The Feedback Loop (my modification of Chatman (1978))

In video game narratives, there is a consistent feedback loop (Figure 8) that involves player input, which creates a new dynamic of power, and requires altered models of production and consumption, transmission and exchange (White, 2014). The personas, implied author, narrator, narratee and implied reader, in the narrative text of Chatman's (1978) model also

becomes a black box of computational operations, which are often hidden or obscured to create the puzzles and challenges that are foundational to gaming. Related prior research which includes Ben-Arie's (2009) proposal of a bi-directional communication structure for interactive storytelling systems is based on narratology theory and communication film theory. Existing narrative-communication models of conventional media including those of Seymour Chatman and Vivian Sobchack are adapted to suggest a detailed narrative-communication model for interactive storytelling systems. The proposal facilitates the formulation of a better definition of the different constituent elements of interactive storytelling communication, and the functions they fulfill.

The traditional definitions of narrative have several limitations if we apply them to explain narratives in video games. Most traditional definitions of narrative view narrative as a given or predetermined structure. In the traditional approach to narrative, the narrative text is viewed as a completed whole or finished product, and does not take into account the possibility of the reader's interaction with the text to modify its contents. Traditional definitions neglect the possible *inter(active)* role when a player carries out his/her *action(s)* to *manipulate* the (narrative) objects in the gameworld to advance the video game narrative. The player as an active *agent* who progresses the video game narrative is not taken into account in the traditional narrative definitions which focus heavily on the structural analyses of a narrative. *Agency* is an important concept for video game narrative where it is defined as "the ability to make decisions and take meaningful actions that affect the gameworld" narrative (Sylvester, 2013: 101). There are also other definitions of agency. For instance, Murray (1998) describes it as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices". Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum (2009); and Tanenbaum (2015) define it as "commitment to meaning", which is "not

about selecting between options...but is instead about expressing intent, and receiving a satisfying response to that intent”.

Video game narrative causes difficulties to Genette’s conception that a narrator must always be present in the gameworld to tell the story. One of the difficulties related to the narrator includes the notion of the PC. The player is both the character s/he plays in a video game genre such as an RPG and also exists as the person who is playing the game. In this case, it is difficult to pin down the notion of a narrator because of the multiple roles that the player embodies during the interaction with the video game narrative. If the character the player controls is a narrator, it is hard to argue that the player is also a narrator.

There are several reasons but I will list only a few. Firstly, the player may not be able to relate to the PC due to the disjunction of information possessed by the player and the PC. This disjunction in the degree of information possessed by the PC and the player may contribute to the loss of narrative immersion in the gameworld<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, the player may not interpret a narrative and see himself/herself as a narrator during the first playthrough of the video game as they are more focused on learning how the gameplay functions.

Secondly, Genette’s conception of a narrator does not exist in multiple layers of a diegesis simultaneously. However, Genette’s (1980) concept of “metalepsis” where the extradiegetic narrator or narratee intrudes into the diegetic universe or when the diegetic characters intrude into a metadiegetic universe may prove to be a counterexample. An instance of a metaleptic intrusion occurs in *The Stanley Parable* where the extradiegetic narrator intrudes into the diegetic universe by opening up new pathways and providing metacommentary about the

---

<sup>1</sup> This disjunction between the PC and player occurs in some of the games in the study such as *Beyond: Two Souls* and *Mass Effect* (Chapter Seven Section 7.3.1.1.3 Ludonarrative Dissonance – Player-(Game Designers’) Character Dissonance).



PC's actions. An alternative interpretation is that the narrator exists inside the gameworld since s/he can affect or be affected by the gameworld and s/he breaks the fourth wall by speaking to the player. In this interpretation, the intradiegetic narrator intrudes into the metaleptic universe of the player. A third interpretation is that the narrator is both intra and extradiegetic and hence can be considered as metaleptic.

Thirdly, it is hard to argue for the presence of a narrator in video game narratives when the player is the central agent who progresses the narrative. For instance, during the gameplay where the player controls the units or the PC to attack the opposition, it is not easy to pin down the narrator when there is no diegesis, but only gameplay challenges.

The traditional definitions of narrative were also conceptualised to work with a specific medium in mind, which includes literary works. Therefore, traditional narrative definitions cannot be applied to the study of video game narratives without modification. New definitions have to be developed to take into account the unique technological properties of video games, such as its *interactivity*, *multi-linearity* and *dynamicity*.

Traditional narrative definitions also cater for the analysis of stable and fixed narratives, which are found in noninteractive media. Video games are *dynamic*, and traditional definitions of narrative are unable to completely resolve the unique property of interactivity in video games. For instance, traditional cognitive narratologists such as Genette (1980), Fludernik (1996) and Herman (1999) emphasise the reader's interpretation of the text to form a mental construct, but do not take into account the ability of video games to be manipulated, configured and interacted with. The element of *choice* in video games is present where players can choose to carry out different actions in the gameworld which are allowed by the gameplay rules.

## 1.7 Adopted definition and model for video game narrative analysis

From a cognitive perspective, video game narrative can also be seen as a mental model which exists in the player's mind (Fludernik, 1996; Herman, 2002; Ryan, 1991). When the player forms a mental model of the video game narrative, a cognitive structure of the narrative is formed, and the traditional literary notion of causality is applicable when the player ties causes to effects, and converts the complexity of events to a story which makes sense. Some similarities of video game narrative to traditional narratives also include the presence of a hero, a goal and the challenge which the hero has to overcome in the scripted story of the video game.

Drawing on Ryan (2006), I define video game narrative as the cognitive interpretation of the player's ergodic interaction and/or interpretation of the gameworld that results in a mental construct. The mental construct is created from both the scripted and non-scripted sequences, which consists not only of the narrative told through the scripted narrative sequences such as the cutscenes, but also the narrative revealed via the semiotic resources, i.e. the linguistic and visual signs. The semiotic resources represent the player's (character) interactions in the gameworld. I propose that the narrative exists on a continuum depending on different players' experience. For instance, players who focus more on gameplay will have less narrative interpretation compared to players who focus more on narrative.

The cognitive approach derives its framework from Ryan's (2003) discussion of *cognitive maps*, which enable the analyst to understand how the player construct the narrative space of the gameworld. Ryan's (2003) concept of cognitive maps and how I will incorporate it into the analysis of the player's interaction with the video game narrative will be discussed in Chapter Five Section 5.1. Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps will be complemented with Fludernik's

(1996) natural narratology and cognitive parameters, which provide not only the low-level analysis, but also higher-level analyses, such as the mediating factors of cognitive frames and the generic frames which originate from the cultural context.

### **1.8 Definitions and distinction between game and play**

This section reviews some definitions of game and play. The purpose of reviewing the definitions is to find the common element in definitions of game and play. The common element is then utilised in Chapters Five, Six and Seven to formulate the framework for video game analysis. This section starts with Walther's (2003) definitions, followed by Salen and Zimmerman (2003). It then outlines the definitions proposed by McGonigal (2011), and Suits (1978).

Walther (2003) argues that the discussion of the division between play and game is important for the concept of gameplay. Walther (2003) defines play as an open-ended territory where imagination and world creation are important factors. Games are restricted areas that oppose the interpretation and optimising of rules and tactics, time and space (Walther, 2003). Walther (2003) argues that there are interdependent boundaries and constraints between game and play. Gaming occurs at a higher level, structurally as well as temporally. This is depicted in Figure 9 below.

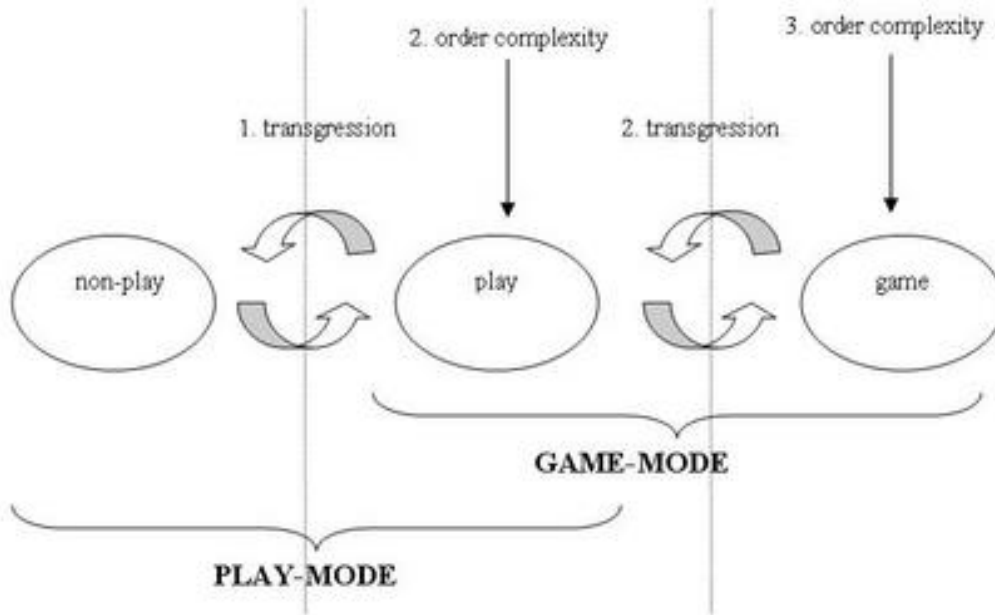


Figure 9 Walther's (2003) distinction between game and play

In the area of play and games, the importance lies in the possibility of highlighting the difference between the *existence* of play and games, and that one can *observe* that one is playing or gaming (Walther, 2003). In the beginning, one makes a distinction to play. Information is attained by drawing a new distinction and a playing world is established. Its basic characteristic is that it is not the world itself and it has separate laws but it inhabits this very world. The distinction is between system and environment, which can be repeated endlessly by system differentiation where the whole system uses itself to form its own subsystems. The initial stroke of distinction is termed as the first transgression of play (Walther, 2003). Play involves a second-order complexity.

Walther (2003) also distinguishes between game and play according to space-time settings. Walther's (2003) space-time matrix is shown in Table 1:

	<b>PLAY</b>	<b>GAME</b>
<b>SPACE</b>	Geometrically based measurements	Topologically based (discrete) state sequences
	Presence (prolonging of presence)	Progression (tactics)
<b>TIME</b>	Durability	Transition
	Search for semantics	Search for structure

Table 1 Space-time matrix (Walther, 2003)

Walther (2003) asserts that “play is centred in a discovery of open spaces that invite observation through the duration of temporality”. A digital game is on the other hand a discrete state machine. Play focuses on the investigation of semantics and it does not only measure its space, but also elaborate upon its modes of interpretation and means for re-interpretation. Play involves the exploration of a world. One first gets immersed in the playing-mood to get into the game, holds on to the first distinction, and constantly accepts the organisation, the rule pattern, of the game. Walther (2003) also mentions that “another feature that distinguishes playing from gaming is the notion of presence”. One has to keep on playing to prolong the sensation of presence, then will come the elucidation of the game’s structure.

Salen and Zimmerman (2003) discuss the relationship between play and game. They suggest that two types of relationship can exist depending on the way play and game are framed. The first sense is that games are framed as a subset of play (Figure 10). Games are differentiated from play in terms of having a formalised set of rules and the competition to win. Most forms of play are looser and less organised than games, but those forms of play which are formalised are considered games. This form of framing game and play is a more typological approach, which defines the relationship between play and game according to the forms they take in the world.



Figure 10 Typological approach of framing game and play (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003)



Figure 11 Conceptual approach of framing game and play (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003)

The second sense is that games can be thought as containing play. Play is but one of the many ways of looking at and understanding games. Play represents one aspect of games and is a subset of games (Figure 11). This approach of framing game and play is a more conceptual approach that situates game and play within the field of game design. Salen and Zimmerman (2003) combine the essential elements of previous definitions of games to come up with their definition. They define a game as “a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome” (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003: 80). In contrast, they define play as “free movement within a more rigid structure” (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003: 304). Play is opposite of rules, it is improvisational and uncertain (Zimmerman, 2009: 26).

McGonigal (2011) defines games according to **four defining traits**. These traits are: a *goal*, *rules*, a *feedback system*, and *voluntary participation*. She defines the **goal** as “the specific outcome that players will strive to achieve. It focuses their attention and continually guides their participation throughout the game. The goal provides *a sense of purpose* (McGonigal, 2011). The **rules** restrict how players can achieve the goal. The **feedback system** informs players how close they are to reaching the goal. It provides *motivation* to keep playing (McGonigal, 2011). “**Voluntary participation** ensures that everyone who is playing the game willingly accepts the goal, the rules, and the feedback (McGonigal, 2011).

Suits (1978: 41) defines playing a game as the “attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory **goal**], using only **means** permitted by **rules** [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of the more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory **attitude**]”. The lusory attitude is the psychological attitude required of a player entering into the play of a game. To adopt a lusory attitude is to accept the arbitrary rules of a game to facilitate the resulting experience of play. Prelusory refers to the player’s attitude prior to entering the play of a game. Suits (1978: 41) also offers a simpler definition of games which is “playing a game is the **voluntary attempt** to overcome unnecessary **obstacles**”.

As seen from the definitions of “game” and “play” in this section, the only nearly universal inclusion in contemporary definitions of “game”, and to a lesser extent, “play”, is its rule-based nature (Wolf, 2012: 222). Searle’s (1975) classification of rules differentiates between constitutive and regulative rules. Constitutive rules are those rules that enable actions, and they are negotiated, based on agreement, and overt in form (Wolf, 2012). Constitutive rules include cheat codes, walkthroughs (Chapter 7 Section 7.3.4) and gameplay mechanics (Chapter 6 Section

6.5) which influence the players' game experience. Players utilise them to subvert and negotiate the rules of a video game. Rules will be discussed specifically as gameplay mechanics in Chapter Six Section 6.5, in relation to the types of player's actions in Section 6.4.

With the discussion of how game and play are defined by various researchers, and their relationships, now I move on to discuss the definitions of gameplay.

### **1.9 Definitions of gameplay and adopted definition**

There is no universally accepted definition of gameplay. Salen and Zimmerman (2003) define gameplay as “the formalised, focused interaction that occurs when players follow the rules of a game in order to play it” (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003: 311). Fabricatore (2007) adopts a player-centred approach and defines gameplay as “the set of activities that can be performed by the player during the ludic experience, and by other entities belonging to the virtual world, as a response to player's actions and/or as autonomous courses of action that contribute to the liveliness of the virtual world” (Fabricatore, 2007). Hence, “interactivity” and “activity” are two concepts essential to Fabricatore's (2007) definition of gameplay. Sid Meier defines gameplay as “a series of interesting choices” (Rollings & Morris, 1999:38).

Rollings and Adams (2003) suggest that gameplay is the core of the game. But the concept of gameplay is extremely hard to define. They mention that the difficulty in defining gameplay arises from the fact that it cannot be defined solely by using a single entity. Gameplay is a result of a large number of contributing elements. They define gameplay loosely as “one or more casually linked series of challenges in a simulated environment” (Rollings & Adams, 2003: 201). In relation to the difficulty in defining the concept of gameplay, I narrow down the number of elements that constitute gameplay in my definition below in terms of *actions*, *strategies*, and



*motives*. Adams (2010: 11) defines gameplay as “the *challenges* that a player has to face to arrive at the object of the game and the *actions* that the player is permitted to take to address those challenges”. Björk and Holopainen (2005) define gameplay as “the structures of player interaction with the game system and with other players in the game”. Rollings and Dave (1999) define “a good game as one that you can win by doing the unexpected and making it work.”

Lindley, Nacke and Sennersten (2008) define the experience of gameplay as “one of interacting with a game design in the performance of cognitive tasks, with a variety of emotions arising from or associated with different elements of motivation, task performance and completion”. Nacke et al. (2009) define gameplay as “the interactive gaming process of the player with the game”. Lindley (2003) “proposed an informally defined notion of the gameplay gestalt as a pattern of perceptual, cognitive, and motor activity involved in gameplay and at the heart of the dominant gameplay experiences supported by contemporary video games”. He also suggests that “the gameplay gestalt is a learned pattern, but it is an operational pattern rather than a mechanism for learning declarative facts”.

Having discussed some definitions of gameplay, the definition of gameplay that I will adopt in this study will be a player-centered one. For the purposes of my analysis, I define gameplay as the player’s action initiation of the gameplay and narrative events, which contributes to the system’s response/feedback to the player’s action initiation. Following Aarseth (2004b), I define gameplay as “the player’s [ergodic] *actions*, *strategies*, and *motives*” to *manipulate* the constituents of the gameworld during their interaction with the *video game* to overcome the *gameplay challenges* which are restricted by *rules*. Player’s *instrumental actions* are more instinctive and *strategic actions* require more thinking. “Manipulation” refers to the player’s ability to modify “complex systems [in the gameworld] within continuous loops of

intervention, observation, and response...that develop in unpredictable and emergent ways” (Moulthrop, 2004). “Manipulation” follows Eskelinen’s (2001) and Aarseth’s (1997) central focus on the dominant function of games as the *configurative* function (Sections 1.6). The concept of gameplay as *configurative practice* is central to the gameplay analysis. The following sections highlight the research aims and reiterate the research questions for the thesis.

### **1.10 Research Aims (Main Objectives)**

- i. To formulate a multimodal discourse analysis framework in Chapter Five for the analysis of the players’ cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative.
- ii. To formulate a multimodal discourse analysis framework in Chapter Six for the micro and macro analysis of the players’ interaction with the gameplay.
- iii. To formulate a ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven, assisted by research aims (i) and (ii) for the proposal of the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games.

### **1.11 Research Questions**

- i. What is the players’ cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative? This interpretation will be analysed using the proposed multimodal discourse analysis framework, and will be discussed in Chapter Five.
- ii. What specific players’ instrumental and strategic actions are involved during the players’ interaction with the video game and how do these actions build up to form the gameplay? This research question is discussed in Chapter Six.

- iii. What are the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games? This research question is discussed in Chapter Seven.

### **1.12 Brief overview of the ludonarrative model**

Ludonarrative refers to an imagined “whole”, of which every video game is comprised. This thesis focuses on the proposal of a ludonarrative model which highlights the relationships between gameplay and narrative based on the players’ experience. The rationale for the study of the relationship between gameplay and narrative is that there is a research gap which integrates multimodal discourse analysis approaches with the game studies approach for the analysis of the relationships between gameplay and narrative in video games. Studies on ludonarrative have also not taken into account different players’ experience but are hypothetical theoretical constructs (See for instance Eskelinen’s (2012) “Cybertext Poetics”).

Chapter Seven Section 7.1 elaborates on the ludonarrative model for video game analysis, as shown in Figure 12 below. The three main categories are “ludonarrative dissonance”, “ludonarrative resonance” and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance”. “Ludonarrative dissonance” refers to the disjunction between the narrative and gameplay and is drawn from Hocking (2007). “Ludonarrative resonance” refers to the congruence between the narrative and gameplay (Watssman, 2012) and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” refers to the narrative and gameplay modes being more or less (in)appropriate for each other. Chapter Five discusses the narrative side of the ludonarrative model. Chapter Six discusses the gameplay side of the model and Chapter Seven discusses the various ludonarrative subcategories.

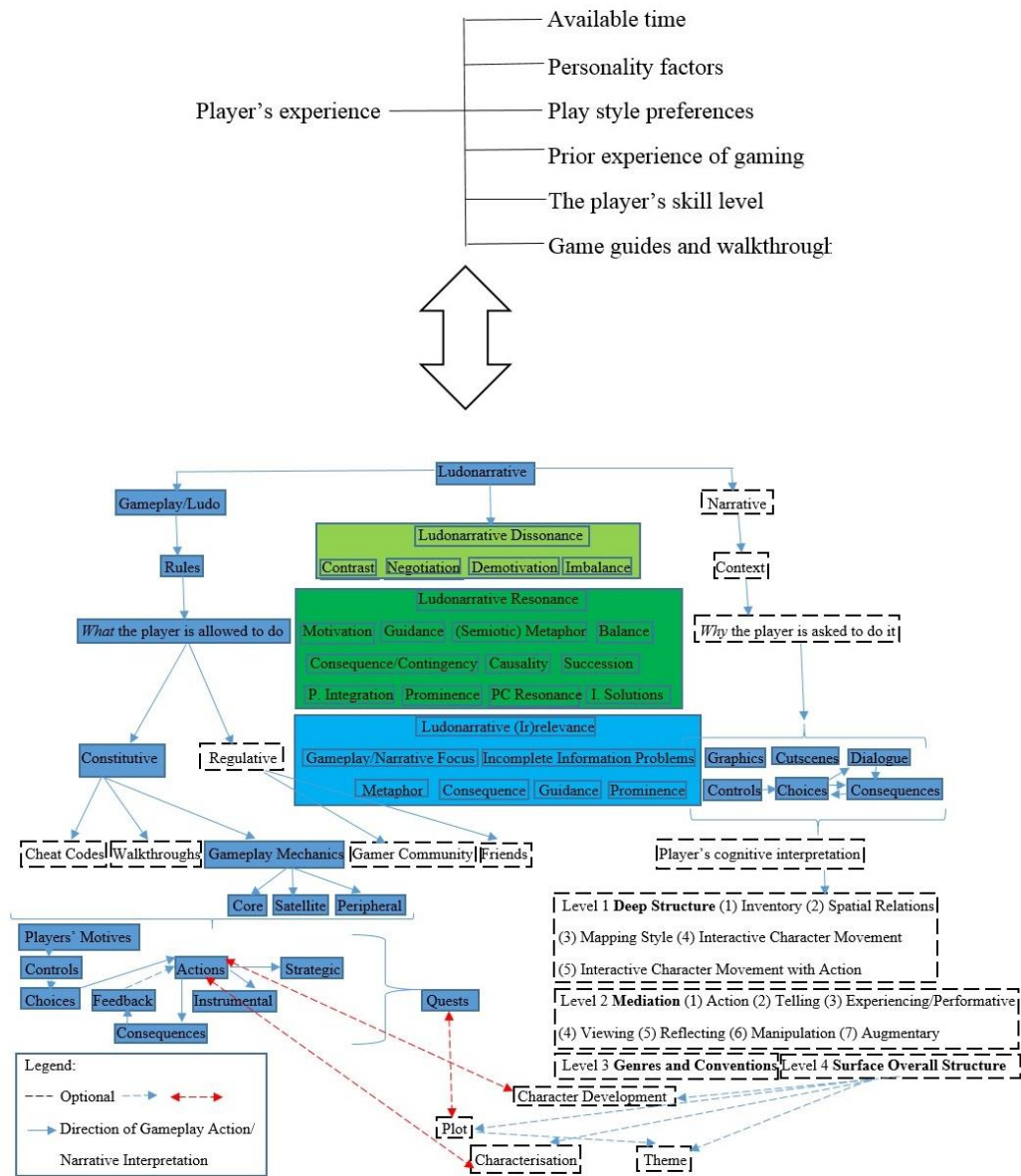


Figure 12 The Ludonarrative Model

### 1.13 Structure of Thesis

Chapter One sets out the foundation of the thesis by providing definitions of core basic terms, and outlining the objectives and research questions. This is followed by Chapter Two, in which the literature review is conducted to highlight the contribution that this thesis makes. In

Chapter Three, the related work discussed in Chapter Two is analysed and the rationale for the thesis is explained. Chapter Four discusses the method by explaining how the empirical study is performed and provides the rationale for the method. Chapter Four also discusses the data, provides an overview of the narrative and gameplay of selected games, and the rationale for the choice of video games. In Chapter Five, the cognitive narratological framework is proposed to understand how the players interpret the video game narrative. In Chapter Six, the gameplay model is proposed to understand the players' ergodic interaction with the video game. In Chapter Seven, the complete ludonarrative model is proposed for video game analysis. This model is refined using the empirical data from the game study. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis in which the research questions in Chapter One are discussed, and the limitations, implications, and future work are sketched out.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I provide a review of studies that focus on the study of ludonarrative relationships in video games, in order to situate the present study within the broader research literature. I will explore the existing literature that investigates how gameplay and narrative – interact and combine in a video game. Section 2.2 discusses the ludology versus narratology debate which serves as the foundation for the study of ludonarrative relationships in video games. Section 2.3 discusses Eskelinen’s (2001) model of the gaming situation which highlights his early position that narratology is incompatible with ludology. Section 2.4 discusses studies on ludonarrative relationships in video games. The literature review helps in the study in two ways. Firstly, it helps to locate a gap that this study is intended to fill. Secondly, it helps to provide methods of analysis which I can adapt for my study.

#### **2.2 The Ludology versus Narratology Debate**

There are three main perspectives that scholars hold in relation to the notion of narrative presence in video games. These three perspectives include the anti-narrative perspective, the pro-narrative perspective and the problematic ludonarrative perspective. Academics who support the anti-narrative perspective argue that narrative should not be present at all in video games, or at least there is no reason at all to study video game narrative. They argue that video games are made to be played and not to tell stories. The most extreme anti-narrative position is held by Eskelinen (2001) who states that:

Outside academic theory people are usually excellent at making distinctions between narrative, drama, and games. If I throw a ball at you, I don't expect you to drop it and wait until it starts to tell stories. On the other hand, if and when games and especially video games are studied and theorised they are almost without exception colonised from the fields of literary, theatre, drama and film studies.

From the quote above, the most important point which is highlighted is that there is an inherent risk that the narrative of video games might become too emphasised in the study of video games, with the gameplay being given too little focus or being ignored outright. Eskelinen (2001) also argues that stories are just “uninteresting ornaments or gift-wrappings to games” and stories in games thus function purely as a marketing tool, and it is a waste of time to study them. He dismissed the value of narrative in video games and argues that we should focus on the study of the gameplay. He supports his argument by criticising Janet Murray's narrative-oriented analysis of the game, *Tetris* and applied his own criteria to examine the game. His argument works only for certain categories of games such as non-narrative games which include *Tetris* and *Spacewar!* as it is not necessary to analyse the minimal presence of narrative in these games. But for video games with lengthier linear and multi-linear narratives, it is necessary to take into account the presence of their narratives.

Academics who support the pro-narrative perspective include Murray (1998). She argues that the potential for future development and improvements of games lies primarily in their narrative aspects. Her stance is that narrative games are being presented as the best possible future for the medium. She suggests that the computer is “first and foremost a representational medium, a means for modelling the world”, and “we should hasten to place this new compositional tool as firmly as possible in the hands of the story-tellers” (Murray, 1998: 284).

For games to mature, she argues that a cyberbard, who is the digital age's equivalent of Shakespeare, is needed. Pro-narrativists desire game narratives that provide more dramatic resonance and human import within them. They also desire increased narrative interactivity and control by the player in the specific sense that the player does not simply control the narrative trajectory of the game, but actually becomes a character who is intellectually and emotionally involved at every stage of the story. This idealistic vision is embodied within the *Holodeck* from the *Star Trek* franchise.

However some scholars, such as Poole (2000) believe that there is a tension between the strong, emotional narrative and interactivity. He argues that if the interactivity of the game was implemented in such a way that a player can truly influence the narrative at any point, such interactivity, if implemented would weaken the designer's impact on the player's story (Chapter One Section 1.5.4.4). In relation to the designer's story, dramatic events need to be irreversible to have emotional resonance (Poole, 2000: 96-100). Because of the interactive nature of video games, the player can usually reload a previously saved game when his/her character dies or when s/he experiences failure in the game. Granic et al. (2013) argues that the player's "experiences of failure do not necessarily lead to [negative basic primal emotions such as] anger, frustration, or sadness, although players often do feel these negative emotions intermittently". Instead, players can also simultaneously respond to [the character's death(s) or] failures in games with [positive basic primal emotions] such as excitement, interest, and joy" (Salminen & Ravaja, 2008).

However, the more complex and deeper emotions, such as the empathetic connection with the character, might not be experienced by the player since the character's death is not permanent. Examples of permanent deaths in video games include Aerith's death in *Final*



*Fantasy 7* (Square Product Development Division 1, 1997) and the hardcore mode in *Diablo III* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2012). Because the characters' deaths are permanent, the players will take special care of their characters since the characters have only one life and as a result of this character feature, players will form a closer empathetic bond with their characters by carefully selecting or observing the choices made during the narrative or gameplay. Permanent deaths are also regarded by many players as a more realistic playing experience. The reason is that the players will have to start all over again at the game's beginning as upon the character's death, the player loses all the progression that s/he has achieved so far in the game for the character. Keogh (2013) also argues that the fear of permanent death in *Minecraft* (Mojang, 2011) imbued the performance of playing it with a narrative weight.

Juul also believes that the power of traditional stories lies in their fixed nature, where things must happen the way they do (Parker, 2009). The fixed nature of traditional stories to Juul is at obvious odds with the interactive nature of video games (Parker, 2009). An article written by Robertson (2013) also argues that "a good writer is a better storyteller than at least 99% of video game players" and "in all but the rarest examples, the characters, stories and narrative events that [the player] remember[s] from video games have occurred in linear, authored stories". Robertson argues that the game story writers are the experts, and s/he possesses the knowledge to craft the most emotional engaging stories for the player who does not have the ability to craft an emotional story due to his/her lack of knowledge. Robertson (2013) and Smith (2015) argue against open-world game narratives by asserting that "their narrative impact is limited and therefore, their potential emotional impact is greatly weakened". Additionally, because of the presence of gameplay in video games, the player's desire for the deeper and more complex emotions, such as the feeling of empathy with the characters in an emotionally-powerful

narrative experience will need to be counterbalanced with the primal emotions, such as competition, anger, frustration, and excitement that the player experiences in the desire to overcome the challenges of the gameplay to win the game.

Alternatively, in empathy games such as *That Dragon, Cancer* (Numinous Games, 2016), the gameplay may be reduced to point and click actions to facilitate narrative interpretation and to encourage players' narrative to develop. Empathy may also be facilitated by using the gameplay mechanics to form bonds with the NPC instead of being engaged in violent shooting gameplay actions in *TLOU: Left Behind* (Naughty Dog, 2014). The gameplay-outcome relationship of "success resulting in a feeling of failure" (Chew, 2013) is present in *Shadow of the Colossus* (Team Ico, 2005 & 2011) and *The Path* (Tale of Tales, 2009) which may cause the player to reflect on his gameplay actions. "Success is difficult or impossible" (Chew, 2013) occurs in the indie game, *Passage* (Rohrer, 2007) where the PC eventually dies. By playing the game, the player reflects on life's inevitable journey towards death. Mitchell (2014) explores the way in which the game mechanics and interaction can be defamiliarised in *Kentucky Route Zero* (Cardboard Computer, 2013) to encourage reflection on the nature of games and interaction.

An article written by Lee (2012) challenges the perspective held by Poole (2000), Juul and Robertson (2013) that only the designer's fixed story can have a dramatic emotional impact on the players. In sandbox games such as *Minecraft*, and open world games such as Rockstar's *Grand Theft Auto V*, and *Skyrim* (Bethesda), the players are given full autonomy to do whatever they want and go wherever they like within the rules and the constraints of the gameworld. In these games, emergent gameplay and emergent narrative are dominant. It is the player's story (Chapter One Section 1.5.4.4) that enables the player to form an emotional connection to the gameworld. The interactivity of these games enables the players to interact with the game rules

to act out their own personalised narratives without even touching the game's authored, quest-based storyline.

These games rarely pressure the player into adopting a particular approach or playstyle (Lee, 2012). Instead, the player is given interactive choices in a free form environment and is able to do anything s/he likes within the constraints set by the gameplay rules of these gameworlds. The designer's story takes a back seat to the player's story, and it is the players' choice of actions and their impact on the game environment that creates the deepest emotional impact in the players' memory. Players become emotionally invested in these games not because of what the game developers' linear story tell them, but their own control and personal investment in the creation of their players' stories. Lee (2012) argues that video games are interactive, and this feature is their most profound advantage they have over every other form of media. In open-ended freeform games, it is the players' ability to tell his/her own stories, and have their own adventures that define their own characters according to their own [emotional] desires (Lee, 2012).

Offering a more balanced approach, Butler (2013b) argues that it is important for interactive storytelling to both limit and expand the possibilities of a player. He cites the example of open world games with an embedded plot which are simultaneously story-telling engines (cutscenes) and narrative networks (simulated story space) which provide players choice to switch between the two interaction paradigms. It can thus be seen that it might not be advisable to restrict the video game narrative to either that of a scripted linear designer's story or the player's story based on their interactive actions in an open-ended gameworld. The emotional appeal and engagement of games might be enhanced by the careful balancing of the designer's scripted linear narrative with the player's own creation of his/her narrative in the gameworld.

Juul (2001) is an academic who argues that the ludonarrative combination in video games is problematic. Similar to the argument made by Poole (2000), and Robertson (2013), Juul (2001) argues that the presence of interactivity in video games causes issues with the narrative in games. Juul's argument is that a continuously interactive story cannot exist. Specifically, he argues that interactivity and narration cannot exist simultaneously, due to the fact that gameplay is almost always chronological but many narratives are non-chronological because time can be manipulated to create analepsis and prolepsis<sup>2</sup>. Additionally, the player cannot influence something that has already happened. "There is an inherent conflict between the now of the interaction and the past or 'prior' of the narrative" (Juul, 2001). The relationship between the player and the game is also different from that of the relationship between the reader and the non-interactive story. In a video game, the player is at the same time an empirical subject outside the game and performs a role inside the game. But for a non-interactive story, the reader simply occupies a position outside of the story.

However, the problem with Juul's argument is that his definition of narrative is literature specific, rather than trans-medial (Patrickson, 2009). He sees narrative as a linear concept, whereas fiction is more spatial, created via graphics, sounds and text. The value of Juul's argument is his determination to challenge the role of plot in gameplay (Patrickson, 2009). Even though narrative elements are present in games, they are rarely dynamic, or truly interactive. The narrative in the gameplay generally serves as backdrop to support, rather than engage or interfere with the gameplay. In the gameplay of online games, users are free to explore at their own pace, and control their own point of view. Direct authorial manipulation of the action is impossible.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Braid* is a counterexample – time manipulation is a gameplay mechanic.

The gameplay environment may evoke stories, but on its own, it is not the full narrative (Patrickson, 2009).

Juul (2001) also argues that the more a game develops its narrative complexity, the less game-like it is going to be. This argument is important as it highlights the fact that in video games, the increasing strength of the narrative will decrease the player's ability to influence the gameplay outcome or the interactivity of the gameplay will be reduced. This is the reason why some video games include narrative separately outside of the gameplay in the cutscenes or cinematics. Another difference which Juul (2001) mentions is that narrative is written or narrated in the past tense but in video games, the player's influence of present events defines the video game. There is a difficulty in perceiving any temporal distance between story time, narrative time, and reading time. In narrative media, temporal devices such as ellipsis, pauses, acceleration and deceleration can be present but in video games, such devices are seldom seen in the gameplay as the game time takes place entirely in real-time. However, this argument does not always hold because some temporal devices can be present in the gameplay of some games. In *Mass Effect*, the player is able to pause the game when selecting weapons and powers during combat. In *Beyond: Two Souls* the game speed slows down when the player is about to perform (scripted quick-time) actions. Time manipulation is a core game mechanic in *Braid* which not only grants the player the opportunity to reverse failed actions, but its purpose can change within each world to promote variable narrative interpretations.

From the discussion in this section, the academics from the anti-narrative camp argue for the focus on the study of the gameplay while academics from the pro-narrative camp argue for the focus on the study of video game narrative. Finally there are also academics who argue that

where narrative and gameplay co-exist in a video game, there will be problems which arise due to the differences between these two concepts.

Having discussed the ludology versus narratology debate, the next section discusses Eskelinen’s (2001) position on the incompatibility between narrative and gameplay and Bunting’s (2013) counter-argument that narrative and gameplay can be integrated.

### 2.3 Video Gameplay - the gaming situation

According to Eskelinen’s (2001) model of the gaming situation, gameplay consists of the player’s actions and gameplay events as opposed to story and discourse in narrative. Eskelinen (2001) utilises the type of activities involved to distinguish between narrative and gameplay. His differentiation between the four major modes, narrative, dramatic, performative and gameplay is reproduced in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, for a story to become a narrative situation, there is a need for the presence of narrators who recount the story to narratees. Stories are made up of events and existents. It is possible that events and existents do not always combine to form stories. An example of this can be found in abstract games like *Tetris* where there are settings, objects and events, but no characters. There can also occur events in games that change the situation but do not convey or carry or communicate stories. The main point is that any element can be turned into a game element. If only one element allows manipulation, it is enough to constitute a game. This feature enables combinations not witnessed in narratives or drama.

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Situation/frame</b>
Story (events and existents)	Recounted	narrative
Story (events and existents)	Enacted	dramatic (matrixed)

Events and existents	Taking place	performative (non-matrixed)
Equipment	Manipulated	Gaming (with rules and goals)

Table 2 Eskelinen's (2001) distinction between the four major modes

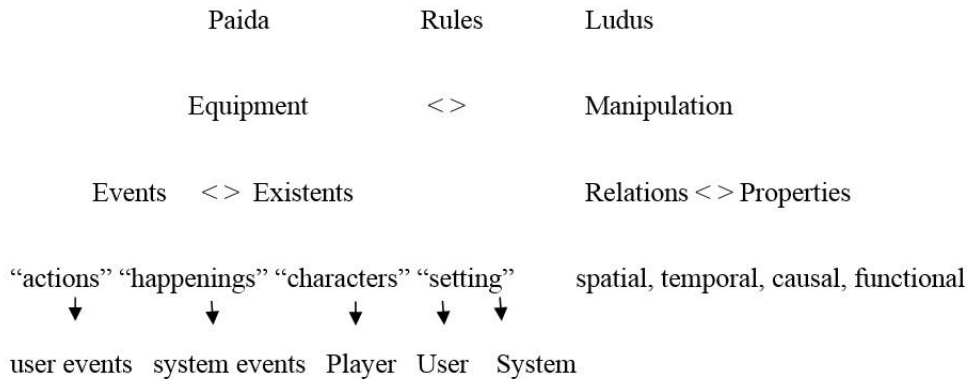
Aarseth's typology of cybertexts (Aarseth, 1997: 62-65) shows that the dominant user function in literature, theatre and film is interpretative, but in games, it is the configurative one which is dominant. Eskelinen (2001) argues that "in literature, theatre and film everything matters or is conventionally supposed to matter equally". The recipient of the literary, theatrical and filmic work has to see or read all of the work in order to interpret it. In contrast, in video games, the player does not have to encounter every possible combinatory event and existent the game contains. The reason being that different events and existents differ in their ergodic importance. Some actions and reactions in relation to certain events will bring the player quicker to a solution or help the player reach the winning situation faster or more effectively than others. Gaming is seen as a configurative practice. Through the specification of the levels of articulation in games, Eskelinen (2001) highlights some of the differences between games and narrative. For instance, in multiplayer games, the player's position constantly affects each other in the articulation level of "player to player". Such an arrangement, though not impossible to execute in narrative fiction, would be very unusual. Eskelinen's (2001) configurative elements in the gaming situation is reproduced in Figure 13 below:

Articulation: player to player - player to game - game to world

Beginning

Means (Rules)

End (Goal)



Material levels: one (traditional games) - two (video games) - three (hybrid games)

Figure 13 The gaming situation as a combination of configurative elements (Eskelinen, 2001)

The configurative elements in a gaming situation consist of a combination of ends, means, rules, equipment, and manipulative action (Eskelinen, 2001). The ends refer to the goal(s) of the game, of which the ultimate goal is to win the game through the player accomplishing the gameplay objectives. Goals and sub-goals could also be divided into spatial, temporal, causal and functional ones. Some of these relations can be manipulated but others are not. Spatial goals involve the task of transversing the game space. Temporal goals involve completing something in time. Temporal relations can be further subdivided into the aspects of order, frequency (repetition), duration, speed, and simultaneity (Eskelinen & Tronstad, 2003: 210). The player can also choose “to change the order of certain events, or make them repeat themselves more or less often, prolong or shorten their duration, or make them appear simultaneously” (Eskelinen & Tronstad, 2003: 210). Causal goals involve plotting out an enemy. Finally, functional goals



involve gaining more power and wealth in the gameworld. Means refer to the agreed set of equipment used in the game, and consists of specific procedural rules that explains how to manipulate the equipment to achieve the player's goal(s) of winning in the gameplay. As seen in Figure 13 above, equipment consists of gameplay events and existents. "Events, existents, and the relations between them can [also] be described at least in spatial, temporal, causal, and functional terms" (Eskelinen, 2004: 38). In narratology, events are in turn made up of "actions" and "happenings" based on their agency, and into kernels and satellites based on their relative importance (Chatman, 1978).

In gameplay, "actions" become user events and "happenings" become system events. In Eskelinen's (2001; 2004: 39) model, the player's "actions" refer to the user time and the "happenings" of the game refer to event time. These events are either independent or dependent on the player. In narrative, existents refer to the "characters" and "settings". In gameplay, when the player is immersed in playing, "characters" become the "PC" which comprises the person who controls the main character in the gameplay as well as the avatar in which s/he controls. "Settings" refer to narrative settings in the narrative and in the gameplay, "settings" become "user settings" in which these are interactive and "system settings" which are non-interactive. Rules refer to the gameplay mechanics which controls the manner in which the player interacts with the gameworld. Manipulation refers to the ways, e.g. player's actions in which the player is allowed to use to interact with the gameworld. Manipulation involves changing the relations (spatial, temporal, causal and functional) between the events and existents of the gameworld through the gameplay. Eskelinen's (2001) notion of *manipulation* will be incorporated into level two (mediation) of Fludernik's (1996) model of cognitive parameters to account for the player's schemata of the narrative during their interaction with the gameplay (Chapter Five Section 5.3

and Table 7). According to Eskelinen (2001), the equipment (the “what” of gaming) and manipulation (the “how”) process in the gameplay resemble the story and discourse of narratology.

Eskelinen rejects the connection between game and story. By using the popular puzzle game *Tetris* as an example of a game that does *not* tell a story, Eskelinen (2004: 39) argues that “in games, the dominant temporal relation is the one between user time (player’s actions) and event time (happenings) and not the narrative one between story time and discourse time”. His model illustrates that “there are series and sequences of events that do not become or form stories” (Eskelinen, 2004: 37). Eskelinen (2001) shows the incompatibility between game and story based on the temporal relationships that give rise to each. In Eskelinen’s (2004: 39) model, stories are built from the relationship between story time, which he describes as “the time of the events told” and discourse time, which is “the time of the telling”. Games, in contrast, are made up of the relationship between “user time (the actions of the player) and event time (the happenings of the game)” (Eskelinen, 2004: 39).

However, Bunting (2013: 60) suggests that by adjusting Eskelinen’s (2001) model slightly, it could also suggest the opposite: a potential functional synthesis of game and story. Bunting (2013: 60) suggests that one could “view the actions of the player in playing a game as a ‘telling’ of sorts, merging user time and discourse time”. “The time of events told” could also actually be “the happenings of a game” within the gameworld. “By merging the supposedly contradictory halves of Eskelinen’s model, one can arrive at a theoretical situation that suggests that story can occur in games as they take place within the gameworld” (Bunting, 2013: 60). By enabling player agency and making the player an integral part of the storytelling process, while

avoiding passive exposition methods like cutscenes, Bunting (2013: 60) argues that games can tell stories.

Contrasting with Bunting's (2013) proposal of a potential functional synthesis of game and story, in video gameplay, there exists a difference between strings of signs as they exist in the game (textonic game elements) and strings of signs as they are presented to the player (scriptonic game elements). Eskelinen (2001) argues that gameplay events should be described in three interplaying registers. In addition to textonic events, there are two kinds of scriptonic events: prefabricated and completed. Prefabricated events are events presented to the player and completed events are the combination of prefabricated events and the player's actions. This taxonomy of gameplay events is shown in Figure 14 below.

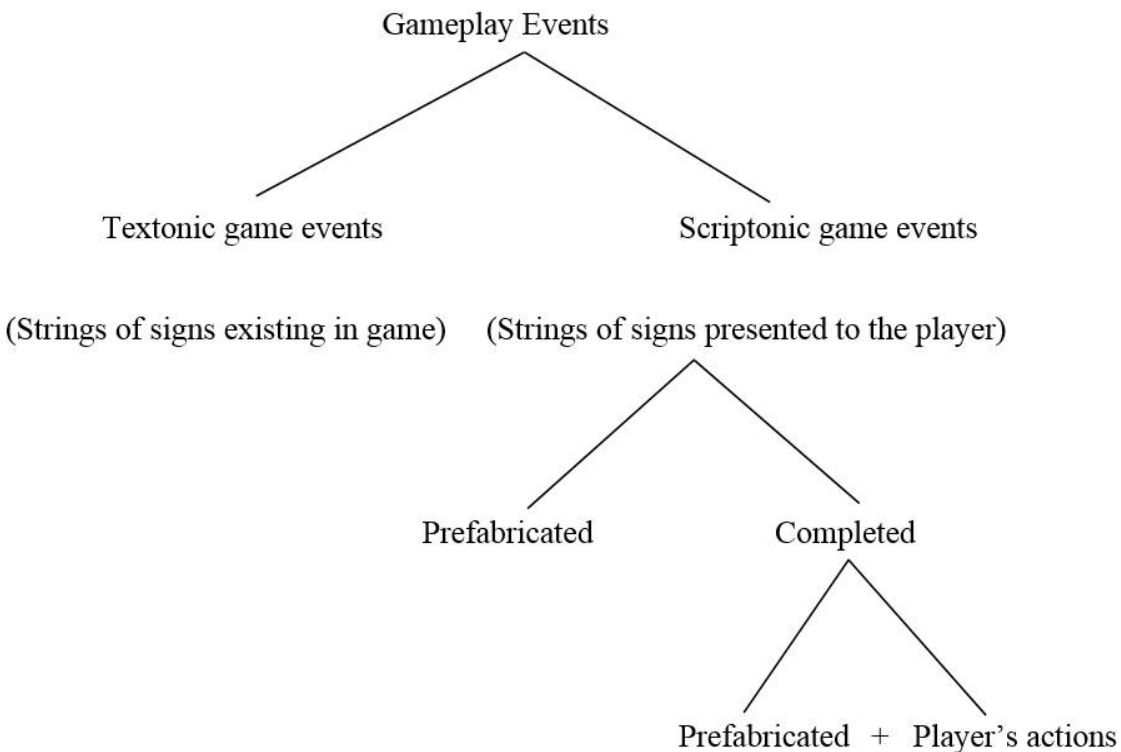


Figure 14 A taxonomy of gameplay events (Eskelinen, 2001)

These configurative elements are hence considered to be more central to the player as the player has to manipulate or configure these events and existents to progress the game. The implication of Aarseth's (1997: 62-65) observation that the dominant user function in video games is configurative has bearings on the method which will be used for the analysis of gameplay in this study. In Chapter Six, I propose a model which consists of the player's instrumental actions (Section 6.4.1), strategic actions (Section 6.4.2), and motives (Chapter 6 Section 6.3) to analyse the player's interaction with the gameplay. The ludonarrative model takes the stance that gameplay is dominant in video games and narrative is only present when it is elicited in the players. Having discussed Eskelinen's (2001) model, the following section discusses studies done on the combination of video game narrative and gameplay.

## **2.4 Studies on the Combination of Video Game Narrative and Gameplay**

Murray (1998) argues that the computer has the four properties of procedural, participatory, encyclopedic, and spatial. She defines interactivity as the combination of the procedural and the participatory properties which enable the pleasure of agency. Her main argument is that the computer medium expands the possibilities of expression available for storytelling. Her linkage between interactivity and storytelling is seen to be a unified whole. She argues that games can be conceptualised and evaluated with the help of narratological tools and models as games are merely another way to tell a story.

Montfort and Bogost (2009) have used a comparative analysis of *Adventure* for PDP-10 and *Adventure* for Atari 2600 to show how different combinations of platform, code, form and interface work together to affect the design, interaction and narrative structures of digital artifacts. Koenitz et al. (2013a) propose a unified theory for interactive digital narrative which builds on

Montfort and Bogost's (2009) levels and narrative methods, as well as procedural source models. Their evolving framework describes IDN as comprised of *system* which refers to the digital artefact, *process* in which the user interacts with the system and the system's reactions, and *product* which refers to a particular instantiated narrative. The concept of the *protostory* is proposed which views the concrete content of an IDN system as a space of potential narratives. The potential narratives are in turn defined by settings, environment definitions/assets, characters, and Narrative design. Character-based emerging narrative (Aylett, 1999) is integrated into the framework.

During the height of the narratology versus ludology debate in game studies (Aarseth, 2001; Eskelinen, 2001; Jenkins, 2004; Juul, 1999; 2001) in 2003, Frasca (2003a) identified "narrativist" as a third position between literature-derived narratology and rule-focused ludology. His narrativist approach is described as being focused on creating digital-native narratives where interactivity is the core property and is not an addition to long established literature based narrative structures. Frasca (2003b) distinguishes between video games as simulation and traditional media as being based on representations. He argues that simulations are different from narratives as they are not just made of fixed sequence of events, but they also incorporate behavioural rules based on the manipulations carried out. An important feature of simulations is that it is not binary (manipulation versus narrative) by nature and is to be viewed as a unified whole. According to this position, Frasca (2003a) concludes that the narratology versus ludology debate did not take place. His perspective is reinforced by Eskelinen's (2012) critique of the lack of proper theorization of related positions. Frasca (2003a) sees mainly Michael Mateas (Mateas, 2001) as a narrativist. However, other theorists are also considered as narrativists. They include Murray (1998; 2012), Bogost's perspective on the need for a procedural rhetoric (Bogost, 2007),

Ryan's understanding of the different strands of digital textuality (Ryan, 2005; 2006), Nitsche's (2008) perspective of spatial narrative and the continuation of this strand of thinking in Ferri (2015) and Koenitz's (2010, 2015) model.

Ryan (2001) adapts Aarseth's (1997) typology of user functions and perspectives in cybertexts to create a typology that shows how different types of interactivity open different possibilities on the level of narrative themes and plot configuration. This typology is to be viewed as a unified system. She proposes the categories of internal/external and exploratory/ontological to create four combinations which are "external/exploratory interactivity", "internal-exploratory interactivity", "external-ontological interactivity", and "internal-ontological interactivity". These categories are used to discuss about the different modes of participation of digital texts in narrativity.

Eskelinen's (2012) "Cybertext Poetics" attempts to connect Aarseth's cybertext to Genette's narratology as a reversal of his earlier position where he rejects the connection between game and story. He critically refines and expands the narratological categories of tense, mood, and voice to accommodate the possibilities created by the seven cybertextual dimensions of textual dynamics, determinability, transience, perspective, access, links, and user function.

Aarseth (2012) presents a narrative theory of games, building on standard narratology. Aarseth (1997: 14) challenged the recurrent practice of applying the theories of literary criticism to a new empirical field without any critical reassessment of the terms and concepts involved. But Aarseth (2012) also clarifies that his challenge does not equate to a ban on the use of narrative theory in game studies. He argues that a critical reformulation of narrative theory is necessary when one utilises traditional concepts of narrative for analysing video game narrative.

Aarseth (2012) went on to formulate a four-dimensional model as a framework to discuss about the different types of elements which exist inside a gameplay level and a narrative level along a continuum. Aarseth (2012) proposes that the four ontological dimensions consisting of world, objects, agents and events are present in narrative and gameplay. These four dimensions are configured differently for different games. Aarseth’s (2012) model provides a framework for the discussion of ludonarrative relationships in this thesis. Aarseth’s (2012) model depicting the differences between gameplay and narrative representations is shown in Table 3 below:

<b>Ontological Dimension</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Objects</b>	<b>Agents (people, animals)</b>	<b>Events</b>
<b>Ludic Level</b>	Explorable	Dynamic	Bots	Chrono-logical
<b>Narrative Level</b>	Depicted	Static	Characters	Plotted

Table 3 A simplification of Aarseth’s (2012) four dimensional model

A more elaborate four-dimensional model is reproduced in Table 4 below. This more elaborate model shows us that the relationship between narrative and gameplay exists on a continuum and that further elements could be present in between the ludic and narrative pole. This has implications on the proposed ludonarrative model where further (sub)categories could be added to the model. The distinction between the (sub)categories are also not mutually exclusive. For instance, we can have more than 1 (sub)category applying to a situation during the players’ interaction in the video game.

<b>Ontological Level</b>	<b>World</b>	<b>Objects</b>	<b>Agents</b>	<b>Events</b>
<b>Narrative Pole</b>	Inaccessible	Noninteractable	Deep, rich, round characters	Fully plotted

	Single Room	Static, usable		Dynamic satellites/playable story
	Linear corridor	Modifiable		
	Multicursal labyrinth	Destructible	Flat characters	Dynamic kernels
	Hubshaped quest landscape	Creatable		
<b>Ludic Pole</b>	Open landscape	Inventable	Bots, no individual identity	No kernels (pure game)

Table 4 A more developed version of Aarseth's (2012) four dimensional model

Other studies have analysed how the player makes a narrative choice (Bryan, 2013), and how the story is conceptualised as a function of gameplay in FPS games (Pinchbeck, 2009). Linderoth (2013) conducted research on how some types of gameplay mechanics are suitable for some narrative themes and narrative elements. Fernandez Vara (2009) analysed how adventure games have integrated story with the player's performance of action in the simulated gameworld to solve its puzzles. Mawhorter et al. (2014) investigated how choice structures influence players interacting with a narrative. Morrison (2013) has defined meaningful choice in games according to four components which are awareness, gameplay consequences, reminders and permanence. Lange (2014) utilised a survey from over 1000 gamers to understand how the average player interacts with a game system that allows the player to choose a "good" or "evil" pathway through a game story. These studies provide insights for the creation of the ludonarrative (sub)categories.

Calleja (2011) coins the term alterbiography to discuss the player's narrative experiences in *LOTRO* (Turbine, Inc., 2007). Calleja (2011) defines alterbiography as a term which refers to the on-going narrative created during interaction with a game environment. It is neither a sole property of the game nor of the player's free-roaming imagination (Calleja, 2011).



Alterbiographies can be generated without much input from the ludic aspects, such as game-goals and rules. However, alterbiographies generated through the interaction with the ludic structures of the game including the game-mechanics and the hierarchy of pre-designed and individually set goals are even more interesting (Chapter One Section 1.5.4.3 Emergent Story). Calleja (2001) coins “ludic belief” to refer to the player’s schematic knowledge of the game’s ludic structures such as its goals, rules, etc to edit out narrative. “Ludic belief” is incorporated into the ludonarrative model (Chapter Seven Section 7.3.1.2). The following chapter analyses the related work to identify research gaps and provides justification for the research questions.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ANALYSIS OF RELATED WORK

#### 3.0 Overview

This chapter analyses the related work discussed in Chapter Two. In Section 3.1, I analyse the related work, provide an attempt to identify research gaps, and justify or re-state the research questions. In Section 3.2, I provide the rationale for the thesis.

#### 3.1 Analysis of related work

In Chapter Two, I reviewed studies that take into account both the narrative and gameplay in video games and Interactive Digital Narrative. First, I discuss the possibility of a novel unified type of narrative. Murray (1998) proposes that narratological tools can be used in games to tell stories. Murray's (1998) perspective is an important strand of thinking for my thesis where I propose the ludonarrative model to show how the narrative could be integrated with the gameplay successfully through "ludonarrative resonance" (Wattsman, 2012) to convey the holistic experience to the player. Montfort and Bogost (2009) and Koentiz et al.'s (2013a) unified theories for Interactive Digital Narrative are also important conceptual frameworks which highlight to me the process in integrating various approaches to take into account the various constituents that make up a video game. They integrate settings, environment definitions/assets, characters (Aylett, 1999), and narrative design to define the concrete content of an IDN system as a space of potential narratives. I integrate the multimodal discourse analysis frameworks for narrative and gameplay analysis to create the ludonarrative model. In addition,

my ludonarrative model is not purely theoretical and it extends prior conceptual frameworks by creating and refining the (sub)categories in the model based on the players' experience. Frasca's (2003b) narrativist position posits that video games are simulation where they incorporate behavioural rules to enable the player to manipulate the constituents of the gameworld. Frasca's (2003b) narrativist position provides insights for the ludonarrative model, specifically, the creation of the (sub)categories of ludonarrative resonance such as "ludonarrative resonance semiotic metaphor" and "ludonarrative resonance parallel integration" where both gameplay and narrative are together. Ryan's (2001) typology of interactivity types provides links between interactivity and the narrative theme and plot. Her framework provides insights for the subcategory "ludonarrative resonance metaphor" in the ludonarrative model where the gameplay characteristics of the NPCs could be used to highlight their narrative characteristics, narrative theme and narrative development in the plot.

Eskelinen's (2012) "Cybertext Poetics" formalises cybertextual and game variables and their factorial combinations and expands Genette's narratology. However, his multiplication of categories is pointing towards a closed system whose internal formal logic and taxonomical coherence are theoretical in nature and are only hypothetical possibilities without actual instances in existing digital narratives or poems. The proposed ludonarrative model in this thesis in comparison will be built and developed based on the retrospective protocol analysis which includes the players' and analyst's play experience. Aarseth's (2012) narrative theory of games is an important contribution to the study of ludonarrative relationships by highlighting that the different constituents of game elements such as "world", "objects", "agents" and "events" occur on a continuum from the ludic to the narrative level. However, it has to be noted that his theory is not fully developed and should be treated accordingly. For instance, his theory has neither

been validated with empirical data from studies nor applied for an example analysis of a sample gameplay in video games.

Having analysed the related work for the justification of the research questions, the next section provides the rationale for the thesis and restates the research questions.

### **3.2 Rationale of the Thesis**

This section will provide the rationale for the thesis based on the analysis of related work. There has been academic studies done in ludonarrative relationships in video games as reviewed in Chapter Two. However, analysing the limitations of prior research in Chapter Three Section 3.1 has shown that prior research do not have empirical foundation and are mostly theoretical. The proposed ludonarrative model provides an empirical foundation that is missing in the previous theoretical work. This thesis aims to fill this research gap through the creation of the ludonarrative model with the different ludonarrative (sub)categories, grounded by the empirical study of players.

The academic study of video games needs to move forward by grounding theoretical frameworks with empirical support. There is a need to understand how the different modes of video games combine or interact with each other to create a distinctive and cohesive experience for the player during his/her interaction with a video game. This is the reason why the method employed for this thesis includes the gameplay observation of the players in the lab and their gameplay recordings complemented by the players' interviews. The method will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The research questions are restated below:

- i. Research question one aims to find out what the players' cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative is. Their interpretation will be analysed using the proposed multimodal discourse analysis framework, and will be discussed in Chapter Five. The multimodal discourse analysis framework in Chapter Five is used as an analytical lens to create open-ended interview questions to create and develop the ludonarrative relationships in the video games with the players to build the ludonarrative model.
- ii. Research question two asks what specific players' instrumental and strategic actions are involved during the players' interaction with the video game and how do these actions build up to form the gameplay? The gameplay analysis framework in Chapter Six is used as an analytical lens to create open-ended interview questions to create and develop the ludonarrative relationships in the video games with the players to build the ludonarrative model.
- iii. Research question three asks what are the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games? The ludonarrative model is built and developed using the multimodal discourse analysis frameworks in Chapters Five and Six, with open-ended interview questions for the study's participants to provide empirical data to build and refine the categories in the model.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

Section 4.1 discusses the method in which the ludonarrative model is created. It includes the participants' profile, the justification for the criteria for selecting the participants, and how the different gameplay and interview sessions were carried out. It also includes the discussion of the multimodal discourse analysis framework used to analyse the gameplay recordings. Section 4.2 discusses the coding of the data. Section 4.3 provides an overview of the narrative and gameplay of selected games. Section 4.4 provides the rationale for the choice of video games.

#### 4.1 Method

This section discusses the process in the creation of the ludonarrative model. An important note about the model is that it is iterative. As seen in Figure 15 below, the multimodal discourse analysis approach is used to create specific open-ended interview questions for the players in the final session. The researcher negotiates the interpretations with the players to (in)validate his own interpretations. The iterative process is repeated with multiple participants to develop the ludonarrative model. More emphasis is placed on the players' interpretations as they have a better understanding of *how* they play the game and *why* they make a specific choice when playing it.

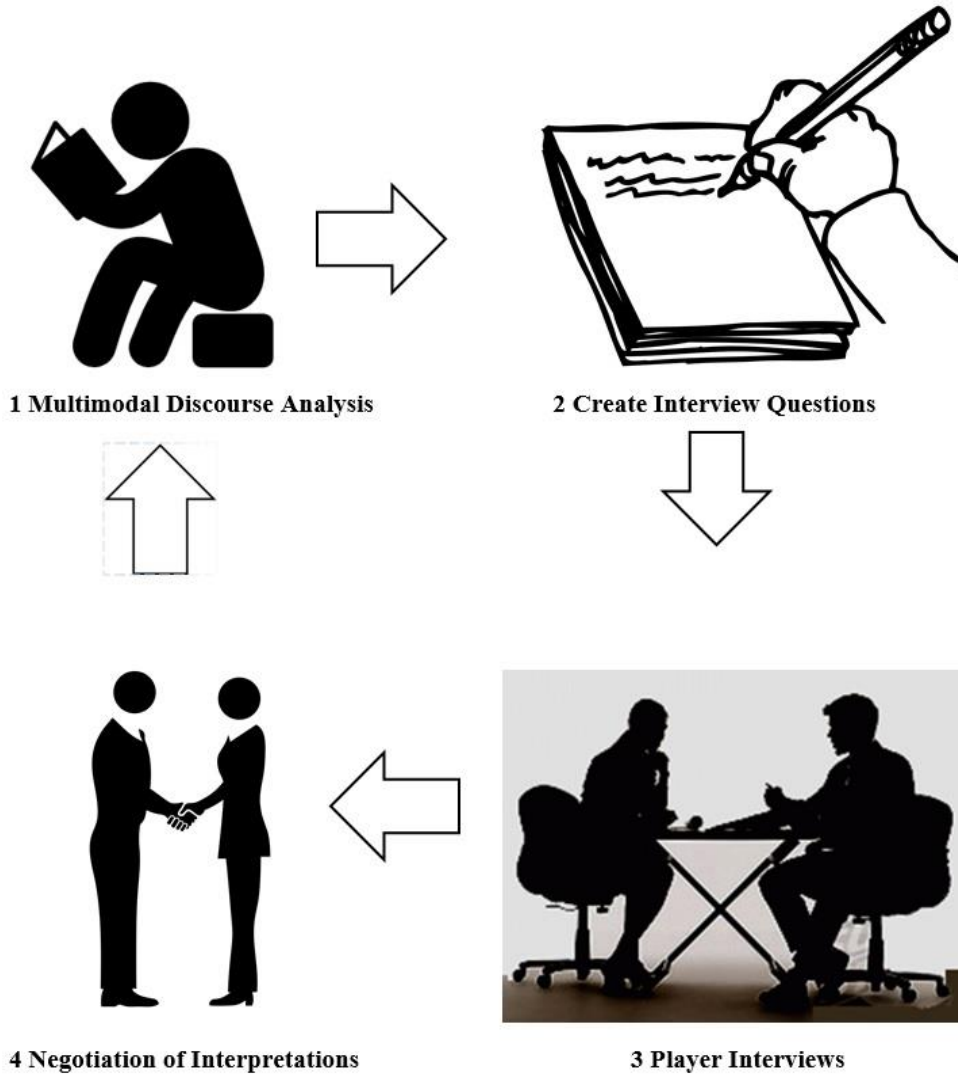


Figure 15 Method

In the first step of the process, a rough taxonomy of ludonarrative categories is first created based on the literature review. The concepts first used to create the ludonarrative model follow from the previous literature which is based on a combination of arguments including Bycer (2013), Pynenburg (2013), Calleja (2011), Watsman (2012), O’Halloran (2007, 2008) and Liu and O’Halloran (2009). These categories built from literature are then modified for game analysis based on the analyst’s gameplay experience (See Chapter Seven). For instance, Liu and

O'Halloran's (2009) concept of "intersemiotic consequence" is originally proposed for the description of the relationship between the linguistic and visual modes. I modify "intersemiotic consequence" to become "ludonarrative resonance consequence" (See Chapter Seven) to indicate the long term consequential relationship between the narrative (Bryan, 2013) and gameplay based on the long term reward information (Delgado, 2007) in *Bioshock*, long term character relationship changes in *The Walking Dead*, and so on.

The second step of the process involves the empirical part of the study. The empirical part of the study is divided into participant recruitment, gameplay observation in the lab, open-ended interviews, and analysis of the gameplay recordings using multimodal discourse analysis frameworks to create open-ended interview questions for the final session. The empirical part of the study is concluded by a final session of open-ended interviews to elicit the players' interpretation of narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationships. Their interpretations are used to develop, refine and validate the (sub)categories in the ludonarrative model.

The following subsections are structured in the following manner. Session 4.1.1 discusses the process of recruitment, the participants' profile, and the justification for the criteria for selecting the participants. Section 4.1.2 discusses the participant observation and first session's interview. Section 4.1.3 discusses how the subsequent sessions were conducted. Section 4.1.4 discusses about the multimodal discourse analysis of the gameplay recordings to create open-ended interview questions for the final session. Section 4.1.5 discusses the final session's interview. Session 4.1.6 discusses the development of the ludonarrative model. Section 4.1.7 discusses the rationale for method.



### ***4.1.1 Participants***

This section discusses the process of recruiting the participants, the participants' profile, and the justification for the criteria for selecting the participants. Participants were recruited via advertisements posted to NUS Integrated Virtual Learning Environment's (IVLE) student events, Facebook gamer communities such as NUS Electronic Gaming, NUS students' computing club, NUS' games development group, and the researchers' gamer friends. Participants were also recruited from the class I tutored and from other modules. Snowball sampling is present where the participants introduced their friends.

The criteria include the participants' required age range from 17 to 40 and the actual age range is from 19 to 33 years old. All participants were required to have some experience (more than five years) in the selected or related games. The age range is justified based on the 2015 figures released by the Entertainment Software Association which shows the average gamer is 35 years old and majority of the players are between 18 – 35 years old. The participants are required to have more than five years of gaming experience so that they would not need to spend time to learn how to play the games in the lab. Additionally, the study would benefit from having experienced gamers as they would have some general knowledge of how the narrative and gameplay are related to each other in the games. This would facilitate the interviews as I do not need to provide in-depth explanation to the participants to enable them to understand my questions.

A total of 37 participants signed up but only 11 participants completed the entire study. The data from some of the 26 participants who have completed the first interview has been included to create the ludonarrative model. The inclusion of their data helps to highlight the

subjective experiences of the gamers. For example, different participants such as Michael and Nasir did not experience “ludonarrative dissonance” in *Mass Effect* because they have different experience in playing video games (**Transcripts 3.111** and **3.112** in Appendix A). Nasir and Michael were able to justify why they did not experience dissonance. Although the data from all the participants who have completed the first interview are used in the thesis, the data from the participants who have completed the entire study constitute the primary data. Table 5 shows the participants’ profiles who have completed the entire study.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Game Experience</b>	<b>Game(s) Played</b>	<b>Gaming Platform</b>
Matt	25	M	➤ 15 years	<i>Beyond: Two Souls</i>	PC
Walter	31	M	➤ 15 years	<i>TLOU</i>	PC
Henry	22	M	11 – 15 years	<i>The Walking Dead Season 1 Episodes 1 - 5</i>	PC
John	23	M	11 – 15 years	<i>Bioshock</i>	PC
Peter	21	M	11 – 15 years	<i>Bioshock</i>	PC
Nasir	24	M	11 – 15 years	<i>Mass Effect</i> and <i>TLOU</i>	PC
Loke	23	M	11 – 15 years	<i>Bioshock</i>	PC
Mary	19	F	6 – 10 years	<i>Bioshock</i> and <i>The Walking Dead Season 1 Episodes 1 – 3 only</i>	PC
Jim	22	M	11 – 15 years	<i>The Walking Dead Season 1 Episodes 1 - 5</i>	PC
Alice	26	F	➤ 15 years	<i>TLOU</i>	PS3
Michael	33	M	➤ 15	<i>Mass Effect, Beyond:</i>	PC

			years	<i>Two Souls</i> and <i>The Witcher 2</i>	
--	--	--	-------	---	--

Table 5 Participants' profile (pseudonyms have been given)

Two to four participants were allocated to each of the five games in the study. All the participants were allowed to choose the game they preferred to play. This would ensure that they are enjoying the game rather than having the perception that they are playing it for a study which would enable the researcher to collect natural data. To maintain a balance, I usually try not to ask them questions during the gameplay but when I occasionally do so, it was done only to elicit their interpretations of the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationships. Sometimes, I also let the participants play by themselves in the lab and I observe their gameplay recordings later. PC gamers are allowed to choose to play the games at their homes or in the lab after the first session and participants who do not like to talk during gameplay are not forced to do so.

#### ***4.1.2 Participant observation and first session's interview***

The gameplay observation involves my observation of the participants playing the games in the lab at a nearby computer. During the first session, the participants were asked to play one of the selected games in the study for one to three hours in the CNM lab. The video recordings of their gameplay were made using *Fraps* (PC) and the PS3 recorder, which enabled me to refer to it when asking the participants questions. At the end of the first gameplay session, the first set of general open-ended interview questions is administered to ask the participants about their gameplay experience. The interview questions (**Appendix C**) are formulated to start with more general questions asking about the narrative and gameplay of the video games they have played and end with more specific questions asking about the ludonarrative relationships such as the congruence and separation between the narrative and gameplay.

Preliminary data was collected during the first session. Some participants were playing the game for the first time, and they were learning about the story and gameplay. Some participants such as Mary (*The Walking Dead*) and Nasir (*TLOU*) have watched Let's Play videos on YouTube while Matt has read about the plot of *Beyond: Two Souls* before the study. Additionally, they were also getting a feel about the ludonarrative relationships and understanding the research aim of the study through the first set of open-ended interview questions.

#### **4.1.3 Subsequent sessions**

The second session for the PC game study was conducted in the participants' homes, where they were asked to play the game at their own pace. One of the participants, Peter played and completed *Bioshock* in the lab. The PC participants were taught to record their gameplay at home using *Fraps*. One of the PS3 participants, Alice conducted the second session at home, as she possessed both the PS3 and PS3 recorder. The other four PS3 participants conducted all the play sessions in the CNM playpod, as they do not possess the PS3 recorder.

The think-aloud protocol (van Someren et al., 1994; Theodorou, 2010) is adapted to ask the participants to verbalise their gameplay experience. Specifically, the participants were asked to explain *how* and *why* they make a narrative and gameplay choice. They were also asked to verbalise their interpretation of the video game narrative in both the cutscene and gameplay. Studies have found that think-aloud protocol is a more effective technique to detect problems in the game than using post-game interviews, because of the prompt response of the participants when a problem is experienced (Gjørseter & Jørgensen, 2012; Kirschner & Williams, 2014; Theodorou, 2010). Extrapolating this to the participants' understanding of the ludonarrative

relations to make in-game decisions and perform gameplay actions, it is thus expected that participants will be more accurately able to describe their reasons for making a specific gameplay action or narrative decision. The reason is that they were required to discuss their reasons simultaneously when making the decision to perform a gameplay action. Not all participants such as Alice and Loke were comfortable with talking during gameplay so the first and final interviews (retrospective protocol analysis) were used to elicit their interpretations and game experience. All the interviews are considered as retrospective protocol analysis when the researcher discussed with the participants about their playing experience and reviewed the gameplay recordings with them after their game sessions.

The players were asked to complete the game from a minimum of 14 hours (*Bioshock*, *The Walking Dead Season One Episodes One to Five*, and *Beyond: Two Souls*) to a maximum of 30 hours (*Mass Effect* and *TLOU*). They were allowed to finish the game within two to three months. After the players had completed the game, the researcher was informed via email and a final interview session was arranged in the lab. The gameplay recordings were reviewed using the multimodal discourse analysis frameworks in Chapters 5 and 6 to create open-ended interview questions.

#### ***4.1.4 Multimodal discourse analysis of gameplay recordings***

The method of a multimodal discourse analysis is adopted to perform the analysis of the gameplay recordings. The multimodal discourse analysis approach is centred on the narrative analysis model proposed in Chapter Five, and gameplay analysis model proposed in Chapter Six to create the proposed ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. I adopt the analytical lenses from the categories within Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps, and Fludernik's (1996, 2003) cognitive

frames for narrative analysis; and Manninen's (2003) instrumental and strategic actions, and Fabricatore's (2007) model of gameplay mechanics for gameplay analysis. Open-ended interview questions are created for the players based on the multimodal discourse analysis performed by using the analytical lenses.

Here, I explain explicitly how I use the analytical lenses to create open-ended interview questions to elicit the participants' interpretations to provide empirical data to develop and validate the ludonarrative categories. In one of the debriefing missions of *Mass Effect*, the player attends a meeting with his crew members after the completion of a mission. The meeting is sometimes portrayed as a cutscene where the player is unable to interact with anything. Therefore, I perceive the player to use a VIEWING frame (Fludernik, 1996, 2003) to interpret the narrative. Two of the squad members, Garrus and Tali suggest to the player that he find another character, Liara to help in their mission. As this is an *optional* mission, it is perceived by the player as an *optional* object in Ryan's (2003) cognitive map of inventory. Next, the dialogue wheel appears where the player is able to use a PERFORMATIVE frame (Fludernik, 1996, 2003) to select a dialogue option to role-play as Shepherd. After the dialogue options are chosen, the player is able to see the amount of Paragon rewards s/he obtained. The analytical lens of an immediate *facilitating* mechanic (Fabricatore, 2007) is used here. To understand if the player interprets the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative resonance causality" to be present, I ask the player open-ended interview question to know if he understand that he obtained the gameplay reward based on the dialogue choice he made.

The analytical lens of a *strategic or instrumental* gameplay action (Manninen, 2003) can be clarified with the player if the player goes to operate the galaxy map console. I ask the participants open-ended interview questions if the previous narrative information motivates them

to choose the next planet to find Liara (**Transcripts 4.2** and **6.5** in Appendix A). If so, the analytical lens of *strategic* gameplay action applies if there is a purposeful action where some thought is being put into performing the action. If there is no thought being put into performing the action, it will be labelled as *instrumental* gameplay action. In this case, the “ludonarrative resonance motivation” category will be absent if the narrative does not motivate the player to manipulate the galaxy map console to find Liara.

The ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative resonance motivation” can therefore be created with the player based on the analytical lenses used for analysing both the narrative and gameplay during the open-ended interviews. These analytical lenses are not used in the interview questions as they are for the analyst’s purposes, and simple interview questions have been asked (Transcribed in **Appendix A**). In this way, the proposed ludonarrative model is created and developed by the empirical study of players through the multimodal discourse analysis of the gameplay recordings, and gameplay observation with open-ended interviews. The empirical study focuses on the players to understand *how* they interpret the relationship between narrative and gameplay based on their interaction and interpretation of the multimodal semiotic resources (language and visuals). In the final stage, the ludonarrative categories of the video games are developed and modified based on the negotiation of the analyst’s interpretation of the ludonarrative relationships in the video games with the players. New subcategories such as “ludonarrative resonance succession”, “ludonarrative resonance guidance”, “ludonarrative dissonance demotivation”, and so on are created based on the data obtained from the retrospective protocol analysis.

#### ***4.1.5 Final session's open-ended interview***

The final session involves asking the participants open-ended interview questions created using the multimodal discourse analysis frameworks. Retrospective protocol analysis was conducted by talking with the participants about their play experience (narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative interpretations) by reviewing the gameplay recordings together with them.

The post-game interview was used to clarify my doubts regarding the players' comments made during the think-aloud protocol. Additional questions were asked to further understand how the players make use of gameplay and narrative information for their decision-making during critical moments in the video game (e.g. **Transcript 3.90** in Appendix A). Definitions of terms such as “narrative”, “gameplay”, “narrative choice”, “gameplay choice”, “narrative event”, and “gameplay event” (e.g. **Transcript 3.86** in Appendix A) were discussed with the participants to understand how they interpret the terms. The last interview session lasted between 2 – 6 hours and was divided into 2 – 3 hourly sessions depending on the participants. Finally, a questionnaire was administered to them to fill in (**Appendix B**).

“The negotiation of interpretations” is a core interaction dynamic during the final session's interviews. This method is similar to the technique known as “member checks” in qualitative research where the researcher obtains informant feedback to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of a study (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006).

“The negotiation of interpretations” means that the open-ended questions asked during the interviews resulted in the creation and revision of the ludonarrative category based on discussions with the participants. For instance, during the retrospective protocol analysis, we clarified about the labelling of specific dialogue choices as gameplay options or a narrative event.



In *The Walking Dead's* interview with Henry (**Transcript 3.106** in Appendix A), I initially asked the question whether he felt being honest with Clementine in the narrative event where he disagreed with her to look for her parents caused the gameplay event where she ran away and was abducted by the Stranger. Henry answered that he interpreted the “narrative event” also as a gameplay choice during the dialogue interaction with Clementine and the part where Clementine ran away as a “narrative event”. Similarly, Jim also interpreted Clementine running away as a “narrative event” as he mentioned that he was unable to do anything to prevent her from doing so. Even though he has a gameplay choice to select the dialogue option to speak with Clementine, it does not cause a change in the gameplay as the same narrative event where Clementine ran away is inevitable. In this way, the “negotiation of interpretations” resulted in the revision of the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative resonance causality” to “ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration” where the gameplay choice in the dialogue option is together with the narrative event.

“The negotiation of interpretations” also refers to the way in which the analyst explained the concepts in the interview questions to the participants and how this could have influenced the participants’ responses. For instance, the first time I asked one of the participants whether he faced a conflict between the gameplay and narrative during the gameplay session<sup>3</sup>, he thought about it for a while and mentioned that he did not face any conflict. I followed up with a more in-depth explanation of the concept of “ludonarrative dissonance” to the participant where I explained that gameplay sometimes gave the player more points, but the story told us about the character’s storyline. The narrative and gameplay will sometimes clash with each other. The participant then was able to think of an example of “ludonarrative dissonance” in *The Walking*

---

<sup>3</sup> The audio file is named “Session 1 – 1 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* 1 – 4 pm”, timing 11:28.

*Dead* where he perceived the gameplay dialogue choices to be giving the player the option(s) to reveal more about themselves, but he interpreted the character in the narrative to be unwilling to reveal his background to the other NPCs. Participants who were unable to understand the concepts after I explained it to them provided brief answers. These answers were discarded. Some guiding questions were also used when the interviewees were unable to provide a detailed response to the open-ended interview questions. Care has to be taken in interpreting the responses obtained in this manner. To avoid “leading” the player, I have to use more open-ended questions and follow-up questions to their answers to draw out more responses instead of “yes and no” questions and questions which contain non-neutral words that encourage interviewees to provide the desired answers.

For Henry (See File – Session 1, 25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 6 – 7.30 pm), I explained to him the concept of “ludonarrative dissonance” by providing an example of the character portrayal in the story sometimes not matching the gameplay action. When he could not think of any examples, I provided another example where the dialogue choices that he made produced some consequences that he felt were not logically consistent with the dialogue choices that he chose. When he still cannot provide any answer, I viewed the gameplay recordings with him to refresh his memory. Henry then mentioned that he faced a conflict between the gameplay event where he found the key from Lee’s brother and narrative consequence where the alarm went off when he unlocked the pharmacy door. The reason he mentioned was that it did not make sense to him that the alarm went off as he felt that it was used to link the story to the next level. Therefore, his previous gameplay actions did not seem to help him in the narrative by providing a positive outcome so he did not feel happy about it. However, the danger with this approach is that it pushes the player until he sees things my way. On reflection, I may try to use

more open-ended questions, let him think about his own answers and stop asking him if he cannot provide any answer after repeated prompting.

“The negotiation of interpretations also refers to the way the participants clarified the questions with the interviewer which resulted in the participants providing the relevant answers to the interviewer. For instance, in *The Walking Dead* interview (See File – Session 1, 25 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3.50 – 5 pm, 0:30), the participant asked me what I meant by “giving an example of a narrative event”. Specifically, he asked whether I was referring to the narration part which was actually covered under narrative event or whether I was referring to the part where the player character scavenges for items to help him progress the narrative. I explained to the participant that I wanted to know how he defines narrative event in his own terms. After the explanation, he responded that gameplay and narrative in *The Walking Dead* are integrated with each other and narration forms a large part of the gameplay where the majority of the time, he was responding to the NPCs in the dialogue options.

The method used for collecting, interpreting and analysing the gameplay recordings is similar in a general sense to Kirschner and Williams’ (2014) four-step analysis process of processual video data used for gameplay reviews with the participants of their study. Step 1 of their method involves recording the gameplay video. It is followed by step 2 where the researcher observes the video recordings with the participants to contextualise the record and interpret the *how* and *why* of actions. Step 3 involves conducting the gameplay review where the researcher discusses the player’s interpretation of gameplay. Step 4 analyses the gameplay review and integrates data from multiple players. Because the researcher is able to involve the participant to get feedback on his interpretation of the claims made, the validity of the researcher’s claims made is increased when the researcher is able to obtain multiple players’

interpretations to understand why the player performs a specific gameplay action. In my thesis, I am also able to obtain multiple participants' interpretations from the retrospective protocol analysis to increase the validity of my interpretation of their gameplay actions/voiceover commentary to develop the ludonarrative model. However, it has to be cautioned that because the final session is conducted some time after the gameplay sessions, issues to do with memory loss may decrease the accuracy of the interpretations made. The findings from the resulting model is not generalizable as the model is developed using the interpretations of only 11 participants.

#### ***4.1.6 Development of the ludonarrative model***

Finally, the proposed ludonarrative model is developed, refined and validated using the data from the study's participants which include the retrospective protocol analysis (Dorst & Dijkhuis, 1995; Ericsson & Simon, 1993) and the gameplay recordings. For instance, the subcategory of "ludonarrative resonance causality" is developed and refined with further subcategories such as "explicit causality", "unexplained explicit causality" and "implicit causality" based on the retrospective protocol analysis.

These subcategories are validated using the data from the other gameplay recordings. For instance, "unexplained explicit causality" is also present in the other parts of *Mass Effect* when the game rewards the player with gameplay items and points, but the narrative does not provide the reason. "Explicit causality" is also present in *Bioshock* where the short term outcome due to the narrative choice of saving the Little Sisters is presented explicitly to the player as feedback in the form of gameplay points and items. "Implicit causality" is present in *The Walking Dead* when the player selects a gameplay choice in the dialogue, but the narrative does not explicitly

inform the player how the NPCs' relationship with the player changes. There will be a message serving as feedback telling the player that the NPC will remember what the player has said or done, but no indication of how the player's gameplay choice changes the narrative in terms of the relationships with the NPCs. Finally, the model is applied to a sample analysis of a gameplay segment in *TLOU* to test and demonstrate its function and utility.

#### ***4.1.7 Rationale for Method***

From a phenomenological and hermeneutic perspective, the video game is conceptualised as a game object, as it is given in the player's experience (Vella, 2015). Rather than focusing on the formal analysis of the video game in relation to the "functional characteristics and components of game objects, and the relations between them" (Aarseth, 2014: 484), the emphasis needs to shift towards "the game as played, as referring to the object of study for game studies from the player's perspective" (Leino, 2010: 6).

Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum (2011) argue that in reading a digital text, the researcher must be able to account for the indeterminate nature of the experience. The indeterminate feature of video games is further worsened in games where players are often forced to choose between multiple exclusive paths without the option of backtracking<sup>4</sup> to see the other potential outcome. Some players in my study such as Michael were observed to circumvent this by sometimes backtracking and trying out different options in *Mass Effect* by reloading a save file. Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum (2011) further state that the indeterminacy is a different phenomenon from the notion of shifting interpretations and readings of the same content conducted in a close reading.

---

<sup>4</sup> This might be mitigated by the save option of the game or the player can choose to play through the entire game to see the different final endings. Alternatively, players also mentioned they do not have time to replay the entire game just to see the different endings or other outcomes so they watch the YouTube videos. Recent games such as *Life is Strange* (Dontnod Entertainment, 2015) also possess a time rewinding gameplay mechanic that enables the players to rewind their choices to see the outcomes of different choices (dialogue and action).

“Rather, the instability of digital texts is rooted in an explicit and literal restructuring of the content and presentation of the experience in conjunction with a shifting set of reader interpretations” (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2011).

I propose some solutions to Bizzocchi and Tanenbaum’s (2011) discussions of the problem of multiple paths in video games. First, the problem of indeterminacy in terms of applying multimodal discourse analysis methods to analyse a video game might be resolved through the empirical analysis of a few players’ gameplay of the same portions of the video game. The analyst can observe the video recordings of different players’ gameplay. The analytical lenses from the multimodal discourse analysis are used to create interview questions. The interviews are conducted after the gameplay sessions to understand how the players interpret the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationships in the video game. When we ask a few players to play the same portions of the same game, they might use different pathways (different gameplay actions, narrative choice/interpretations, and ludonarrative interpretations). By collating a few gameplay recordings of different players complemented by their interviews, I am provided with empirical data to understand how to construct the ludonarrative model based on the players’ experience. The gameplay recordings complemented by the interviews provide the data to understand *how* and *why* different players understand the structure (narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationship) of video games differently which gives rise to the different gameplay actions, different narrative and ludonarrative interpretations when playing the game.

Alternatively, the player analyst may also choose to play through the game multiple times and see the other pathways. However, there is the problem that the player analyst may involve researcher’s bias as s/he is conducting the analysis of his/her own gameplay. “Games are performance-oriented, and our own performance might not be the best source, especially when

we are analysing it ourselves” (Aarseth, 2004). In video game analysis, “playing is essential, but should be combined with other sources if at all possible” (Aarseth, 2004b). To strengthen the analysis or guard against misinterpretations, the interpretations made by the researcher should match the results to the empirical basis (Aarseth, 2004b) by leveraging the player-participant’s own interpretative ability to reflect on their experiences (Williams & Kirschner, 2013).

The player-analyst is able to obtain other players’ gameplay in the media such as YouTube channels to see the other pathways that other players choose in their gameplay videos. However, the analyst will not be able to access the other players through interviews to understand how their interpretations of the ludonarrative relationships contribute to their actualised pathways in the narrative and gameplay. Therefore, an empirical approach will allow the analyst to study the indeterminate nature of video games in terms of the different pathways chosen by players. Games are interactive and are experienced in different ways by different players (Jørgensen, 2012). The empirical data obtained from the open-ended interviews during the retrospective protocol analysis is used by the analyst to create and develop the ludonarrative model. The method used is iterative as the steps involved include developing the initial model, conducting further interviews, and refining the model. The empirical data provides the analyst with different (players’) data to support, broaden and/or challenge the analyst’s interpretations in a performance related, polymorphic and dynamic video game medium. In the next section, I discuss the coding of the data.

## **4.2 Coding**

Table 6 lists the coded features for the empirical data from the interviews and the gameplay commentary. For instance, in specific timings of the video and audio recordings, the

data is analysed to see if the players’ focus is on the gameplay or narrative. We based the coding on the ludonarrative model’s category such as “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” to highlight when the participants were not able to link the hints provided from the narrative to help them to overcome the gameplay puzzles using data from the interviews. Other main coding headings include the ludonarrative categories of “dissonance” and “resonance”. For “ludonarrative dissonance”, based on the video and audio recordings, when the participant experiences a “contrast” or “logical inconsistency” between the narrative and gameplay information, this data is coded. For “ludonarrative resonance”, when the participant experiences a synergy between narrative and gameplay, this data is coded. The different categories to be coded from the data are listed in Table 6. Other than the ludonarrative categories listed in Table 6, the player’s experience (Chapter 7 Section 7.3.4) and analytical frames used (Chapters 5 & 6) are also coded. These categories are the kinds of features that are extracted from the data to build and develop the model. The coding is attached in Appendix D.

<b>Ludonarrative (LD)</b>	<b>Dissonance</b>	<b>Ludonarrative (LR)</b>	<b>Resonance</b>	<b>Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance (LIR)</b>
LD – Demotivation		LR – Motivation		
LD – Logical Inconsistencies		LR – Guidance		LIR – Guidance
LD – Contrast		LR – Metaphor		LIR – Metaphor
LD – Contrast: Incomplete information problems		LR – Information solutions		LIR – Incomplete information problems
LD – Contrast: Anagnorisis		LR – Semiotic Metaphor		
LD – Imbalance		LR – Balance		LIR – Gameplay focus LIR – Narrative focus



LD – Contrast: Player-(Game Designers’) Character Dissonance	LR – Player-(Game Designers’) Character Resonance	
LD – Negotiation	LR – Consequence/Contingency	LIR – Consequence
LD – Information	LR – Causality	
	LR – Succession	
	LR – Parallelism Integration	
	LR – Prominence	LIR – Prominence

Table 6 Coded Features

In the next section, I provide an overview of the narrative and gameplay of the selected video games in the study.

#### 4.3 Overview of narrative and gameplay of selected games

*Mass Effect* belongs to an action (third person shooter) role-playing game genre (ARPG). “The entire RPG genre is about choice” (Erickson, 2009). There exists choice in character creation and customisation, choice in dialogue options, and story choice (in terms of background story information from NPCs). The player encounters two types of narrative spaces, scripted narrative sequences and gameplay. Scripted narrative sequences advance both the narrative and gameplay and appear after the PC has completed a specific number of gameplay goals. The scripted narrative sequence is also tightly woven with the gameplay and both proceeds simultaneously. For instance, the Paragon and Renegade gameplay customisation options corresponds to the “good” and “bad” narrative pathways respectively. *Mass Effect’s* narrative structure follows the “branching” and “side quest and story convergence” model discussed in section 1.5.4.5.2.

*The Walking Dead* is an episodic graphic adventure which is played from a third person perspective. It is based on Robert Kirkman's *The Walking Dead* comic book series but has a different narrative from the comic book and television series. Although characters such as Hershel Greene and Glenn also appear in the game, their character portrayal and stories are different. Season One consists of five episodes released between April and November 2012. *The Walking Dead* occurs simultaneously with the events from the original comic series as a zombie apocalypse has overwhelmed much of society and serves as a prequel to the television series. Choice is a major aspect of character interaction in the game and selection of different dialogue options will change the other characters' disposition towards the PC.

*Bioshock* belongs to the genre of a FPS game. It combines scripted narrative sequences with multi-linear gameplay actions to create a cohesive experience to the player. The linearity of the scripted narrative sequences serves to immerse the player in the *Bioshock*'s gameworld of Rapture. Audio recordings scattered throughout the game not only provide the backstory for Rapture, but also complement the gameplay by providing gameplay hints to the player. Different gameplay actions such as choosing to save or harvest The Little Sisters when the player is given a choice will not only impact the narrative ending but also change the types of gameplay rewards (Chapter 6 Section 6.5). The game has three different narrative endings (Sinclair, 2007) depending on whether the player saves or harvests The Little Sisters.

*TLOU* is an action-adventure survival horror video game which is played from a third person perspective. It has a linear narrative and multi-linear gameplay, where the player has different choices or strategies to overcome the gameplay challenges. The video game narrative is similar to the "string of pearls" model outlined in Section 1.5.4.5.1 where the linear story is merged with multi-linear gameplay. Similar to *Bioshock*, diaries and audio recordings which are

left behind by the previous inhabitants of the gameworld provide both the backstory, and also, sometimes, they complement the gameplay by providing gameplay hints/mechanics to the player.

*Beyond: Two Souls* is an interactive drama action-adventure video game played from a third person perspective. It has both a linear narrative and linear gameplay, where the player has a limited choice of action to choose how to progress the narrative. The game uses predominantly QTEs where the player has to successfully press a sequence of buttons to progress the narrative. There is a binary outcome from successfully pressing or failing to press the buttons during QTEs. Successful completion of QTEs will contribute to a different narrative outcome on a micro level, compared to the instance when the player fails the button prompts in a QTE. However, the overarching plot remains the same. The next section discusses the rationale for the choice of video games.

#### **4.4 Rationale for the choice of video games**

The main criterion for the choice of the video games is that the selection of the games has to provide both different meaningful narrative<sup>5</sup> and gameplay choices for the player so the same game possesses different narrative and/or gameplay pathways depending on the player's choices. The term meaningful is taken to refer to the players' perception of their choices/actions having a consequence in the gameworld (Transcript 3.93 in **Appendix A**). The different narrative (Chapter Five Section 5.2) and gameplay pathways (Chapter Six Section 6.7) through the selected games for this study are accounted for in my study where two to four participants are

---

<sup>5</sup> *TLOU* does not have branching narrative choices but is included in the game to broaden the range of video games used to create the ludonarrative model. I argue that narrative choices in *TLOU* involve choosing to or not to interact with the characters and objects such as notes when given a prompt to unlock more backstory. Based on the second criterion, the narrative and gameplay in *TLOU* have some relationship to each other. For instance, in the category of "ludonarrative resonance metaphor", the empirical data shows that the narrative is an important mode that teaches the player the gameplay mechanics (See Chapter 7 Section 7.3.2.3).

assigned to play each video game for a minimum of fourteen hours. Depending on the players' interpretation of the narrative and gameplay information, and their subsequent or simultaneous performance of the gameplay action in the narrative, the actualised gameplay data from the gameplay recordings will reflect the different pathways chosen by the players.

The second criterion is that both the narrative and gameplay must have some relationship with each other such that the players will not focus solely on either the narrative or gameplay. The second criterion excludes games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010) where the narrative and gameplay are independent and do not change the other. The players can focus on either the narrative or gameplay in such games. My research aim is to create the proposed ludonarrative model (Chapter Seven Section 7.1). My gameplay experience is complemented by the other participants' gameplay experiences highlighted during the retrospective protocol analysis to develop the proposed ludonarrative model.

The games used to build and develop the ludonarrative model are the PC games – *The Walking Dead*, *Mass Effect*, *Bioshock*, and the PS3 games – *TLOU* and *Beyond: Two Souls*. The rationale for selecting these games is that they provide the element of choice in both the narrative (conversational dialogues) and gameplay (actions). However, the ludonarrative relationships in the five games used are different from one another to develop the model. The next chapter proposes the video game narrative analysis model with the aim to build the ludonarrative model.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### VIDEO GAME NARRATIVE

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks which are utilised for the video game narrative analysis as a mental structure formed in the player's mind. The proposed theoretical frameworks are presented in the context of the gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis. As I have discussed in Chapter Four, the video game narrative analysis framework proposed in this chapter is used as one part of the analytical lens to conduct the multimodal discourse analysis on the gameplay recordings to create the interview questions to build and validate the ludonarrative categories in the model.

Although I separate the discussion of narrative from gameplay, it may not always be possible to separate both concepts. For instance, Ryan (2009) has leveraged Caillois' (1961) work to make a distinction between "narrative games" and "playable stories". The former includes games where "the story is meant to enhance gameplay" while the latter includes games where "the gameplay is meant to produce a story".

In my proposed model, narrative is not inherent in the text but requires narrative reception to demonstrate narrativity (Keen, 2015). Narrative reception is understood based on the empirical data obtained from the participants in the game study. In Section 5.1, I discuss and build on Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps which are used to understand how the player interprets the video game narrative. In Section 5.2, I discuss multi-linear narrative in terms of the different narrative structures in video games. In Section 5.3, Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'natural' narratology and cognitive parameters are built upon to create a four level model for the

understanding of the different stages in which the player interprets the video game narrative based on the interaction with the video game. In Section 5.4, I answer research question one proposed in Chapter One. Section 5.5 summarises Chapter Five.

### **5.1 Ryan's (2003) Cognitive Maps**

A cognitive map or mental model of narrative space (Ryan, 2003) is the spatial information gathered by readers or spectators regarding spatial relations as they progress through the narrative text. Through the feedback loop effect, these mental models are built to a large extent on the basis of the characters' movements, which enable the readers or players in a video game to visualise these movements within a containing space. Mental maps are both dynamically constructed in the course of reading and consulted by the reader or player to orient himself/herself in the narrative world. Although Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps are drawings, in this study, cognitive maps are modified and taken to refer to the mental models of the player formed from the PC(s)' interactive motion in the gameworld. Spatiality is described in terms of interactive motion, which is specific to video games, rather than spatiality, which exists in non-interactive art forms. Mental models are also created via observations of the semiotic resources of the gameworld as the PC moves through the gameworld and interacts with the various objects. These semiotic resources are interpreted in the player's mind to form a cohesive picture of the narrative events in the narrative space. In addition to Ryan's (2003) original 3 categories of "inventory", "spatial relations", and "mapping style", 2 categories which include "interactive character movement" (Section 5.1.4), and "interactive character movement with action" in video games (Section 5.1.5) are proposed. The "complication of cognitive maps" in video games is also discussed in Section 5.1.6.

In a video game, the player needs to know the spatial location of the character in relation to the character's goal to understand the narrative events in the gameworld. The mental model of narrative space is constructed by the player and held in the long-term memory. However, it is built from images of individual spatial frames that are constantly updated due to the dynamic movements of the character which occurs in real-time in the gameworld. Players are thus not always able to situate individual frames in the gameworld as these frames are changed constantly. Thus, the player's mental maps do not necessarily have to be the same throughout, in the representation of spatial relations. Some locations, such as the location of the enemy's base, need to be precisely situated in relation to the PC, but other NPCs, such as the enemy units, may occupy free-flowing positions in the player's mind.

In video games, players thus form complex cognitive maps of several strategic locations of the opponents, resources, and choke points, etc. The narrative space in the video game not only serves as a background for the character and their actions, but also serves to present a coherent story world to the player. Because video games are a spatial medium, which emphasises the PC's transversal of the game space during the narrative progression, cognitive maps are an ideal framework to structure the narrative events of the video game. A narrative space that is not designed well enough, such as not providing enough affordance for the player will contribute to difficulties in the player's understanding of the direction to move in the gameworld. This may contribute to the player's focus on the gameplay and result in the loss of narrative immersion in the gameworld. The change in the analytical lens from the video game narrative model to the gameplay analysis model in Chapter Six in the ludonarrative model reflects the player's focus on the gameplay. An instance where the affordance was unclear to the player will be discussed using *Beyond: Two Souls* under Ryan's (2003) category of *spatial relations*. The analysis of

*Beyond: Two Souls* also helps to create the corresponding ludonarrative category, “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” (See Chapter Seven Section 7.3.3.1).

Ryan (2003: 224) suggests that cognitive maps can be evaluated in terms of three criteria: their *inventory*, *spatial relations*, and *mapping style*. These three criteria combine together to form the narrative event(s) in the player’s interpretation of the video game narrative. In the following sections, I discuss how these cognitive maps can be used to understand the players’ mental comprehension of video game narrative using the retrospective protocol analysis where the gameplay recordings are reviewed together with the participants. Although there is a separation made between the categories, there is no clear-cut division between them. For instance, the discussion of *obligatory* objects in “inventory” also pertains to “spatial relations” as it helps to point the player in the direction to move towards the goal.

### **5.1.1 Inventory**

The cognitive maps pertaining to *inventory* emphasises the priority which the player places on specific *objects* in their mental representation. These objects can come from the video game, or other inter(textual) sources, such as the player’s knowledge of other video games which they have played. *Objects* can be classified as *obligatory* or *optional*. The cognitive map of the *inventory* in terms of the *objects* informs us about the player’s conceptualisation of the plot. *Obligatory* objects can include landmarks such as the enemy’s base, or a crucial location that the player has to defend against enemy attacks. The importance of the *object* in the cognitive map of the player’s mental model indicates that the particular landmark is the goal of the character in the plot, where the character might have to reach that specific landmark (Figure 16) to fulfil the narrative goal, to destroy it or to kill a designated target at the location to resolve the conflict in a



particular mission of a game session. Based on the interview, Michael mentioned that it was the second image (instead of the first image in the flashback) of the tower that emphasised to him the importance of reaching the tower to fulfil the narrative goal in *Beyond: Two Souls*’ chapter titled “The Mission” (**Transcript 4.18** in Appendix A).

Hence, I argue that the use of image repetition (redundancy) together with the character’s dialogue and the proper use of lighting are techniques that enable the player to construct the cognitive map of an *obligatory* object in the narrative.



Figure 16 An *obligatory* object highlighted in the flashback of *Beyond: Two Souls*

Less important objects in the inventory will appear at the bottom of the list of priority of the player’s cognitive map. *Optional* objects include side missions such as the acquisition of additional squad members for the PC in *Mass Effect* (Figures 17). These squad members are not necessary for the completion of the game, but serve to provide additional narrative (and bonus gameplay skills) for the side characters. The side characters’ narrative in *Mass Effect* do not change the major plot.



Figure 17 Liara's side mission as an *optional* object for the player

Based on the empirical data from the *Mass Effect* interview, Michael mentioned that he chose to focus on the PC's narrative and not the supporting character, Liara's narrative so he only went to find her towards the end of the game. This indicates his placing of lower priority on her character's narrative. He also indicated that he was more interested to have lesbian sex with her rather than obtaining her narrative (**Transcript 4.2** in Appendix A). Nasir did not focus on finding Liara when he played the game as he mentioned that the quest log did not provide him with sufficient information on her location in the gameworld (**Transcript 6.5** in Appendix A). *Bioshock's* participants such as Peter (**Transcript 3.49** in Appendix A) and John (**Transcript 3.13** in Appendix A) treat the audio logs that they picked up as *optional* objects as they mentioned that they treat the narrative in the audio logs as noise in the background.

### 5.1.2 Spatial Relations

Ryan (2003: 226) argues that “the evaluation of spatial relations is much more difficult than the analysis of the inventory because it deals with scalar rather than binary categories: While an item is or isn’t on the map, it can be located at variable distances from another item.” I suggest that the similar problem is created for the player’s cognitive maps for spatial relations because as opposed to the cognitive maps of objects, which are static, the cognitive maps constituting the information of spatial relations is dynamic as the player has to compare the difference of the distance between two objects or characters in the gameworld. This is even more difficult for players when they have to track the spatial relations of moving objects in the gameworld, in relation to enemy or friendly units. For instance, in an escort mission, the player has to estimate the spatial distance between the objects which need protection, in relation to the location that the objects have to reach to indicate that they have reached safety.

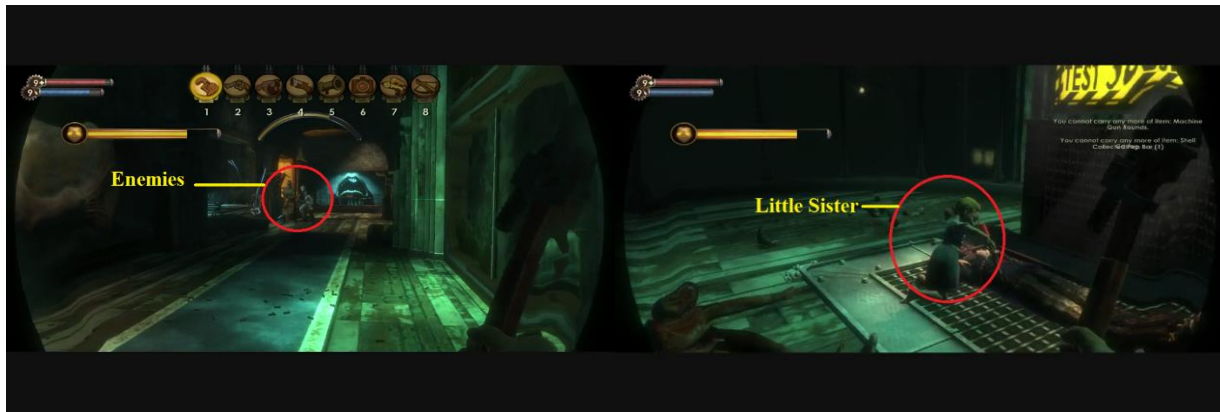


Figure 18 Tracking the *spatial relations* of moving objects

Furthermore, the player has also to estimate the spatial relation of enemy units who are arriving to intercept the escorted units (Figure 18), and the player also has to estimate the spatial distance between the nearest friendly unit from the escort. This complicated intersection of

spatial relations due to the tracking of multiple dynamic objects in the game space, create a cognitive map of *intensifying plot action* in the narrative event. However, based on the empirical data from the participants of the *Bioshock's* game study, the players focus more on the gameplay instead of thinking about the narrative as they highlighted that they did not question the narrative representation of the Little Sisters when they were escorting them (**Transcript 4.3** in Appendix A).

As a result of this perception, the escort mission was more of a gameplay event to the players. Therefore, the category of *spatial relations* in the player's formulation of a narrative is dependent on the game itself. An interesting finding was that the participants were concerned that failing the gameplay goal of escorting the Little Sisters would change the narrative ending even though their gameplay actions were inconsequential to the narrative. Only after finishing the game and during the last interview did they confirm that they realised that the gameplay action was inconsequential in changing the narrative (**Transcript 3.42** in Appendix A). In this sense, the cognitive map of *spatial relations* pertains more towards the story structure and gradual revelation of the significance of NPCs in determining the game's ending than spatiality in the narrative. The analysis conducted here helps to build the ludonarrative categories of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus" and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – consequence" in Chapter Seven.

In the *Beyond: Two Souls'* game study, the lack of clear affordances for Michael and the dark lighting used in the setting (Figure 19) contributed to his difficulty in evaluating the spatial relations between his PC who is running to escape from the authorities and the narrative goal that he has to reach. This contributed to his greater focus on the gameplay and distraction from the

narrative (**Transcript 4.4** in Appendix A). This analysis helps to build the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” in Chapter Seven.

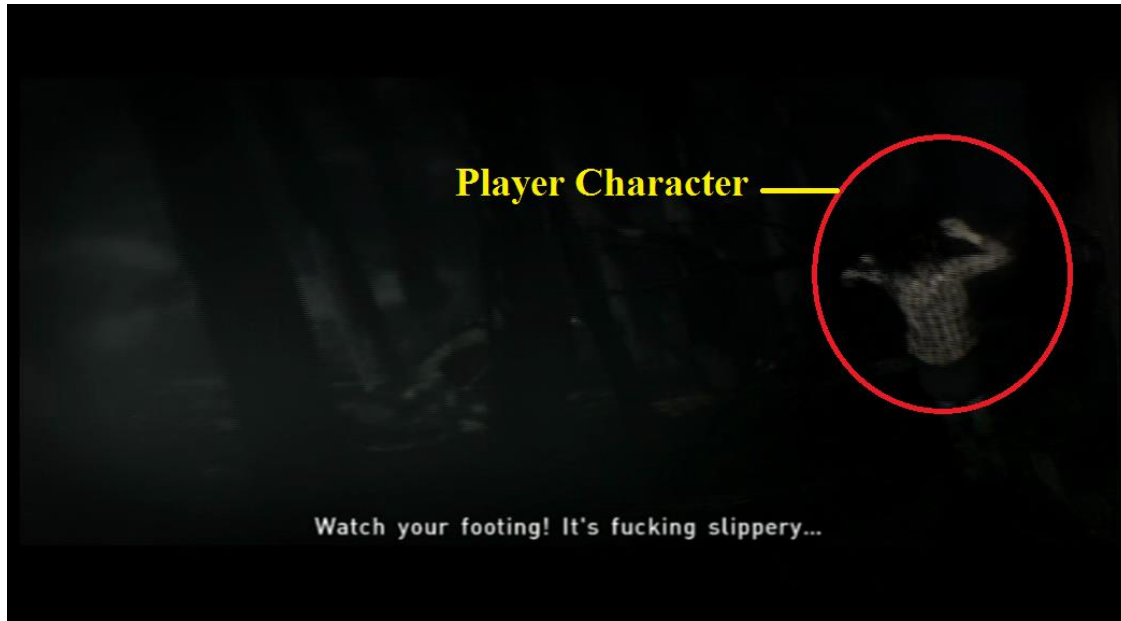


Figure 19 Difficulty of evaluating spatial relations in *Beyond: Two Souls*

### 5.1.3 Mapping Style

Ryan (2003: 227) argues that the *mapping style* can be *conventional/symbolic* or *iconic*. In addition to Ryan (2003), I suggest the addition of an *indexical* mapping style. Objects represented by a symbolic mapping style bears an arbitrary relationship with the referent in which it refers to in the player’s cognitive map. In *Mass Effect*, the colour coding of the dialogue choices enables the player to understand the narrative pathway and gameplay outcome of selecting those options. Specifically, the blue colour coded narrative choice corresponds to the “good” narrative ending and the red coloured narrative choice corresponds to the “badass/evil” narrative ending (Figure 20). Players in the game study who have played a significant part of

*Mass Effect* or *Mass Effect 2* were able to understand the conventional narrative meaning of the colour coded dialogue options (**Transcript 3.44** in Appendix A).



Figure 20 Colour coding as a mapping style

In *Beyond: Two Souls*, the coloured dots indicate to the player the affordance in which he can interact with the other characters or the environment. For instance, a blue dot on a character with an orange outline indicates that s/he can control the PC, Aiden, to possess the other character. A blue dot on a character with a red outline indicates that s/he can use Aiden to kill the other character. Finally, a blue dot on a character with a blue outline indicates that the player can control Aiden to knock the other character unconscious. However, the appearance of the colour coding of the dots is inconsistent. For example, the white dot sometimes appears while at other times it does not. The player, Michael, assumes that the white dot is used to indicate the direction in which he can use to control the PC's action. When it does not appear or is too small to be seen,

the player is unsure of the action to take. When the white dot does not consistently appear, the player takes a longer time to learn the function of the white dot's affordance (**Transcript 4.4** in Appendix A). Sometimes, the blue dot on a character with a blue outline also has the function to kill the other character (Jodie's mother, Nora). In the study, the players were only able to know the function of killing through an additional narrative iconic object, the heart. The inconsistency of mapping style of the affordance to the PC's gameplay action in the narrative confuses the player and distracts him from understanding the narrative.

An icon attempts to reproduce the visual perception of an observer, and it partially represents the object it refers to. Most units in real-time strategy games are iconic in the sense that they partially resemble human beings, aliens, or humanoids. The buildings are also iconic as they resemble the real-world referents. Other types of narrative iconic objects include artefacts left behind by the inhabitants of the gameworld such as notes and photographs. An example of a narrative iconic object is Sarah's photo with Joel (Figure 21) which Ellie passed to Joel in the final chapter of *TLOU*. When the player chooses to interact with the photo, it unlocks further backstory for the player when Joel's gesture of accepting the photo and his dialogue inform us that he has finally let go of his loss of Sarah and accepted Ellie as his surrogate daughter.



Figure 21 Sarah's photo with Joel as a narrative iconic object

Other types of artefacts are inhabitant's notes (Figure 22) which Nasir mentioned that they make the gameworld more realistic as they are handwritten (**Transcript 4.5** in Appendix A):

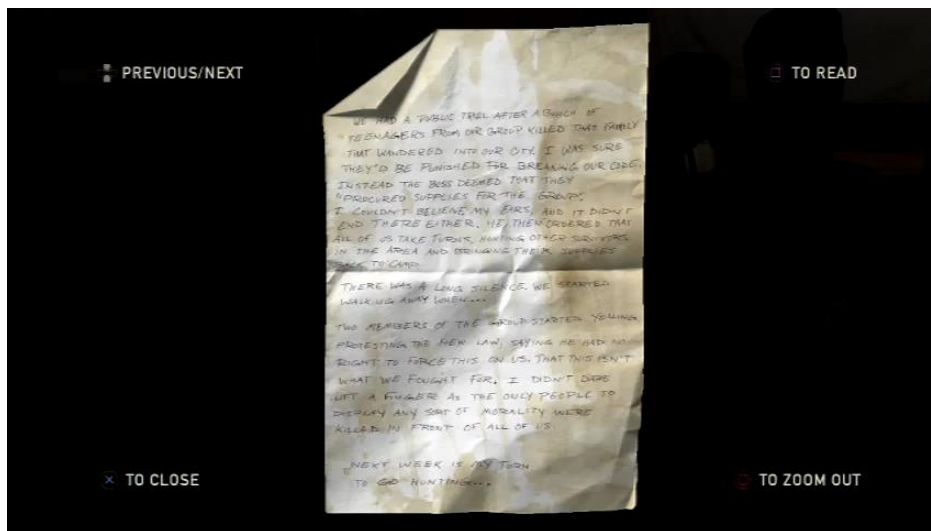


Figure 22 A narrative iconic object, the inhabitants' notes

Another example of a narrative iconic object is Wrex's Krogan armour (Figure 23) in *Mass Effect*. Nasir mentioned that the decryption gameplay skill was crucial to unlock the narrative object (**Transcript 4.6** in Appendix A). When the player obtains the armour for Wrex



after finishing his side mission, it will increase the relationship point with Wrex and opens up an additional dialogue choice when negotiating with Wrex on Virmire to prevent him from dying.



Figure 23 Wrex's armour as a *narrative iconic object*

An indexical mapping style functions by pointing the player towards narrative information that they can interact with. Indexical mapping styles include the multimodal semiotic resources which work together, such as language used in the subtitles (Figure 24), audio prompts from characters (Figure 24) or the environment, visuals that highlight a narrative object (Figure 25) and so on. These multimodal semiotic resources indicate a character or object that can be interacted with. An instance of an indexical mapping style is the audio prompts given by the characters in video games such as *TLOU*. Audio prompts serve a pointing function for the players to convey information to them that they can choose to interact with the characters to unlock further backstory. Symbolic, iconic and indexical cognitive maps complement each other to provide the player with the visual cues for the cognitive understanding of the semiotic

representations in the narrative space. The analysis conducted using Ryan's (2003) *mapping style* highlights the importance of facilitating the players' learning of the functionality of the affordances by providing something new in the appearance of something familiar or consistent to the players' cultural scripts. The analyses conducted in this section create the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative resonance metaphor" in Chapter Seven.



Figure 24 A language and audio indexical prompt



Figure 25 A visual indexical prompt

#### 5.1.4 *Interactive Character movement*

The cognitive map of the *interactive character movement* may be used by the player to understand the plot progression. As the character proceeds in the direction of the goal, the character encounters other objects in the form of enemy units who constitute the gameplay obstacles and may be interpreted as the narrative conflict (Figures 26 & 27). These are character challenges. However, based on the empirical data from the interviews, the participants do not necessarily interpret the gameplay challenges as narrative conflict as they separated the gameplay from the narrative (**Transcript 4.23** in Appendix A).



Figure 26 Big Daddy fighting splicer

In one of the side missions of *Mass Effect*, Michael encountered a group of humans who have been turned into husks (a subservient robot) as his squad moved further in to explore the interior of the planet (Figure 27). He mentioned that he thought about the narrative of the side mission regarding *why* the scavengers were turned into the husks. However, he did not create his own narrative when prompted about it during the interview (**Transcript 4.8** in Appendix A).



Figure 27 Character movement, action and progression challenges in relation to emergent narrative

The above discussion seems to suggest that in certain genres of games such as *Bioshock*, *TLOU*, and *Mass Effect* the emergent or player's narrative may not form in the mental model of the player as the gameplay (movement) does not necessarily map to a narrative. From the empirical data of the interviews, the gameplay seems to be dominant in *Bioshock* while the designer's narrative is more dominant in *TLOU*. Although narrative and gameplay are more balanced in *Mass Effect*, the side missions' narrative is simple and the participants did not make up their own narrative. Players focus more on the gameplay in *Bioshock* and *TLOU* during gameplay challenges and do not make up their own narrative as they chose to follow the pre-scripted linear narrative. For *Mass Effect*, the player simply wonders about the narrative reason behind the gameplay challenges when prompted about it during the interviews.

Another finding is related to the concept of immersion<sup>6</sup> in the *flow* of the game. According to Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1990), *flow* is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. Based on the empirical study, *The Walking Dead's* participant mentioned that he was so immersed in playing the game that he did not care about the relationship between narrative and gameplay (**Transcript 4.24** in Appendix A).

Perhaps emergent narrative may be easier to be formed in MMOs (*LOTRO*), open world games (*Grand Theft Auto*, *Skyrim*), RPGs (*Dark Souls* franchise), point and click adventure games (*Kentucky Route Zero*), indie games (*Journey*), action-adventure games (*Ico* and *Shadow*

---

<sup>6</sup> Immersion is not exactly the same as flow. Immersion has been defined as the perception of being spatially present in the non-physical world in virtual reality. Immersion has been divided into different levels, namely, engagement, engrossment, and total immersion (Brown & Cairns, 2004). Flow is defined by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1990) in terms of being involved in the performance of an activity where the person has energised focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the activity. The overlaps between immersion and flow are that attention is needed, sense of time altered, sense of self lost, and the same skills and knowledge are used. What distinguishes immersion from flow is the fleeting nature of total immersion (Brown & Cairns, 2004).

of *the Colossus*) or sandbox games (*Minecraft*) where the narrative may be open to interpretation. The analysis conducted using the concept of *interactive character movement* in this section formulate the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” in Chapter Seven.

### **5.1.5 Interactive character movement with action**

The cognitive map of interactive character movement may intersect with interactive character action during exploration when players find embedded narrative in the gameworld. The empirical data from the interviews highlights the multiple interpretations of the minor character, Ish’s backstory conveyed through the narrative iconic objects – the notes in *TLOU*. Nasir interpreted Ish as a more positive character while Alice interpreted Ish as a more negative character (**Transcripts 4.9 and 4.10** in Appendix A):

A static character movement might indicate the narrative event where the backstory is been conveyed to the player (Figure 21). For instance, Mary mentioned that she paused the game to listen to the audio logs in *Bioshock* so that she can concentrate on listening to it but a splicer came to distract her (**Transcript 3.10** in Appendix A).

*TLOU*’ participant, Alice mentioned that she would pay more attention to the narrative if a cutscene (**Transcript 4.20** in Appendix A) or an affordance such as a visual indexical prompt (Figure 25) is given to the player to trigger the character’s backstory during the character’s movement. She felt that in this way it would be better than if the narrative was given simultaneously while she was roaming around exploring the gameworld’s environment or when there is a gameplay happening simultaneously. The reason which is also echoed by another participant is that it is very distracting if narrative is given simultaneously with gameplay

(**Transcript 4.19** in Appendix A). This cutscene or affordance focuses her attention on the narrative by forcing her to stand and watch or/and listen to it. She also mentioned that if a narrative prompt was given during the gameplay, it felt forced and she would also tend to wander around while the narrative was being conveyed by the character. Therefore, the empirical data shows that the participant's listening or watching the narrative may not always correlate to a static character movement but may also occur during instances of dynamic character movement (**Transcript 4.11** in Appendix A). However, it is easier to focus on interpreting the narrative when the player is not performing too much gameplay actions but only involved in controlling movement or turning the camera to look around. Based on this analysis, the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus" is proposed and further discussed in Chapter Seven.

A dynamic character movement might also indicate rising action or conflict in the plot. Character movements might indicate the character's role in the narrative but not always so as indicated by the interview data as referring to more of the NPCs' gameplay attributes. For instance, common enemies such as the Infected in *TLOU* only move in a fixed predictable direction to rush at the PC when they are alerted to the player's presence. Common enemies such as humans will hide and use flanking manoeuvres (**Transcript 4.12** in Appendix A). This analysis helps to construct the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – metaphor" in Chapter Seven where the NPCs' gameplay attributes do not contribute significantly to the players' narrative interpretation based on the examples discussed above.

According to the proposed cognitive model, the player forms a cognitive map of some characters to understand the narrative roles of the different characters and enemies in the gameworld based on the multimodal semiotic resources such as the other character's dialogue

and the characters' movements. For instance, major NPCs (Tess, Bill, Ellie, and David) with multi-directional movements, interactive dialogue, and interactive action in the gameplay are interpreted in the player's cognitive map as having more important narrative functions, as they are not only able to help the player to attack enemy units but also play key narrative roles. Examples of their interactive action include throwing medical kits, and ammunition during gameplay fights to the player. Ellie's constant accompaniment of the PC throughout the game and interactive dialogue enable a bond to form with the player.

On the other hand, based on the empirical data, Alice mentioned that she did not really map the common enemies' and David's gameplay movements during the gameplay fights to the narrative. This was due to her focus on the gameplay so she did not form the link to the narrative. There was not much narrative interpreted during the gameplay fights as the participant interpreted it as a goal to be overcome. This contributes to the creation of the ludonarrative category "(ir)relevance – gameplay focus". She mentioned during the interview that she linked Bill's dialogue about the Infected been predictable and the humans been scary to David though because she mentioned David's boss fight was the most difficult on the highest difficulty level. David in *TLOU* has a more unpredictable movement. David will come to track the PC at the highest difficulty level and this increases the gameplay challenge. His gameplay movement and actions enhance his narrative characterisation as the antagonist hunting for Ellie. All enemies become more sensitive to the PC especially on the highest difficulty level when fighting the PC, Joel and Ellie. Their gameplay attributes further add to the postapocalyptic setting of the gameworld (**Transcript 4.13** in Appendix A). This provides data to build the ludonarrative category "resonance – metaphor". Similarly, Walter also did not form any emergent narrative of the characters when they were moving to help the players during the gameplay but their



gameplay actions and movements were in line with their narrative characterisation (**Transcript 4.22** in Appendix A).

The different character movements of Ellie and Joel in the gameplay contribute to a type of player narrative experience. For instance, Alice mentions that Ellie favours a more stealth gameplay movement as she perceives Ellie to be weaker than Joel who has more gameplay options. Joel can either directly fight the enemies or use a stealth movement to progress the gameplay. In this way, the gameplay movements and actions are highlighting the narrative characteristics of the different characters and the interdependence of Joel and Ellie who complement each other in the narrative (**Transcript 4.14** in Appendix A). The lack of character movement and actions also plays a part in narrative characterisation, for example, character development. For instance, in the beginning of the Spring chapter of *TLOU*, Joel's gameplay mechanic of boosting Ellie is being subverted. Ellie would usually come to Joel to be boosted up when called, but in the Spring chapter, she did not respond when the player presses the gameplay controller button "triangle" to call her (**Transcript 6.8** in Appendix A). This clever subversion of the gameplay mechanics highlights her emotional distance from the gameworld because she killed David in the previous chapter. This analysis builds the ludonarrative category "Ludonarrative Resonance Metaphor" (Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.3) where the different amount of gameplay options available to the different PCs and the subversion of the gameplay mechanics influence the player's narrative interpretation of the characters. However, the cognitive map of *character action* in the gameplay does not always map to the characterisation of the character in the narrative as Alice and Walter mentioned that the characterisation of the PCs has been done in the cutscenes (**Transcript 4.7** in Appendix A). In this case, the

ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – metaphor” is proposed for Chapter Seven.

### **5.1.6 *Complication of cognitive maps***

Cognitive maps are complicated by two factors. Firstly, video games are *multimodal* as they consist of more than one semiotic resource, e.g. linguistic and visual signs. Secondly, video games are ludonarrative, they are both gameplay and narrative. This provides interesting scenarios which can be analysed by the ludonarrative model (Chapter Seven Section 7.1). For instance, in a narrative event, a semiotic mode, e.g. the visual sign may provide narrative information to the player, while the linguistic sign communicates gameplay information to the player simultaneously. Examples are given in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.3 under “Ludonarrative Resonance Metaphor”. For instance, the visual sign provides the narrative information that the PC was injured during the explosion in *TLOU* followed by Tess passing him a health kit while the linguistic sign conveys gameplay information regarding the affordance to use the health kit. In this way, when the player performs the gameplay action to press the control to heal his character, he interprets his character’s action to be healing himself from the injuries sustained from his close proximity to the explosion in the narrative. Simultaneously, it is also a gameplay event where the player is learning the controls for the health kit.

## **5.2 Multi-linear Narrative**

In *The Witcher 2* and *Mass Effect*, the game designers make numerous side plots to give the players choice. This is the “side quest and story convergence” model discussed in Chapter One, Section 1.5.4.5.2. These side missions usually do not have any impact on the main storyline in the main plot, but they serve to help the player complete the main plot. The reason which I

have already discussed is that if these side missions do impact the main storyline, they will contribute to the number of possible branches in the story exploding, as seen in the branching story structure. It may be hard for the game developers to develop multiple endings for the video game narrative because they will need to obtain more resources such as employing more game designers to create additional narrative and gameplay content for the other branches.

The side quests in the “side quest and story convergence” model serve to provide variety to the player, and give them the element of choice and player *agency* (Definition in Chapter 1 Section 1.6) in affecting the gameworld. For instance, by choosing a specific side quest in the gameplay, the game will affect the side plot in the narrative by offering the players different narrative endings to wrap up a particular supporting character’s story. Instances of side plots occur in *Mass Effect* where the different supporting characters’ side quests are unlocked once the player has interacted with them sufficiently. The selection of a specific side quest also supports the gameplay by offering the players rewards, e.g. in-game currency, experience points or gear rewards in *The Witcher 2* and experience points, paragon or renegade rewards in *Mass Effect*. Completion of side quests, such as Wrex’s family armour in *Mass Effect* also helps the player in the narrative by providing an additional dialogue option to prevent Wrex’s death on Virmire. But players would not know the consequence of their narrative and gameplay choice (**Transcript 4.21** in Appendix A) unless they replay the game a few times or consult the walkthroughs online, such as reading game guides or watching YouTube videos. This adds to the replay value of the game. Figures 28 and 29 show examples of two different narrative pathways.

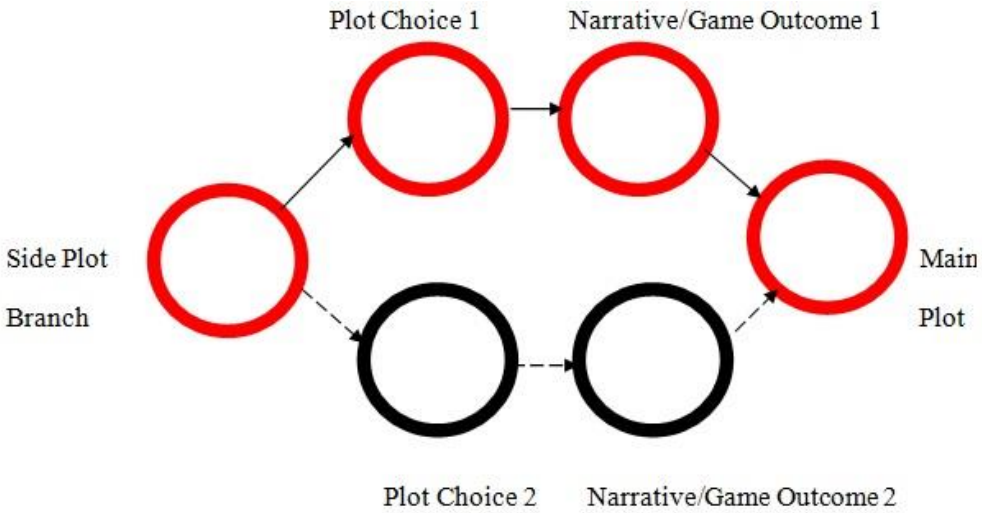


Figure 28 Narrative Pathway 1 – Side Plot

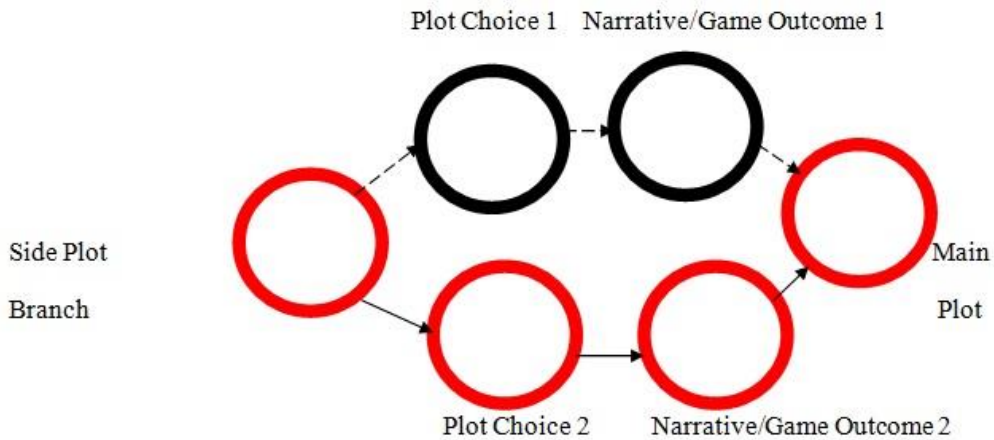


Figure 29 Narrative Pathway 2 – Side Plot

Branching multi-linear stories are generally thought as one of four styles. Firstly, a tree that branches out with different end points (Figure 30). *The Witcher 2*, *Mass Effect*, and *Bioshock* to a lesser degree belong to this category. Secondly, plot lines that converge or diverge like parallel roads to the same destination (Figure 31). *The Walking Dead* belongs to the second category. The third category involves variation in the micronarratives (Jenkins, 2005) within

each chapters of *Beyond: Two Souls* but the overarching narrative remains the same. This is similar to the “string of pearls” model discussed in Chapter One Section 1.5.4.5.1, but not entirely the same because the gameplay challenges occur rarely in *Beyond: Two Souls*. The fourth category includes embedded narrative in the gameworld told through the notes and the environment. Embedded narrative branches off from the main storyline and is optional, depending on exploration and the player’s interpretation. An example includes Ish’s storyline in *TLOU*. The first option is much more difficult to implement because of the programming and asset management challenges (McIntosh, Cohn and Grace, 2010).

Branching types of stories give the player more options in progressing through the video game’s narrative by having their decisions affecting the overall narrative direction. While *The Walking Dead* does not have multiple endings, the different narrative choices in the dialogue provide variety to the player by highlighting the different relationships between the player and the NPCs as a result of the player’s different narrative choices.

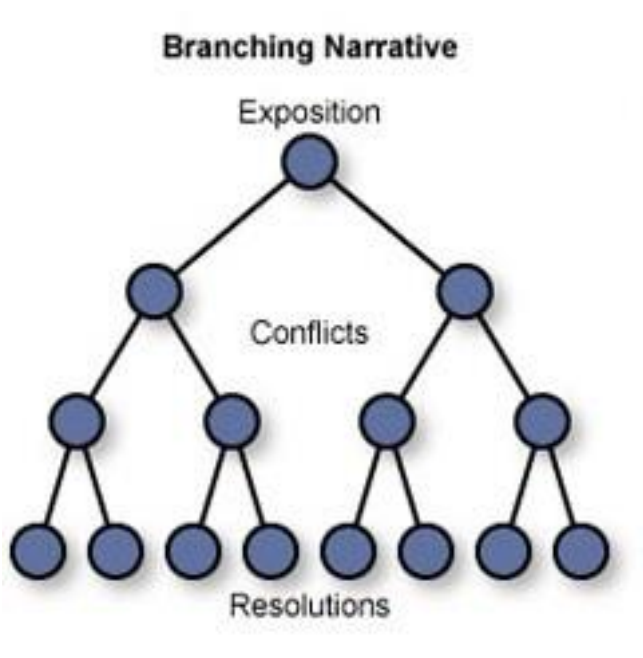


Figure 30 Branching narrative structure with multiple endings

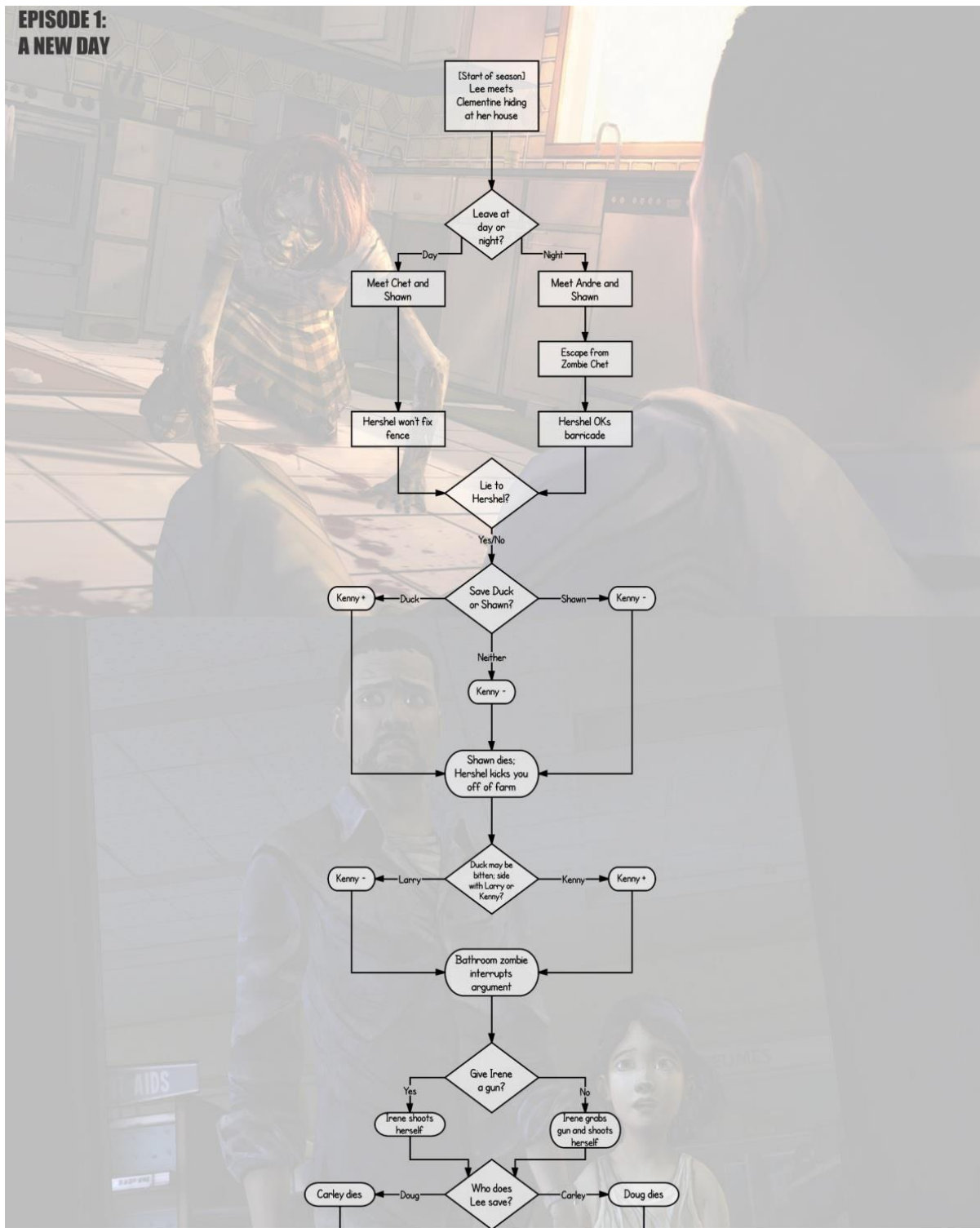


Figure 31 Divergent and convergent plot lines in *The Walking Dead Season 1 Episode 1* (Telltale Games, 2012) Source: <http://venturebeat.com/2013/03/31/the-walking-dead-season-one-plot-graph/>

Having discussed Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps, the complication of cognitive maps, and multi-linear narrative structure, Section 5.3 discusses Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'natural' narratology and cognitive parameters to provide the higher level constituents of the proposed video game narrative framework. These higher level constituents help to provide the context for the analysis of the players' narrative interpretation by explaining *how* and *why* the player interacts with the video game narrative. For instance, level 2, the mediation level provides the different frames that the player draws upon to interpret the video game narrative and level 3, genres and conventions provide the cultural patterns of storytelling which influence the players' narrative interpretation.

### **5.3 Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'Natural' Narratology and Cognitive Parameters**

The analysis of video game narrative in this study is based on the assumption that the players create stories from the perception and comprehension of the information conveyed via the multimodal, i.e. linguistic and visual semiotic resources of the video game. From a narrative cognitive perspective, players create stories out of everyday moments to process them and incorporate them into the greater narrative that is each person's life story (Bruner, 2004). Players have a tendency to narrativise even situations that do not seem to be narrative at first glance, demonstrate what is considered as classical narrative structure. When the player engages in the gameplay and encounters an enemy, or becomes involved in a conversation with an NPC, these engagements while not narrative in its "texton" form (Chapter One Section 1.6), may become narrativised in the "scripton" form (Chapter Two Section 2.3) as the text is read/interpreted, through the player's experience (Aarseth, 1997).

The narrative experience is the result of the player interacting with the game. Evidence for the narrativisation of the game content during gameplay can be seen from postgame narrativised discussion of the game (Juul, 2001; Zhou, 2012) which highlights the interpretation of the gameplay moments as a narrativised construct. Thus, gameplay moments in the timeframe of the game can be experienced by the player within a narrative context. Two examples are given from the game study's postgameplay interviews. The first is from *TLOU* where Nasir interprets Tess passing the first aid kit to the PC, Joel in the narrative context of the explosion in the scripted narrative event (**Transcript 4.15** in Appendix A). The second is from *Beyond: Two Souls* where Matt interprets Aiden's gameplay interaction with the entities in the narrative context of Jodie's narrative by projecting his narrative interpretation, specifically, his feelings of Jodie and Aiden (**Transcript 4.16** in Appendix A).

In games, the micronarratives (Jenkins, 2005) formed by the player do not necessarily conform to traditional narrative structures and rules as there may be a multi-linear narrative during the gameplay as a result of the different gameplay choices available to the player. However, the gameplay choices may be more limited in more story focused games like *The Walking Dead*, *TLOU* and *Beyond: Two Souls* where there is less free play.

Fludernik (1996) proposes a new model for narrative analysis in "Towards a Natural Narratology", based on her notions of *experientiality*, *narrativity*, and *narrativisation*. There are two assumptions made on her model. Firstly, the cognitive framework of natural narrative can be applied to *all* narrative. Secondly, the reading process is fundamental to the constitution of narrativity, which makes a text narrative. According to her model, "narrativity...is not a quality adhering to a text, but an attribute imposed on the text by the reader who interprets the text as narrative, thus narrativising the text" (Fludernik, 2003: 244). Her model "constitutes narrativity



not – as is traditionally the case – in reference to plot or story, but in reference to what [she has] called *experientiality*” (Fludernik, 2003: 245). *Experientiality* refers to “the dynamics between *tellability* and *point* noted by Labov and other discourse analysts. It describes the typical quality of natural narratives in which surprising events impinge on the protagonist (usually coterminous with the narrator) and are resolved by his (or her) reactions – a sequence that provides an illustrative ‘point’ to the story and links the telling to its immediate discourse context” (Fludernik, 2003: 245).

The concept of experientiality was introduced “to characterise the purpose and function of the storytelling as a process that captures the narrator’s past experience, reproduces it in a vivid manner, and then evaluates and resolves it in terms of the protagonist’s reactions and of the narrator’s often explicit linking of the meaning of this experience with the current discourse context” (Fludernik, 2003: 245). However, Fludernik’s (1996) definition of *experientiality* only takes into account the experience of game characters who are not manipulated by the player. These include characters in the cutscenes. To incorporate the player’s *experientiality* into the narrative analysis, I complement Fludernik's definition of *experientiality* for NPCs or characters in the cutscenes with Pearce’s (2004: 145) definition of *experiential*. Pearce (2004: 145) defines *experiential* as the emergent narrative that is produced from the inherent ‘conflict’ of the game from the players’ experience. The feature of *experiential* is a component of all games (Pearce, 2004: 145).

She also argues that for the narrator the story’s *experientiality* resides not just in the events themselves, but in their emotional importance and exemplary nature. The events become tellable precisely because the narrator is able to find meaning from them and connect to them on an emotional level (Fludernik, 2003). *Narrativity* is thus constituted by the combination of

experience reviewed, reorganised, and evaluated ('point')" (Fludernik, 2003). Fludernik (2003: 245) also argues that narrativity "depends on events (story) only to the extent that the large majority of our memorable experiences occur in the context of events or series of actions and reactions by human subjects" (Fludernik, 2003: 245). She emphasises that the most important definition of narrativity is that it "is not the series of narrative actions in themselves but their experiential (emotional and evaluative) overload", indicating her focus on the human consciousness in defining the object of narrative. The *experiential*, in terms of the *emotional* and *evaluative* overload has been elicited during the interviews using retrospective protocol analysis (e.g. **Transcripts 3.12, 3.13, 4.3 & 4.16** in Appendix A).

Fludernik's (1996) concept of *narrativisation* is inspired by Culler's (1975) notions on naturalisation. She sees *narrativisation* as a process in which *narrativity* is imposed on a discourse, thus turning it into a narrative. The process is a dynamic one, and is facilitated by the "interpretative recuperations" carried out during the reading, hearing, viewing or manipulation process when playing video games. *Narrativisation* is an action, in which the title of narrative and the property of *narrativity* as something outside of the text is imposed on it, thus constructing it as a narrative. However, culture and discourse restricts our definition of what can be a narrative and what cannot be a narrative. The context based interpretation of narrative thus shows that narrative is a relative concept. This is another reason why Fludernik (1996) focuses on natural narratives, and uses the concept of prototype theory to suggest that spontaneous oral narration of experience is much more universal, which she asserts is the prototype for all subsequent cultural developments of mediums and forms of narrative.

Fludernik's model is divided into four levels. The lowest level is considered as the deep-structure of cognitive parameters attaching to narrative. It is related to the question of "what" to

distinguish between the question of “how” in the next two upper levels, which details the manner in which narrative material is conveyed to the person receiving it. The lowest level refers to the “basic-level schemata such as the readers’ real-world understanding of what an action, a trajectory, a goal, [agency], etc., consist in” (Fludernik, 2003: 244). This level is the pre-understanding of how the world functions and contains “parameters of real-life experience” which are the most basic, initial cognitive frames of experiencing. Fludernik (1996) calls these cognitive frames “core schemata” and they relate to presupposed understanding of reality. They make up a configuration of an experienced event that includes (and must include) an evaluation of it and its meaning. This configuration is a mechanism of causality and holds that final causes that exist in nature, e.g. purposes found in human actions, tend toward definite ends, and must be in mutual agreement with the function of evaluation. These cognitive schemas are natural as being part of our consciousness, which enable us to grasp a world of action and change.

Herman (2002: 331) argues that “stories trigger recipients to establish a more or less direct or oblique relationship between the *stories* they are interpreting and the *contexts* in which they are interpreting them”. This prompts the recipients to relate “two types of mental models”, one that they build up from the textual cues, and the other based on their prior experience in the real world. Hence, there are two classes of mental models, which are formed from the *text* and the recipient’s *real life mental model of the world*, to form the “complete” cognitive schemata of the gameworld. These mental models also incorporate the player’s understanding of the gameplay rules into their mental model of the game narrative. (Chapter Two Section 2.4 – Calleja’s (2011) *alterbiography*). In this study, Ryan’s (2003) constituents of cognitive maps, which include *inventory*, *spatial relations*, and *mapping style* and additional constituents such as *interactive character movement* and *interactive character movement with action* are brought

under the lowest level of Fludernik's (2003) model. These constituents incorporate the linguistic and visual signs. The lowest level forms the player's cognitive schema of the video game narrative.

The second level of Fludernik's (2003) model consists of "the schemata that define the narrative material within a perspectival paradigm: the ACTION, TELLING, EXPERIENCING, VIEWING, AND REFLECTING frames" (Fludernik, 2003: 244). These cognitive schemata/frames/parameters mediate a story to us and render it accessible. These categories are natural as "explanatory patterns" are utilised by us to understand our daily experience. The second level is also reflective, which takes into account the presence of consciousness. The ACTION frame consists of the experiential core and it focuses on the protagonist's consciousness. It is presented as a series of events and reactions to them. In video games, it concentrates on the PC, the events s/he is involved in and his/her reactions. However, the player also occupies the perspective of the PC during gameplay. I do not see the player as synonymous to the PC as the player may sometimes not relate to the PC due to the different EXPERIENCING frame. When this occurs, there is player-(game designers') character dissonance (Chapter Seven Section 7.3.1.1.3).

The core of experientiality can also be focused on the TELLING frame in which our familiarity with storytelling is being foregrounded. In this frame, a narrator, either explicit or implicit, tells a story to us. The teller's consciousness is emphasised in the TELLING frame. The VIEWING frame is concerned with witness narratives and the cognitive mode conceptualises an on-the-screen spectator watching the narrative events. This frame focuses on the viewer's consciousness. In video games, this frame focuses on the player. The VIEWING frame applies to the video game cutscenes. In the gameplay, when the player is performing an action when the

game is conveying a scripted designer's story, the PERFORMATIVE frame takes over. *Performative* is defined by Pearce (2004: 145) as "the emergent narrative seen by spectators watching and/or interpreting the game [narrative] underway". For instance, in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.10, I provided the example where Henry formed his own narrative as he thought that it was about to rain when he controlled the PC, Lee Everett to move through the zombies. The narrative interpretation motivated his gameplay action where he quickly controlled the PC to move through the zombies. The EXPERIENCING frame "directly touches on the experiential core of the narrative, focusing on the protagonist's immersion in the experience" (Fludernik, 2003: 246). It focuses on the protagonist's consciousness. Pearce's (2004: 145) EXPERIENTIAL frame (defined above) is the equivalent term for the player's experience of narrative in the gameplay.

Finally, the REFLECTING frame "relates to the mental evaluation of the experience" (Fludernik, 2003: 246), which gives rise to a mode of narrative transmission. It focuses on the teller's consciousness. In video games, the REFLECTING frame also refers to the player who thinks back on the scripted and non-scripted narrative during and/or after the gameplay and is present in the gameplay recordings. I argue that these five frames combine together to convey the video game narrative to the player. For instance, during the cutscene, the frames that are present include the (N)PC's ACTION, EXPERIENCING, and the player's VIEWING. During the gameplay, the ACTION frame occurs during the game designer's scripted story in which the player uses a VIEWING frame to interpret the non-interactive scripted story as a narrative event.

In addition to the basic frames from Fludernik's (1996) model, I add two more frames. These are the MANIPULATION and AUGMENTARY frames. Fludernik's (1996) model does not take into account the player's action involvement during the gameplay. I modify her model

for video game analysis and provide the addition of a MANIPULATION frame based on the discussion of Eskelinen's (2001) "manipulation" as a core feature of game (play) in Chapter Two Section 2.3. I define the MANIPULATION frame as the player's ability to control the PCs in the video game narrative to interact with the other game objects. This frame focuses on the player's consciousness. The narrative 'operator', *augmentary*, is defined by Pearce (2004: 145) as "layers of information, interpretation, backstory, and contextual frameworks around the game that enhance other narrative operators". The AUGMENTARY frame includes the embedded narrative as defined in Chapter One Section 1.5.4.2.

The third level of Fludernik's (1996) model discusses how the player/viewer/reader interprets the information conveyed and forms the narrative according to his/her knowledge of the cultural pattern of storytelling and includes genres and conventions. Fludernik (1996) does not contrast "cultural" with "natural", and she argues that this level is also natural as we naturally employ these culturally acquired capabilities. This level includes the poetics of a genre, and the "generic and historical frames such as the 'satire' or 'dramatic monologue' schemata" (Fludernik, 2003: 244), allowing for its creation and consumption. In video games, this level is equivalent to the player's current knowledge of the generic features of familiar video games s/he has played, in terms of how video games function to enable the player's gameplay actions, restricted by the rules, and the challenges in which the player has to overcome to achieve the game goal. This level is also concerned with the player's knowledge of how video game narratives (Chapter One Section 1.6) are different from traditional narratives and also how the video game narrative combines with the gameplay (Chapter Seven Section 7.1) to form the player's experience.

The fourth level of Fludernik's (1996: 43-45) model is "the level of narrativisation that utilises elements from the first three levels in order to constitute narrativity". It is a dynamic

process of narrativisation in one narrative. Here, the previous levels are employed to construct a coherent narrative that settles problems and contradictions in the understanding of the text. Fludernik’s (1996) model and my modification of it is shown in Table 7 below.

Level	Constituents
1	<b>Deep structure</b> – Player’s core schemata based on the information conveyed via the multimodal semiotic resources from the video game narrative, which are analysed by Ryan’s cognitive maps (2003) (Section 5.1). Focuses on human experientiality.
2	<b>Mediation</b> - <i>Narrativisation</i> by means of consciousness. Consists of a complex natural category with several frames to choose from. The original five cognitive frames from Fludernik’s (1996) model consist of ACTION, TELLING, EXPERIENCING/EXPERIENTIAL, VIEWING/PERFORMATIVE, and REFLECTING. For video games, the additional frames of MANIPULATION and AUGMENTARY are added.
3	<b>Genres, and conventions</b> - Concerned with the cultural patterns of storytelling. In video games, it is not only concerned with the gameplay, but also concerned with how video game narrative is different from traditional narrative, and how gameplay combines with the narrative. The player’s subjective knowledge of video games provides explanations for the different player’s experience.
4	The final level is the surface level, in which the player combines the knowledge of the previous levels to construct a coherent video game narrative.

Table 7 Fludernik’s (2003) model adapted for video game narrative analysis

Fludernik also argues that the “naturalisation” process starts from the deep structure. For instance, when a new genre of video game is released, the player is at first, unfamiliar with the inner workings of the video game rules and mechanics. S/he has to play the game a few times to form a basic cognitive schemata of how the different semiotic resources convey narrative information to the player. The player also has to learn the affordances, the gameplay rules and understand the different degrees of interactivity of the different objects in the gameworld. Then the player will form the MANIPULATION cognition schemata to understand how the gameworld is mediated to the player in terms of the game rules. When the basic schemata from

the first level and the mediation schemata from the second level have become familiarised, the player then constructs the cognitive schemata for the generic convention of the video game genre. As the genre becomes familiarised as the game is released for some time and its generic features become stabilised, the video game (narrative) of this specific genre will become naturalised.

Here, I provide a sample analysis of the player's interpretation of the video game narrative using a modification of Fludernik's (2003) model. In this example, Michael plays *Beyond: Two Souls* and is asked by the PC's mother to get the bottle of oil from the garage (Figure 32).



Figure 32 The PC's goal to get the oil from the garage

On level 1 of Fludernik's (2003) model, Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps include *inventory*, *spatial relations*, and *mapping style*. Michael forms the cognitive map of *inventory* where he perceives the bottle of oil as the *obligatory* object required to progress the narrative and the exploration of the house as an *optional* object. The cognitive map of *spatial relations* is more



problematic for Michael as he has to calculate the distance between Jodie's mother, his PC – Jodie and the specific location of the bottle of oil. The locations of the characters are explicit but the location of the bottle of oil is implicit as there is no affordance given for the bottle of oil's location in the house except that it is in the garage. In this case, the *spatial relations* cannot be formed and Michael cannot complete the *obligatory* object. Thus, Michael embarked on the *optional* object of exploring the house so that he would be able to find the *obligatory* object through the *optional* object.

For the cognitive map of *mapping style*, there are conventional/symbolic indicators which include the white dot that the player by then would have learnt what it stands for. The white dot is an indicator for the player that the objects can be interacted with (Figures 33 & 34). These symbolic indicators serve as affordance for the player to explore the house by trial and error to find the garage in which the bottle of oil is located.



Figure 33 Conventional/Symbolic Indicators



Figure 34 Conventional/Symbolic Indicators

The *narrative iconic object* includes the box of memories in one of the rooms located at the second floor of the house (Figure 35). When the player interacts with it using Aiden, it unlocks backstory explaining Jodie’s childhood, specifically *why* her relationship with her “parents”, especially her “father” is bad. However, in the study, Michael did not find the box. When Matt found it, he did not know that he has to use Aiden to interact with it to induce a flashback for the player (**Transcript 3.51** in Appendix A). In this case, the *indexical mapping style* is absent as there is no explicit multimodal affordance, such as the linguistic or visual semiotic resource to guide the player to use Aiden to interact with the box. The available affordance only indicates to the player that he can use Jodie to interact with it.



Figure 35 The box of memories as a *narrative iconic object*

On level 2 of Fludernik's (2003) model, the ACTION frame consists of the narrative event of Jodie exploring the house, interacting with the telephone, the door, Jodie's father and her reactions to them. In the TELLING FRAME, there is no explicit narrator in this narrative event telling us the story. The VIEWING frame consists of the cutscene where the gameplay is suspended and the player watches Jodie talking on the telephone with her imaginary friend, Aiden (Figure 36). The PERFORMATIVE frame also takes over when the player interprets Jodie talking with Aiden on the telephone as he controls her to pick up the phone. From the gameplay observation of Michael, the EXPERIENCING frame tells us that Michael was able to immerse in the optional object of exploring Jodie's house, but was unable to immerse in the obligatory object of finding the bottle of oil in the garage. He commented that he was playing a game where he did not know where the garage was even though he/the PC has been living in the house since young. The REFLECTING frame is related to the EXPERIENCING frame where Michael commented during the gameplay and post gameplay interview that he was playing a game where

he did not know where the garage was (**Transcript 3.16** in Appendix A). This player-(game designers') character dissonance (Chapter Seven Section 7.3.1.1.3) prevented him from immersing in the PC's narrative role. The MANIPULATION frame involves the player's control of the PC to move around the house, explore it and interact with the various objects found in it. The AUGMENTARY frame includes the character interaction with the telephone, her father and the box of memories which unlock embedded narrative to deepen the player's experience.



Figure 36 The VIEWING frame where the player watches Jodie

The third level of Fludernik's (1996) model enables us to know how the player interprets the narrative information according to his/her knowledge of the cultural pattern of storytelling and includes genres and conventions. As Michael has some experience playing point and click adventure games, such as *Myst*, he was able to know that he had to explore the house by trial and error to find the bottle of oil. Even though the game does not give explicit affordance for the obligatory object, the bottle of oil, he was not stuck for a long time. From his experience with

*Beyond: Two Souls* he mentioned that he is playing the narrative (Ryan's (2009) "playable stories") as it is very linear and scripted (**Transcript 4.17** in Appendix A). He commented that the gameplay is the narrative as the game will sometimes run by itself without the player providing inputs to influence the game. He mentioned that there is a limited time in which he could influence the game and things could happen regardless of whether the player likes it or not. However, Michael also felt that the game is inconsistent as sometimes, it would not proceed if he did not interact with the game (**Transcript 4.17** in Appendix A). In this sense, Michael mentioned that the game is trying to emulate life which left him confused as to what he was going to do. During the last interview, he mentioned that he does not have the cultural knowledge of the American's garage with regard to where it is located inside the house. In Singapore, the equivalent term of the garage is the carpark found at the bottom of the housing block (**Transcript 3.16** in Appendix A). Therefore, this disjunction in the cultural knowledge of the garage left him confused as to the location of it in the house.

On the fourth level, the player combines the knowledge of the previous levels to construct a coherent video game narrative. From the understanding of the narrative, Michael mentioned that he was not able to connect emotionally to the PC, Jodie. The reason is because of the disjunction between the cultural knowledge of the garage in the house and the lack of explicit affordance in the cognitive map guiding him in the garage's direction.

#### **5.4 Answering Research Question One**

This section attempts to answer research question one proposed in Chapter One. Research question one asks how the player's process of cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative can be described. This interpretation has been analysed using the multimodal discourse

analysis framework proposed in Chapter Five. From the study of the players, their cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative is able to arise usually when they are able to focus on multiple modes. The participants which include Loke mentioned during the interviews that they usually were only able to focus on one mode during the gameplay sessions, such as the visuals or the gameplay (**Transcript 5.13** in Appendix A). It is mostly during the retrospective protocol analysis that players were able to utilise both the *REFLECTING* and *VIEWING* frames to interpret a narrative. For instance, when I reviewed the videos together with Matt and asked him whether he formulated a narrative for Aiden's gameplay interaction with the entities, he mentioned that Jodie and Aiden are his projection. When he felt that Jodie was feeling frustrated based on her utterances, then he will project her feelings towards Aiden's gameplay actions in the visuals (**Transcript 4.16** in Appendix A).

The analysis here contributes to the creation of the ludonarrative category “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” during the gameplay session and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus” during the retrospective protocol analysis. The reason is that the participants were more focused on gameplay during the playing sessions and were more focused on narrative interpretation when they did not have to engage in gameplay actions during the interviews.

Another finding from the analysis shows the important concept of *redundancy* introduced in Section 5.1.1 for a narrative interpretation to arise. For instance, in *Beyond: Two Souls*, we have shown that the *obligatory* object is highlighted twice through the visuals to the player in the PC's flashback, appears in the diegetic gameworld, and Jodie's utterances.

Using Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps of *spatial relations*, I have shown that during the gameplay sessions, players do not usually focus on interpreting a narrative when they are

involved in the gameplay events, such as the escort missions as they focus on one mode such as the visual mode (**Transcript 5.13** in Appendix A). In *Beyond: Two Souls*, the lack of clear multimodal affordances and the dark lighting used prevented the player from focusing on the narrative interpretation as he was figuring out the direction to move towards the goal. This analysis builds the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” in Chapter Seven.

The *interactive character movement* does not usually favour narrative interpretation when the players are formulating strategic actions to overcome the gameplay challenges as the players focus on the visuals. Instead, a static character movement makes it easier for players to focus on, interpret and reflect on the narrative. This analysis builds the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus”. The cognitive map of *interactive character action* during the gameplay does not usually map to the characterisation of characters in the narrative. The majority of the participants perceived the characterisation to be done primarily during the scripted sequences with optional narrative presented during gameplay. This suggests that participants are more focused on the gameplay fights instead of interpreting the narrative during gameplay. The analysis builds the ludonarrative subcategories of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance metaphor”. Alice perceives the narrative characterisation of Ellie and Joel based on their different *interactive character movements and actions*. Nasir perceives the subversion of Ellie’s boosting gameplay mechanic during the Spring chapter of *TLOU* as a reflection of her emotional development in the narrative. These analyses build the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative resonance metaphor” in Chapter Seven.

Ryan's (2003) *mapping style* has been used to highlight the instances when clear multimodal affordances have been used to convey ludonarrative information to the player on *Mass Effect's* dialogue wheel through positioning and colour coding. Ryan's (2003) *mapping style* highlights instances where inconsistent use of colour coding in *Beyond: Two Souls* confused the player and delayed his learning of the gameplay controls. Ryan's *mapping style* has also shown that the presence of *narrative iconic object* is insufficient on its own to facilitate the players' uncovering of narrative in the gameworld (**Transcript 3.51** in Appendix A). There has to be an explicit multimodal affordance which serves an *indexical pointing function* to provide information to the player that s/he has to activate Aiden to interact with game objects to unlock backstory. For instance, the game could use Jodie to tell the players explicitly to activate Aiden to interact with the box. However, this may also make the gameplay less interesting as the players are guided to perform actions and do not explore the game on their own. I suggest that a compromise be made where the player could be given an option to activate a game hint when they play the game if they want more explicit hints to unlock backstory.

Using the third level of Fludernik's (1996) *cultural patterns of storytelling* enables me to understand the difficulties faced by the players when they play *Beyond: Two Souls* due to the different cultural scripts that the players in my study possess from that of the game designers. There is the absence of multimodal affordances to guide the player in the direction to move towards the *obligatory* object (unlike in *Bioshock*), so the player has to explore the house by himself (*optional* object). The analysis using Ryan's (2003) *mapping style* builds the ludonarrative subcategory of "ludonarrative resonance metaphor" in the case of *Mass Effect* and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance metaphor" for *Beyond: Two Souls* in Chapter Seven. The different



cultural frames also build the subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance metaphor” where the fictional representation of the house’s layout does not facilitate the players’ finding of the garage.

## 5.5 Summary of Chapter Five

In this chapter, I have proposed the video game narrative model which is grounded in the context of the gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis. The model is summarised in Table 8 below.

Level	Constituents
1	<p><b>Deep structure</b> Ryan’s (2003) Cognitive Maps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Inventory</b> – Priority in which the players place on specific objects in their mental representation. Objects can be classified as <i>obligatory</i> or <i>optional</i>.</li> <li>(2) <b>Spatial Relations</b> – Player’s evaluation of distance between two or more objects. Objects may be <i>stationary</i> or <i>dynamic</i>. Cognitive map may either map to a narrative or gameplay event.</li> <li>(3) <b>Mapping Style</b> – Process in which players map an object to their mental models. Cognitive map may either map the object to a <i>narrative</i> or <i>gameplay</i> object. Mapping style can be <i>conventional/symbolic</i>, <i>iconic</i> or <i>indexical</i>. Categories are not mutually exclusive, i.e. objects can be both narrative and gameplay or both symbolic and iconic.</li> <li>(4) <b>Interactive Character Movement</b> – The player’s control of the PC to move in the gameworld. Movement may be <i>stationary</i> or <i>dynamic</i>. Cognitive map may map the character’s movement to <i>narrative conflict</i> in the <i>plot</i> or <i>gameplay challenges</i> or both.</li> <li>(5) <b>Interactive Character Movement with Action</b> – The player’s control of the PC to move in the gameworld to interact with game objects. Movement may be <i>stationary</i> or <i>dynamic</i>. Cognitive map may map the interactive character movement with action to the <i>character’s narrative role</i> or <i>gameplay function</i> or both.</li> </ol>
2	<p><b>Mediation</b> – Schemata that define the narrative material within a perspectival paradigm.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Action</b> – Concentrates on the PC, the events s/he is involved in and reactions.</li> <li>(2) <b>Telling</b> – A narrator tells the story to the player. Narrator is implicit or explicit.</li> <li>(3) <b>Experiencing/Performative</b> – Player’s immersion in the emergent narrative.</li> <li>(4) <b>Viewing</b> – The player watches the narrative events.</li> <li>(5) <b>Reflecting</b> – The player thinks back on the scripted and non-scripted narrative.</li> <li>(6) <b>Manipulation</b> – The player’s control of the PCs to interact with other objects.</li> <li>(7) <b>Augmentary</b> – Contextual frameworks around the game such as backstory.</li> </ol>

3	<b>Genres and conventions</b> – The player’s current knowledge of the generic features of familiar video games s/he has played.
4	<b>Surface overall structure</b> – The dynamic process of narrativisation where the player utilises elements from the first three levels to constitute narrativity.

Table 8 The video game narrative analysis model

This model provides the analytical lens for the multimodal discourse analysis which expands on Ryan’s (2003) cognitive maps, and Fludernik’s (1996, 2003) natural narratology and cognitive parameters. By using this model as an analytical lens for the multimodal semiotic resources during the review of the gameplay recordings, I have created open-ended interview questions to clarify with the participants about their interpretations of the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationships during the retrospective protocol analysis. This is an iterative process where my analysis and interpretations of the gameplay recordings are combined with the participants’ answers to the interview questions to build the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. Based on the proposed model for video game narrative analysis, the narrative side of the ludonarrative model is shown in Figure 37 below.

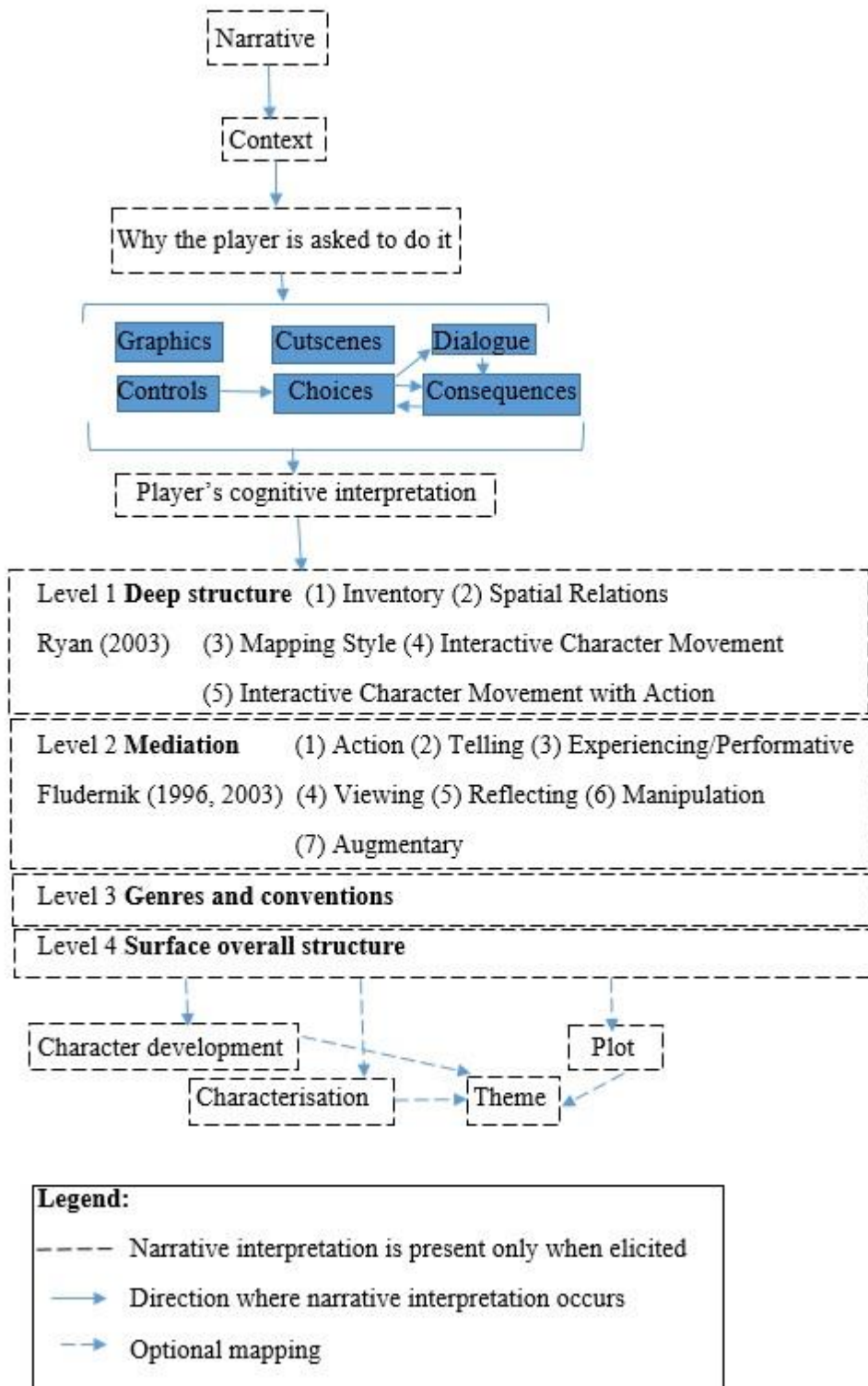


Figure 37 The narrative side of the ludonarrative model

As shown in Figure 37 above, the narrative provides the context for the player's cognitive interpretation of the video game based on the semiotic resources. The semiotic resources are manifested as visuals in the graphics and linguistic semiotic resources in the characters' utterances. The dotted lines bracketing the different components of the model indicate that the players' cognitive interpretation of the narrative is not always present when the player focuses on the gameplay. The downward arrows indicate that the direction of narrative interpretation flows downwards. The players interpret the narrative using the semiotic resources in the cutscenes and dialogue. In games such as *The Walking Dead*, the player may have control to select specific choices such as clicking on narrative objects to obtain backstory or selecting dialogue choices to contribute to consequences where the PC's relationship with the other NPCs changes. A cognitive model of the narrative is formed in the four different levels of the proposed narrative analysis model. This cognitive model may or may not finally map to the narrative elements such as "characterisation", "characters", "plot", and "theme".

This model is integrated into the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven to highlight how the narrative side of the model contributes to the ludonarrative model, specifically the various (sub)categories of the ludonarrative relationships. All the narrative analysis performed on the gameplay recordings are used as one part of the model to build the ludonarrative model. For instance, the ludonarrative category such as "ludonarrative (ir)relevance: incomplete information problems" in Chapter 7 Section 7.3.3.3 is proposed based on insufficient multimodal cues to signal to the players that they can interact with the box of memories using Aiden to unlock backstory for the player. This model is also used to highlight the amount of narrative that the player uncovered when playing the game based on the analytical lenses used. This enables the

analyst to understand *how* and *why* different players understand the (narrative) structure of games differently.

Having summarised the proposed narrative analysis model for the creation of the ludonarrative model, in the next chapter, I will propose the model for gameplay analysis. The gameplay analysis model is used as the analytical lens when narrative interpretation in terms of the cognitive interpretation of scripted and non-scripted content is absent from the player when the player focuses on the gameplay.

## CHAPTER SIX

### VIDEO GAMEPLAY

#### 6.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the theoretical frameworks which are utilised for the video gameplay analysis. As I have discussed in Chapter Four Section 4.1.4, the video gameplay analysis framework proposed in this chapter is used as the analytical lens to conduct the multimodal discourse analysis on the gameplay recordings to create the interview questions to validate the ludonarrative categories in the model. Some of the analyses (e.g. Section 6.4.1.2) are used to create the subcategories of the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven, such as “ludonarrative dissonance demotivation” (Section 7.3.1.3). As defined in Chapter 1 Section 1.9, the gameplay is actualised as the player’s [ergodic] *actions*, *strategies*, and *motives* to *manipulate* the constituents of the gameworld during their interaction with the video game to overcome the *gameplay challenges* which are restricted by *rules*. Based on this definition, some of the video games in the study such as *The Walking Dead* and *Beyond: Two Souls* are less game-like and more narrative as there are fewer gameplay challenges (Tables 13 and 14).

As argued in the previous chapter, although the narrative is separated from the gameplay, it may not always be possible to separate both concepts. Therefore, the discussion in Chapter Five was also about gameplay, but defined in a different way in terms of the players’ cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative’s semiotic resources present in both the scripted and non-scripted sequences. Based on the above narrative and gameplay definitions, these two concepts are teased apart to enable the application of the multimodal discourse analysis framework for the analysis of the gameplay recordings to create the ludonarrative (sub)categories.

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first half of this chapter will include the discussion of the lower level constituents of the gameplay analysis model. Sections 6.1 and 6.2 provide the theoretical discussions of Montfort's (2003) model for interactive fiction and Heaton's (2006) model of gameplay respectively to provide the foundation for the proposal of the gameplay analysis model. In Section 6.3, Mette and Nils' (2013) IGMC and Yee's (2007) frameworks for understanding the player's motives are discussed. The empirical data from the game study's interviews enables the analyst to understand the player's motive(s) in choosing a specific gameplay action/pathway. The player's motive enables the analyst to understand *why* the player utilises specific types of instrumental and strategic actions during the gameplay. In Section 6.4, Manninen's (2003) types of *strategic actions* in multiplayer games are modified to analyse gameplay in single player games. In Section 6.5, Fabricatore's (2007) gameplay mechanics are used to build the *gameplay challenges* and *facilitating mechanics* in the model.

The second half of this chapter will include the discussion of the higher level constituents of the framework for gameplay analysis. The higher constituents include the analysis of the player's interaction with the gameplay on a macro level. "Meaning in video games is not produced through verbal and written language, sounds and images, but more characteristically through storyworlds and algorithms which the player is encouraged to interact" (Bruchansky, 2011). For these reasons, the model which is adopted for the analysis of the macro level of the gameplay integrates interactional discourse models. These models include Sinclair and Coulthard's (1975) and Martin and Rose's (2007) exchange structure, which are discussed in Section 6.6. They take into account the experiential dimension of the human interaction with the computer. Section 6.7 devotes a short segment to understand multi-linear gameplay. Section 6.8 applies the proposed gameplay analysis model to the gameplay recordings to show how it can be

used for the analysis and creation of the ludonarrative (sub)categories. Section 6.9 answers research question two. Section 6.10 summarises Chapter Six.

In the following sections, I will first discuss how prior theoretical frameworks have been utilised for discussing interaction in interactive fiction and games. This will enable a better understanding of how to modify the various frameworks, such as the exchange structure to analyse the player's interaction with the gameplay.

### **6.1 Montfort's (2003) interactional framework in interactive fiction**

In *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*, Montfort (2003: 25) mentions that “a work of IF is not itself a narrative; it is an interactive computer program”. Montfort proceeded to provide examples to demonstrate how a person interacts with interactive fiction. He suggests that there is an input and output which forms an exchange. Following Genette's (1980) terminology, Montfort (2003: 26) stated that “an input that refers to an action in the IF world is a *command*; this input is diegetic”. Commands are usually in the form of imperatives to the PC and does not have to refer to a physical action (Montfort, 2003: 26). Commands that fail but are still understood by the parser are still considered commands. An input which refers to several actions (e.g. take all) consists of several commands which are decomposed by the parser.

Montfort (2003: 26) proceeds to argue that all other inputs which consist of save, restore, quit, restart, changing the setting's details, or addressing an entity to ask for hints which are not part of the IF world are categorised as *directives*. Following Genette (1980), Montfort (2003: 26) categorised a directive as *extradiegetic*. Commands and directives are thus different sets.



Montfort (2003: 27) next discussed about outputs. He suggests that “outputs that follow input from the interactor and describe anything about the IF world and events in it (including the inability of the PC to enact a particular action as commanded) are *replies*” (Montfort, 2003: 27). It is a reply as long as it describes the IF world regardless of whether it is a direct result of what the interactor typed, or the event it described occurred because of a timed or random event. All other outputs that do not describe the IF world are *reports*. Montfort’s (2003) taxonomy of inputs and outputs, and the relationship between them and the roles of interactor and PC, are reproduced in Table 9 below.

	<b>Extradiegetic</b>	<b>Diegetic</b>
	Interactor	PC
<b>Input</b>	<b>Directive</b>	<b>Command</b>
e.g.	quit	pick up the phone booth
<b>Output</b>	<b>Report</b>	<b>Reply</b>
e.g.	Are you sure you want to quit?	You find nothing of interest there.

Table 9 Montfort’s (2003) two level of diegesis

Montfort (2003) also suggests that there are higher units of interaction with IF. For instance, an exchange is made up of one command and the reply that follows it. An exchange also corresponds to a cycle just like how command and reply correspond to input and output. A series of exchanges that are part of the same narration, and presented with all the embedded directives and reports, makes up a *course*. A single course can extend across several sessions and also across several interactions. Finally, at the highest level, a *traversal* of an IF work is a course extending from a prologue to a final reply, and from an initial situation to a final situation. Montfort’s (2003) different units of interaction with IF is shown in Figure 38 below.

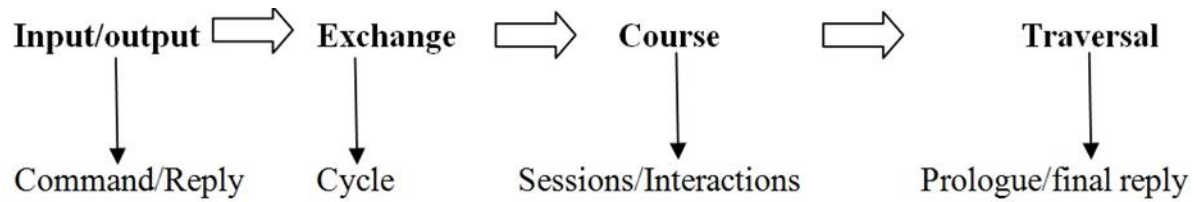


Figure 38 Montfort's (2003) units of interaction with IF.

## 6.2 Heaton's (2006) circular model of gameplay

Heaton (2006) develops a theoretical model of how gameplay works in practice. His model is abstract and aims to be universal, which is applicable to any type of game. Heaton states that "its starting point is that gameplay is a property of all games and is a set of interactions between the player and the game, and the model is focused on the player and the player's actions" (Heaton, 2006). Only when a game is linked to a human agent is there gameplay.

The model contains two components, the player and the game. The player is a human who has elected to play and the game is a system that the player interacts with. Everything which is not the player is part of the game, including other players. All information is conveyed to the player through clearly defined output channels and the player's actions are conveyed through clearly defined input channels (Heaton, 2006).

Gameplay occurs when the player interacts with the game. The interaction in this model is circular, it is a flow of information from the game to the player and from the player back to the game. The flow is always in the same direction and no stage can be missed (Heaton, 2006). The initial gameplay interaction model is as shown in Figure 39.

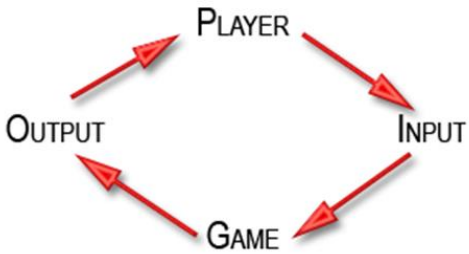


Figure 39 Initial gameplay model (Heaton, 2006) (Source: [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a\\_circular\\_model\\_of\\_gameplay.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a_circular_model_of_gameplay.php) Accessed: 23 Jun 2015)

The model also uses only one player and the game when applied to a multiplayer game. Heaton (2006) further develops the gameplay model. He suggests that three things must happen for gameplay to be present. First, the player must be able to get information about the state of the game. Second, the player must be able to affect the game, creating new game states. Third, new game states must be communicated to the player, prompting further actions. Furthermore, in almost all types of games, the game creates new states without the player's input. New states can be created from other players and through random procedurally generated gameplay events. The updated gameplay model is shown in Figure 40 below, with the interface as part of the model.

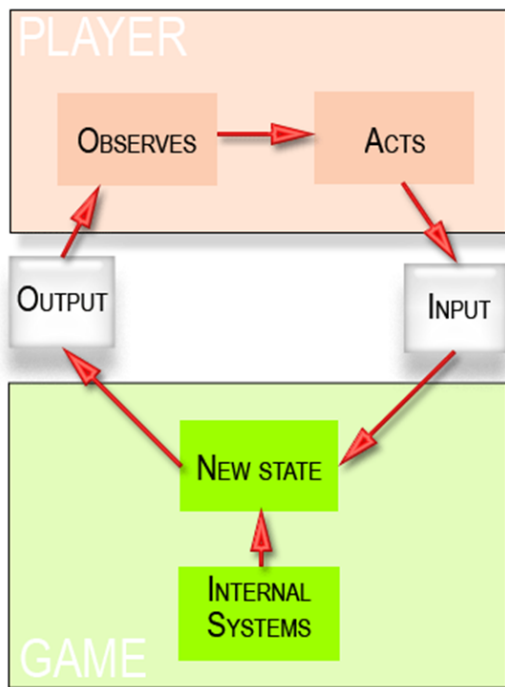


Figure 40 The updated gameplay model incorporating the player’s observation, action and interface (Heaton, 2006) (Source: [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a\\_circular\\_model\\_of\\_gameplay.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a_circular_model_of_gameplay.php) Accessed: 23 Jun 2015)

Heaton (2006) continues to develop the model once more to take into account the player’s decision-making process, which takes place between observation and action. Heaton (2006) suggests that in each cycle of the model, there is only one decision made. A key feature of gameplay in Heaton’s (2006) model is that the player is repeatedly making decisions. Between observation and action, the player uses analytical skills. The player analyses the current and potential future states of the game which inform the player’s decision. The player then attempts to make the best course of action. At the end of the analysis stage, the player makes a decision. The player may also fail to act where a decision was possible. The player’s analytical skills support the decision. After the decision has been made, the player uses another set of skills to implement the decision. Anyone can make a game-related decision, but the skills required to

bring that decision about are what distinguishes between a good and a bad player. Action games tend to test the player's implementation skills, while strategy games tend to test for analytical skills. Heaton's (2006) complete model is reproduced in Figure 41.

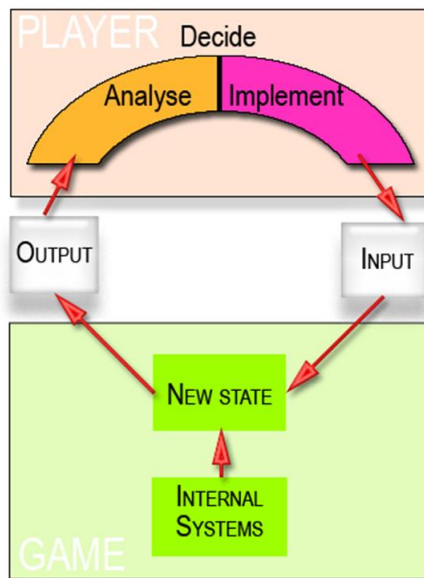


Figure 41 Heaton's (2006) complete gameplay model incorporating the player's decision-making

Heaton (2006) also mentions that each cycle has only one decision and implementation within it. If many decisions are made at once, the model may be applied many times in the same time span of the game.

The limitations of the model are as follows. The gameplay model is best suited for the analysis of turn-based games such as chess. The reason is that the analysis, decision and implementation are obvious and clearly demarcated (Heaton, 2006). But when one analyses a real-time game, things are more difficult. There are overlapping gameplay cycles and the game itself does not have clearly separated phases. The model is also a deliberate simplification and it is challenging to find out the sort of decisions the player is making to see the scale of analysis and implementation required.

Heaton (2006) terms a single complete cycle as a unit of interaction. Each unit of interaction requires analysis, decision, implementation and change in game state. The unit of interaction can be used as a means to test the game to see if they have given the player enough time to make decisions before they act. The model developed is descriptive rather than prescriptive. The model is also an atomic model which describes gameplay in a stripped down and obvious way. Its main purpose is to be used as a building block from which to construct larger scale and less-obvious theories of how games work. The benefits for game designers is that the model's circularity creates regular patterns of thought and action in the player, who repeatedly makes decisions which are similar but unique. If the game designer is able to analyse the gameplay patterns of different players, it would be possible to design new games which cater to the players' decision-making to further facilitate or challenge the player.

Having reviewed prior frameworks used to analyse interactive fiction and games, the next section discusses the player's motive(s). The player's motive(s) are used to understand *why* a player performs a specific gameplay action.

### **6.3 The Player's Motive(s)**

Mette & Nils' (2013) concept of narratification to unify narrative and gameplay is useful to understand the contextual factors which interlink the player with the PC. The application of narrative methods, the *Goal, Motivation and Conflict* (GMC) to the player is shown in Table 10 below. *Goal* is defined by Juul (2013) as what the player of a game strives for. A goal is an assignment of value to the possible game outcomes. The *goal* refers to the game not as an object, but as an activity. *Motivation* is defined as "the processes that can energise and give direction or purpose to behaviour" (Wlodkowski, 1989). In psychology, *motivation* is "a global concept for a

variety of processes and effects whose common core is the *realisation* that an organism selects a particular behaviour because of expected consequences, and then implements it with some measure of energy, along a particular path” (Heckhausen & Heckhausen, 1991: 9). Conflict is the challenge(s) that the player faces when playing the game. Mette & Nils (2013) also distinguish between external and internal factors in the respective categories of goal, motivation and conflict for the character. External factors relate to the physical context while internal factors refer to the character’s psychology.

<b>Video Game</b>	<b>Player</b>	<b>Character</b>
<b>Goal</b>		External: Internal:
<b>Motivation</b>	(1) Investigating (2) Empathetic identification with character (3) Fun and challenging (4) Atmosphere	External: Internal:
<b>Conflict</b>		External: Internal:

Table 10 Mette & Nils’ (2013) Interactive, Goal, Motivation and Conflict (IGMC) framework

However, the analyst also needs a framework to understand the player’s motivation. Mette & Nils’ IGMC framework does not provide a detailed taxonomy of player’s motivation, as it is an initial proposal. Hence, I integrate Yee’s taxonomy of player motivations in online games with Mette & Nils’ IGMC framework. Although Yee’s (2007) framework of motivations of play is catered to online games, some of his categories such as “achievement” and “immersion” are applicable to the analysis of the player’s motive(s) in *The Walking Dead*, *Bioshock*, *Mass Effect*, *TLOU*, and *Beyond: Two Souls*. Yee’s (2007) framework of player motivations is

multidimensional and consists of the categories of achievement, social, and immersion. Yee's (2007) taxonomy of player's motivation is reproduced in Figure 42 below.

<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Immersion</b>
<b>Advancement</b> Progress, Power, Accumulation, Status	<b>Socializing</b> Casual Chat, Helping Others, Making Friends	<b>Discovery</b> Exploration, Lore, Finding Hidden Things
<b>Mechanics</b> Numbers, Optimization, Templating, Analysis	<b>Relationship</b> Personal, Self-Disclosure, Find and Give Support	<b>Role-Playing</b> Story Line, Character History, Roles, Fantasy
<b>Competition</b> Challenging Others, Provocation, Domination	<b>Teamwork</b> Collaboration, Groups, Group Achievements	<b>Customization</b> Appearances, Accessories, Style, Color Schemes
		<b>Escapism</b> Relax, Escape from RL, Avoid RL Problems

Figure 42 Yee's (2007) taxonomy of player's motivation in online games

The definitions of the components under each category are as follows. Under the *achievement* motivation, there are advancement, mechanics and competition. Advancement refers to “the desire to gain power, progress rapidly, and accumulate in-game symbols of wealth or status” (Yee, 2007). Mechanics refer to “having an interest in analysing the underlying rules and system to optimise character performance” (Yee, 2007). Competition refers to “the desire to challenge and compete with others” (Yee, 2007). Related to this study, *achievement* motivation is correlated with *gameplay* motivation. *Social* motivation is not applicable to the study so it is not discussed.

Under *immersion* motivation, are discovery, role-playing, customisation and escapism. Discovery refers to “finding and knowing things that most other players don't know about” (Yee, 2007). Role-playing refers to “creating a persona with a background story and interacting with other players to create an improvised story” (Yee, 2007). Customisation refers to “having an



interest in customising the appearance of their character” (Yee, 2007). Escapism refers to “using the online environment to avoid thinking about real life problems” (Yee, 2007). Related to this study, *immersion* motivation is correlated with *narrative* motivation.

Having discussed the frameworks for the player’s motive(s), the next section discusses Manninen’s (2003) interaction forms and communicative actions in multiplayer games. Manninen’s (2003) model is used as a basis to construct the framework for the lower level analysis of the player’s gameplay micro (instrumental and strategic) actions in single player games.

#### **6.4 Manninen’s (2003) Interaction Forms and Communicative Actions**

Manninen (2003) proposed a model of interaction forms for analysing communicative and social aspects of computer-mediated gaming. His work was conducted using conceptual analysis, by applying the Communicative Action Theory (CAT) as the framework. CAT consists of six main types of social actions available to participants. These actions are (1) instrumental, (2) strategic, (3) normatively regulated, (4) dramaturgical, (5) communicative, and (6) discursive action. Further subcategories of interaction actions under these top-level interaction categories are as follows: Autonomous/AI category, Avatar Appearance, Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour, Environmental Details and Setting Modifications.

Some of the communication actions are modified for the analysis of the single-player video games in this study and I will discuss them briefly. In my study, communication actions become interaction actions with the gameplay in the absence of other human players. As seen below, language-based interaction in video games only occupy one of the categories selected from Manninen’s (2003) model. This shows that “the majority of interaction forms in video

games were not based on language, but rather, they were based on the actions and non-verbal behaviour of the players involved” (Manninen, 2003). The selected interaction forms from Manninen’s (2003) model discussed in this section are incorporated into the integrated gameplay model discussed in Section 6.6 to indicate the specific type of actions that the player utilises in a specific moment to interact with the gameplay. These actions include the player’s action initiation or the player’s resultant action. Empirical data from the interviews, players’ reflections, audio commentary, and gameplay recordings are used to provide examples for each category towards the aim of developing the ludonarrative model.

#### **6.4.1 Instrumental Actions**

Instrumental actions occur in the non-social world, and are performed by players to advance their personal interests. “Individuals seek to bring about a desired circumstance by behaving according to the technical rules derived from their technical knowledge or from theoretical models” (Manninen, 2003). Instrumental actions are more instinctive and usually do not require preplanning by the player but involves implementation. The main concern is the realisation of a goal by selecting an action from alternatives. The basic actions can include killing monsters to gain experience points and collecting treasures dropped from slain monsters. Other actions include puzzle solving or exploration to find a specific item or character to facilitate the player’s overcoming of the gameplay obstacles/challenges. In the *Bioshock’s* game study, Loke mentioned that he is motivated by investigation (Mette & Nils, 2013) and exploration (Yee, 2007) instead of relying on the narrative to find the location of the incinerate plasmid to melt the ice obstacles at the doors (**Transcript 6.9** in Appendix A).

The reason was that the narrative given in the audio logs, such as “The Freezing Pipes” did not provide him with explicit instructions on where to find the incinerate plasmid. The audio log only gave him hints that he has to find something to melt the ice but not where to find it. The analysis here provides data to build the ludonarrative subcategory “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” in Chapter Seven. The transcript for “The Freezing Pipes” audio log can be found in **Transcript 6.10** in Appendix A.

Time sensitive instrumental gameplay action is sometimes given together with the narrative but left implicit. For instance, in *TLOU*, Alice mentioned that she discovered the time limit to catch Robert only when she failed the objective within a time limit (**Transcript 3.38** in Appendix A). The narrative showed Robert taunting the player, followed by his action of throwing his revolver at the player, and finally his action of running away. The multimodal characterisation of Robert in the narrative was implicitly hinting to the player that s/he has a time limit to catch Robert before the game ends in failure. However, Alice was unable to form the link given in the narrative to the gameplay. The analysis creates the ludonarrative subcategory “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – guidance” in Chapter Seven.

#### ***6.4.1.1 Instrumental Actions - Environmental Details and Setting Modifications***

These actions involve interaction with the environment to achieve an advantage and they are more instinctive. For instance, the player may break interactive objects to collect consumables, or activate a bridge to gain access to a quest location. Artefact based interaction such as collecting health packs to restore lost hit points forms one of the basic actions in game settings that revolve around material products. In the *Bioshock's* game study, Loke utilises the environment to fight the Big Daddy by jumping back and forth between a barrier so that the

enemy cannot reach him (Figure 43). The participants in *TLOU*' study, Nasir, Walter and Alice throw bottles (Figure 44) or bricks to distract the enemies so that they can sneak pass them or use stealth kills to eliminate them. These players' actions are motivated by the fun and challenge in the gameplay (Mette & Nils, 2013). When fighting the enemies, the players do not usually focus on the narrative. The analysis here builds the ludonarrative category “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” in Chapter Seven.



Figure 43 Environmental Instrumental actions in *Bioshock*

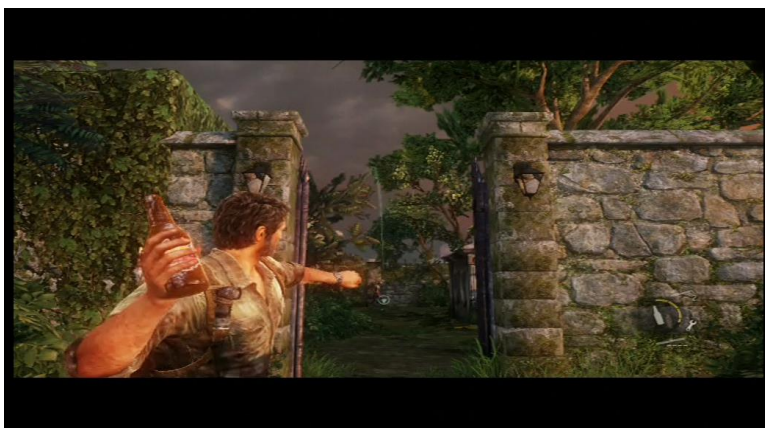


Figure 44 Environmental Instrumental actions in *TLOU*

#### ***6.4.1.2 Instrumental Actions – PC Upgrades***

These actions involve interaction with the PC(s) to achieve a gameplay advantage and they are more instinctive and do not involve strategic thinking. These actions upgrade the PC based on the obligatory gameplay goals. This type of upgrade is similar to the category of weapon upgrades performed solely by the game (Toh, 2015). Character upgrades are subsumed under character customisation. They do not provide choice to the player, so there is a lack of player agency. Upgrades performed are also irreversible. For instance, in a mission in the latter half of *Bioshock*, the PC is given a gameplay goal through the narrative to find the different parts of the Big Daddy suit to transform his character into a Big Daddy. He needs to become a Big Daddy so that the Little Sisters will help him through the museum level to reach the antagonist, Frank Fontaine for the final fight. Donning a powerful suit, such as the Big Daddy armour in *Bioshock* enables the player to possess an instrumental advantage over the enemies. For instance, Big Daddy's body suit provides a twenty five percent resistance to all damage while wearing it (Figure 45). The player's actions in this category are guided by advancement – gameplay progress and power (Yee, 2007).

However, based on the interviews, the player, John highlighted that the narrative was actually demotivating him as it was slowing down the gameplay by asking him to perform repetitive gameplay actions without offering new variety in the gameplay or offering a significant gameplay reward by becoming a Big Daddy (**Transcript 6.7** in Appendix A). This analysis creates the subcategory of “ludonarrative dissonance – demotivation” in Chapter Seven.



Figure 45 PC upgrades

### ***6.4.1.3 Instrumental Actions - Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour***

These are instrumental actions utilised by the player. In *TLOU* and *Mass Effect*, the players may utilise micro actions, such as crouching, to hide under cover to reduce their chances of being shot at by the enemies in the gameworld (Figures 46 & 47). These actions are instinctive and do not require preplanning. The player's actions are motivated by atmosphere (Mette & Nils, 2013). Furthermore, Walter mentioned that in *TLOU*, the PC's companion, Ellie, is able to integrate into his PC (**Transcript 6.11** in Appendix A) by taking cover with him (Figure 47).



Figure 46 Crouching under cover in *Mass Effect*



Figure 47 Crouching under cover in *TLOU*

#### **6.4.1.4 Instrumental Actions - Language-based communication**

These actions are present in game communities who support and value the communication aspects of playing (e.g. RPGs). In *The Witcher 2*, *Mass Effect*, *Beyond: Two Souls*, and *The Walking Dead*, the player may select different dialogue options. These dialogue choices enable the PC to influence the other character(s) to provide a different dialogue response or to physically react differently. Language based instrumental actions include the scenario where the player does not have sufficient time to think of the answer or is under a time-imposed

restriction (Figure 48) to choose a dialogue option. Time-based restriction frequently occurs in *The Walking Dead*:

[TWD file 10 Holy Shit [Mary] 40:07]

Mary: Damn what should I say? They are all bad options. The options are all bad.

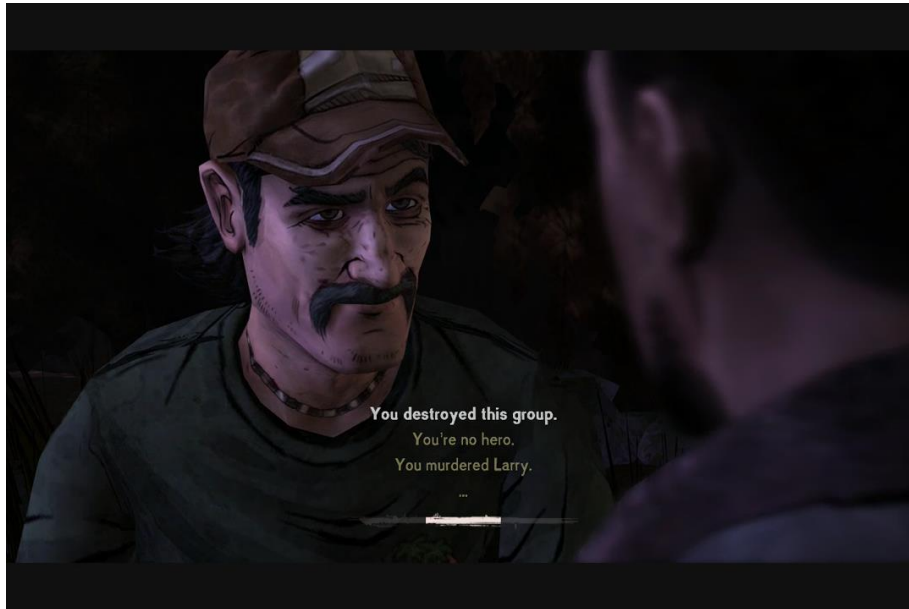


Figure 48 Language based instrumental actions in *The Walking Dead*

Based on the empirical data from the interviews, time-imposed restrictions for dialogue choices may make it easier or harder for players to make decisions. On the one hand, Jim mentioned that when making the decisions under a time restriction, it will make it harder for him to make the choice. The reason is that he has to immerse himself more in the PC, Lee Everett's narrative role in *The Walking Dead* to understand his perspective. In doing so, he is motivated by empathetic identification with character (Mette & Nils, 2013):



[ 26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 7 pm [Jim] 37:05]

Interviewer: So does it make it easier for you to make the decision or does it make it harder?

Jim: Harder to be honest. Stress your morality. You only have limited choice, limited amount of time to decide who to save, what to do, it happened that you have to decide quickly.

On the other hand, Mary mentioned that it will be easier to make the decision in *The Walking Dead* as the time restriction made her choice more instinctive as she did not have much time to think of which choice to make. She is motivated by the realistic atmosphere (Mette & Nils, 2013) in which the time restriction creates (**Transcript 5.3** in Appendix A).

#### **6.4.2 Strategic Actions**

A strategy is defined by Juul (2013) as “a set of principles that a player uses to play a game”. “Goal-oriented strategic action occurs in the social world and involves two or more individuals, comprehending that they are anchored in a social context, who seek to bring about a desired state of affairs” (Manninen, 2003). In the proposed framework, I modify strategic actions to also occur in the non-social world and where the player utilises actions to take advantage of the environment or unit strengths to overcome the opposition. Strategic actions require preplanning such as analytical thinking and hence take more time to implement. In real-time strategy games, more direct strategic actions are required, while a continuum of strategic actions exist in MMORPG to Action Role-Playing Games (RPGs). These actions are motivated by mechanics (Yee, 2007) where the players analyse various aspects of the game to achieve their goals. The subcategories below outline the specific strategic actions.

### 6.4.2.1 Strategic Actions - Environmental Details and Setting Modifications

These are actions that take advantage of the environment to facilitate the player's elimination of the opposition, overcoming of the gameplay obstacles or discovering and unlocking a hidden area. These actions require deliberation and may require some time to set up. They are motivated by investigation (Mette and Nils, 2013), exploration (Yee, 2007), and analysis (Yee, 2007). In *Bioshock* where there is the presence of interactive environments in the gameplay, players may lure groups of enemies into a spatial location such as a pool of water before electrifying the water using the shock plasmid power to kill all the enemies simultaneously. Mary was able to solve the puzzle in *Bioshock*'s level in Arcadia by using the incinerate plasmid to light up the second torchlight on the wall which unlocks a hidden area offering gameplay rewards (Figures 49 & 50). She made use of analytical thinking during gameplay and did not want to progress the scripted narrative sequence at that time when the Houdini Splicer was trying to get her attention (**Transcript 6.12** in Appendix A). The analysis here provides data for the ludonarrative category “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus”.

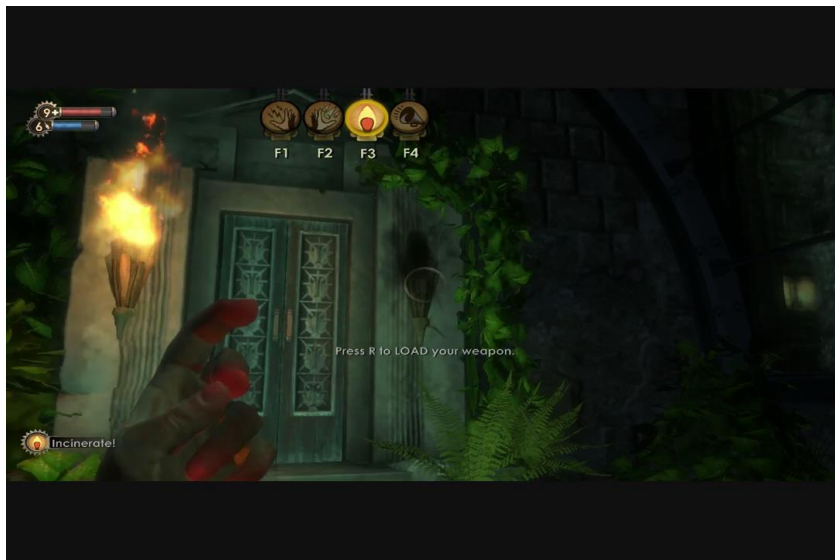


Figure 49 Strategic environmental action in *Bioshock* – using incinerate plasmid

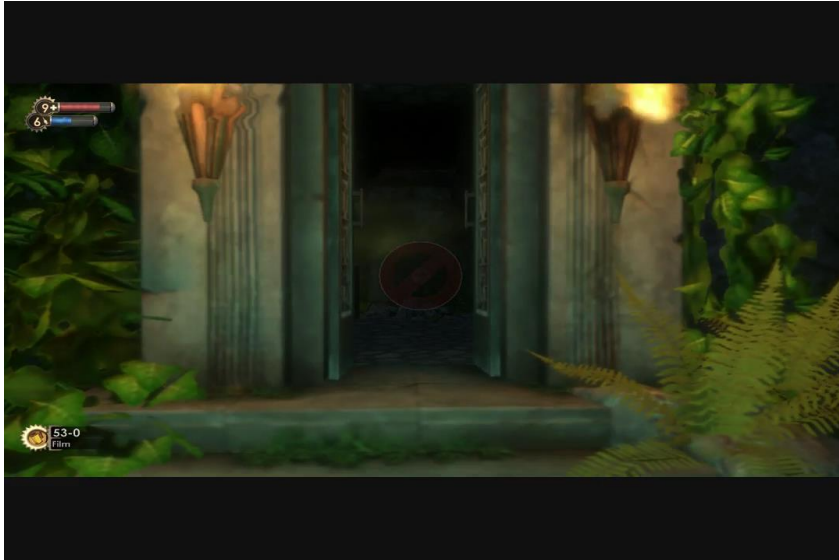


Figure 50 Strategic environmental action in *Bioshock* – Solving the puzzle

#### **6.4.2.2 Strategic Actions - PC Customisation**

These actions involve interaction with the PC(s) to achieve a gameplay advantage. Character customisation is a broader category that includes character upgrades. But it is more deliberate and involves strategic (analytical) thinking. This type of customisation is similar to the category of weapon customisation performed by the player (Toh, 2015) and may or may not be reversible. Reversible character customisation enables the player to experiment with different play styles. These actions are motivated by fun and challenge (Mette & Nils, 2013), and mechanics (Yee, 2007). For instance, in *Bioshock*, the player could choose to alter their equipped plasmids and gene tonics and mix and match different active plasmids with different passive plasmid powers at the Gene Bank. This type of character customisation is reversible. In *Mass Effect*, character customisation is done separately in the character window, and the player could choose gameplay points to add for specific abilities, such as weapon specialisation, class specific powers, paragon and renegade points, and so on. In *TLOU*, character customisation which

includes skill and weapon upgrades are irreversible. Thus, the player would require some deliberations on which weapons and skills to upgrade for his/her character. For instance, Nasir commented during the gameplay that he chose to upgrade the shotgun's recoil as he thinks that the upgrade will make it more accurate:

[*TLOU* Session 3 Part 3 2014-07-01 [Nasir] 02:26]

I'm guessing this will make it more accurate. mm why not.

The player may not understand the feedback given through the fictional representations of the objects in the gameworld during the process of crafting and customising equipments. When this occurs, the players will tend to treat the fictional representations as being irrelevant to their gameplay action of crafting and perform the gameplay actions using trial and error (**Transcript 3.32** in Appendix A). The analysis here creates the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance: metaphor” in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.3.4.

#### **6.4.2.3 Strategic Actions – Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour**

These are strategic actions performed by the player. These actions are deliberate and involve reflection by the player whether they want to perform the actions. These actions involve micro-managing the squad mates in *Mass Effect* (**Transcript 5.37** in Appendix A). They are motivated by analysis (Yee, 2007). In *TLOU*, Nasir deliberated during the play through whether he wanted to shoot the Clickers and finally decided upon it as he commented that he needs to practice aiming:

[*TLOU* Session 3 Part 6 2014-07-01 [Nasir] 01:05]

Nasir: Think I'll try. I need more practice shooting, I'll try just shooting.

In *The Walking Dead*, Henry, deliberated during the gameplay about the player actions that he has to undertake to overcome the zombies. The zombies are obstructing his gameplay goal of reaching the woman trapped in the room to save her. He was thinking of the actions he can take to overcome the zombies in his way (**Transcript 5.10** in Appendix A).

#### ***6.4.2.4 Strategic Actions - Language-based communication***

Language-based strategic actions include critical moments in the game where the player takes time to think of which dialogue options to choose in careful consideration of the gameplay outcome. For instance, in choosing one of the dialogue options, the player sacrifices one of the other characters to die so they will never appear again. The other character's death not only ends their narrative, but also results in the player's loss of their gameplay abilities to facilitate the gameplay fights. This occurs in *Mass Effect* where Michael chose to sacrifice Kaidan instead of Ashley, after careful consideration of the situation (**Transcript 6.13** in Appendix A), by taking on the perspective of Commander Shepherd (Figure 51). These actions are motivated by empathetic identification with character (Mette & Nils, 2013), analysis (Yee, 2007) and role-play (Yee, 2007). In this category, narrative interpretation is highlighted through the REFLECTING frame where the participants explained why they make a specific dialogue choice. The analysis builds the ludonarrative subcategory "ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration" in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.9 when narrative interpretation and gameplay action occur together.



Figure 51 Language based strategic action in *Mass Effect*

The type of instrumental and strategic actions discussed in Section 6.4 is summarised in Tables 11 and 12 respectively below:

Type of Action	Description
Instrumental Actions	Instinctive.
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications	Interaction with the environment/object to obtain gameplay advantage.
PC Upgrades	PC(s)' upgrade to obtain gameplay advantage. Irreversible as the upgrade is performed by the game.
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour	Controlling the character's movement or actions to obtain gameplay advantage.
Language-Based	Selecting dialogue choices under time restriction with minimal

Communication	thinking.
---------------	-----------

Table 11 Instrumental actions

Type of Action	Description
Strategic Actions	Requires thinking.
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications	Puzzle solving, thinking up of gameplay strategies using the environment to overcome the enemies or obstacles.
PC Customisation	Broader category that encompasses character upgrades. May or may not be reversible. Reversible customisation enables players to experiment with different play styles.
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour	Movement and body actions that require deliberation whether the player wants to perform them.
Language-Based Communication	Influence the other characters' response (Actions or language). Critical gameplay moments when other character is sacrificed.

Table 12 Strategic Actions

### 6.5 Fabricatore's (2007) model of gameplay mechanics

Fabricatore (2007) proposes a model of gameplay mechanics. Fabricatore's (2007) model and my addition to it is represented in Figure 52 below.

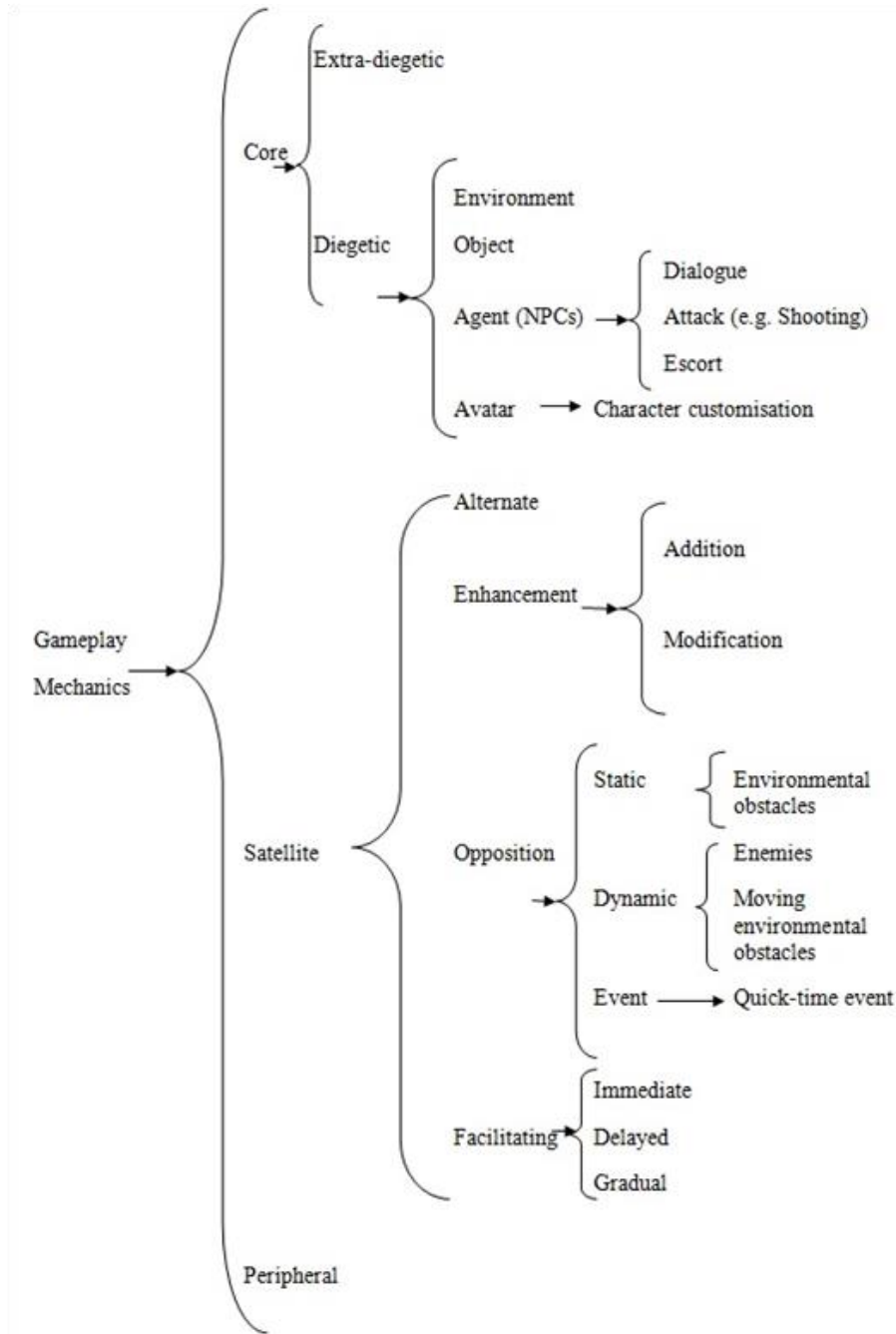


Figure 52 Fabricatore's (2007) modified model of gameplay mechanics

His model is player-centric and he defines “core gameplay as the set of activities that the player will undertake more frequently during the game experience, and which are indispensable to win the game”. Core game mechanics are defined as the game mechanics which allow the carrying out of the core gameplay activities, and they are “the most important in the game, since



players will have to deal with them during most of their play experience”. Core gameplay mechanics can be subdivided into two main categories - diegetic and extra-diegetic player’s actions. Diegetic player’s actions can be subdivided into those which involve interaction with the game “environment, object or agent” (NPCs) (Pinchbeck, 2009: 252) and those in which the interaction is involved with aspects of the player’s avatar or centred on the player’s avatar.

In first-person shooters such as *Bioshock*, the core gameplay mechanic encompasses all the player’s diegetic gameplay actions which include shooting, interacting with the environment, hacking in-game objects, etc (Table 13). Because *Bioshock* also incorporates role-playing elements, role-playing core gameplay mechanics introducing diegetic gameplay actions such as character customisation, and choosing to save or harvest the NPCs called The Little Sisters, etc are also present (Table 13). The player’s extra-diegetic actions outside of the gameworld include pressing the keyboard or the mouse to control the PC, and activating the menu to read the gameplay objectives or the map. Gameplay actions such as pressing the mouse or keyboard button to save the game or adjust the game settings are also extra-diegetic gameplay actions.

The definition of gameplay according to the player’s actions is discussed in Section 6.4 and challenges in Section 6.5 as a form of mechanic. Following the definition, some of the player’s core gameplay actions inside the gameworld and challenges for the five video games analysed in this study are summarised in Tables 13 and 14 below. Challenges are taken to be equivalent to opposition mechanics in Fabricatore’s (2007) modified model of gameplay mechanics. The supporting empirical data from the interviews can be found in Appendix A as follows – *Bioshock* (Transcripts 5.12 – 5.22), *The Walking Dead* (Transcripts 5.23 – 5.28), *Mass Effect* (Transcripts 5.29, 5.31 – 5.39), *TLOU* (Transcripts 5.40 – 5.41, 5.47), and *Beyond: Two Souls* (Transcripts 5.48 – 5.49).

<i>Bioshock</i>		<i>Mass Effect</i>		<i>The Walking Dead</i>	
<b>Core Mechanics</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Core Mechanics</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Core Mechanics</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
FPS, switching weapons and powers	Boss fights, e.g. Big Daddy and Frank Fontaine	Third person shooting, infinite ammo, learning/choosing weapons/ powers through UI	Boss fights, e.g. Thorian, Saren & Benezia	FPS (Very few instances, e.g. episodes 2 & 4)	
Character gameplay customisation	Enemy attacks, e.g. Splicers	PC/squad customisation – class, skill points	Enemy attacks, e.g. Husks, Geth, Krogan, etc.		
Environmental interaction, e.g. open doors, pick up objects, operate lever	Scripted (Timed) gameplay events, e.g. mini games	Environmental Interaction, e.g. open doors and containers	Timed gameplay events, e.g. mini games	Environmental Interaction though point and click	Timed (narrative) event, e.g. dialogue, interaction, QTEs
Saving or harvesting Little Sisters	Obtaining desired narrative ending	Character Interactions – side quests/ Dialogue options/Morality system, e.g. Paragon and Renegade	Obtaining desired dialogue responses	Character Interactions/ Dialogue options	Obtaining desired dialogue responses
Movement, e.g. static or dynamic	Achieving gameplay goals	Movement, e.g. crouching, static or dynamic (walking vs running); taking cover	Achieving gameplay goals, e.g. primary and side missions/quests	Movement, e.g. static, crouching or moving stealthily (Scripted)	
Exploration		Exploration (using Mako)/Using maps	Moving around the map	Exploration	
Hacking mini game	Environmental obstacles (Locked objects)	Decryption mini game	Environmental obstacles (Locked objects)		Environmental obstacles (Locked objects)
Escort NPCs, e.g. Little Sisters		Micro managing squad members	Micro managing AI characters		

Table 13 Some core gameplay actions and challenges (PC games)

<i>Beyond: Two Souls</i>		<i>TLOU</i>	
<b>Core Mechanics</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Core Mechanics</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Jodie & Aiden (Switching of control between them)	Highly scripted boss fights, e.g. Asian general	Third person shooting, stealth attacks, melee attacks, choosing weapons/ powers, limited carrying capacity	Boss fights & enemy attacks, e.g. Bloater and David
		Character customisation (though obtaining gameplay objects like pills and training manuals by scavenging to upgrade character and weapons)	Achieving gameplay goals, e.g using stealth to sneak past enemies, performing stealth kills
Different point and click interaction using Jodie (inducing flashback, dialogue) and Aiden (possession of enemies) through PS3 controller	Timed (narrative) event, e.g. dialogue, interaction, QTEs	Environmental interaction, e.g. open doors, pick up objects, operate lever, activating torchlight using PS3 controller	(Scripted) Implicit timed gameplay events, QTEs
Character Interactions/ Dialogue options	Obtaining desired dialogue responses	Character Interactions/ Dialogue	
Movement, e.g. static or dynamic (walking vs running), crouching, moving stealthily (scripted)	Environmental obstacles (Locked objects)	Movement, e.g. crouching, static, or dynamic (walking vs running); taking cover	Environmental obstacles (Locked objects & puzzles)
Exploration	Figuring out PS3 controller	Exploration/Scavenging	Figuring out PS3 controller

Table 14 Some core gameplay actions and challenges (PS3 games)

Fabricatore (2007) defines satellite game mechanics as those aimed at enhancing already existing activities by enriching the core gameplay without increasing its complexity. Satellite mechanics include enhancement, alternate and opposition mechanics. Only opposition and enhancement mechanics are used in this study so only these two will be explained. Enhancement mechanics are defined as mechanics designed to enhance the already-existing core gameplay mechanics (Fabricatore, 2007). Enhancement mechanics are subdivided into *addition* and *modification*. Addition enhancement mechanics add new features to existing mechanics. Enhancement mechanics can be added to both facilitating mechanics (defined later in this section) and opposition mechanics. When *added* to facilitating mechanics, it adds new functionality to the player's weapons (Toh, 2015) or armour. For instance, in *Mass Effect*, anti-organic ammunition deals more damage to Rachni and Thorian Creepers while anti-personnel and shredder rounds deal more damage to living targets. *Modification* enhancement mechanics change an already existing feature of gameplay mechanics (Fabricatore, 2007). In *Bioshock* (Irrational Games, 2007), the player's weapon could be modified at the "Power to the People" vending machines found throughout Rapture. After the upgrade, the weapon could either hold more ammunition, fire with a longer range, increase its damage or consume less ammunition, and so on.

When new *addition* enhancement mechanics are added to opposition mechanics, enemies will possess new types of attacks, increasing the challenge. For instance, in *TLOU*, the different stages of infection resulted in different types of Infected. The first three types of Infected are known as Runners, Stalkers, and Clickers, which correspond to the infection stages one, two, and three respectively. These enemies only have melee attacks. The final fourth stage of infection creates the boss enemy known as the Bloater, which possesses an additional range attack. When new *modification* enhancement mechanics are added to opposition mechanics, the enemy will be

able deal more powerful attacks to the player. For instance, in the Hephaestus level of *Bioshock*, the enemies hit harder and are also harder to kill as the player approaches the antagonist, Andrew Ryan's office.

Opposition mechanics are defined as “powerful means of enhancing the challenge in a game (Fabricatore, 2007). Their main function is to hinder the players' progress. They offer a different type of challenge to the players as they have to learn to avoid or master such a gameplay mechanic to overcome it rather than to use it. An example of an opposition mechanic, the QTEs (Chapter One Section 1.5.4.1) can be found in *The Witcher 2*, *The Walking Dead*, *Beyond: Two Souls*, and *TLOU*. The player needs to understand how the QTEs function to progress the gameplay. Specifically, s/he needs to know that fast reflexes and the correct keyboard button needs to be pressed at the precise moment when the prompt appears onscreen to progress the interactive narrative or gameplay sequence. In this study, opposition mechanics are subdivided into three categories. These are *static* opposition mechanics, *dynamic* opposition mechanics, and *event* based opposition mechanics discussed below.

*Static* opposition mechanic is concerned with environmental obstacles. This includes locked containers in *Mass Effect* and *TLOU*, blocked passageways in *Bioshock*, *Beyond: Two Souls*, and *TLOU* and traversing water bodies in *TLOU*. To overcome these challenges, the player has to find or use another in-game object such as keys or new powers to overcome the obstacles. Sometimes, the in-game objects used to overcome the static opposition mechanics are found on dynamic opposition mechanics such as enemies. In *TLOU*, Ellie is a key NPC that not only helps but is also helped by the PC to traverse the water bodies (**Transcript 3.62** in Appendix A).

*Dynamic* challenges include environmental obstacles that can move about or involve AI enemies. Because dynamic opposition mechanics can move about, it poses a higher challenge to the player compared to static opposition mechanics. Dynamic challenges also increase in difficulty as the player progresses the gameplay. For instance, in the first few gameplay phases (Section 6.6.3), the player encounters easier enemies that can be killed in a few attack moves (Section 6.6.1). However, as the player reaches the peak of each gameplay phase, s/he usually has to overcome a boss enemy before s/he can enter the next gameplay phase. These boss enemies include the Big Daddies in *Bioshock* and the Bloater in *TLOU* who guard highly valued resources or the goal. When boss enemies are defeated, the player is provided access to the facilitating mechanics, rewards, or goal. These facilitating mechanics, depending on the player's choice of gameplay action(s) can be immediate, gradual or delayed (discussed below).

*Event* based opposition mechanics include time-based events and some dialogue options. For instance, in some of the dialogues in *The Walking Dead*, the player has to make a dialogue choice within a limited time period (**Transcript 3.11** in Appendix A). In *TLOU*, there is an implicit timed gameplay event where the player has to catch Robert before it fails and the player has to restart from a saved file (**Transcript 3.38** in Appendix A). In *Mass Effect*, there is an explicit timed gameplay event where the player has to defuse a number of bombs on Eden Prime within a time limit.

Opposition mechanics can interact with each other to create more complex gameplay mechanics. For instance, an event-based challenge such as pressing the correct keyboard button at the precise moment when the prompt appears onscreen can interact with dynamic challenges such as enemy attacks in *The Witcher 2* to enhance the difficulty of a QTE.

In addition to *opposition* mechanics, I include the category of *facilitating* mechanics which I define as those mechanics which function to aid the player's gameplay progress. Facilitating mechanics can be *immediate*, *delayed*, *gradual* or a mixture. *Immediate* facilitating mechanics refer to gameplay rewards which can exist in the form of bonus points or benefits to the PC. *Immediate* facilitating mechanics are awarded as soon as the player has finished selecting a narrative choice and/or gameplay action. An instance of this occurs in *Bioshock*, when the player harvests or saves the Little Sisters. The bonus points to are given as feedback displayed to the right hand side of the screen (Figure 53) in the form of in-game currency (80 ADAMS). Another instance of an immediate facilitating mechanic include completing side missions in *Mass Effect* where bonus experience points and weapons/armour will be awarded to the player.



Figure 53 Immediate facilitating mechanic

*Delayed* facilitating mechanic refers to gameplay rewards in the form of bonus points or benefits that are awarded to the player after a delayed period of gameplay. For instance, for every three Little Sisters rescued in *Bioshock*, the player is rewarded with a significant amount of in-

game currency, e.g. 200 ADAMS. Special plasmid powers and other in-game objects such as EVE hypos and proximity mines are also awarded (Figure 54). The player will discover the delayed facilitating mechanic after playing through the game and be enticed to select the gameplay pathway to obtain more reward (**Transcript 5.1** in Appendix A).

Mary also mentioned that she chose to save all the Little Sisters because she wanted to collect all the special plasmid power rewards from the Little Sisters' presents. She chose to save them all after finding out she will be rewarded for every three Little Sisters she saved. She mentioned that she is a player who likes to collect everything. She also mentioned that the game also repaid the player with the ADAM gameplay reward even though it was slightly lesser than if she harvested (killed) the Little Sisters. The ADAM gameplay resource was also not important for her gameplay progress as she mentioned she didn't do a lot of upgrades (**Transcript 5.8** in Appendix A).



Figure 54 Delayed facilitating mechanic



Gradual facilitating mechanics refer to gameplay rewards which are awarded consistently. For instance, every time the PC levels up<sup>7</sup>, the player will be awarded experience points<sup>8</sup> to increase the PC's attributes to strengthen the PC. In *Mass Effect*, the player can choose to customise his/her character by investing points to strengthen the character through weapon or skill specialisation. In *TLOU*, if the player uses the gameplay strategy of shooting the enemies consistently instead of using stealth kills, Walter mentions that they will consistently “drip feed” the player with ammunition drops (**Transcript 3.8** in Appendix A).

The final category which Fabricatore (2007) proposed for the gameplay mechanics is the peripheral gameplay. He defines it as the category which encompasses all activities which need completely new mechanics (neither relying on core mechanics nor on satellite mechanics), and which temporarily replaces the core gameplay at a certain point of the game experience (Fabricatore, 2007). Peripheral mechanics include the mini games in *Bioshock* and *Mass Effect*. The players have to win the mini games before they can hack open the various in-game objects, such as the first aid kiosks, turrets, sentry bots, locked containers, doors, and so on.

## **6.6 Integrated gameplay model for the analysis of player's gameplay interaction**

In the second part of this chapter, I discuss the higher-level constituents of the gameplay analysis framework. I draw upon Martin and Rose's (2007) exchange structure to integrate Fabricatore's (2007) modified model of gameplay mechanics with the player's gameplay actions. The relationship between the two integrated frameworks and the player is shown in Figure 55

---

<sup>7</sup> Refers to the situation after a PC has received sufficient experience points (see definition in next footnote) to progress to the next character level. There is a maximum character level in different role-playing games, and the maximum character level is increased as soon as an expansion pack is released for the game.

<sup>8</sup> An experience point is a unit of measurement used in many role-playing games (RPGs) and role-playing video games to quantify a PC's progression through the game (Unknown author, 2014). Experience points are generally awarded for the completion of quests, overcoming obstacles and opponents, and for successful role-playing.

below. The centrality of the player's interaction with the gameplay is emphasised. The integrated frameworks contribute to a better understanding of the player's interaction with the gameplay.

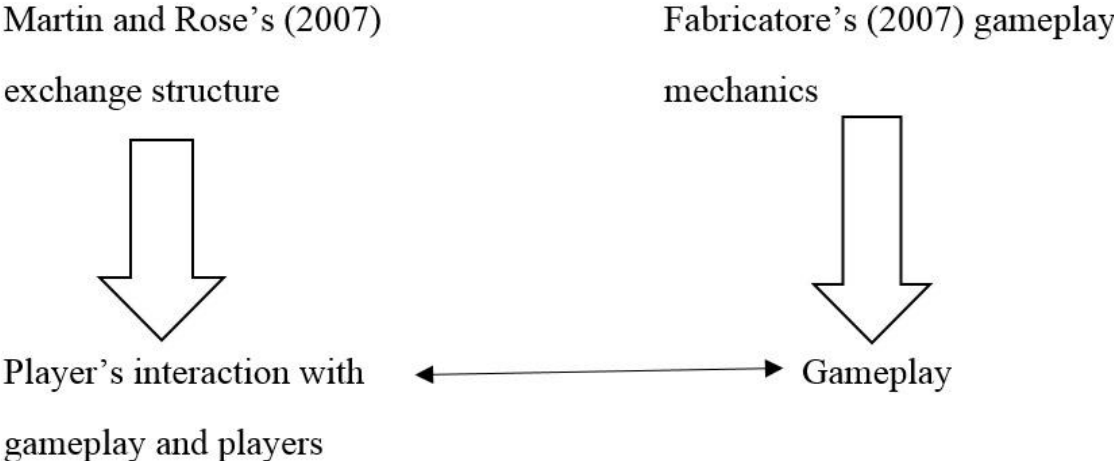


Figure 55 The relationship between the integrated frameworks and the player

**6.6.1 The move**

The smallest unit of the exchange structure is a move. Following Lindley (2005b), I define a move within a game as an abstract player action, mapping action to a specific importance within the rule set independently of local, personal and idiosyncratic variations in performance; a move stands for a physical or simulated ergodic action allowed and facilitated by the game's framing. I define a move as a single unit of the player's ergodic actions in the gameplay which has a significant impact in changing the existing state of gameplay. Defining a move in this way helps to mitigate the problems of applying a turn-based framework (Section 6.2 ) to analyse a real-time game.

Firstly, the analyst only focuses on the player’s ergodic actions that change the gameplay in significant ways, such as overcoming the challenge, defeating a group of enemy units, and accomplishing the gameplay objective, etc. This prevents the analysis of every single move that the player makes which will make the analysis incredibly onerous. Secondly, defining the move in this way enables the analyst to group similar player’s actions together as a move, which approximates the real time nature of non-turn based games. A single move can be explained by Adams’ (2010: 40) concept of a *gameplay mode* (Figure 56). Adams (2010: 40) defines a *gameplay mode* as consisting of “the particular subset of a game’s total gameplay that is available at any given time in the game, plus the UI that presents that subset of the gameplay to the player”.

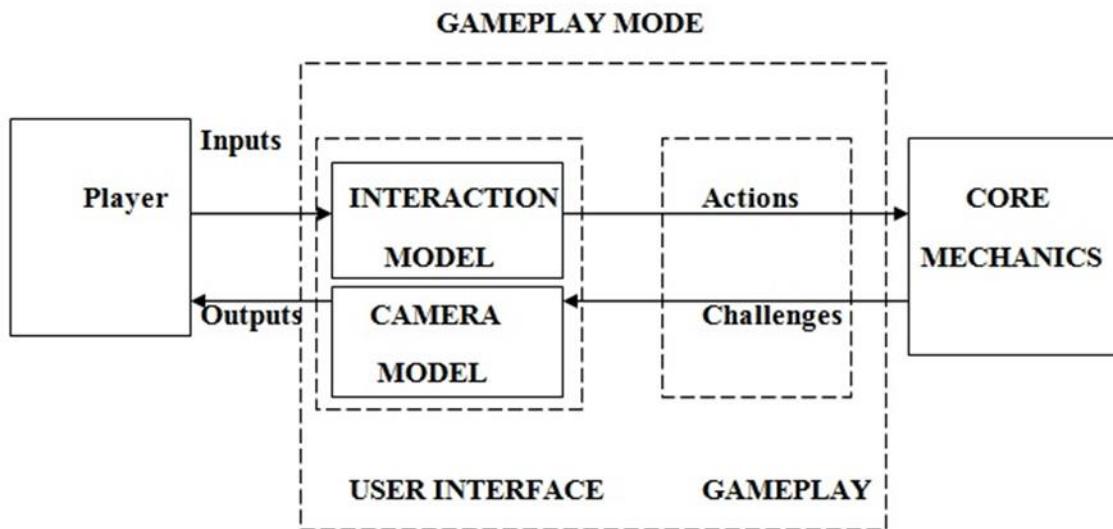


Figure 56 The move for gameplay analysis (Adams, 2010)

A single move operates as follows. As seen in Figure 56 above, the player inputs actions via the UI. The player’s actions then trigger the core mechanics. The core mechanics either activate obstacles to challenge the player (oppositional mechanics) or facilitates (facilitating mechanics) the player’s gameplay. The manifestation of the core mechanics will be displayed as

visuals and/or audio output to the player via the UI. *Core mechanics* are defined by Adams (2010: 287) as “the precise definition of the rules and internal operations of the game”. The core mechanics “turn the general rules of the game into a symbolic and mathematical model that can be implemented algorithmically” (Adams, 2010: 35). It is more specific than the rules. For instance, while the rules state that caterpillars move faster than snails, the core mechanics state exactly how fast each moves in centimetres per minute. The core mechanics are converted into algorithms in the software written by programmers. The core mechanics are the heart of any game because they generate the gameplay (Adams, 2010: 36).

The mechanics define the gameplay challenges and the player’s actions which can be undertaken to meet the challenges (Adams, 2010: 36). The core mechanics also determine the effect of the player’s actions upon the gameworld (Adams, 2010: 36). “The mechanics state the conditions for achieving the goals of the game and what consequences follow from succeeding or failing to achieve them” (Adams, 2010: 36). In the video game, the core mechanics are hidden from the players. The players discover them through play. As the player replays the game continuously, they eventually become aware of the inner workings of the mechanics and they learn to optimise their play to beat the game (Adams, 2010: 36). A quality of core mechanics is the degree of *realism*. A game is always a simpler model of the real-world situation, to make it more playable and more fun. Games fall between a cline of *abstract* and *representational*. Abstract games are not a simulation of anything real while a representational game accurately simulates the real-world situation in a simplified manner.

“Mechanics document how the game world and everything in it behave” (Adams, 2010: 295). It determines the relationship between entities, events and processes in the game, and the conditions that trigger the events and processes. The mechanics not only describe the overall

rules of the game, it also determines the behavior of particular entities which includes the AI of an NPC. There are two types of mechanics. These are global and local gameplay mechanics. Global mechanics operate throughout the game and local mechanics apply only in particular gameplay modes. Some functions of core mechanics are listed in Table 15 below.

<b>Functions of core mechanics</b>	<b>Description</b>
Operate internal economy of the game	Specifies how the game or the player creates, distributes, and uses up the goods on which the game bases its economy
Present active challenges	The level design specifies active and passive challenges. Active challenges are governed by mechanics but passive challenges are not.
Accept player actions	Implements the effects of player's actions upon the gameworld and other players.
Detect victory or loss	Determines the termination conditions of the game. Detects success or failure in all challenges in the game, and apply whatever consequences the rules call for.
Operate the AI	Determines the behaviour of NPCs and AI opponents.
Switch the game from mode to mode	Keeps track of the gameplay mode and when the game or player requires a mode change, the core mechanics switch modes and signal the UI to update itself accordingly.
Transmit triggers to the storytelling engine	Updates the plot when game events or player actions influence the plot.

Table 15 Some functions of core mechanics (Adams, 2010: 289)

“The user interface mediates between the core mechanics of the game and the player” (Adams, 2010: 37). It represents the challenges generated by the core mechanics as *outputs*, visually as graphics on the screen or sound from the speakers. The UI also converts the player's *inputs*, the button presses and movements on the keyboard or controller into actions within the

game context (Adams, 2010: 37). The UI is also known as the *presentation layer* as it lies between the player and the core mechanics (Adams, 2010: 37). The UI also presents the story of the game and creates the sensory embodiment of the gameworld, which includes all the images and sounds of the world (Adams, 2010: 37). The UI includes the camera model and the interaction model. The UI converts the player's inputs on the hardware into actions within the gameworld.

The game's *interaction model* dictates the relationship between the player's inputs and the resulting actions (Adams, 2010: 38). The camera model "display[s] the space inside the game from a particular angle or point of view" (Adams, 2010: 38). Adams (2010: 38) defines the *camera model* as the system that controls the behaviour of the imaginary camera. Camera models can be static or dynamic. Early games are simple and used a static camera to show a fixed perspective. Modern games which are more complex incorporate dynamic camera models where the camera moves in response to the player actions in the gameworld. Dynamic camera models cause the player's experience to be livelier and more cinematic (Adams, 2010: 38). There are several types of camera models which include first person, and third person in three dimensional gameworlds, and top-down, side-scrolling, and isometric camera models for presenting two dimensional game worlds (Adams, 2010: 39).

### **6.6.2 *The exchange***

In the gameplay exchange structure (Figure 57), the move starts with the player's action. This is followed by the system's response. The exchange ends with the player carrying out specific follow-up action(s) as a result of the system's response to advance the gameplay. For instance, if the player is unable to overcome the gameplay challenge in the mini-game, s/he may

restart the mini-game to retry the challenge. The follow-up action is optional. There may also be a system's response to the player's resultant actions.

The exchange structure for the analysis of the player's gameplay actions is shown in Figure 57 below. In the IR pairing, the player has carried out an action and the system then provided a response. This is similar to Heaton's (2006) circular model of gameplay.



Figure 57 The exchange structure for gameplay analysis

In Figure 57, the player's action initiation and player's follow-up actions consist of *instrumental* and *strategic* gameplay actions. These actions map to the gameplay mechanics, such as the core actions to interact with the gameworld. The system response is provided to the player in terms of feedback via the multimodal semiotic resources. The system response maps to the gameplay mechanics. For instance, when the user interface displays a timer to indicate to the player how long s/he is required to overcome a challenge, it highlights the opposition gameplay mechanics.

Manninen's (2003) modified model discussed in Section 6.4 above is incorporated into the gameplay exchange structure to expand the types of player's (micro) actions which the player can utilise during the gameplay interaction.

### **6.6.2.1 Feedback Types**

Feedback is the stimuli in which the video game conveys information about the gameworld's state to the player. When a player inputs to a game, it should provide feedback to the player. Input to the game is instigated through the keyboard and mouse. Whatever the input, the player will require feedback. Feedback is multimodal. It can be a visual animation, an audio feedback, subtitles, and language displayed or all simultaneously. Feedback is important for the player to decide what subsequent actions s/he choose to undertake in the gameplay. It is classified under "system's response" to "player's actions".

Oxland (2004: 14) divides feedback into two types. "The first is explicit feedback, which is activated when the player performs an action, and implicit feedback, which is presented informatively" (Oxland, 2004: 14). Oxland (2004: 14) provides the examples of a signpost or a well-trodden path as implicit feedback. In the study of the selected video games, explicit feedback can be presented via the language signs in *Bioshock*, such as the names of the different settings displayed on the loading screens when the player enters a new region in the gameworld. Implicit feedback can be presented via the visual signs in *Bioshock* and *TLOU*, such as the different designs of the settings in the different levels. Implicit feedback is also present in environmental indicators such as the yellow ribbon in *TLOU* which point the direction for the player to move towards in the gameworld (**Transcript 5.11** in Appendix A). Figure 58 below reproduced from Oxland (2004: 15) provides the taxonomy of feedback types.



Feedback type	Feedback description	E	I
Visual feedback	This is what the player is seeing on the screen both directly and indirectly.	✓	✓
Audio feedback	What the player is hearing both directly and indirectly.	✓	✓
Action feedback	A reaction from the player's actions. This could be a combination of visual and audio, and is explicit feedback.	✓	
NPC feedback	Feedback from non-controlled characters that populate the game world.	✓	✓
Accumulative feedback	As the player progresses through the game he is going to require progression or accumulative feedback.		✓
Emotional feedback	This is feedback that provokes an emotion in the player.	✓	✓
Fulfilment feedback	Feedback that stimulates a sense of fulfilment, it is important for games to recognise the need for fulfilment.	✓	✓
Informative feedback	Feeding information to the player. A context-sensitive control mechanism does this.	✓	✓

Figure 58 Oxland's (2004) taxonomy of feedback types

*Visual* and *audio feedback* are generic types and they can be found in both the **player's action** and **system's response**. In *Beyond: Two Souls*, visual feedback can be used to distinguish whether the player allows the dialogue options to run through on its own or not. When the player allows the game to auto select the dialogue options for him/her, it will fade out slowly on its own. When the player chooses the dialogue options, there will be no fade out. In *The Walking Dead*, audio feedback can be seen in the PC talking to himself to provide the player with hints when the player interacts with the objects. *Action feedback* is more specific, and it is a system's response to the player's action. It consists of either or both *visual* and *audio feedback*. In *Mass Effect*, the PC's health bar would turn green when the PC is hit by negative effects such as toxins. However, in the game study, the visual feedback by itself is insufficient to allow the player to know its function as it did not tell the player the function explicitly through language in the UI (**Transcript 5.33** in Appendix A). *NPC feedback* is the **system's response** which is activated

when the player clicks on the NPC to interact with him/her. *Accumulative feedback* is the *system's response*, which is a result of the player's gameplay actions. For instance, as the player collects the various parts of the Big Daddy suit in *Bioshock*, the transformation is indicated both visually and through the audio. Visual feedback is provided when the player wears the helmet and s/he experiences a more restricted field of view. Audio feedback is given to the player when s/he adopts Big Daddy's voice box causing him/her to sound like Big Daddy.

*Emotional feedback* is more subjective but is also the **system's response** to the player's action. For instance, in *The Walking Dead* and *Mass Effect*, the time limit is a gameplay mechanic in which the player either has to choose a dialogue option or perform a series of gameplay actions within a time restriction. The player's emotion intensifies and s/he becomes anxious as the time limit is almost over but s/he has not made up his/her decision to complete the gameplay choices/actions, especially if the player perceives the choice/action to be difficult (File – *The Walking Dead* [Mary] File 10 Holy Shit 40:07). *Fulfilment feedback* is the **system's response** to the player's action. It can be in the form of cinematic cutscenes or NPC's feedback that reward the player after his/her successful attempt at beating the gameplay. Finally, *informative feedback* is the **system's response** which conveys information to the player. This can be in the form of the timer countdown and time bar in *Mass Effect* and *The Walking Dead* respectively. Another instance includes the shortening of the PC's health bar at regular intervals in the latter half of *Bioshock*.

### **6.6.3 Gameplay Phase Types**

In the above paragraphs, I have proposed the framework on the lower levels of move (player's action), followed by the exchange structure unit for the analysis of the player's

interaction with the gameplay in the form of Fabricatore's (2007) gameplay mechanics. The framework is summarised in Tables 16 and 17 below.

<b>Player's Action</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Instrumental Actions</b>	Instinctive.
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications	Interaction with the environment/object to obtain gameplay advantage.
PC Upgrades	PC(s)' upgrade to obtain gameplay advantage. Irreversible as the upgrade is performed by the game.
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour	Controlling the character's movement or actions to obtain gameplay advantage.
Language-Based Communication	Selecting dialogue choices under time restriction with minimal thinking.
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	Requires thinking.
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications	Puzzle solving, thinking up of gameplay strategies using the environment to overcome the enemies or obstacles.
PC Customisation	Broader category that encompasses upgrades. May or may not be reversible. Reversible customisation enables players to experiment with different play styles.
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour	Movement and body actions that require deliberation whether the player wants to perform them.
Language-Based Communication	Influence the other characters' response (Actions or language). Critical gameplay moments where other character is sacrificed.

Table 16 Player's instrumental and strategic actions

<b>Gameplay Mechanics</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Core – Extra-diegetic</b>	Player’s actions that occur outside of the gameworld.
<b>Core – Diegetic</b>  (1) Environment  (2) Object  (3) Agent (NPCs)  (4) Avatar	Player’s actions that occur inside the gameworld.  (1) Interaction with environment, e.g. puzzles.  (2) Interaction with object, e.g. locked containers.  (3) Dialogue, attack, escort, and so on.  (4) Character customisation or upgrade.
<b>Satellite - Alternate</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Satellite – Enhancement</b>  (1) Addition  (2) Modification	Enhance already-existing core gameplay mechanics.  (1) Add new features to existing mechanics.  (2) Change an already-existing gameplay mechanic.
<b>Satellite – Opposition</b>  (1) Static  (2) Dynamic  (3) Event	Gameplay challenges.  (1) Environmental obstacles, e.g. locked doors.  (2) Environmental obstacles or NPCs.  (3) Quick-time event, timed dialogue options, timed event.
<b>Satellite - Facilitating</b>  (1) Immediate  (2) Delayed  (3) Gradual	Mechanics which aid the player’s gameplay progress.  (1) Gameplay rewards (points, items) given immediately  (2) Gameplay rewards (points, items) given after delayed time.  (3) Gameplay rewards (points, items) given consistently.
<b>Peripheral</b>	All gameplay activities which need completely new mechanics and temporarily replaces the core gameplay at a point of the game, e.g. mini-games.

Table 17 Fabricatore’s (2007) gameplay mechanics

In this section, I will propose models for the higher level analysis termed as gameplay phase types. For the purposes of my study, I define a gameplay phase as a localised grouping of gameplay events, made up of moves and exchange(s). These localised gameplay events are usually initiated by the player (user events) but are sometimes initiated by the system (system events). They are categorised according to their similar functions. For instance, as seen in Table 19, the gameplay session introduction serves to provide information to the players in terms of the gameplay objectives. This is contrasted with the boss phase which functions to challenge the player's gameplay progression. Figure 57 constitutes an exchange and a gameplay phase type can be made up of an exchange or several exchanges, depending on the length of the gameplay session. The model of gameplay phase types for this research is adapted from Martin and Rose's (2008) story phases. Their framework of story phase is briefly outlined in this section. After I outline their framework of story phases, I will then propose my modification of their framework to cater to the analysis of gameplay.

Martin and Rose's (2008) story phase is originally developed to analyse non-ergodic narrative texts which are non-interactive, such as literary works and films. Martin and Rose (2008: 82) argue that each phase type performs a certain function to engage the reader as the story unfolds. It performs its functions by constructing its field of activities, people, things and places, by evoking emotional responses, or by linking it to common experiences and interpretations of life. The main phase types and their functions are summarised in Table 18 below.

<b>Phase types</b>	<b>Engagement functions</b>
Setting	Presenting context
Reactions	Behavioral/attitudinal outcome
Problem	Counter-expectant creating tension
Solution	Counter-expectant releasing tension
Comment	Intruding narrator's comments
Reflection	Intruding participant's thoughts

Table 18 Common story phase types and their functions (Martin and Rose, 2008: 82)

The key principle that organises these narrative phases is expectancy, and the narrative is carried forward by swings in expectancy from phase to phase (Martin & Rose, 2008: 85). The narrator engages the reader by manipulating the expectancy, that is, by fulfilling or disrupting it, through a series of phases/phase change in each stage.

However, gameplay is different from story phases. To analyse the game, I adapt the common story phase types from Martin and Rose (2008) and reconceptualise them as the common gameplay phase types. The modified phase types and their functions are shown in Table 19 below. It is noted that the comment and reflection gameplay phases are more free-flowing as they do not necessarily have to occur at the end of the gameplay session. For instance, some participants provided audio commentary while playing the game simultaneously. It is only the more critical reflections that occur at the end of the gameplay session. They can also occur before or after any of the other gameplay phases. The gameplay session introduction does not necessarily have to be provided by the game, but the players may also provide a recap of what they have done up to that point of their gameplay in the gameplay recordings.

Phase Types		Engagement Functions
Gameplay Session Intro		Presenting the gameplay objectives
Monster group <i>n</i>		Opposition mechanics
Boss 1	Phase 1	Opposition mechanics
	Phase 2	
	Phase <i>n</i>	
Monster group <i>n</i>		Opposition mechanics
Boss 2	Phase 1	Opposition mechanics
	Phase 2	
	Phase <i>n</i>	
Comment		Game developer's/Narrator's/Player's comments
Reflection		Player's gameplay discussion

Table 19 Common gameplay phase types and their functions (Adaptation of Martin and Rose, 2008: 82 and Fabricatore, 2007)

The gameplay phase types proposed can be modified or new phases added when analysing the gameplay of specific video games. To analyse another game, the analyst may need to create different gameplay phase types which are specific to different video game genres. As noted from the review of Heaton's (2006) gameplay model in Section 6.2, the development of a model which has clearly demarcated moves, exchanges and phases will make it more difficult to implement it for the analysis of games with real-time gameplay.

To face this difficulty, the analysts can develop their own taxonomy of gameplay phase types according to their research purposes. They can then use multimodal textual features as markers to distinguish between their proposed gameplay phases. I will now give a brief

description of the proposed common gameplay phase types as shown in Table 19 with examples from the empirical data in the game study.

### **6.6.3.1 *Gameplay Session Introduction***

This common gameplay phase serves the function of orientating the player to the gameplay objectives. It is usually given at the start of a new level or during a cutscene. For instance, in *TLOU*, the cutscene immediately after the prologue informs the players that they have to find Robert. The cutscene's narrative motivates the player to find Robert in the gameplay. This analysis builds the ludonarrative subcategory of "resonance motivation" in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.1. In *Bioshock*, the cutscene introduces the player to Big Daddy as a boss enemy and its symbiotic relationship with the Little Sisters. The cutscene's narrative facilitates the players' formulation of general gameplay strategies/actions to overcome Big Daddy to get to the Little Sisters. This analysis builds the ludonarrative subcategory of "resonance guidance" in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.2. Gameplay interaction also introduces the gameplay ability of common enemies. For instance, in *TLOU*, interacting with the Clicker stuck on the door caused Tess and Ellie to provide the PC, Joel with crucial gameplay ability of the Clicker in the narrative (event) where it was encountered the first time (**Transcript 3.30** in Appendix A). This gameplay phase therefore sometimes occurs before a new enemy or boss encounter where it is necessary to explain the difficult or different gameplay mechanics to new players.

### **6.6.3.2 *Monster group n***

These are packs of common enemies who usually serve as opposition mechanics to the player before the harder boss encounter. The  $n$  denotes the number of such groups before the boss encounter. Each successive groups may have different abilities or more difficult challenges



as the player gets closer to the boss encounter. Common enemies include Splicers in *Bioshock*, Geth and Krogans in *Mass Effect*, Walkers and humans in *The Walking Dead*, Infected and human enemies in *TLOU*, and entities and humans in *Beyond: Two Souls*.

#### **6.6.3.3 Boss**

This is the hardest part of the gameplay. It consists of a single boss who may be accompanied by common enemies. For instance, in *Bioshock*'s final fight, Frank Fontaine is accompanied by his Splicers and security bots. Sometimes, there are multiple bosses. Multiple bosses usually occur towards the endgame. For instance, in the final chapter of *TLOU*, two Bloaters obstruct the player's progress towards the Firefly's hospital.

#### **6.6.3.4 Comment**

The game developers congratulate the players after they have successfully overcome the boss challenge. They may also provide further gameplay information to players, such as the name of the boss (Bloater) and their characteristics in *TLOU* through the characters after the players have completed a (boss) challenge, to progress their gameplay. This gameplay phase usually occurs at the end of a boss encounter, but is free to appear during or after the other gameplay phases. This gameplay phase also functions as an indicator of phase change. The participants may or may not provide commentary during their gameplay.

#### **6.6.3.5 Reflection**

This gameplay phase involves the players' discussion after they have finished a gameplay session. This gameplay phase may occur after the boss gameplay phase, but may also be free to appear after the other gameplay phases.

### **6.6.3.6 Player Effectance**

In contrast to the key principle of expectancy which organises the narrative phases, I argue that the key principle which organises the gameplay phases is the notion of player *effectance*. The reason for the use of the concept of player effectance is because of the ergodic nature of video games. The player is the central agency who advances the gameplay. Effectance is a motivation concept defined by White (1959). In White's (1959) effectance motivation theory, he "portrayed people's motivational system as being energised by an urge towards competence, that is, making progress in the knowledge and abilities that support the individual's struggle for survival" (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006: 136).

According to White (1959), the human motivational system is laid out to secure adaptive behaviour, which means to gain new competencies. But people are not aware of this superordinated function of their activities. Instead, "they perform actions that lead to competence gain because of more immediate and situation-based reasons" (Hartmann & Klimmt, 2006: 136). White (1959) argues that "the subjective reward of such activities that people perceive during performance is the satisfaction of having imposed an effect on the environment". By achieving this experience of gratification, the individual is provided with an immediate motivation to deal with one's environment. As this experience is motivating, people will be encouraged to develop a stable motivation to enter this condition. The motivational disposition ensures that the individual continues to actively interact with the environment to gain new competence. White (1959) terms this as effectance motivation.

In video games, it is the player's agency that advances the gameplay. As they change the gameplay state through their actions, new system events will be procedurally generated to offer

the player continuous challenge to immerse him/her in the gameworld. When the players are able to overcome the gameplay challenges, they will feel an immense satisfaction as it is their effort or effectance that contributes to the winning of the game. The way in which gameplay phases serve as pulses of effectance is depicted in Figure 59 below. The dotted lines indicate that these gameplay phases are free-flowing and can move around.

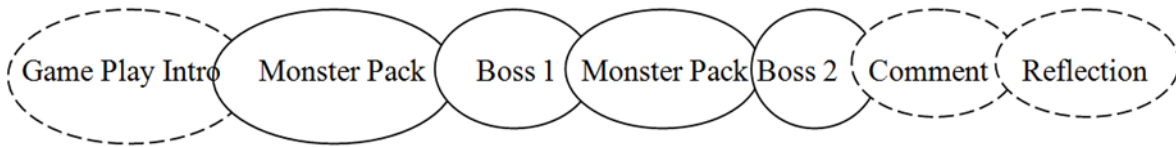


Figure 59 Gameplay Phases as pulses of effectance

The gameplay session introduction creates a counter-effectance of common enemies through the player’s active interaction with the gameplay after they understand the gameplay objectives. This is followed by counter-effectance of more groups of common enemies. The player’s counter-effectance of common enemies eventually leads to the boss encounter. This chain of gameplay phases repeats itself after boss encounter 1 on the way to boss encounter 2. The interaction of the player in these gameplay phases engages the gameplay to advance the game. The gameplay will need to constantly challenge the player with new opposition mechanics to immerse him/her in the gameplay. The gameplay phase ends as the final boss is defeated and the player exits the game.

#### **6.6.4 Gameplay Stages**

The final or highest level of the gameplay is the gameplay stage. A stage is defined as an entire playthrough of a gameplay session, made up of gameplay phases, exchanges, and moves. I propose a few stages. These are theoretical stages and may not apply to different player types as some players are fast learners of gameplay mechanics. In stage 1, the player first encounters the

gameplay. In stage 2, s/he continues to learn the gameplay mechanics. In stage 3, the player applies the knowledge s/he has learnt to overcome the challenges. In stage 4, the player masters the gameplay. In stage 5, the player focuses on the temporal mastery. The player's interaction with the gameplay will start to decline after they have achieved temporal mastery. The player will start to tire of the gameplay as they have overcome every challenge of the gameplay instance/session. Game developers will have to entice players back to play the game by including randomly generated dropped items that are extremely rare to get them to keep on playing a multiplayer game. They will have to update the single player game with new gameplay content such as expansion packs or DLCs. The gameplay stages are depicted in Figure 60 below.

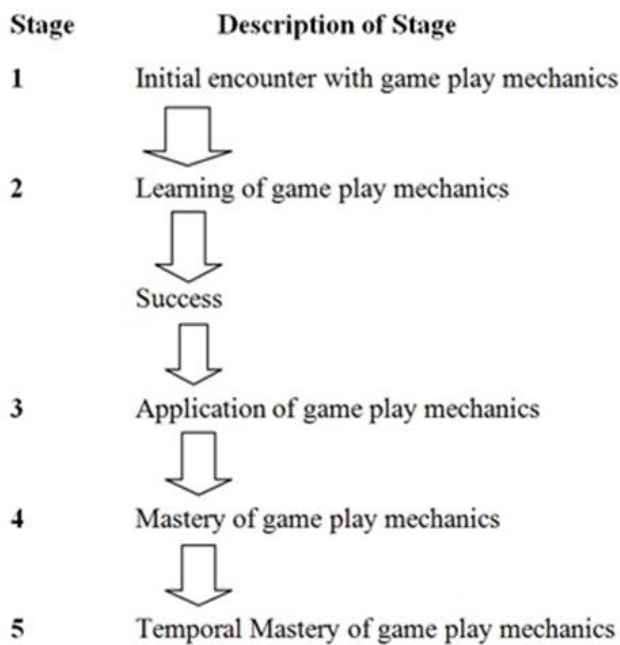


Figure 60 Gameplay Stages

### 6.7 Multi-linear Gameplay

The gameplay content is sequenced by scripting in terms of compulsory gameplay missions and optional secondary missions on the various planets in *Mass Effect*. In *Mass Effect*,

the player may choose to engage in the side missions on the planets or skip them. This creates a vast number of possible multi-linear gameplay paths, as the players are given a choice to do the optional secondary quests which may not only complement the main quest but also creates different gameplay pathways (Figure 61). The advantage is that the players do not have to worry about getting stuck on a tough mission. They can skip the harder missions first and go back and do them later after they have accumulated more character experience or in-game rewards. This strategy is not possible for story focused games like *The Walking Dead*, *Beyond: Two Souls*, *TLOU* and *Bioshock* where the gameplay is restricted by the narrative.

However, in an early mission on the first play through, *Mass Effect* players may possess insufficient “Paragon” or “Renegade” points to customise the character to open up the dialogue options. In the interview, Nasir discussed about the difficulties he faced on Feros where he had insufficient “Paragon” gameplay points invested to influence the other NPC, Ethan Jeong in the narrative dialogue option which resulted in his inability to save him (**Transcript 5.42** in Appendix A). Another instance was the C-Sec mission on the Citadel (**Transcript 5.43** in Appendix A). So in a sense, the gameplay may restrict the narrative as the player is required to gain more experience points first through completing more missions before s/he can open up more dialogue options.

Once players have finished the game, they also cannot go back to explore previously unexplored game areas as the selected games in the study are not open world. Players would not be able to return to complete the side missions once the primary gameplay mission or main plot is resolved. In the *Mass Effect* study, Nasir only realised this when he completed the game as he was influenced by other games such as *World of Warcraft* which does not have such restrictions (**Transcript 5.4** in Appendix A).

Completing secondary quests in *Mass Effect* may make the completion of the primary missions easier by providing the player's characters with more experience points and upgrades to kill enemies faster. The multi-linear gameplay also provides a greater amount of freedom to the player because of the element of choice. The element of choice endows the player with *agency* (Definition in Chapter 1 Section 1.6). Choice and *agency* provide the experience that the player is actually in command of the gameplay and give him/her a sense of control. *The Walking Dead* (Transcript 5.44 in Appendix A) and *Beyond: Two Souls* do not have multi-linear gameplay as they are narrative focused and there is a fixed sequence to complete the narrative. For instance, in *The Walking Dead*, the PC will get chased out of Hershhal's farm regardless of the choice he made to save either Shawn or Duck. In *Beyond: Two Souls*, the PC has to bring the oil to her mother first before she is allowed to play outside the house.

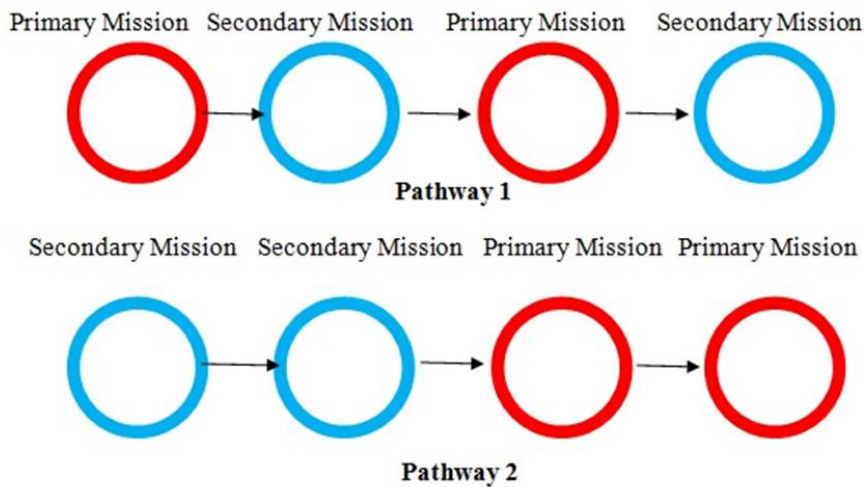


Figure 61 Examples of multiple pathways through the gameplay in *Mass Effect*

While *The Walking Dead* and *Beyond: Two Souls* do not provide secondary missions or quests which contribute to their more linear gameplay, the player has a choice to select or not to select the type of gameplay actions to utilise through point and click. As these games are narrative focused, the presence of choice do not contribute to multi-linear gameplay but

contribute to minute changes of the narrative on the micro level. For instance, in both games, choosing to explore the gameworld will unlock backstory for the characters (Chapter 5 Section 5.3 “Box of Memories”). In *Beyond: Two Souls*, choosing the gameplay action of using Jodie or using Aiden to possess the Asian general will contribute to two different narrative pathways where the PC will be caught in different ways within the chapter (**Transcript 5.45** in Appendix A). Matt was unaware that he can use Aiden to possess the Asian general because there was no multimodal affordance provided explicitly to him. He also did not feel the different narrative pathways meaningful as it will lead to the same narrative ending at the end of the chapter. This analysis creates the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus” in Chapter Seven where the player is unaware of the different gameplay actions that they can choose to change the micronarratives. In *The Walking Dead*, choosing to go out of Clementine’s house with her either in the day or during the night will contribute to two different narrative events. If the player chooses to go out in the day, the player would encounter Chet and Shawn. But if s/he chooses to go out in the night, the player would encounter the zombie Chet and a police officer (**Transcript 5.46** in Appendix A). Mary did not realise the difference as she only played it once. This analysis creates the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance consequence” in Chapter Seven for the players who have only played once. First-time players are unaware of the narrative consequences based on the different gameplay actions in the dialogue options that can be chosen.

There are no side or optional missions in *Bioshock*, and *TLOU*. An optional gameplay in these games is that players can choose to or not to explore hidden areas in the gameworld to scavenge for items. In *Bioshock*, the player can choose when to kill or spare certain NPCs such as Sander Cohen during the gameplay. Choosing to kill or spare NPCs in *Bioshock* is a gameplay

event since, the narrative is linear and cannot be changed. Although it might also be argued as a narrative event when the players interpret the characterisation of the NPC Sander Cohen which influenced their gameplay action. Most of the participants except Mary (**Transcript 5.5** in Appendix A) know that they could kill him at Fort Frolic, but chose not to do so. They mentioned that they chose to spare Sander Cohen because they sympathise with him, as he was mentally unsound (**Transcript 5.6** in Appendix A). Killing Sander Cohen on Fort Frolic would enable the player to obtain the *immediate facilitating mechanic* such as the Muse key to obtain gameplay rewards from unlocking the glass dome in Fort Frolic. However, killing Sander Cohen later in his apartment at Apollo Square would give the player double the reward. The *immediate facilitating mechanic*, such as the Muse key, would become a *delayed facilitating mechanic*, as the player obtains the Fort Frolic's reward further on in the game. Killing Sander Cohen in his home would also unlock the door to the upper level of his house, which contains a "Power to the People" upgrade machine. The machine enables the player to further upgrade a selected weapon (Toh, 2015). The players mentioned they did not intentionally want to kill Sander Cohen in Apollo Square. Mary mentioned that the dancing Splicers immediately attacked her when she entered his home, forcing her to fight them (**Transcript 5.5** in Appendix A). Peter mentioned that he was looking for the door code to Frank Fontaine's Penthouse and he went into Sander Cohen's home and kill him, hopefully to find the door code there (**Transcript 5.7** in Appendix A).

## **6.8 Application of Gameplay Analysis Model**

In this section, I apply the proposed gameplay model to demonstrate how it works and show how it is used to develop the ludonarrative (sub)categories. The proposed model consists of the basic unit of the move which includes the player's gameplay actions summarised in Table 16.



The move interacts with the gameplay mechanics (summarised in Table 17) and is followed by the player's resultant action and system's response to form an exchange. The higher order gameplay unit consists of the gameplay phase which can be made up of a single exchange or several exchanges. Finally, different gameplay phases combine to form a gameplay stage which refers to a complete playthrough of the game.

I use the data from the two participants of *Beyond: Two Souls*. Michael experienced trouble mastering the controls while Matt was more proficient with the controls. Michael became more passive as the game progressed. He realised that the PC will not die in the scripted QTEs even if he did not input the PC's actions (correctly) using the PS3 controller. He also allowed some dialogue options to run through on their own in the latter half of the game after he discovered that the game will automatically select the choices for him. His role was observed to occupy a more passive viewer role as opposed to a more active gamer role. The player as an *audience* member who is a passive recipient of the narrative is Lindley's first mode used to discuss how players engage with the dramatic and narrative aspects of games (2005a). Michael's gameplay actions were motivated by relaxation (Yee, 2007) as he mentioned that he was a casual gamer. He mentioned that the interaction is a senseless annoyance that he had to deal with as it interrupts his understanding of the narrative (**Transcript 5.49** in Appendix A).

For Michael, the narrative is separated from the gameplay. In his case, the narrative model proposed in the previous chapter is more dominant. Because this chapter is focused on the discussion of the gameplay model, the analysis of Michael's narrative interpretation of the scripted sequences in the boss fight of *Beyond: Two Souls* is not provided here.

Matt followed the game prompts closely and chose to be guided by the game. He participated in the gameplay actively and chose all the dialogue choices without allowing the game to choose the options for him. Matt's gameplay actions were motivated by exploration (Yee, 2007), empathetic identification with character (Mett & Nils, 2013), and role-playing (Yee, 2007). The reason he mentioned during the interview was that he wanted to uncover more story when playing the game. He engaged in all the QTEs and pressed all the correct buttons. For Matt, he mentioned that the narrative is together with the gameplay because he felt that the number of actions that he can perform is quite limited (**Transcript 5.48** in Appendix A). In his case, the gameplay model is linked to the video game narrative model proposed in the previous chapter where he uses the MANIPULATING frame to interact with the gameplay to push the narrative onward. There was minimal narrative interpretation when he engaged in the gameplay fight with the Asian general as he was focused on performing the correct gameplay actions to prevent Jodie from becoming injured. Matt belongs to Lindley's (2005a) second mode as a *performer* who is actively playing a character role within an unfolding story that has either been pre-defined for the player by the designer, or the story is emerging from the player's actions.

The analysis of Michael's *passive* interaction with *Beyond: Two Souls*' gameplay creates the ludonarrative subcategory of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance: narrative focus" in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.3.2. The analysis of Matt's *active* interaction with *Beyond: Two Souls*' gameplay provides empirical data to create the ludonarrative subcategory of "ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration" in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2.9 where he mentioned during the interview that he is playing the designer's pre-defined narrative. Matt's gameplay actions also provide empirical data to create the "ludonarrative resonance causality" subcategory where a different story outcome unfolded for him within the chapter after the *gameplay event* of the boss

fight. Specifically, for Matt who performed all the player actions correctly, the story outcome was that Jodie escaped together with Ryan from the enemy base in the submarine. They also had a kiss when they reached safety. For Michael who failed all the player actions when he remained passive, the boss fight was perceived as more of a *narrative event* and the different story outcome was that Jodie had to be rescued by Ryan. The part where they escaped in the submarine was absent. She also had to be resuscitated when they reached safety.

Therefore, it can be seen that the two players demonstrated different learning of the gameplay mechanics depending on their play style which is active or passive. Matt's gameplay interaction during the gameplay boss fight with the Asian general in *Beyond: Two Souls* is analysed using the proposed gameplay model. Table 20 displays Matt's gameplay (File reference is *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 5 Part 2 Recording 2015-02-24 [Matt]). The next section answers research question two proposed in Chapter One for the creation of the ludonarrative model.

<b>Exchange /Move</b>	<b>File Timing</b>	<b>System's Response/Player's Action</b>
1/1	1:00:32	Player's instrumental action – Climb ladder
1/2	1:01:00	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general raises hand to punch Jodie
1/3	1:01:01	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – blocks punch with left hand
1/4	1:01:04	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general strangles Jodie
2/1	1:01:06	Player's instrumental action 1 (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – shakes controller to break strangle
2/2	1:01:07	Player's instrumental action 2 (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – strikes Asian general with right hand
2/3	1:01:12	System's response – opposition mechanic/QTE – Asian general stabs Jodie's hand and strangles
2/4	1:01:13	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – press X continuously to release hand
3/1	1:01:19	Player's instrumental action (kinesics/spatial behaviour) – swings controller to strike Asian general using screwdriver
3/2	1:01:29	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings chain at Jodie
3/3	1:01:30	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge attack
4/1	1:01:31	Player's instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) - pushes PS3 controller to kick Asian general
4/2	1:01:36	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general strangles Jodie using chain
4/3	1:01:40	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics/spatial behaviour) – swings PS3 controller to break strangle

4/4	1:01:49	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings chain at Jodie
5/1	1:01:50	Player's instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge
5/2	1:01:52	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings chain at Jodie
5/3	1:01:53	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge chain
5/4	1:01:55	System's follow-up response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings chain at Jodie
6/1	1:01:56	Player's instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge chain
6/2	1:02:01	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings hook at Jodie
6/3	1:02:02	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge hook
6/4	1:02:04	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings hook at Jodie
7/1	1:02:05	Player's instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) – pushes PS3 controller to dodge hook
7/2	1:02:13	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general swings leg to kick Jodie
7/3	1:02:14	Player's follow-up instrumental action (kinesics and spatial behaviour) pushes PS3 controller to block kick
7/4	1:02:27	System's response – opposition mechanic, dynamic – Asian general lifts fire extinguisher to hit Jodie
7/5	1:02:29	System's follow-up response – facilitating mechanic (immediate) – entity impales Asian general and kills him

Table 20 Matt's gameplay

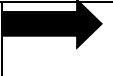
## 6.9 Answering Research Question Two

In this section, I will explain how the gameplay model proposed in this chapter helps to build the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. The gameplay model is used to highlight the different types of gameplay actions and strategies that players used to overcome the gameplay challenges. This enables the analyst to understand *how* and *why* different players understand the (gameplay) structure of games differently based on their different motivations. Here, I attempt to answer research question two proposed in Chapter One towards building the ludonarrative model. The types of gameplay actions and strategies could occur simultaneously with the narrative interpretation or they could only occur on their own. For instance, in *Mass Effect*, *The Walking Dead* and *Beyond: Two Souls*, “strategic actions – language-based communication” also involves narrative interpretation as evidenced in the gameplay recordings. The analysis in Section 6.4.2.4 builds the ludonarrative subcategory “ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration” in Chapter Seven. The analysis in Section 6.4.1.2 from the retrospective protocol analysis shows that sometimes the narrative would demotivate the players’ gameplay. This analysis creates the ludonarrative subcategory “ludonarrative dissonance – demotivation” in Chapter Seven.

The analysis of gameplay actions and strategies in Section 6.4.1.1 builds the ludonarrative subcategory “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus”. The analysis performed in Section 6.4.2.2 builds the ludonarrative subcategory of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance: metaphor” in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.3.4 when the player does not understand the game’s feedback. The analysis in Section 6.6.3.1 has created the subcategories of “resonance motivation” and “resonance guidance”. In Section 6.8, based on the analysis using the proposed gameplay model, three subcategories of the ludonarrative model have been created. These subcategories are “ludonarrative (ir)relevance: narrative focus”, “ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration”, and “ludonarrative resonance causality”.

## 6.10 Summary of Chapter Six

In this chapter, I have proposed the video gameplay analysis model which is grounded in the context of the gameplay recordings and retrospective protocol analysis. The model focusing on the gameplay exchange structure and highlighting its constituents, namely, the player's *actions*, the gameplay *mechanics*, and the gameplay *feedback* are summarised in Table 21 below.

<b>Player's Action</b>		<b>Gameplay Mechanics</b>
<b>Instrumental Actions</b>		<b>Core-Extra-diegetic</b>
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications		<b>Core-Diegetic</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Environment</li> <li>(2) Object</li> <li>(3) Agent (NPCs)</li> <li>(4) Avatar</li> </ul>
PC Upgrades		<b>Satellite – Enhancement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Addition</li> <li>(2) Modification</li> </ul>
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour		<b>Satellite – Opposition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Static</li> <li>(2) Dynamic</li> <li>(3) Event</li> </ul>
Language-Based Communication		<b>Satellite – Facilitating</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Immediate</li> <li>(2) Delayed</li> <li>(3) Gradual</li> </ul>

<b>Strategic Actions</b>		
Environmental Details and Setting Modifications		<b>Peripheral</b>
PC Customisation		
Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour		
Language-Based Communication		
↓		
<b>System's Response/Feedback</b>	→	<b>Gameplay Mechanics</b>
Visual		As above
Audio		
Action		
NPC		
Accumulative		
Emotional		
Fulfilment		
Informative		
↓		
<b>Player's Follow-up Action</b>	→	<b>Gameplay Mechanics</b>
↓		
<b>System's Response to Follow-Up Action</b>	→	<b>Gameplay Mechanics</b>

Table 21 The gameplay exchange structure

As shown in Table 21 above, the gameplay exchange structure starts with the player's action which may be a strategic or instrumental gameplay action. Strategic actions involve critical thinking whereas instrumental actions are more instinctive. The player's gameplay



actions involve the following. “Environmental details and setting modifications” require the player to interact with the environmental obstacles to overcome gameplay challenges. “PC upgrade” (Toh, 2015) involves the game’s upgrade of the PC and “PC customisation” (Toh, 2015) requires the players to interact with their avatars to modify their gameplay abilities. “Kinesics and spatial behaviour” require the player to move around the gameworld and take advantage of the environment such as taking cover or using stealth movement to overcome the enemies. “Language-based communication” involves dialogue interaction with the other NPCs.

As shown by the arrow pointing towards the right column, the player’s gameplay actions are mapped onto the gameplay mechanics. The player’s gameplay actions are core-diegetic gameplay mechanics which occurs within the gameworld. Core-diegetic gameplay mechanics are the most frequently used and are crucial for the player’s progress in the game. These mechanics involve the player’s interaction with the environment, object, agent (NPCs) and avatar. Satellite-enhancement gameplay mechanics add features to existing core-diegetic mechanics or modify existing core-diegetic mechanics. Satellite-opposition gameplay mechanics challenge the player’s progress and satellite-facilitating mechanics help the player’s progress. Peripheral gameplay mechanics temporarily replace the core-diegetic gameplay mechanics at a certain point of the game and includes the mini-games in *Mass Effect* and *Bioshock*.

The player’s actions are followed by the game’s feedback. Feedback include the following. Visual and audio feedback are multimodal semiotic resources in the gameworld that provide information to the player. Action feedback is more specific and involves the information relayed to the player regarding the impact of his/her gameplay actions. For instance, a successful kill of the enemy is relayed to the player through both the visual and audio resources which show the enemy falling down and shouting out upon dying

respectively. NPC feedback involves the dialogue given to the player depending on the player's choice of dialogue initiation. NPC feedback may also involve reward or punishment given to the player depending on the player's prior action, e.g. quest completion or failure respectively. Accumulative feedback involves consistent changes in the gameworld in response to the player's gameplay actions. The accumulative feedback is conveyed via the audio and visual resources and may be reflected in the environment or the player's avatar. Emotional feedback can involve the NPC's dialogue, gesture and facial response to the player's actions or an event which cause the player to feel a specific emotion. Fulfilment feedback conveys audio and visual feedback to the player when s/he has completed a specific quest. Informative feedback may be conveyed to facilitate the player's carrying out of gameplay actions, such as a timer provided at the interface to indicate the time left before failure.

The system's response/feedback to the player's action therefore also maps to the gameplay mechanics. The system's response/feedback may lead to a player's follow-up action if the problem encountered cannot be resolved. For instance, if the player cannot overcome the challenges in the mini-game, the player may follow-up and restart the mini-game for another attempt to beat it. The exchange ends with the system's response to the player's follow-up action. For instance, if the player manages to overcome the mini-game's challenge, the system provides fulfilment feedback in the form of audio (sound of door unlocking) and visual semiotic resources (door unlocking) as reward to the player. This fulfilment feedback maps to the satellite-facilitating gameplay mechanic.

This model provides the analytical lens for the multimodal discourse analysis which modifies Manninen's (2003) interaction forms in online games and Fabricatore's (2007) model of gameplay mechanics for the analysis of single player games. I use this model as an analytical lens which is centred on the players' gameplay actions to review the gameplay

recordings. Then I create open-ended interview questions to understand and interpret the gameplay actions and strategies that players used to overcome the gameplay challenges and to customise their PC in the games. These interpretations are finally used to build the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. Similar to the narrative model discussed in Chapter Five, this is an iterative process where my analysis and interpretations of the gameplay recordings are combined with the participants' answers to the interview questions to build the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. The gameplay side of the ludonarrative model is shown in Figure 62 below.

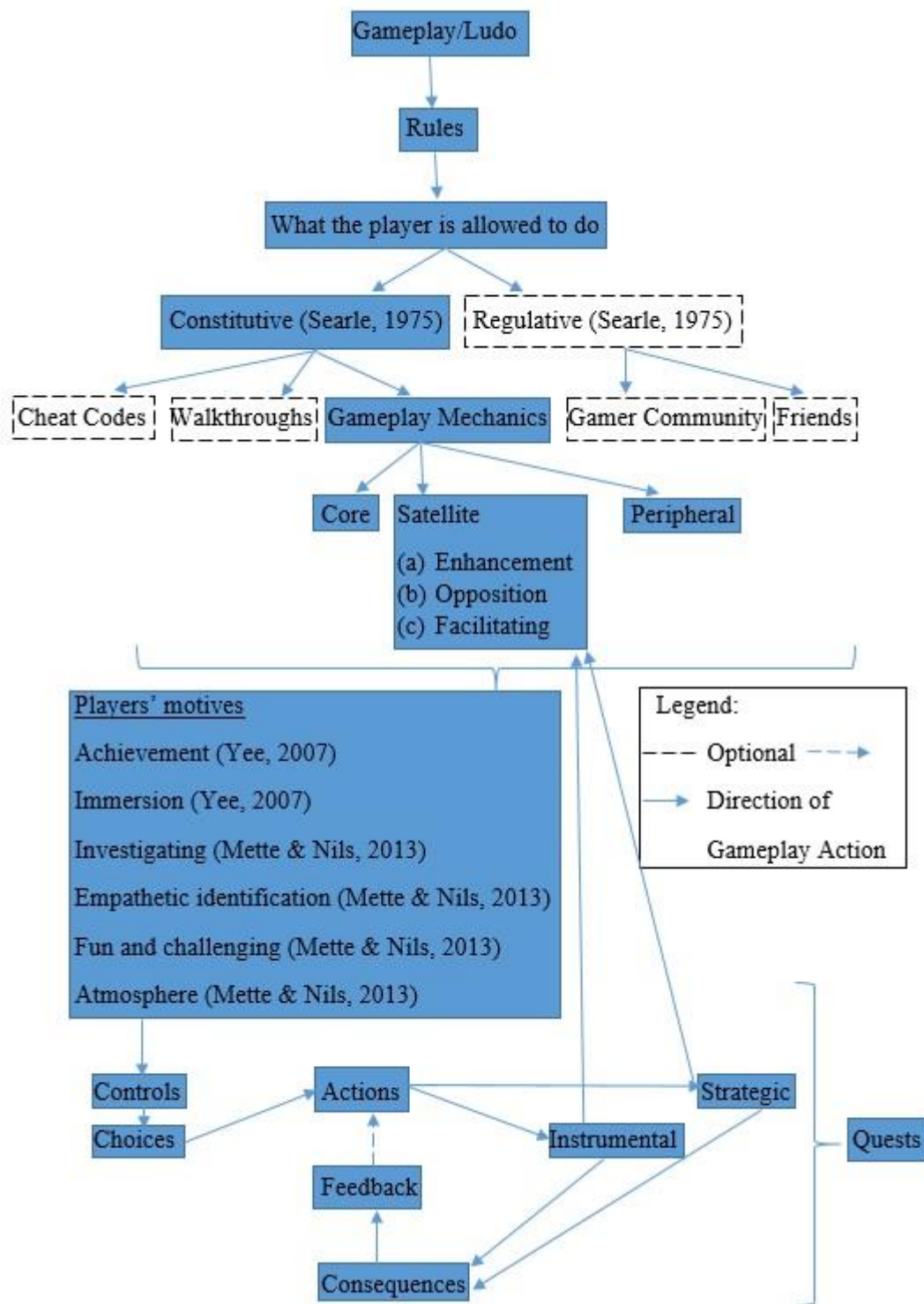


Figure 62 The gameplay side of the ludonarrative model

As shown in Figure 62 above, the “ludo” or the gameplay rules enable the players’ gameplay actions through the constitutive rules (Searle, 1975). The gameplay side of the

ludonarrative model enables the analyst to understand *what* gameplay actions different players perform in the gameworld based on the type of video games and their motives.

“Cheat codes” and “walkthroughs” are optional under constitutive rules, depending on the player’s gaming preference. Regulative rules (Searle, 1975) are optional and are more applicable for multiplayer games although some players (e.g. Mary and Loke) who are friends in my study discuss gameplay strategies with each other. Gameplay mechanics is a specific instantiation of “rules” and consists of “core”, “satellite” and “peripheral”. Gameplay mechanics enables the players’ actions. The players’ motives determine *how* the players will interact with the game and *how* they interpret the ludonarrative relationships. For instance, players such as John are more achievement oriented (Yee, 2007) and they tend to progress the gameplay instead of interpreting the narrative. John’s motive influenced him to formulate a lesser degree of narrative compared to immersion oriented (Yee, 2007) players. The players first interact with the controls, based on their motives. Their interactions are manifested as choices in the types of gameplay actions. Gameplay actions include “strategic” and “instrumental”. The performance of specific gameplay actions results in consequences (e.g. changes in character’s relationships or PC’s gameplay abilities) in the gameworld which is displayed as the system’s response/feedback to the player. “Feedback” may or may not contribute to the further performance of the player’s gameplay actions. “Controls”, “choices”, “actions”, “consequences” and “feedback” form the “quests” in the gameplay.

In this section, I have summarised the proposed gameplay model for the creation of the ludonarrative model. In the next chapter, I will propose the ludonarrative model which brings together the narrative and the gameplay analysis frameworks for video game analysis.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE LUDONARRATIVE MODEL

#### 7.0 Overview

This chapter proposes the ludonarrative model by integrating the analyses performed in Chapters Five and Six using the narrative and gameplay analyses model. The ludonarrative model is grounded on the gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis. As mentioned in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the method used is iterative which involves using the multimodal discourse analysis approach to create interview questions for the participants, the answers to which are used to create the (sub)categories in the ludonarrative model.

This chapter is divided into several sections. Section 7.1 provides the theoretical grounding for the ludonarrative model by discussing Dena's (2010) preliminary model for describing the meaning-making process of polymorphic fiction. Section 7.2 provides justification for the ludonarrative model. Section 7.3 provides an overview of the respective (sub)categories of the ludonarrative model. Section 7.4 applies the proposed ludonarrative model for a sample analysis of the *TLOU*' prologue to demonstrate how it can be used to analyse a video game. Section 7.5 summarises Chapter Seven.

#### 7.1 The Ludonarrative Model

Dena (2010) proposes a preliminary model to describe the meaning-making processes of polymorphic fiction. Polymorphic fiction refers to stories that have different forms of expressions. An example is *The Matrix* franchise by the Wachowskis which has a continuing storyline across comics, computer game, feature films, online games, and anime (Dena, 2010). She argues that "polymorphic fictions offer a unique methodological opportunity to stretch current notions of the role of delivery media and environments in the meaning-making

process, as well as understanding narrative and game modes” (Dena, 2010). However, current theories that directly describe these practices are not attending to the meaning-making process of the co-presence of narrative and gameplay in video games. Based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2001) framework, Dena (2010) developed a skeletal model for the analysis of polymorphic fictions. Their theory of multimodal communication consists of three different levels, namely, “common semiotic principle”, “mode”, and “media” (Figure 63).

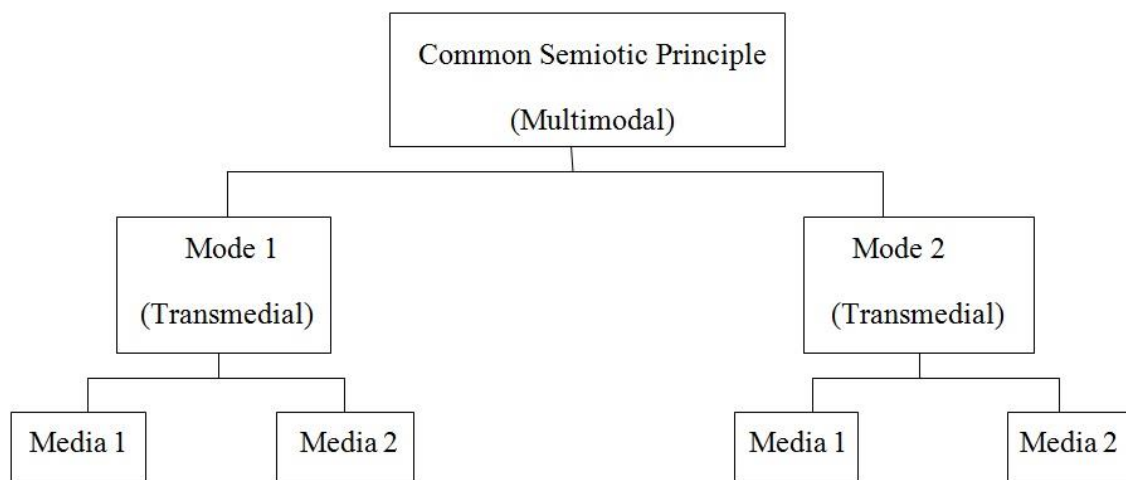


Figure 63 Diagram illustrating the relations between principles, modes, and media, as espoused by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) (Reproduced from Dena (2010))

The top level in Figure 63 is the common semiotic principle, such as “action”, “emotion”, and “framing”. It is a transmodal element that is on a level of general abstraction. Different elements can therefore be present in different abstractions in different modes and media. For instance, framing principles are present in different forms in different media. In music, framing principles can be observed as lyrics; in books as covers; and in movies as cinematography. A common semiotic principle is “a multimodal principle, that can be differently realised in different semiotic modes” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:3). Multimodal is defined by Dena (2010) as the merging of modes.

The second level in the model consists of modes. Modes are semiotic resources that “can be realised in more than one production medium” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:21-22;

original emphasis removed). In this study, modes refer to the linguistic and visual semiotic elements present in the gameplay and narrative. The final level is media. They “are the material resources used in the production of semiotic products and events” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Examples of media are books, cameras, computers, and (human) vocal apparatus.

Dena (2010) further argues that moving the inquiry to take into account modal diversity assists comprehension of the relationship between narrative, game, and media. More importantly, through the shift in the framework to understand modes as a holistic entity, the investigation assists the study of the interlinking of elements consisting of modes *and* transmodality. The implication of this model is twofold. Firstly, this model facilitates the analysis of the ludonarrative relationship in video games. Secondly, by defining a transmodal element as an element that can be realised in different modes, it makes the definition of certain concepts relevant to both narrative and gameplay in video games. For example, Dena (2010) argues that by interpreting the notion of “cause or causal relations” as a possible transmodal principle, “cause” can then be extrapolated to narrative and gameplay concepts equally in the form of plot and quests respectively. The main difference being that quests involve action on behalf of the player and plot involves narration. Thus, the concept of “cause” is no longer restricted to the narrative concept, but can occur in both the narrative and gameplay concepts.

With the discussion of Dena’s (2010) transmodiological approach, I will now modify Dena’s (2010) model as shown in Figure 63 to create a ludonarrative model for video game analysis. The modification is shown in Figure 64 below.



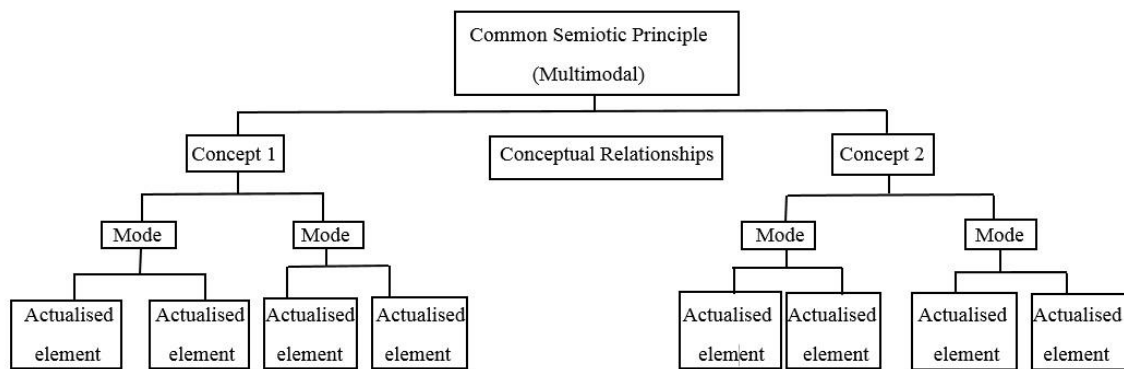


Figure 64 Modification of Dena (2010)

On the second row, I include “concept”. These concepts are derived from the common semiotic principle. They are the overarching conceptual meanings. In this thesis, concepts include “narrative” and “gameplay”. The third row consists of “mode” which refers to the semiotic resources such as the linguistic and visual resources. On the fourth row, I include “actualised element”. These elements are conveyed via the different modes to create the actualised meanings by the players. “Actualised elements” include “quest”, “plot”, “characterisation”, “narrative themes”, and so on. The centre column includes the “conceptual relationships” that indicate how the concepts are linked to each other. Figure 64 is further developed into the proposed ludonarrative model in Figure 65.

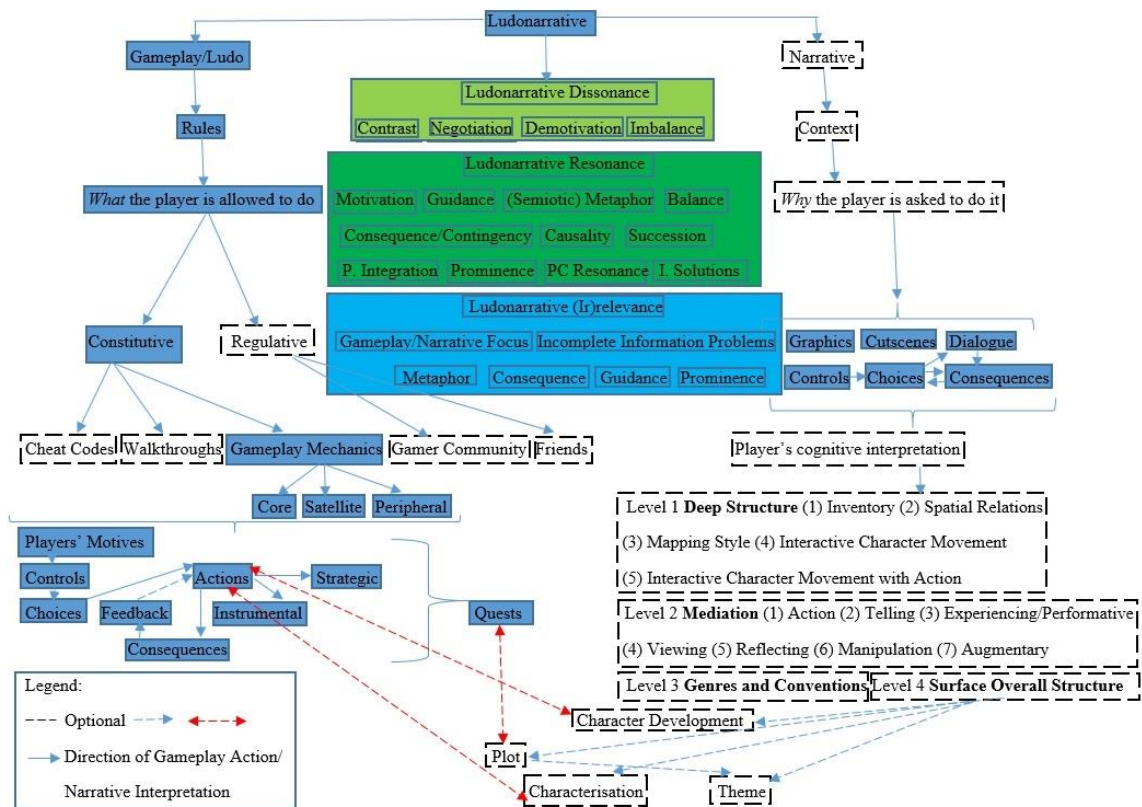


Figure 65 The Proposed Ludonarrative Model for Video Game Analysis

As shown in Figure 65 above, at the top level, there is “ludonarrative” which is a multimodal element consisting of a combination of modes. “Ludonarrative” is also transmodal, with elements, e.g. causal relations that can be realised in different concepts. For instance, the causal relations exist between “action” and “consequence” under the gameplay concept whereas the causal relations exist between “dialogue choice” and “consequence” under the narrative concept. On the second row, “ludonarrative” can be differently abstracted as the “ludo” and the “narrative” concepts. These are the different methods employed that influence the way messages are presented, received and acted upon by the player. As shown by the directional arrows in Figure 65, the proposed model is a top down model. “Ludonarrative” consists of “gameplay interaction” or “ludo” facilitated and constrained by the rules and cognitive interpretation of the “narrative” which is not always present unless elicited from the players (indicated by dotted lines in Figure 65).

Rules are subdivided into “constitutive” and “regulative”. “Constitutive rules” enable players’ actions and include “cheat codes”, “walkthroughs” and “gameplay mechanics” that allow player interaction”. “Cheat codes” and “walkthroughs” are optional elements depending on the players’ gaming preferences. “Regulative rules” control or facilitate players’ actions and include “the gamer community”, and “friends”. “Regulative rules” are optional and apply more to multiplayer games although players in my study such as Loke and Mary consult each other on gameplay strategies. Rules contribute to the players’ motives (Chapter Six Section 6.3) in the game which encourage the players to interact with the controls to select choices. Choices can include “actions” which are subdivided into “instrumental” (Chapter Six Section 6.4.1) and “strategic” (Chapter Six Section 6.4.2). Actions include “killing”, “escorting” or “gathering resources”, depending on the video game genre. Selecting different choices contribute to different consequences. Different consequences are provided as feedback (Chapter Six Section 6.6.2.1) and challenges (Chapter Six Section 6.5) to the player. “Feedback” may contribute to follow-up actions. “Controls”, “choices”, “consequences”, “motives”, “action” and “feedback” are classified under “quests” in gameplay. Although it is argued that narrative provides the context, gameplay rules also provide the context to the player by restricting or guiding the player’s actions.

For instance, based on the participant’s definition, Jim interprets gameplay as those portions of the game where the player does nothing to understand the narrative, but to play for advancing the narrative (**Transcript 3.96** in Appendix A). When the player clicks on the dialogue option in *The Walking Dead* and the NPC talks to the player and says that the remote control does not work, this also constitutes more gameplay than narrative because the participant, Jim felt that it does not handle the narrative issues at hand. Henry mentioned that choosing to cut off or not to cut off his (Lee’s) arm constitutes a gameplay choice as it does not change the narrative in *The Walking Dead* (**Transcript 3.97** in Appendix A).

In this model, although there is a division made between narrative and gameplay, there is no absolute division between the two. Depending on the players' interpretation and negotiation with the analyst for the creation of the ludonarrative (sub)categories, it is the degree of how much narrative and gameplay is present in the different video games. For instance, the participants, Jim and Henry mentioned that in *The Walking Dead*, when the player convinces an NPC to join the PC through the dialogue choices, it is both narrative and gameplay. The narrative includes the consequence reflected later in the game where choosing a specific dialogue will result in different narrative outcomes such as changing the NPCs' relationship with the PC (**Transcripts 3.96 & 3.97** in Appendix A). The gameplay includes the action of making the dialogue choice and the gameplay mechanics of the relationship points.

Henry and Matt mentioned that some dialogue options such as choosing to spare/support or kill/isolate an NPC are both narrative and gameplay choices. The reason is that both narrative and gameplay influence their choices as these choices have both narrative (influencing characters' relationships) and gameplay outcomes (influencing the relationship points) (**Transcripts 3.97 & 3.136** in Appendix A). Walter mentioned that he perceives the narrative and gameplay choices are one and the same in *The Walking Dead* as he felt that the whole game is built around making choices (**Transcript 5.2** in Appendix A). Matt mentions that the gameplay is the story in *Beyond: Two Souls* as his gameplay actions change the micro narratives in each chapter (**Transcript 5.48** in Appendix A).

How much narrative or gameplay is present depends on two major factors. Firstly, how the gamer interprets the different degrees of narrative and gameplay in the game depending on his/her interaction (**Transcript 3.98** in Appendix A). Secondly, how the game developers create the game (**Transcript 3.96** in Appendix A). In a scripted narrative sequence such as a QTE, the player can perform a gameplay action such as pressing the

correct keyboard, mouse or PS3 controller button when prompted and the consequences of the player's action will be presented as feedback. There may also be narrative conveyed during the QTEs. The degree of narrative and gameplay present in QTEs depend on the context. For instance, QTEs appearing in *TLOU*'s prologue are more narrative (**Transcript 3.25** in Appendix A) because gameplay choices are minimal while QTEs that provide a choice to shiv or strangle an enemy in *TLOU* are more gameplay (**Transcript 5.41** in Appendix A).

According to the proposed model, the dotted lines in Figure 65 mean that players' narrative interpretation may not always be present. Narrative interpretation is only present when it is elicited either in the gameplay recordings or during the first and final interviews during the retrospective protocol analysis. Whether narrative interpretation is present depends on the types of games used in the study. For instance, narrative focused games such as *The Walking Dead* will tend to facilitate narrative interpretation whereas gameplay focused games such as *Bioshock* will tend to encourage gameplay interaction.

Whether narrative interpretation is present also depends on the player's personality type. For instance, players who are more "immersion" personality type (Yee, 2007) would focus more on narrative interpretation whereas players who are more "achievement" personality type (Yee, 2007) would focus more on gameplay interaction. The argument that the presence of narrative interpretation is dependent on the players' personality is supported by the interview data where John and Peter who are more "achievement" (Yee, 2007) player type mentioned that they do not care about the side stories in *Bioshock*'s audio logs. Peter perceived them to be noise as he focused more on the gameplay during the sessions and John was unable to interpret the audio logs' narrative because he was unable to understand the language. On the other hand, Mary is an "immersion" player type (Yee, 2007) who listened to all the *Bioshock*'s audio logs to piece together *Bioshock*'s narrative.

As shown in Figure 65 above, “choices”, “controls” and “consequences” can also appear under the third column, “narrative”. In specific genres of video games such as interactive graphic adventures and some role-playing games, the player may utilise the controls to select the dialogue choice. Depending on different players’ narrative and gameplay choices, the narrative consequences may be different, resulting in a multi-linear narrative.

“Narrative” provides the context, and gives the player a motivation when s/he is asked to do something, such as a quest in a role-playing game. Under the third column, for the category of “narrative”, clicking on an NPC or interacting with a game object might convey narrative information to the player. The narrative information might be presented to the player in the visual mode which consists of graphics and cutscenes via mimesis (*Beyond: Two Souls’* and *Bioshock’s* flashbacks). It can be presented in the form of a linguistic mode characterised by the presence of a narrator in the form of an NPC telling the story to the player. The narrative sequence can either be interactive or non-interactive. For instance, in *The Walking Dead*, Jim mentioned that when the player clicks on objects in the room to interact and the PC comments on these objects to reveal NPCs’ backstory, it constitutes extra narrative (**Transcript 3.96** in Appendix A). But these are gameplay choices as the player can choose not to select them. They also do not change the narrative and serves to hook the player to the character. Henry mentioned that narrative choices are those that give the PC backstory (**Transcript 3.97** in Appendix A). Alice mentioned that she perceives those dialogue options in *The Walking Dead* that provide pure backstory as gameplay options when she can choose to listen or not to listen to them because they do not change the narrative (**Transcript 3.98** in Appendix A). But after negotiating with her, she felt that backstory in the dialogue choices are a mixture of gameplay and narrative choices. The reason is that the backstory will affect her perception of the character in the narrative and influences her subsequent decision-

making during her later interaction with the character. In contrast, Alice perceives those dialogue options in *Beyond: Two Souls* as narrative dialogue choices when they change the narrative within each chapter of the game. Therefore, the amount of narrative present depends on the players' experience and whether they choose to focus on the gameplay interaction or the narrative interpretation when playing the game.

Cutscenes are usually displayed at the beginning and end of an act, a book, or a mission. When cutscenes are placed at the beginning, they provide contextualising information. When they are shown at the end, they serve as a reward to the player for completing the objectives. The various elements of Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps and Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'natural' narratology and cognitive parameters are included in the model to provide the analytical frames for the analyst to create interview questions for the participants to understand their narrative interpretations. The "quest" in gameplay is realised as a plot when the player is able to relate the gameplay actions to the narrative events through causality. The bidirectional arrows mean that "quest" can become "plot" and vice versa through "ludonarrative resonance causality", depending on the players' interpretation. "Character development" and "characterisation" are interlinked to gameplay actions and strategies in a bidirectional way through "ludonarrative resonance metaphor", depending on the participants' interpretations. "Character development" and "narrative characterisation" interlinked to "gameplay actions" and "strategies" could be correlated by the players to the "narrative theme". For instance, Walther mentioned that the player's gameplay action of shooting the trapped soldier under the metal cabinet without remorse provides Joel's characterisation and highlights the gameworld's post-apocalyptic context (**Transcript 3.133** in Appendix A).

The inclusion of empirical data such as the interviews conducted using retrospective protocol analysis to create, refine and validate the ludonarrative (sub)categories in the

ludonarrative model contributes to the subjectivity of the ludonarrative model. The ludonarrative categories are aesthetic/pragmatic/experiential in nature as they have to be experienced by the players and need interpretation and negotiation between myself and the participants. The ludonarrative model's subjectivity puts them in contrast to the more objective categories of Dena's model which are more theoretical. The benefit of the ludonarrative model is that it is able to highlight the subjective experience of different players where they interpret the narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative relationships differently. The players' subjective experience and the analyst's interpretation of their experience also provides a rich source of data from which new subcategories could be developed based on the proposed main categories. Since the data gathered is subjective, it has also to be noted that multiple labelling may be present when the analyst conducts the ludonarrative analysis of the video game based on different players' experience. The multiple labelling is reflected in the coding of the data. The proposed model is created, developed, refined and validated using the empirical data. It has also been tested by applying the ludonarrative (sub)categories to the analysis of *TLOU*' prologue (Chapter Seven Section 7.4).

What is missing from Dena's (2010) model as shown in Figures 64 and 65 is the relationship or interaction between the concepts in the middle row. My proposed ludonarrative model does not map completely to Dena's model (2010). For instance, the third row in Dena's model (2010) (Figure 63) consists of different media, but there is only one gaming media in my study on two platforms which include the computer and the PS3. Figures 64 and 65 propose the addition of the ludonarrative relationship in the second column to build on Dena's (2010) model. The ludonarrative relationships include "ludonarrative dissonance", "ludonarrative resonance" and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance". In sections 7.3.1, 7.3.2 and 7.3.3, I will discuss the meanings of these terms with video game examples. The



examples include the empirical data from the game study's first and final session's interviews, participants' post gameplay reflections, and their commentary in the gameplay recordings.

The players' motives are included at the left gameplay column to correlate with the ludonarrative categories. For instance, "achievement" (Yee, 2007) players such as John and Peter are correlated to the ludonarrative subcategory of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance gameplay focus" in *Bioshock*. "Immersion" (Yee, 2007) players such as Nasir are correlated to the ludonarrative subcategory of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance narrative focus" in *Mass Effect*. "Achievement" (Yee, 2007) and "immersion" (Yee, 2007) players such as Mary and Henry could be correlated to both "ludonarrative dissonance" and "ludonarrative resonance". "Ludonarrative dissonance" occurs when players such as Mary feel a conflict to focus on the narrative or gameplay in *Bioshock* and "ludonarrative resonance" occurs when players such as Henry feel a heightened sense of immersion when they feel a seamless integration between narrative and gameplay in *The Walking Dead*.

## **7.2 Justification of Ludonarrative Model**

As highlighted by the analysis of the literature review in Chapter Three, the justification for the proposal of the ludonarrative model is the paucity of studies of ludonarrative relationships in video games which are grounded in empirical data. The theoretical terms used such as Clint Hocking's (2007) "ludonarrative dissonance" and Watsman's (2012) "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" are not validated by studies that take into account the different players' varied experience and motivation during their game interaction. I expand Clint Hocking's (2007) "ludonarrative dissonance" and Watsman's (2012) "ludonarrative resonance" with subcategories based on literature review and empirical data from the gameplay recordings and retrospective protocol analysis. I contribute to ludonarrative studies by proposing a new category "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" which

bridges “ludonarrative resonance” and “ludonarrative dissonance” on a continuum by indicating the suitability of the narrative and gameplay concepts for each other based on the players’ subjective experiences.

Although it is argued that video games are holistic experiences that have to be experienced as a package, the ludonarrative model which I propose in this thesis is able to foreground the specific elements in each of the modes (Figures 64 and 65). Some elements in each concept include “instrumental actions” and “strategic actions” in the gameplay, and “interactive character movement and action”, “mapping style”, and “schematic frames” in the narrative. I then show how the various constituents in each concept interrelate with each other (through multimodal discourse analysis analytical lenses discussed in the previous chapters) to provide the holistic players’ experience, depending on different players’ personalities. For instance, players who are more driven by the gameplay would be more predisposed to ignoring the narrative of the game. This is classified as “ludonarrative irrelevance – gameplay focus” in the proposed ludonarrative model. The ludonarrative model is able to highlight the type of players’ experience depending on their gaming preferences.

### **7.3 Ludonarrative Relationships**

Fiction and mechanics need not fight (though they easily can), and neither one need be given primacy (though one often is). Used together, they can enhance and extend each other in ways that each cannot do alone. Consummately great game design cannot be done by dropping a great fiction on top of excellent mechanics. It is done by threading them together into a single system of emotion. That’s why so much of game design isn’t just about crafting a well-balanced challenge or a beautiful world. It’s about doing each in such a way that it integrates seamlessly with the other. (Sylvester, 2013: 34)

The above quote summarises the different types of relationships between the narrative and gameplay in video games. First, gameplay and narrative can produce conflicting meanings with each other when they interact. This is known as “ludonarrative dissonance” and is discussed in section 7.3.1. Second, when game design is created “by dropping a great fiction on top of excellent mechanics” (Sylvester, 2013), the narrative and gameplay will have a weak relationship with each other. The reason is that these concepts are not developed together at the same time by specialised groups of game designers working collaboratively. I term this as “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” and is discussed in section 7.3.3. Finally, when narrative and gameplay are created in such a way that they seamlessly integrate with the other, that they cannot be separated, they will have a symbiotic relationship with each other. This is known as “ludonarrative resonance” and is discussed in section 7.3.2.

The term “ludonarrative dissonance” originates from Hocking (2007), a former creative director at LucasArts who wrote about it in his blog. Citing the example from the game *Bioshock*, Hocking argues that the gameplay in *Bioshock* encourages the player to adopt an Objectivist approach. The player is encouraged to take care of his self-interests by becoming more powerful to progress the game. For example, the player is enticed by Atlas to make the gameplay choice to extract more ADAM from NPCs called the Little Sisters in the gameworld which results in their death, instead of saving them, to gain direct power. However, in the narrative, the player is encouraged to be selfless. The player is tasked to save the NPCs such as Atlas’ family (by Atlas) and the Little Sisters (by Brigid Tenenbaum) and oppose Ryan, the antagonist in the narrative. With this disjunction between the gameplay and the narrative focus, the player becomes aware about the inconsistency of the reality portrayed in the gameworld and they would make judgments as to whether or not the information given to them by the gameplay and narrative is congruent based on the gameworld’s standards. They would therefore be pulled out of the gameworld. A related term is “narrative dissonance”

(Bycer, 2013) in game storytelling which refers to “the game mechanics directly clash with the narrative and pacing of the title”.

The term “ludonarrative resonance” has overlaps with other scholars’ concepts. Michael Mateas (2001) expanded on Laurel’s (1986, 1991) theoretical work to better accommodate the notion of *agency*. Mateas proposes a theoretical framework to integrate agency into Aristotle’s poetics of drama. The player decides what can and cannot be done, based on material and formal constraints (Mateas, 2001). The *formal constraints* are defined as motivations for action from the plot and *material constraints* are defined as conventions for action made available through the language and patterns in the medium (Mateas, 2001). Mateas’ formal constraints are similar to my proposal of narrative interpretation which expands and integrates Ryan’s (2003) cognitive maps and Fludernik’s (1996, 2003) cognitive parameters. His *material constraints* are similar to my proposed gameplay model which expands and integrates Manninen’s (2003) communicative actions and Fabricatore’s gameplay mechanics.

“Ludonarrative resonance causality and consequence” are similar to Wardrip-Fruin’s (2010) “SimCity Effect”. The “SimCity Effect” is defined as a relatively complex set of internal processes that is transparently presented on the surface, such as a fictional world to the user (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010). In “ludonarrative resonance causality and consequence”, when the effects of the player’s gameplay actions on the narrative and vice versa are clearly shown to the player, the player would be able to form a rough mental model of the underlying internal processes of video games such as *Mass Effect*. The effects of the player’s actions on the narrative are more explicit to him on the second playthrough (**Transcript 3.4** in Appendix A). Specifically, the player will be able to link the underlying computational process in the gameplay system of Paragon and Renegade to the changes of the narrative (dialogue and character action) presented in the fictional world. The subcategory of

“ludonarrative resonance prominence” is similar to Pinchbeck’s (2009) ludodiegetic model where he conceptualises story as a function of gameplay in FPS games. “Ludonarrative resonance prominence” is also comparable to Fernandez Vara’s (2011) “indexical storytelling” where the signages in the gameworld not only provide environmental storytelling but also points the direction for the player to move towards in the gameworld.

“Ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration” is similar to Fernandez Vara’s (2009) proposal of story integration with player’s action in adventure games. While Aarseth’s (2012) preliminary proposal of his ludonarrative model looks at ontological dimensions such as “world, “objects”, “agents”, and “events”, this study utilises the semiotic resources of the video games by drawing on the analytical lenses proposed in the narrative and gameplay model to create the ludonarrative model. Eskelinen’s (2012) “Cybertext Poetics” where he connects Aarseth’s cybertext to Genette’s narratology is similar to the subcategories of “ludonarrative resonance” in the ludonarrative model where I discuss the synergies between gameplay and narrative based on the multimodal discourse analysis.

The term “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” has some overlaps with Linderoth’s (2013) proposal of a “ludo-narratological construct”. She argues that some types of gameplay mechanics, such as improved character abilities as the game progresses are appropriate for some narrative themes and elements in specific video games which includes superheroes, Greek gods and sport stars. The comparison of the ludonarrative model with other frameworks is summarised in Table 22 below.

<b>Frameworks</b>	<b>Concepts</b>				
Ludonarrative Model (Toh, 2015)	Ludonarrative Resonance Prominence	Ludonarrative Dissonance (1) Contrast (a) Incomplete Information Problems (b) Anagnorisis (c) Player-(game designers') character dissonance (2) Negotiation	Ludonarrative Resonance Balance	Ludonarrative Resonance Causality and Consequence	Ludonarrative Resonance Parallelism Integration
Ludodiegesis Model (Pinchbeck, 2009)	Story as a function of gameplay in FPS				
Ludonarrative Dissonance (Hocking, 2007)		Ludonarrative Dissonance			
Agency (Mateas, 2001)			Formal and Material Constraints		
SimCity Effect (Wardrip-Fruin, 2010)				SimCity Effect	
Story Integration into Simulation Through Performance (Fernandez Vara, 2009)					Story integration into simulation through performance of player's actions
Indexical Storytelling (Fernandez Vara, 2011)	Environmental storytelling – signage and tutorials				

Table 22 Comparison with other models

Frameworks	Concepts			
Ludonarrative Model (Toh, 2015)	Multimodal semiotic resources	Ludonarrative Resonance	Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance	Ludonarrative Resonance
Ludo-narratological Construct (Linderoth, 2013)			Gameplay mechanics' relevance to narrative themes and elements	
Ontological Ludonarrative Model (Aarseth, 2012)	World, objects, agents and events			
Cybertext Poetics (Eskelinen, 2012)		Aarseth's (1997) cybertext and Genette's (1980) narratology		
Game spaces (Jenkins, 2005)				Enacting stories

Table 22 Comparison with other models (Continued)

### 7.3.1 Ludonarrative Dissonance

In general terms, “ludo” refers to what the player is allowed to do in the gameplay and “narrative” provides the reason why the player should do the thing in the gameplay. An example of the *Mass Effect*'s participant's experience of a conflict between the narrative pacing and game mechanics is discussed below.

During the gameplay commentary, Michael mentioned that the gameplay still continues by giving the player the side quest from the admiral as if he was unaware that Shepherd had become a fugitive towards the end of the narrative:

[*Mass Effect* 24 [Michael] 1:08:29]

Michael: So you see ah it's kind of killed this kind of programming that I am actually a fugitive now and the story is going on as if I haven't done anything wrong. So now I can choose to continue with the side quest which is quite absurd. Or I can go to the major arc and finish the story.

This conflict between narrative pacing and gameplay mechanics was confirmed in the last interview session where the video recording of the gameplay was reviewed with the participant (**Transcript 3.52** in Appendix A).

Ludonarrative dissonance can occur in two ways. The first way involves the **information** conveyed to the player in relation to the player's choice in the gameworld. The narrative message (interpretation) conflicts with the information conveyed through the gameplay. On the one hand, if the gameplay promotes certain gameplay actions by rewarding it but the character's narrative portrayal (interpretation) conveys an opposite message, ludonarrative dissonance occurs. For instance, Nasir chose to play a consistently good Shepherd in *Mass Effect* so he did not feel compelled to take the side quests which involved dubious activities that gave him gameplay rewards.

He mentioned about the conflicts he faced between the gameplay and narrative in the post gameplay reflection. In the first example, he mentioned that a side quest on the Citadel required him to help another character cheat by calibrating a program for the gambling games. However, as Nasir is creating a good Shepherd in the narrative, he did not choose the gameplay in the side quest, as it conflicted with his character's portrayal (narrative interpretation) (**Transcript 3.1** in Appendix A).

In the second example, he mentioned about the Keepers' side mission on the Citadel. At first he accepted the mission, but as he progressed in it, he found that the character who gave him the mission was trying to get another character killed. The reason is that the other character was trying to inform the authorities on the Citadel about their illegal scanning of the Keepers. As the player was creating a good Shepherd in the narrative, he felt a dissonance between his character in the narrative and the gameplay, which involved the illegal activities of scanning the Keepers for experience points (**Transcript 3.2** in Appendix A). Even though



he was curious to find out more about the Keepers by helping to scan them for the character who gave him the mission, he didn't feel comfortable to continue doing the mission. Thus, he stopped his gameplay action of scanning them illegally, halfway through the mission.

The third example he provided during the post gameplay reflection involved a side mission which was given to him on the planet Noveria (**Transcript 3.3** in Appendix A). The side mission required him to spy for the other characters to get information for them. He mentioned that he did not want to abuse his authority as a Spectre, as he felt that although the mission gave him some character benefit in the gameplay such as experience points, but it was not in line with the good Shepherd he was building in the narrative.

However, in the last interview for *Mass Effect*, Nasir mentioned that on the second playthrough, he realised that *Mass Effect's* choices were more flexible than he thought when he played it the first time. For instance, he could have chosen the side missions which involve doing illegal activities, but could also have a good narrative outcome where he turned the illegal stuff to the authorities and get the other character arrested. In this way, the dissonance or conflict between gameplay and narrative was lessened. It also became easier to play the game, because he realised that he was not restricted from choosing the side missions in the gameplay which involve illegal activities in the narrative as he could turn in the missions to the authorities to obtain a good outcome. In doing so, the gameplay actions which he chose were in line with the narrative portrayal of the PC (**Transcript 3.4** in Appendix A).

In *The Walking Dead*, the participant mentioned his narrative interpretation of Lee Everett as a character who does not want to reveal his past to the other NPCs. However, the gameplay options also allow him to select choices to reveal the PC's past which he wanted to in a restricted form of a player's narrative. In this case, he felt that there is a conflict between

the narrative portrayal and the gameplay choices in the dialogue (**Transcript 3.101** in Appendix A).

On the other hand, if the gameplay (outcome) prohibited the player from carrying out certain actions, but the narrative (interpretation) provided the player reason that they should do them, there is ludonarrative dissonance. From *Mass Effect*, Nasir mentioned that he interpreted the narrative in the white coloured dialogue option “calm down” (Figure 66) as the choice to save a side character, Wrex. Using the analytical frame of *symbolic mapping style* from the narrative framework, Nasir assumed that the positioning of the dialogue at the top right hand corner means that it will have a positive impact. However, the gameplay (and narrative) outcome (Figure 67) of selecting that choice was that Wrex was killed and he did not want that, as he wanted to persuade Wrex to get him back on his side. In this sense, he felt a conflict between the narrative given in the white coloured dialogue option and the gameplay outcome where the character was eliminated in the game, preventing his use in the future gameplay (**Transcript 3.5** in Appendix A). In this instance, the dialogue option he chose is an event based opposition mechanic which occurs on the dialogue wheel.



Figure 66 Interpreting the narrative of the dialogue option “calm down”



Figure 67 The gameplay (and narrative) outcome of the white coloured dialogue option

The second way is when there are **logical inconsistencies** between what is conveyed through the gameplay and the narrative. This logical inconsistency can happen between the cutscene’s narrative representation or narrative themes of the video game and the gameplay.

A participant mentioned in the *Mass Effect* interview that he found the Geth powerful in the cutscene, but when he played the game they felt weak to him (**Transcript 3.110** in Appendix A). Michael and Nasir did not find this inconsistency though (**Transcripts 3.111 & 3.112** in Appendix A).

In the game study, players interacted with the video game, *TLOU* on the normal difficulty level. On the higher difficulty level, the logical inconsistency might not occur since the enemies are harder to defeat. During the last interview, Walter mentioned about the disjunction between the “realistic” setting of *TLOU* and the random ammunition drops from the enemies in the gameplay (**Transcript 3.6** in Appendix A). During the last interview, Walter also observed logical inconsistencies between the constant ammunition drops from the enemies in *TLOU*’ gameplay which conflicted with the setting of the gameworld where the narrative shows there is a scarcity of resources in the post-apocalyptic environment (**Transcript 3.7** in Appendix A). However, further interview prompts highlight that he didn’t link the gameplay resources that he is able to carry to the narrative as he mentioned that to him, the limited scarcity of resources was not a prominent point in the narrative, as it merely contributes to the overarching atmosphere of the gameworld (**Transcript 3.8** in Appendix A). The link between the narrative theme of limited resources in the post-apocalyptic gameworld and the gameplay resources was not strong as the ludonarrative relationship was inconsequential in *TLOU* (cf. Section 7.3.3.5 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance Consequence).

Another inconsistency may be related to the player’s active gameplay participation and passive narrative interpretation when the player’s control is taken away. In the cutscenes or scripted narrative sequences, the PC does not need to be involved when fighting a major enemy, such as a boss character and the boss will then be either killed or admit defeat and surrender. However, in the gameplay, the PC has to participate actively and fight every enemy to the death. For instance, on the one hand, in *Bioshock*, the player does not have to

fight Andrew Ryan, the main antagonist during the climax. His death occurs in a scripted narrative sequence where control is taken away from the player. On the other hand, the final boss fight in *Bioshock* occurs in the gameplay where the PC has to defeat Frank Fontaine in a prolonged gameplay sequence. However, in the *Bioshock's* game study, some of the players, such as Mary did not desire the gameplay control when it was taken away from her during the encounter with Andrew Ryan. She explained that the game's narrative was highlighting the player's gameplay actions were been controlled by the video game where the character, Atlas constantly told/mind controlled the player (character) what to do (**Transcript 3.9** in Appendix A). This similarly occurs for another player (**Transcript 5.22** in Appendix A).

It has to be noted that ludonarrative dissonance does not necessarily mean that the player's experience is always bad. Through the video game analysis and the interviews' empirical data, I argue that the clash between the gameplay action and narrative representation can also serve to highlight the overall message, central theme or "freedom of choice" (in *The Walking Dead* example given above) in the video game. For instance, in *TLOU*, the gameplay is less scripted than the narrative so the player has more freedom of choice in formulating gameplay strategies to overcome the challenges (discussed above). The perception of a clash between gameplay and narrative during the first playthrough is contrasted to the perception of a lack of a clash between gameplay and narrative during the second playthrough in *Mass Effect*. This contrast shows us the player's learning of the ludonarrative relationship where they understand it better on the second playthrough (**Transcript 3.4** in Appendix A).

The proposed ludonarrative dissonance processes take place through the interaction between specific elements in the narrative and gameplay concepts. The interaction between the elements or mechanisms have the potential to re-contextualise (i.e. diverge) the meanings of semiotic modes (O'Halloran, 2007). There is a need to further examine the mechanisms at

work which bring about a divergence of meanings of selections from different concepts. The mechanisms which facilitate the interaction between constituents from the concepts include:

### ***7.3.1.1 Ludonarrative Dissonance Contrast***

Constituents from one concept function as a contrast to constituents from another concept. The incongruity which arises from the distinction between selections from different concepts is functional in producing a re-contextualising relationship between their meanings (Liu and O'Halloran, 2009). An instance is where the gameplay interrupts the player's listening to the narrative in *Bioshock's* audio logs (**Transcript 3.10** in Appendix A).

#### ***7.3.1.1.1 Incomplete information problems***

Pynenburg (2013) defines *incomplete information problems* as the situation in which “to solidify the empathetic connection between player and character, game designers may force players to make quick, important decisions with limited knowledge of how their choice may affect events further in the narrative”. Usually, these moments force the player to make choices under a time restriction. By not explicitly telling the player how their gameplay actions/choices will affect the larger narrative, the players find that they have to think more like the PC so they have to immerse themselves into the character. The reason is that they are forced to make difficult decisions on the same information available to the character when the time restriction simulates how real life conversations occur. Depending on the context, in games such as *The Walking Dead*, choosing a different gameplay choice/action may or may not affect the player's relationship with the other characters in the narrative (**Transcript 3.11** in Appendix A).

### 7.3.1.1.2 Anagnorisis

*Anagnorisis* is another ludonarrative mechanic which is available to game developers to strengthen the player's empathetic experiences. The term originates from Aristotle's Poetics, and is defined as a moment in plot structure which features the discovery or recognition which contributes to the peripety [or 'reversal of fortune for the protagonist'] (Pynenburg, 2013). Anagnorisis usually occurs during a "recognition scene" or plots during the principle reversal or peripety that occurs from someone's acquisition of knowledge previously withheld but when known, contributes to a decisive change (in the gameplay). In a sense, *anagnorisis* is related to *incomplete information problems* in which certain information is withheld from the player regarding the gameworld, i.e. the player possesses less information about the gameworld. This withholding of information from the player could lead to the player's perception of the disjunction between the gameplay actions of the PC and PC's role, e.g. gender in the narrative events when it is uncovered. For instance, Pynenburg (2013) cited the example of the *Metroid* game (Nintendo R&D1 & Intelligent Systems, 1986) which only reveals to the player the female gender of the PC, Samus at the game's conclusion. The effect of withholding the information regarding the PC's gender will challenge the player's preconceptions regarding gender norms, especially those who assumed that Samus would be male based on name and occupation. The effect of not revealing anything about the PC's gender (in the narrative) but showing her (gameplay) abilities before the conclusion, enables the player to empathise with the female-identified character before the player had the chance to reject said empathy (Pynenburg, 2013).

However, from the empirical data in *Bioshock's* study, Peter was unable to completely understand one of the side character, Jasmine Jolene's narrative. Jasmine Jolene was the antagonist, Andrew Ryan's mistress. The narrative in the audio logs, her ghost's flashback and the PC's flashback of his "family" when the player enters the bedroom behind the strip

club at Fort Frolic collectively convey the narrative information to the player. This narrative information tells the player that Andrew Ryan killed Jasmine Jolene after she secretly sold his son's (the PC) foetus to another side character, Brigid Tenenbaum who was working for Frank Fontaine (the other antagonist). The narrative information that Peter could not decipher was that Jasmine Jolene was his PC's biological mother. He was unable to understand this narrative information because it was subtly hinted in the PC's visual flashback of his "family". There was no language used in the flashback to explicitly tell the player this narrative information. Therefore, anagnorisis was unable to occur for Peter when he played the game. It was only during the post gameplay interview that I mentioned this narrative information to him.

Peter mentioned that if he would have known the narrative information that Jasmine Jolene was his character's biological mother, he would be even more motivated to find the antagonist Andrew Ryan to get to the bottom of the issue (**Transcript 3.12** in Appendix A). This highlights that participants who were able to understand the subtle narrative information might become more motivated in the gameplay. The player's ability to understand this narrative information might contribute to a decisive change in the player's gameplay by motivating his/her gameplay actions.

John also mentioned that he was unable to fully understand the side character, Jasmine Jolene's backstory. Therefore, his PC's relationship to her was unclear to him when the narrative information was revealed to him when he was playing. He was more focused on the gameplay and the narrative link of Jasmine Jolene to his PC's gameplay role cannot be formed. He explained that to him the side character's narrative in *Bioshock* was optional. The reason is that he felt from his experience of playing other video games, the norm was that the narrative is optional and can be skipped but the gameplay was more obligatory (**Transcript 3.13** in Appendix A).



#### 7.3.1.1.3 Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance

Pynenburg (2013) defines player-character dissonance as the situation in which “the characters know more about a given situation than the player”. This is opposed to dramatic irony in literary and dramatic terms in which the actors on the stage or some characters in a story are not aware of facts known to the spectator or reader. In video games, players are usually expected to infer about their character as they play the game. This is the reason why players usually control a character afflicted with amnesia, such as in *The Witcher 2*. Based on the interviews of the empirical study (**Transcript 3.15** in Appendix A), the definition of player-character dissonance is modified to include the situation where the player’s knowledge of the gameworld is less than what they think the game designers know about the PC. The PC’s amnesiac condition makes them a blank slate, and the player only knows the same things which are revealed to be known by the PC, but the game designers know all the possible pathways (and the narrative) that the player can choose to progress in the gameworld. Examples of games which feature PCs with amnesia include *Planescape: Torment* (Black Isle Studios, 1999), *The Witcher* (CD Projekt RED, 2007), and *The Witcher 2* (CD Projekt RED, 2011).

Michael who played *Mass Effect* showed an instance of an out of character experience when the other character, Ashley was shown to know more narrative information than his PC in the dialogue interaction. He understood that the game designers were using this method to convey the narrative information to the player instead of the PC. He mentioned that the PC who was Commander Shepherd is expected to know information about the other races, such as the Geth, (a synthetic race) as he has a lot of battlefield experience. Michael also mentioned that his experience of the sniper commando in real life and how the style of character’s narrative information is presented in anime helped to pull him out of character when he played this part of the game (**Transcript 3.14** in Appendix A).

Nasir attempted to justify why the PC who is Commander Shepherd does not possess knowledge about the synthetic race, the Geth (**Transcript 3.15** in Appendix A). We also ended up agreeing that it is the way in which the game designers choose to portray the other character's backstory information to the player. Nasir felt some disjunction between the PC and himself as a player during the last interview. However, when he played the game, he did not think too much about the disjunction because he was immersed in playing the game.

Michael explained that he was unable to relate to the PC, Jodie in *Beyond: Two Souls*. For instance, in the eighth (chronologically the first) chapter titled "My Imaginary Friend", he was asked to help the PC's foster mother take the oil from the garage (narrative analysis in Chapter Five). However, he mentioned that because he was unfamiliar with the layout of Western houses as he stayed in Singapore's Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats, he was unclear where the garage was. In Singapore, the garage is situated outside the house at the carpark on the ground level. Hence, when he played the game he attempted to go out of the house to look for the garage but ended up being called back into the house by the foster mother. The different experience caused him to be detached from the PC when playing the game (**Transcript 3.16** in Appendix A).

Walter mentioned that in *TLOU*'s prologue, he knew that the PC's daughter, Sarah was looking for Joel, the PC during the outbreak of the apocalypse in the narrative. However, he felt weird when the gameplay allowed him to control Sarah to read the newspaper to obtain backstory about the gameworld instead of finding Joel immediately (**Transcript 3.129** in Appendix A).

In *Mass Effect's* study, Michael mentioned that at the game's beginning Saren was introduced as the main antagonist. However, the narrative did not explain his motivation at the start. This lack of narrative information caused him to become curious about the character.

He mentioned that he wanted to kill him at the earliest possible moment (**Transcript 3.17** in Appendix A). However, as he continued to play the game, the narrative showed him another side of Saren where he was a pawn of another major antagonist, the Reaper Sovereign. This caused him to choose the narrative option to attempt to bring Saren back to the good side later when he was given a choice to fight him or persuade him without fighting him during the climax. The player-(game designers') character dissonance "allows for games to make commentary on the assumptions people make about the characters they embody, and more importantly, it allows for revelations that form empathetic bonds with characters that can appear shockingly villainous". Pynenburg (2013) argues that "if games are able to make players feel empathy for people who commit atrocities, it is likely that games are able to foster empathy with nearly any kind of character". Video games can then be used to broaden our view of the world by enabling us to experience what it is like to be someone other than ourselves.

Another definition for this category is the situation where the players know more about a given situation than the PC. This can happen when the cutscene shows the player a different narrative event than the gameplay event the PC is engaged in. For instance, in *Mass Effect*, the PC was on route to find Saren in the gameplay, but a cutscene interrupts the gameplay to show Saren killing Nihlus. A participant mentioned that he found it weird that the player knows more narrative information than the PC (**Transcript 3.118** in Appendix A). Nasir mentioned that the PC is not restricted to his own perspective in the gameplay and is able to see narrative events from multiple characters' perspective. For instance, he mentioned the cutscene that occurs after the gameplay shows the narrative event from the smuggler NPC's perspective where Saren was interacting with Nihlus (**Transcript 3.119** in Appendix A). Similarly, in *TLOU*, the player was able shift perspectives between playing Ellie and Joel in the Winter Chapter. This enabled him to know more information than Joel

when he played him to look for Ellie by understanding Ellie's precarious position from her perspective as being a captive of David (**Transcript 6.14** in Appendix A). This is similar to zero focalisation (Genette, 1980) where the player is presented narrative information beyond what the PC could know in the gameplay.

### ***7.3.1.2 Ludonarrative Dissonance Negotiation***

Constituents from different concepts result in a macro-shift in meanings and this involves re-contextualisation in order to bring about a reconciliation between the meanings explicated through different concepts. Calleja (2011) discusses the term "ludic belief" (Chapter Two Section 2.4) to refer to the player's schematic knowledge of the game's ludic structures to edit out narrative incongruities or illogical narrative elements. In the *Mass Effect's* game study, Nasir and Michael mentioned that they expected to get the gameplay reward which are the weapons after they have rescued a party member on a planet (**Transcript 3.18** in Appendix A). Therefore, they used this schematic gameplay knowledge to edit out the narrative incongruities (lack of narrative explanation of the weapons which were suddenly given to them) when they played the game and focused more on the gameplay. In *The Walking Dead*, Henry mentioned that the PC talking to himself in the narrative was meant to help the player in the gameplay (**Transcript 3.89** in Appendix A).

In addition to Calleja's term "ludic belief", I propose the term "narrative belief". "Narrative belief" refers to the player's schematic knowledge of the game's narrative structure to edit out gameplay incongruities or illogical gameplay elements. In the *Mass Effect's* study, Michael mentioned that he did not find a conflict when his squad member, Jenkins died in a scripted cutscene and cannot be revived. Usually, in *Mass Effect*, squad members who are killed in the gameplay fights can be revived, but for Jenkins, he is dead permanently. He mentioned the game designers intentionally created the cutscene to highlight

the character's permanent death (**Transcript 3.66** in Appendix A). Therefore, Michael used his narrative knowledge to edit out the gameplay incongruity. However, during the interview, Nasir mentioned that he found a conflict (ludonarrative dissonance) between the gameplay depiction where squad members can be revived, and cutscene portrayal of the character where Jenkins cannot be revived (**Transcript 3.67** in Appendix A). But he did not feel too much about the taking of gameplay control away from him in relation to Jenkins' loss, because he only had three dialogue exchanges with him on the Normandy. Also, he mentioned that he knew that the game was making room for another character. Another participant also felt conflict (ludonarrative dissonance) between Jenkins' death in the cutscene and the gameplay where other squad mates could be revived when killed in the gameplay. He mentioned that there is a lack of narrative explanation in many games when characters die permanently in the gameplay to make room for another character (**Transcript 3.114** in Appendix A). Therefore, there exist different continua of ludonarrative negotiation between different players depending on their interpretation of the ludonarrative relationships.

### ***7.3.1.3 Ludonarrative Dissonance Demotivation***

In contrast to the category “ludonarrative resonance motivation” defined in Section 7.3.2.1, the category proposed in this section is defined as the situation in which the narrative demotivates the player from achieving the gameplay goals, choosing specific gameplay choices or perform specific gameplay actions. In the *Mass Effect's* study, Michael mentioned that when the NPCs do not reveal to him information about the (narrative) state of the gameworld and redirects him to speak with another person, he felt angry as they are forcing him to do something without giving him the information (narrative and gameplay instructions) (**Transcript 3.53** in Appendix A). Another example of demotivation occurs in the *Bioshock's* study where the narrative requires the player to become Big Daddy. To do so, the player has to embark on the multi-part goal of gathering the various parts of the Big Daddy suit towards

the end of the game. However, the gameplay action has become repetitive to the players. They have become familiarised with the multi-part goals given earlier in the game such as gathering the components to create the Lazarus factor at Arcadia, and gathering the various components to assemble the E.M.P. bomb at Hephaestus. John mentioned that the multi-part goal is used to prolong the game's play time without offering new variety to the game. The reward for becoming the Big Daddy is also not very significant as he mentioned that he did not feel more powerful than he expected (**Transcript 6.7** in Appendix A).

#### ***7.3.1.4 Ludonarrative Dissonance Imbalance***

Imbalance between the gameplay and narrative is created when one of the concepts is more dominant than the other such that it occupies the player's attention. It is related to the game's pacing such that the narrative and gameplay concepts are proceeding at different speeds from each other. For instance, in *Mass Effect*, when the player engages in performing the gathering tasks on the planets, the narrative is put on hold and does not proceed. Nasir mentioned that there is no narrative support for the gameplay gathering tasks on the various side planets (**Transcript 6.6** in Appendix A). Ludonarrative dissonance imbalance also occurs in *Bioshock*'s multi-part gameplay goals discussed in Section 7.3.1.3. When the player gathers the respective components to become a Big Daddy, the gameplay is proceeding but the narrative development is halted.

#### ***7.3.2 Ludonarrative Resonance***

Ludonarrative resonance occurs when the gameplay and the narrative fit together extremely well such that they cannot be separated (Wattsman, 2012). This can also be termed as gameplay and story integration. The player is allowed to do something by the gameplay, and the narrative provided ample reasons why the player should do it in the gameplay. A video game with ludonarrative resonance, where the narrative and gameplay concepts are

combined successfully, immerses the player in the gameworld by allowing the player to interact with a story they want to believe in, in a satisfying way (**Transcript 3.122** in Appendix A). Ludonarrative resonance requires the presence of a narrative which the player wants to believe in and the presence of a gameplay which gives the player enough freedom to feel involved, but does not undermine the narrative. Therefore, to create ludonarrative resonance, there needs to be a delicate balancing between narrative and gameplay. An example of the seamless integration of narrative and gameplay occurs in *The Walking Dead Season One*. Henry discussed his emotion of extreme sadness when he used the gameplay action to put to rest the reanimated body of the PC's deceased brother in the narrative to obtain the pharmacy's key (**Transcript 3.19** in Appendix A).

Nasir commented about the successful combination of gameplay and narrative in *TLOU* (**Transcript 3.20** in the Appendix A). The first point he mentioned was the lack of proper equipment in the gameworld. The narrative setting was that it was a post-apocalyptic environment and there was a lack of resources. It incorporates into the gameplay where the player has to utilise gameplay actions, such as scavenging for items to craft various gameplay objects from the pieces of items he found in the gameworld.

The second point he mentioned was the limited character storage. He mentioned that the PC's carrying capacity is limited, so the player is encouraged to use the stuff and engage in exploration to find items to replenish supplies. These gameplay actions, which include scavenging and constant crafting as a result of the limited gameplay carrying capacity, are aligning with the gameworld's "realistic" setting in a post-apocalyptic environment (**Transcript 3.21** in the Appendix A). The third point he mentioned was the limited ammunition. The PC has only a limited amount of ammunition per weapon. For instance, his shotgun has only eight bullets. Therefore, he needs to be careful with his shots, and not keep

missing when shooting. This gameplay aspect also aligns with the post-apocalyptic setting where there are limited resources in the gameworld (**Transcript 3.22** in Appendix A).

The final point he mentioned was the different gameplay actions of the two types of enemies in the gameworld, the humans versus the zombies. Specifically, human enemies' AI are programmed to appear to be smarter than the zombies. On the one hand, human enemies will take cover or flank the player. On the other hand, zombies will just come straight at the player if they become aware of him. The gameplay actions of the different types of enemies therefore align with the narrative portrayal of the characters in the gameworld (**Transcript 3.23** in Appendix A).

During the last interview, I discussed with Nasir about how the gameplay in *TLOU*' prologue builds up the narrative. He mentioned that the gameplay action where he has to carry the PC's daughter to escape during the apocalypse enabled him to empathise with the PC. The interactive narrative sequence facilitates his understanding of Joel's backstory as he is allowed to participate in it (**Transcript 3.24** in Appendix A). By giving some gameplay control to the player in the prologue and then taking away the control at the end of it enabled the player to understand the PC's experience of the loss of his daughter. The resonance between gameplay and narrative in the prologue enables the player to relate to *why* the PC, Joel does not want to form an attachment to Ellie as he does not want to risk attaching to her and re-experiencing loss again.

During the last interview, Walter however commented that to him there is no gameplay in *TLOU*' prologue as there is simply a movement from point A to B (**Transcript 3.25** in Appendix A). However, according to my definition, the gameplay consists of the players' actions and their successful completion of the QTEs which are the challenges to progress the prologue's narrative. I interpret Walter's comment that there is no gameplay as



his understanding that the gameplay has been integrated into the narrative, and that it cannot be separated from it according to the ludonarrative model. Instead of viewing the prologue as having zero gameplay, I interpret the gameplay as lesser than the subsequent parts of the game as the prologue serves as a tutorial for the player to familiarise with the basic controls of the PC. Also, based on my negotiation with Walter during the last interview, we came to the agreement that there is minimal gameplay in *TLOU*' prologue. During the first interview, Walter also mentioned that the part of the prologue where his PC was carrying his daughter has both story and gameplay together as he can control his character to see what is happening (**Transcript 3.130** in Appendix A). From the interview data, it can therefore be shown that repeated playthroughs of the game will change the players' experience and the change can be reflected in the ludonarrative categories. For instance, during the first playthrough, for players who seldom play PS3 games, they would be more focused on learning the basic gameplay controls to interact with the game. *TLOU*' prologue teaches the player basic actions such as moving, interacting with objects, and the QTEs. The subcategories of "ludonarrative resonance prominence and guidance" are thus present where the narrative is used as a scaffolding to point the player to the actions that s/he could utilise using the PS3 controller.

On the second playthrough, however, once the player has familiarised with the gameplay controls, the prologue would be perceived to become a scripted narrative sequence as they know what is going to happen. The subcategory of "ludonarrative irrelevance – narrative focus" is thus present where the player can ignore the gameplay and focus on understanding the narrative better. The contexts in which the QTEs occur also changes the ludonarrative categories depending on their functions. While the QTEs in the prologue are more integrated into the narrative, the QTEs in the other parts of the game where the player is able to use stealth kills on the enemies are more integrated into the gameplay (**Transcript 5.41**). When there is no scripted narrative during the gameplay fights, the participants are

observed to focus more on the gameplay actions, rather than the narrative interpretations of the fights. In this case, the subcategory of “ludonarrative irrelevance – gameplay focus” is present where the player ignores the narrative to focus on performing the gameplay actions.

There is no game which can allow complete player freedom as this game would be infinitely large and the code infinitely complex. Modern hardware would be unable to support such freedom. This is the reason why the gameplay provides specific choices for the player to select or in a less agentic way, actions to perform. For example, the player might be given a choice to select one of the two different gameplay options – either to kill or save an NPC, or to move or see in the left or right direction. Ludonarrative resonance occurs when the player is provided with the right amount of freedom such that they feel their actions are their own. Simultaneously, the narrative is interesting enough that the player wants to engage with it. More importantly, ludonarrative resonance means that the narrative gives good reason for the player to do what they are allowed to do in the gameplay.

The proposed ludonarrative resonance processes take place through various narrative and gameplay mechanisms which have the potential to co-contextualise (i.e. converge) the meanings of each of the modes (O’Halloran, 2007). There is a need to further examine the mechanisms at work which bring about the convergence of meanings of selections from different concepts. The mechanisms which facilitate the interaction between constituents from different concepts include:

### ***7.3.2.1 Ludonarrative Resonance Motivation***

Configurative elements which make up the gameplay and interpretative elements which make up the narrative interrelate with each other to facilitate processes of ludonarrative synergy. Interpretative elements from the narrative concept serve a contextualising function to the gameplay which brings a broader context and meaning to the gameplay. The narrative

motivates the player to achieve the gameplay goals (**Transcripts 3.105 & 3.113** in Appendix A) or to choose specific gameplay (dialogue) choices (**Transcript 3.106** in Appendix A) or perform specific gameplay actions (**Transcript 3.103** in Appendix A). The gameplay reward (Paragon points) may also motivate the player to select a specific narrative pathway in *Mass Effect* (**Transcript 3.117** in Appendix A). Interpretative elements making up the narrative explains to the player the means, the specific procedural rules or gameplay mechanisms which s/he can utilise to achieve the gameplay goals. In *the Beyond: Two Souls* game study, the cutscene at the beginning of the ninth (chronologically the tenth) chapter provides the gameplay objective for the player. The cutscene also gives hints that there are enemies such as the entities that the player has to overcome (**Transcript 3.26** in Appendix A). In *TLOU*, the death of an NPC, Tess, in a cutscene motivates the player to progress the gameplay to find out more about the narrative development (**Transcript 3.68** in Appendix A). A new narrative event may also motivate the player's gameplay. In *Bioshock*, the antagonist Frank Fontaine initiated a narrative event by telling the player in a scripted dialogue that the player's health will be reduced in intervals until he died. Peter, mentioned that he was afraid that his character would die before he can complete the game, so he was motivated in the gameplay to find the antidote to remove the negative effects (**Transcript 3.69** in Appendix A). However, John did not feel as much tension to motivate him to find the antidote in the gameplay. The reason he mentioned was that the visual feedback did not convey the urgency and if he died he could load from the save file (**Transcript 3.82** in Appendix A).

Gameplay elements such as gameplay mechanics also generate alterbiography (Calleja, 2011) dynamically during the moment of gameplay. Integrating gameplay mechanics to generate alterbiography (Calleja, 2011) not only generates additional layers of meaning to the video game narrative, but also informs narrative and gameplay decisions taken during the course of the game. However, alterbiography in the form of the player's narrative seldom

occurs in the empirical data, as most of the players do not usually think of the narrative when they engage with the gameplay mechanics. Exceptional instances involve ludonarrative resonance where gameplay and narrative are integrated together (**Transcripts 3.19 & 3.30** in Appendix A).

Dickey (2006: 251) suggests that in (adventure) games, there are two primary literary techniques integrated into narrative, which provide motivation for the gameplay. These techniques are *plot hooks* and *emotional proximity*. Plot hooks are present in both backstory and cutscenes. A plot hook is defined as an unanswered question that keeps the reader guessing and is an uncertainty which focuses the player's attention by planting questions which the player feels compelled to answer (Dickey, 2006: 251). Plot hooks create intrigue, arouse curiosity and frame puzzles. In the category, player-(game designers') character dissonance discussed above, the withholding of the other character's motivation in *Mass Effect* may create curiosity in the player. The withholding of narrative information about the characters also motivates players to find out more about the story. For instance, Jim mentioned that he was motivated to progress *The Walking Dead* game when his interaction with the PC, Lee's brother's corpse provided vague information about their relationship (**Transcript 3.59** in Appendix A). The term player-(game designers') character dissonance is used because the player may possess less narrative information, such as the character's backstory, than the game designers' (characters). The game designers' characters are supposed to be aware of the other characters' backstory, as they have lived in the gameworld for a period of time. The player is thus motivated to continue playing the game to uncover the narrative explanation for the character's actions which are left unexplained at the game's beginning.

In *The Walking Dead*, the lack of explanation of the player's gameplay actions motivates the player to progress the narrative which only later explains why specific NPCs or

the PC performs specific actions (**Transcript 3.104** in Appendix A). For instance, the PC was fighting Crawford's doctor who turned into a Walker (followed by Molly stabbing him repeatedly after the PC defeated him) in a QTE. Only later does the cutscene in the narrative activated via the camcorder explain the doctor's identity, his connection to Molly and Molly's gameplay action of stabbing the doctor's corpse continuously. However, other players are not motivated by plot hooks to progress the gameplay to uncover unanswered questions in the narrative. They prefer the narrative to be clearly presented to them instead of given in a vague manner (**Transcripts 3.131 & 3.132** in Appendix A). These players are motivated by the challenge in the gameplay instead of the narrative (Mette & Nils, 2013).

Emotional proximity motivates the player by engaging the player in the role s/he is playing. Emotional proximity is defined as "empathy and identification the player feels toward his or her character in the game" (Dickey, 2006: 251). To establish emotional proximity, the character not only has to be similar to the player, but more importantly, possessing characteristics which the players can identify with. Dickey (2006: 251) suggests that emotional proximity can be established by creating multidimensional characters with strengths and weaknesses and also creating characters who develop through the player's progression in the gameplay. Multidimensional characters exist in *TLOU* who enable the player, Nasir and Alice, to experience emotional proximity to them (**Transcripts 3.60 and 3.63** in Appendix A). The existence of multi-dimensional characters motivate Nasir and Alice to progress the gameplay to find out more about the narrative.

However, Walter, mentioned that he did not feel that some of the characters, such as David, the cannibals and the hunters were multi-dimensional or morally ambiguous. The reason is that they ultimately turned out to be bad with no redeeming characteristics and they mostly look out for their immediate group (**Transcript 3.61** in Appendix A). Therefore, he was not fully able to feel emotional proximity towards some of the characters who he felt had

more room for improvement in their character portrayals. Dickey (2006: 256) also suggests that emotional proximity can also be established by factors other than characters such as the familiarity of the narrative structure via the reassurance of cultural codes and values. Emotional proximity occurs in *The Walking Dead* example given in section 7.3.2. Henry mentioned that he could feel his character's emotional experience of extreme sadness when he controlled the PC, Lee Everett in the gameplay to kill his (PC's) brother in the narrative.

### **7.3.2.2 Ludonarrative Resonance Guidance**

In this category, the narrative guides or instructs the player what to do in the gameplay, such as giving the overall objective or guiding the player to formulate the general and specific gameplay strategies/actions. However, the narrative does not necessarily motivate the player to engage in the gameplay (**Transcripts 3.27, 3.80, 3.107, 3.140** in Appendix A).

Ludonarrative resonance guidance can also refer to the sequential organisation of the game where the players have to first obtain the narrative information from the NPCs in *Mass Effect* before they engage in the gameplay (**Transcript 3.107** in Appendix A). The NPCs also direct the players to speak with a specific NPC who will give the gameplay missions to the player (**Transcript 3.53** in Appendix A). However, there is a programming bug in the Feros' missions in *Mass Effect* where the player is able to engage in the gameplay missions first even before they are given to him by the NPCs as noted by Michael (**Transcript 3.28** in Appendix A).

### **7.3.2.3 Ludonarrative Resonance Metaphor**

Sylvester (2013) defines metaphor in games as a concept "giving something new the appearance of something familiar to make it easier to understand". Sylvester (2013: 220-221)

explains that metaphor is one of the most important concepts that enables the player to learn how to use the gameplay mechanics by wrapping the gameplay mechanics in fiction and narrative elements to communicate information faster to the player:

In a sense, the entire fiction layer of a game is a giant metaphor. We set up intricate sets of game mechanics that would be maddeningly difficult to learn from scratch. Imagine learning a complex video game if it were represented only by abstract shapes. But then we wrap them in the appearance of a growing city or an ancient war, and every relationship and system becomes clear. The fiction layer serves many emotional purposes in games, but its simplest and most basic reason for existence is to help players understand the system through metaphor.

Graham et al. (2006) developed a cognitive mental model technique to investigate the players' shifting knowledge of the game system as they interact with it. They hypothesised that novices would start with an impoverished mental model based on the visible *physical* characteristics of the game system. As they gained experience and insight through the gameplay sessions, their mental models would shift and accommodate the *functional* characteristics of the AI agents. Their findings indicate that five of the novice participants started with the predicted physical-based mental model. However, while their models qualitatively shifted with experience, they did not necessarily change to the predicted functional-based model.

In the *Bioshock's* game study, Mary mentioned that based on the visual appearance of the weapons, she chose to use some weapons such as the wrench and shotgun while avoiding the use of others such as the crossbow, chemical thrower, and grenade launcher when she first found them. She mentioned that the huge *physical* size of the weapons blocked her view so she did not use them at first as she perceived them to obstruct her gameplay. Therefore, the

weapons' affordance or metaphorical physical appearance prevented her from using them. It was only through her discussion with Loke that she realised the potential *functional* usefulness of the weapons (**Transcript 3.29** in Appendix A). After her discussion with Loke, she started to use the bigger weapons. Her *physical-based* mental model thus shifted to a *functional-based* model based on other gamers' experience which is used to accommodate her shift instead of the video game's fictional representations. Mary also mentioned that Loke reads wikis to know more about the weapons so it was not necessarily the game's visual representation that facilitates the players' shift from a *physical-based* mental model to a *functional-based* model. Only after shifting to a *functional-based* model did she mention that the learning of the weapon's control was intuitive.

Another instance is where the narrative was helping to set up the gameplay mechanics of the *Clicker* (a type of zombie-like enemy who detects the player using sound) for the player in *TLOU*. In this instance, the information about the Clicker's gameplay mechanics/action was conveyed to the player through the narrative when the player, Alice selects the option to interact with the Clicker who was trapped at the door (**Transcript 3.30** in Appendix A).

Graham et al.'s (2006) study indicates that the ludonarrative relationship of metaphor is present to enable the players to form a cognitive mental model to understand what the game objects mean through their physical resemblance to real world objects. The players could then further develop their understanding of the functional operations of the game objects as they continue to play the game. Video games which do not assist the player to shift to an understanding of the functional capabilities of game objects will contribute to the inability of players to shift to a functional-based mental model. This would result in player's frustration, players quitting the game, or not choosing to use a specific weapon or gameplay mechanic if they are optional. Players who are unable to shift to a functional understanding of



the game objects may also change their gameplay interaction, such as to become more passive in the gameplay. This happens in the *Beyond: Two Souls* game study where Michael was unable to map the different coloured dots' affordance to their gameplay function in the interaction (**Transcript 3.31** in Appendix A). He mentioned that the game did not provide clear affordances to tell the player what to do.

Walter mentioned that the visual representation of the crafting objects in the crafting window of *TLOU* makes it hard for him to track the resources that he has gathered (**Transcript 3.32** in Appendix A). He mentioned that it was difficult to decode the system in terms of how the visual representation indicated the amount of crafting resources that the player possessed before s/he can craft a certain gameplay object.

Graham et al's (2006) findings indicate that the players do not necessarily shift to a functional-based cognitive model from a physical one. However, I argue that a video game can facilitate the player's shift to an understanding of the functional capabilities of the game objects in the following ways. Firstly, by providing a tutorial based interaction integrated with the narrative at the beginning of the game. Secondly, a visual design (physical form) which is intuitive to understand and learn. For instance, pressing the forward arrow to move forward, right arrow to turn right, and "r" button to reload a weapon. Thirdly, a narrative context that mimics function. Although the gameplay mechanics may remain the same, different players may incorporate different degrees of narrative (Anthropy & Clark, 2014) to facilitate their functional learning of the mechanics. For instance, in *TLOU*, Alice interprets the event where Tess passed her PC a health kit as solely a gameplay event. Although Tess passed her PC the health kit after he was injured in an explosion earlier, she focused on the UI information to learn how to use the health kit (**Transcript 3.33** in Appendix A).

On the other hand, Nasir mentioned about the narrative providing the context for the gameplay tutorial to facilitate his learning on how to use the health kit (**Transcript 3.34** in Appendix A). Initially, Walter interprets Tess passing the health kit to the player as a narrative event, but shifts his understand of it to a gameplay event when it teaches the player how to use it (**Transcript 3.35** in Appendix A).

Further to Sylvester (2013), I suggest that fiction and narrative elements can also be wrapped in gameplay mechanics. This usually occurs after the player has mastered the gameplay mechanics. In this case, the gameplay mechanics have become a familiar device to the players and the player's schema contains the knowledge of how gameplay mechanics function. The gameplay mechanics serve many utilitarian purposes in games, but now its simplest and most basic purpose can be used to help the players experience the narrative (development) through metaphor, which is the now familiar gameplay mechanics. The narrative (development) includes the character relationships, characterisation of (N)PCs, plot development, the character development, the control of the different characters, etc.

Alice discussed during the last interview that the different amount of gameplay options in *TLOU*, such as the different weapons available to different PCs influence her narrative interpretation of the characters. For instance, Joel has a greater amount of weapons and crafting options compared to Ellie who is restricted to only a dagger and first aid kit at a specific point in the game. Ellie was also unable to craft items and her attacks were weaker compared to Joel who can use brute force as a strategy to overcome the gameplay enemies because he is more robust. In this sense, the different gameplay mechanics of the PCs influenced how the players interpret the characters' narrative portrayal. Specifically, Joel is a

stronger character in the narrative while Ellie is a little girl who needs to be “rescued”<sup>9</sup> by Joel in the winter chapter (**Transcript 3.36** in Appendix A). Table 23 below summarises the concepts introduced in Sections 7.3.2.1 – 7.3.2.3.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Ludonarrative Category</b>	<b>Concepts Introduced</b>
7.3.2.1	Ludonarrative resonance motivation	Contextualisation
		Achieve Gameplay goals
		Gameplay choices
		Gameplay actions
		Gameplay rewards
		Narrative progression
		Plot hooks
7.3.2.2	Ludonarrative Resonance Guidance	Emotional proximity
		Giving overall gameplay objective
		General/specific gameplay actions
7.3.2.3	Ludonarrative Resonance Metaphor	Sequential organization
		Mental model – Physical-based
		Mental model – Functional-based
		Setting up gameplay mechanics
		Convey narrative development

Table 23 New concepts introduced

#### **7.3.2.4 Ludonarrative Resonance Semiotic Metaphor**

O’Halloran (2008) defines a semiotic metaphor as “metaphorical shifts occur where the functional status of elements is not preserved and new elements are introduced (e.g. a complex scene which becomes a metaphorical entity)”. When applied to video games,

---

<sup>9</sup> The female characters were portrayed to be independent in *The Last of Us*. Ellie killed David, the antagonist by herself after the player controls her to overcome him in the winter chapter. Joel only arrived after Ellie killed David to comfort her to break her out of the emotional trauma from killing (**Transcript 3.138** in Appendix A).

metaphorical shifts can occur when the functional status of gameplay elements is not preserved as new narrative elements and gameplay mechanics are introduced. An instance of this occurs during a gameplay mission of *Starcraft II: Heart of the Swarm* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2013) where Sarah Kerrigan sealed herself in a chrysalis in the First Spawning Pool at Zerus to begin her transformation into the Primal Queen of Blades. In this instance, the player can no longer control her as a gameplay functional mechanic. New narrative elements are introduced which refer to the narrative event of the zerg forces defending Kerrigan's chrysalis until she was reborn. Similarly, new gameplay mechanics are introduced such as the player's ability to activate the locust swarm to defend the chrysalis whenever the ability is fully charged.

In *Bioshock*, a narrative event occurs when the PC took the first dose of Lot 192 in Olympus Heights which successfully freed the PC from the antagonist, Frank Fontaine's remaining influences. However, it has a side effect, which makes the PC lose control of his active plasmid powers where they become randomised. The PC also can no longer customise the plasmid powers he wield at the Gene Bank after this narrative event. Thus, the functional status of the plasmid powers is not preserved and the new gameplay mechanic of the randomised plasmid powers is introduced. This shift in the functional status of the plasmid powers create gameplay challenge. Mary mentioned during the gameplay that she was nearly killed when her plasmid powers shifted randomly in the middle of the fight with the Big Daddy (**Transcript 3.37** in Appendix A).

From the other direction, metaphorical shifts can also occur where the narrative function of specific elements is not preserved as new narrative functions or gameplay mechanics are introduced. Where the element previously served a narrative function, it now serve either a new narrative function or becomes a gameplay object. This metaphorical shift usually occurs during the change from system events, where the gameplay withholds

gameplay control from the player to convey important narrative information to the player, to user events where the control is returned to the player after the narrative information has been successfully conveyed. Alice mentioned that in *TLOU*, the narrative objective of finding Robert (given in an earlier cutscene) has shifted to become a time based gameplay event where the player is required to chase after Robert and subdue him within a time restriction or the gameplay event will fail. The time based restriction is required to be discovered by the player as the gameplay does not display the timer countdown explicitly in the UI to inform the player of the remaining time before the gameplay event fails (**Transcript 3.38** in Appendix A).

#### **7.3.2.5 Ludonarrative Resonance Balance**

This is the most important relationship between narrative and gameplay which contributes to the successful integration of these two concepts. The game developers of *Starcraft II: Wings of Liberty* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010) highlights the formula needed to immerse the player in the game through the right balance of gameplay and narrative during the game development process (ElderPredator, 2010). They mentioned that during the game development, the gameplay action needs to be balanced with the narrative elements such as important plot points and character developments such that mood, story, and gameplay come together in *Starcraft II*.

The balance between the gameplay and narrative is created by setting the difficulty level or challenge of the gameplay such that it does not dominate the player's focus. The challenge of the gameplay needs to be designed such that it does not interfere with the players' narrative interpretation. As the player progresses the gameplay, relevant plot points and meaningful character developments in the game narrative are highlighted to complement it.

The *Starcraft II* developers also highlight the necessity of establishing a connection between the audience and the characters in the game (MODDB.com, 2010). It can be done through scaffolding. For instance, in game design, it is important to first familiarise the player with the core gameplay and establish some of the characters and their relationships before giving the player advanced challenges. The specific manner in which gameplay is balanced with narrative in video games varies according to the stage of the video game. In an early stage of the game, the narrative concept establishes the setting, introduces the characters and character relationships to orientate the player. Simultaneously, the gameplay also orientates the player by introducing the player the basic gameplay mechanics one at a time through scaffolding. The players are given time to practise utilising the gameplay mechanics in a real time gameplay event to familiarise themselves with it.

From the game study, the participants mentioned that they found the narrative and gameplay balanced in *TLOU* (**Transcripts 3.39 and 3.54** in Appendix A). Alice mentioned that the narrative proceeded quickly and the gameplay also helped in moving the narrative forward. Walter mentioned that during the first playthrough, the cutscenes were not too long and were balanced with the gameplay. In *The Walking Dead*, on a general level, the game's narrative is more dominant (**Transcript 3.83** in Appendix A). In certain parts of the game, depending on the players' interpretation, the gameplay is more dominant such as the fight with Andy Saint John at the dairy farm (**Transcripts 3.56 & 3.58** in Appendix A). For *Bioshock*, most players focus more on the gameplay so it is more dominant (**Transcripts 3.49, 3.65, 3.69, 3.75, 4.3** in Appendix A). Only Mary attempted to focus on both gameplay and narrative. In *Beyond: Two Souls*, participants mentioned that they were playing the narrative so the gameplay is less than the narrative. Specifically, Matt and Michael mentioned that they did not feel they were in control of the PC's actions (**Transcripts 4.17 & 5.48** in Appendix

A). In *Mass Effect*, participants prefer to focus on the narrative so it is more dominant for them than the gameplay (**Transcripts 3.45, 3.73 and 3.76**).

#### ***7.3.2.6 Ludonarrative Resonance Consequence/Contingency***

Liu and O'Halloran (2009: 380) suggest that “visual and linguistic components of multisemiotic texts can be interconnected through Consequential Relations when one semiotic message is seen as enabling or determining the other rather than simply preceding it”. Based on the sub-classification of its linguistic counterpart, they also distinguish between Consequence and Contingency. “Intersemiotic Consequence refers to unmodalised causal relations between visual and verbal messages where the effect has been ensured” (Liu and O'Halloran, 2009: 380). Conversely, in multisemiotic texts where there is no ensured effect, the logic of Intersemiotic Contingency is made across language and images. I suggest that their notion of Intersemiotic Consequence and Contingency can be applied to analyse the relationship between gameplay and narrative.

Calleja (2013) argues that in video games, rules and goal hierarchies are crucial in establishing the story-world's structure of meaning. Game rules do not only influence the emotional charging and thus narrative significance of a game sequence, but also act as generators of narrative themselves (Calleja, 2013). In specific genres of video games, such as MMORPGs, RPGs and Real Time Strategy Games (RTS), the completion of specific quests in the gameplay is causally linked to the scripted narrative. Quest completion will progress the narrative or generate new narrative events when specific gameplay objectives are completed by the player. Ludonarrative Resonance Consequence is seen to occur when the gameplay action chosen by the player is seen as enabling or creating an outcome in the narrative rather than simply preceding it and vice versa. The consequence created in this category is not apparent immediately but can only be observed by the player after the

narrative or gameplay option has been made after some time (Compare with “ludonarrative resonance causality” in **Section 7.3.2.7**). For instance, players who do not put any gameplay points into “Charm” and “Intimidate” during character customisation in *Mass Effect* will experience the consequence of their action in the narrative after some time when less dialogue options are available to them to influence the other NPCs (**Transcripts 3.108, 3.120 & 3.123** in Appendix A) and vice versa. The gameplay action of character customisation in terms of “Charm” and “Intimidate” points will also change the narrative ending when the player chooses the Paragon (Good) or Renegade (Badass/Evil) dialogue options. In video games where the player can make a narrative or gameplay choice, “Ludonarrative Resonance Contingency” occurs during the player’s decision-making before the choice is made where there is not yet an ensured effect on the concepts.

Immediate outcome (In **Section 7.3.2.7** “ludonarrative resonance causality”) is more apparent to the player but long term outcome (classified under “ludonarrative resonance consequence”) may be less apparent to the player (**Transcript 3.40** in Appendix A). For instance, Michael mentioned that he did not know the consequences of his choices in *Mass Effect* on *Mass Effect 2* unless he read the walkthrough. Long term outcome may be understood when the game is replayed which allows the player to compare the different choices. Another way to discover the long term outcome is through consulting online game walkthroughs or watching YouTube videos. Finally, long term outcome may be discovered after playing a significant segment of the game or finishing the game (**Transcript 3.88** in Appendix A). The analyst who has access to different players’ gameplay of the same games will also be aware of the long term outcome by comparing the different players’ pathways.

In *The Walking Dead*, Henry did not know the consequences of his gameplay/narrative choice where he chose not to kill Larry (Lily’s father) in the meat locker. The consequence of



his choice where Lily helps him later in the gameplay fight with Danny Saint John was only apparent after it was shown to him (**Transcript 3.95** in Appendix A).

In *Beyond: Two Souls*, Michael was unable to see the long term consequence of his gameplay actions in the twelfth (chronologically the ninth) chapter titled “Like Other Girls” on the narrative of the sixteenth (chronologically the fifteenth) chapter titled “The Dinner”. In the chapter titled “Like Other Girls”, Michael chose the narrative choice to let Jodie sneak out from the security guard. This caused the gameplay event where he chose to use Aiden to protect Jodie in the bar after the guy wanted to rape her. However, the gameplay event’s outcome manifested in the narrative event of the later chapter titled “The Dinner” where Jodie was unable to have sex with Ryan was unclear to him (**Transcript 3.41** in Appendix A).

In the *Bioshock*’s game study, Loke also mentioned that he did not know if there is a consequence (such as changing the narrative ending) if he allowed any of the Little Sisters to die in the penultimate escort mission. Therefore, whenever one of the Little Sisters he was escorting died, he reloaded the game from an earlier save where they remained alive so that the gauntlet run for the escort mission was completed successfully without any Little Sisters dying (**Transcript 3.42** in Appendix A). However, the death of any Little Sisters during the escort mission did not have any consequence in changing the narrative ending. The analysis of Michael’s and Loke’s gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis from the last interview creates a new subcategory “ludonarrative (ir)relevance consequence” in section 7.3.3.5.

### **7.3.2.7 Ludonarrative Resonance Causality**

Causality is defined as events “linked to each other as cause to effect, effects in turn causing other effects, until the final effect. And even if two events seem not obviously interrelated, we infer that they may be, on some larger principle that we will discover later”

(Chatman, 1978:46). As argued by Chatman, even with no explicit causal link made between narrative events, the readers or players will tend to read causality into a sequence of events recounted as a narrative. Ludonarrative resonance causality occurs when the gameplay action creates an immediate narrative outcome that is apparent to the player and vice versa. Ludonarrative resonance causality may contribute to a less instinctive choice made by the players when they may be able to predict the outcome of a given choice. This category is contrasted to ludonarrative resonance consequence when the outcome can only be seen after some time has passed after the choice has been made. If the outcome cannot be predicted, the players may resort to the use of instinct, their real life experience (section 7.3.4), narrative and/or gameplay information to make the choice. They may also play the game normally if they are unaware that there is a narrative outcome based on their gameplay action. Thus, in this category, there are two different types of causality. The first is explicit causality where the player is able to see the outcome based on the feedback (Chapter 6 Section 6.6.2.1) from the game.

During the first interview, Michael explains the explicit causal connection between the narrative and gameplay in *Mass Effect* (**Transcript 3.43** in Appendix A). For instance, he mentioned that the more he interacted with the other characters via the dialogue wheel, the more advantage he will have over the game such as obtaining more gameplay rewards. During the last interview, Michael explains the dialogue wheel in *Mass Effect*. Based on his experience of playing *Mass Effect 2* and finishing *Mass Effect*, he is able to know choosing which narrative dialogue choices will cause him to obtain gameplay rewards, such as paragon and renegade points or open up more dialogue choices. For instance, he mentioned that the choices provided on the left-hand side of the dialogue wheel usually provides more backstory. The right-hand side is usually more gameplay as Michael mentioned that after choosing the right hand side, some options will disappear. The top and bottom choices of the dialogue

wheel on the left and right side which are colour coded blue and red are linked to the paragon and renegade reward points respectively (**Transcript 3.44** in Appendix A).

Under *explicit causality*, there is also another subcategory of *unexplained causality* where the reason that the player obtains a specific gameplay reward, e.g. both paragon and renegade points are left unexplained. Therefore, the player is unable to understand why he obtains the gameplay reward. For instance, in *Mass Effect*, sometimes the game will reward the player both paragon and renegade points, but it does not provide the reason why (**Transcript 3.55** in Appendix A).

The second type is *implicit causality* where the player is unable to see the outcome because the game does not give player feedback. Nasir explains his inability to know the gameplay outcome of saving an NPC in the narrative. Specifically, he did not know that saving and convincing the NPC Ethan Jeong to help in the narrative will make his gameplay easier in the sense that he did not have to save as many indoctrinated colonists later when fighting them to enable the colony on Feros to survive. Nasir did not form the link between the narrative choice and gameplay outcome which later leads to the narrative outcome of whether the Fero's colony survive or perish (**Transcript 3.45** in Appendix A).

#### **7.3.2.8 Ludonarrative Resonance Succession**

Event has been defined by Bal (1985) as a transition of one state to another. It requires a succession of two states and an observation that change has occurred. This category involves a gameplay event's transition to a narrative event and vice versa. However, the link between the gameplay and narrative events is not as strong as the link formed between the gameplay and narrative events in "ludonarrative resonance causality" and "ludonarrative resonance consequence". In *The Walking Dead*, Henry mentioned that a gameplay event occurs when the PC fights with an NPC, Molly in Season 1 Episode 4. The narrative event

occurs in succession after the gameplay event when Clementine appeared suddenly and stopped Molly from killing the PC. The succession of events may lead to narrative effects on the player such as surprise when different events suddenly occur without narrative explanation (**Transcript 3.99** in Appendix A). Another instance occurs in *Bioshock* when the player is given gameplay control after he was first shown a long cutscene as he travels down into Rapture via the Bathysphere.

### **7.3.2.9 Ludonarrative Resonance Parallelism Integration**

Liu and O'Halloran (2009: 373) suggest that “language and images construe the world of experience through Transitivity structures. If the two concepts share a similar Transitivity configuration, Intersemiotic Parallel Structures will take shape in the multisemiotic text”. Similarly, configurative elements from the gameplay concept function to correspond with the interpretative elements from the narrative concept and vice versa. Congruent meanings constructed by the elements in each of the concepts are operative in producing ludonarrative cohesion. For example, in the first training mission of *Starcraft II: Heart of the Swarm* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2013), the first narrative event consists of Kerrigan commanding the drone to construct a zerg structure. Simultaneously, the first gameplay move consists of the player clicking on the PC Kerrigan to direct her to construct the zerg structure.

In this category, the two concepts are so integrated with each other that the player becomes emotionally immersed in the narrative by performing the PC's gameplay action. In video games, it is difficult to achieve the seamless integration of the narrative with the gameplay such that they cannot be separated because in some games, either the narrative (*TLOU*) or gameplay concept (*Bioshock*) may be more dominant than the other. When narrative is able to seamlessly integrate with gameplay, the video game works very well to immerse the player into the PC's role. For instance, in *The Walking Dead*, Henry cited the

example of Lee carrying out the gameplay action of chopping his brother's head to obtain the pharmacy's key. The gameplay action is simultaneously a narrative event (**Transcript 3.46** in Appendix A). Specifically, the narrative tells the story of Lee and his relationship with his brother. The player experiences the emotion of extreme sadness through the PC's dialogue together with performing the gameplay action. When the player feels the same emotions as the PC as he carries out the gameplay action, there is ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration. However, Jim felt annoyed rather than sad for the PC, Lee Everett. He also felt that the narrative and gameplay were not as close in the part when he performed the gameplay action of killing Lee's brother using the axe. The reason he mentioned is that the narrative does not provide sufficient information regarding Lee Everett's relationship with his family other than that they did not talk much (**Transcript 3.64** in Appendix A).

A counterexample where gameplay distracts the player from the emotional engagement in the narrative occurs with Michael who played *Beyond: Two Souls*. He did not find the PS3 controls intuitive. In other games like *Bioshock* and FPSs, when he pressed the forward arrow, the PC will move forward. But in *Beyond: Two Souls*, he has to press X to move forward. The button X is sometimes also used in the QTEs. Therefore, he faces a problem mapping the PS3 control buttons to the different gameplay actions that he has to perform in the game. When this happened, he indicated that he was unable to emotionally connect with the PC, Jodie when she cried after killing the possessed scientist in the facility as he was figuring out the PS3 controls (**Transcript 3.47** in Appendix A).

Another counterexample occurs in *The Walking Dead*, when the player, Jim, was fighting with Andy Saint John at the electrical fence of the Saint John's dairy farm. The gameplay control was counter-intuitive, but he was able to overcome the challenge in the QTE in a short time due to his computer science background. Jim also mentioned that the gameplay felt dissociated from the narrative as the PC was fighting with the antagonist, Andy

Saint John in a QTE and lasted for one minute plus. However, his group members simply stood around and watched them fight (**Transcript 3.56** in Appendix A). He also did not want to form any emotional engagement with Lily who came to save him (Lee Everett) as he mentioned that to form such engagement is a sign of severe gameplay addiction. Another player, Mary was observed to face difficulty overcoming the QTE when Lee fought with Andy Saint John at the electrical fence. She mentioned that the gameplay control was counter-intuitive during the interview and it was a refreshing change in the game. Compared to Jim, her experience, as elicited during the interview, was that the game was trying to integrate the gameplay into the narrative (**Transcript 3.57** in Appendix A). The reason is that only by letting go of the controls would Lily come to save her PC, Lee Everett. Therefore, there was ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration for her. For Henry, he felt that in *The Walking Dead*, when he was controlling the PC, Lee, to fight with Andy Saint John, it was more of a gameplay event (boss fight), as the narrative was minimal (**Transcript 3.58** in Appendix A). He interpreted the part where Lily came to save his PC as having very little narrative compared to the entire gameplay QTE.

#### **7.3.2.10 Ludonarrative Resonance Prominence**

Elements from one concept are incorporated to draw attention to particular elements from another concept and this gives rise to a semantic expansion. For instance, narrative information which is conveyed via the NPC's dialogue can draw the player's attention to the gameplay which may influence the player's decision-making when making a narrative and/or gameplay choice. An example of this occurs in *Bioshock* after the player has performed a specific action such as saving a Little Sister. This triggers the scripted narrative information from Tenenbaum which informs the player that s/he will be rewarded in a later gameplay phase after s/he has saved three Little Sisters. In this sense, the character's dialogue also becomes more gameplay. Mary mentioned that because of Tenenbaum's promise, the

narrative is pushing the players towards the good side to save the Little Sisters. In this way, the narrative influenced the player's gameplay choice to save the Little Sisters (**Transcript 3.48** in Appendix A).

Another example occurs in *TLOU*, where the characters first introduce the gameplay mechanic in a narrative event. The gameplay mechanic will be present later on in the game. For instance, Alice mentioned a narrative event where Ellie was informing the PC, Joel and NPC, Tess about her narrative characteristic where she was unable to swim as they were approaching the Capitol Building to rendezvous with the Fireflies. This narrative information contextualises or points towards the later gameplay events where the player has to interact with the planks to ferry Ellie across water bodies. More importantly, the narrative information also draws attention to the gameplay mechanic in the later parts of the game (**Transcript 3.62** in Appendix A). Another instance in *TLOU* is when Walter uses the gameplay action of shooting the military personnel trapped under the metal cabinet. He mentioned that his gameplay action points to the narrative where the characters in the gameworld kill others without remorse. The narrative context of the gameworld where it is bleak and human lives are worthless is highlighted (**Transcript 3.133** in Appendix A).

Another instance in this category is the players' placing of emphasis on one concept which influenced their gameplay instead of one of the concepts (narrative or gameplay) drawing their attention to the other concepts. For instance, in the final part of *The Walking Dead Season One Episode Five*, the player, Henry was controlling the PC, Lee Everett to move through the walkers with Clementine (analytical frame – character movement). During the last interview, he mentioned that he was afraid that it would rain and they would be discovered by the walkers when the walkers' blood smeared on their body was washed off. His own player's narrative interpretation influenced his gameplay so that he was motivated

(cf. ludonarrative resonance motivation in **Section 7.3.2.1**) to control his PC to quickly progress this part of the game (**Transcript 3.85** in Appendix A).

#### **7.3.2.11 Ludonarrative Player-(Game Designers') Character Resonance**

The subcategory here is defined as the situation where the player's knowledge of the gameworld aligns with what they think the game designers know about the PC. This definition is contrasted with the definition of "ludonarrative player-(game designers') character dissonance" in **Section 7.3.1.1.3**. Player's information alignment with the game designers' character could happen when a plot twist occurs when crucial information about the PC is revealed to the character which (re)contextualises the player's gameplay actions. This example occurs in *Bioshock* when the player meets Andrew Ryan and is informed about his role as a puppet in the narrative (**Transcript 3.9** in Appendix A). Another instance of player's information alignment with the game designers' character occurs in *TLOU*' prologue where the narrative explains the PC's backstory to contextualise his gameplay actions for the later parts of the game (**Transcript 3.24** in Appendix A).

#### **7.3.2.12 Ludonarrative Resonance Information Solutions**

In contrast to the category defined in Section 7.3.1.1.1, *information solutions* is defined as the situation in which to solidify the empathetic connection between player and character, game designers may encourage players to perform gameplay actions or make important decisions by providing them with explicit knowledge of how to overcome the gameplay challenge(s) or make a narrative choice. The consequences of their gameplay actions are also explicitly shown to them as feedback in the narrative setting or gameworld. The explicit knowledge is provided in the multimodal semiotic resources such as the linguistic or visual modes. For instance, Alice mentioned that sometimes *TLOU* will give a visual and linguistic prompt for the player to interact with Ellie to ask how she is feeling. The



players may choose to talk to her and how she responds creates emotional attachment (**Transcript 4.11** in Appendix A). In many parts of the game, Ellie is also an important companion who helps the player to cross water bodies (**Transcript 3.62** in Appendix A).

### 7.3.3 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance

Watssman (2012) uses the term “ludonarrative alienation”, which is defined as the situation where the narrative and gameplay gain *nothing* from the presence of the other and they may also not restrict each other. The video game might only have an engaging gameplay or an interesting narrative and the player might enjoy only one of the concepts on its own merits. “Ludonarrative alienation occurs when the players are allowed to do something *in the gameplay* but are given no strong *narrative* reason why they should or where the reasons they are given are insufficient and vice versa (emphases mine)” (Watssman, 2012). This happens most often when the player is not engaged by the narrative or the gameplay. The effect on the player is boredom.

However, Watssman’s use of the term “alienation” assumes that the gameplay and narrative are completely isolated from each other but this is not always the case. Hence, I used a different terminology, ludonarrative (ir)relevance which is defined to be occurring when narrative and gameplay have a weak relationship with each other, neither conflicting, as in dissonance, nor harmonising, as in resonance. This could happen in cases where the narrative is undeveloped or rushed by the game developers. This could also happen in cases where the players belong to a specific category of gamers, such as those who focus more on the gameplay or narrative. The difference between my terminology and Watssman’s (2012) terminology is a matter of degree. The narrative and gameplay concepts in “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” are more or less relevant to each other on a continuum and bridges

“ludonarrative dissonance and resonance”. The relationship between narrative and gameplay in Watsman’s (2012) “ludonarrative alienation” is more absolute.

### **7.3.3.1 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance – Gameplay Focus**

This category is defined as the situation when players focus more on the gameplay such that the narrative is backgrounded when they play the game. In the *Bioshock*’s study, Peter chose to focus more on the gameplay rather than listen to the audio logs’ narrative. In doing so, he missed the door code that was given in the “Paparazzi” audio log to unlock the antagonist’s (Frank Fontaine’s) penthouse in *Bioshock*’s Apollo Square level (**Transcript 3.49** in Appendix A). He ended up searching for the door code online to unlock the door.

“Ludonarrative irrelevance – gameplay focus” can also occur when the gameplay affordance is unclear to the player. When the player faces difficulty in figuring out the gameplay actions to proceed the narrative, he will feel frustrated, and as a result, lose interest in the narrative. For example, if the game requires the players to press a correct sequence of buttons in the gameplay but the affordances are not clear, the players would not feel like they were engaging in an immersive manner with the gameplay. They would be more focused on the gameplay and the narrative may thus become less relevant. In the *Beyond: Two Souls* study, Michael mentioned that the affordance was unclear to him, so he did not manage to save Jodie using Aiden. He was more motivated on mastering the gameplay mechanics (**Transcript 3.50** in Appendix A) rather than immersing in the storyline (Yee, 2007).

In *Bioshock*, some of the players such as Loke, John and Peter mentioned during the interview that they were more motivated to engage in the fun and challenging gameplay rather than listen to the storyline in the audio logs and memorise the door code (**Transcript 3.65** in Appendix A). Loke was unable to link the subtle gameplay hints from the audio logs’ narrative to find the incinerate plasmid to melt the doors frozen by the ice (**Transcript 5.13**

in Appendix A). He focused on the gameplay and found the way to overcome the gameplay obstacle by trial and error.

### **7.3.3.2 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance: Narrative Focus**

This category is defined as the situation where players focus more on narrative interpretation such that the gameplay is of secondary importance. This category applies more to players who are motivated to play the game to immerse (Yee, 2007) in the narrative. For instance, Nasir mentioned in the first interview that he prefers to play games more for the narrative which was why he chose *Mass Effect* for the study. When I asked him during the first interview if he found any side quest, he mentioned that he did not find any (**Transcript 3.76** in Appendix A). This shows that he was focusing more on the narrative rather than doing a lot of exploration for the gameplay items. During the last interview he also mentioned that during his first playthrough of *Mass Effect*, he did not really do all the side quests in the gameplay such as collecting the Insignias, Matriarch writings and minerals. The reason is that there was no narrative support but only some gameplay rewards such as money where he could get from doing the main quests (**Transcript 6.6** in Appendix A).

I have also discussed in Section 7.3.2 that when players replay the game, certain aspects of the game become irrelevant to them once they have mastered it. To restate the example, Walther mentioned that he viewed *TLOU*'s prologue as having very little to no gameplay on his second playthrough. I observed during the lab session and in the gameplay recordings that he was focusing more on interpreting the narrative during the second playthrough.

### 7.3.3.3 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance: Incomplete Information Problems

The perception of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance: incomplete information problems” may occur when the game does not provide sufficient information to the players via either of the concepts, such as narrative or gameplay through the semiotic resources to unlock more gameplay information or narrative respectively. The difference between “ludonarrative dissonance: contrast – incomplete information problems” in Section 7.3.1.1.1 and the category here is in the degree of player’s awareness whether they can perform specific gameplay actions based on hints from the narrative and vice versa. In “dissonance”, the players may be aware that they can perform a specific gameplay action or select a narrative choice but they are unsure of the outcome due to incomplete information. In contrast, for “(ir)relevance”, the players may be less aware that they can perform a gameplay action or select a narrative choice due to incomplete information.

An instance occurs where the gameplay cues to perform specific actions are not provided explicitly to the player to unlock more backstory for the PC, Jodie, in *Beyond: Two Souls*. When this occurs, the player would miss the narrative information altogether. Although the player, Matt was motivated to both explore the gameworld and find out more about the storyline (Yee, 2007), some backstory could not be unlocked. Matt does not know that he can switch the gameplay perspective to control Aiden to unlock backstory in the box of memories by triggering the flashback as there was no explicit affordance provided (**Transcript 3.51** in Appendix A).

In *Mass Effect*, Nasir mentioned that when playing the game, the narrative did not provide explicit information on how to obtain Tali’s side mission in the gameplay. When he talked to Tali, she only told him that she needed a specific item for her pilgrimage and the Geth Incursion mission also did not explicitly tell the player that it is related to Tali’s side

quest (**Transcript 3.137**). Therefore, he faced difficulty unlocking her quest and he only managed to find the quest by looking up the information online.

Another instance occurs when gameplay hints are provided simultaneously with the narrative in *Bioshock's* audio logs. However, gameplay hints given are very subtle so the players need to expend effort to form the linkage between the gameplay hints given in the audio logs to the gameworld setting. This example has been discussed in Section 7.3.3.1 above but is also relevant here. Loke mentioned that he only listened to the audio logs for the backstory, but was unable to figure out the link from the audio logs' narrative to the gameplay to overcome the gameplay obstacle in the form of the frozen doors in the gameworld. He figured out how to overcome the frozen doors through trial and error (**Transcript 5.13** in Appendix A).

#### **7.3.3.4 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance: Metaphor**

In Section 7.3.2.3, ludonarrative resonance metaphor is defined as a concept in games where some new feature of the game is given the appearance of something familiar to make it easier to understand its function. However, in the category proposed here, if the participant does not possess the corresponding knowledge of what the game is trying to convey through either one of the modes, such as the visual or linguistic mode, he may treat the information as being irrelevant. For instance, Nasir mentioned that he did not know what the green colour on the PC's health bar means. During the retrospective protocol analysis, he assumed that it means his character was healing. Only when we looked it up online that we determined that the green colour symbolised some negative effect (such as suppressing health regeneration) applied on the PC by the Geth stalker where they injected a poison, radiation or electric shock from a distance (**Transcript 5.33**). If the player does not know the meaning conveyed via the metaphorical visual representation of the objects in the gameworld, their gameplay function

would be unknown. The player would therefore treat the information as irrelevant if the negative effect does not influence his gameplay on the difficulty level he is playing.

Walther mentioned about the visual representation of *TLOU*'s crafting system where the player has to collect items to create gameplay objects. He was unable to figure out what the pie chart system represented in the visual interface (**Transcript 3.32** in Appendix A). The game designers could have modelled the gameplay system based on a real-world referent, but if players do not understand *how* the system works, they would treat the metaphorical visual representation as being irrelevant to their learning of the gameplay function of the system.

#### **7.3.3.5 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance – Consequence**

In Section 7.3.2.6, “ludonarrative resonance consequence” is defined as the situation where the gameplay action chosen by the player is seen as enabling or creating a long term narrative outcome that is apparent to the player after some time and vice versa. The category proposed here is used to refer to the situation where the player is less aware of the consequence of the gameplay action on the narrative and vice versa which contributes to its irrelevance. In the *Mass Effect*'s study, Nasir mentioned that he was unable to know the long term gameplay consequence of his narrative choice in saving the Exogeni NPC, Ethan Jeong. Specifically, he did not know that in the gameplay later he can save less colonists once he saved the NPC. The reason is that he has only played once and has no basis for comparison for the alternative pathway if he chose to let Ethan Jeong die (**Transcript 3.45** in Appendix A). Therefore, he just played the game normally and saved all the colonists. He treated the consequence(s) of his narrative choice on the gameplay as being irrelevant.

In the *Bioshock*'s study, Loke mentioned that he reloaded the game for the Little Sisters' escort mission to prevent any of their deaths (**Transcript 3.42** in Appendix A). The reason was that he was afraid that there will be a consequence in changing the narrative

ending if he allowed any of them to die during the escort. In actual fact, there was no consequence in letting any of the NPCs die. The linkage that Loke formed from the gameplay action to the narrative consequence is irrelevant. But it also enabled the players to set their own gameplay goals to prevent the NPCs from dying.

The category proposed here also refers to the linearity of the game where regardless of what gameplay actions the players choose, the narrative will converge in the same outcome. For instance, in *The Walking Dead*, regardless of what gameplay actions the players choose, the narrative will still converge in a single pathway. During the last interview, we discussed about Henry's decision to choose to go or not to go to the Saint John's dairy farm which results in the same narrative consequence of going (**Transcript 3.91** in Appendix A).

Similarly, Nasir discussed about the gameplay choice of saving characters in *The Walking Dead* as being less meaningful for him as they will end up dying sooner or later in the narrative (**Transcript 3.93** in Appendix A). To Henry, the irrelevant consequences in the choices are still meaningful for him as he felt that his choices make him feel that he is participating in the narrative. However, for Nasir, he felt that irrelevant consequential choices in *The Walking Dead* are less meaningful for him as there is no point giving choices if they ultimately converge to the single ending. He also mentioned that he prefers to play a game where gameplay and narrative are more balanced. The reason is that he prefers to be challenged when he plays a game so that he can get a sense of progression through a story. Even though the players' gameplay choices do not change the overall plot of the narrative, the micro narratives in terms of the players' personal interpretation of the narrative are different as elicited in the interviews. For instance, Henry mentioned that he felt more tensed when he chose to keep Lee's arm as Lee is perceived to have less time to stay alive to save Clementine in *The Walking Dead*. But he also mentioned about the cost and benefit analysis

where having two arms makes it more practical for his character to carry out gameplay actions like climbing ladders (**Transcript 3.100** in Appendix A).

In story focused games such as *TLOU*, there is ludonarrative (ir)relevance consequence as the gameplay actions do not change the narrative and vice versa (**Transcript 3.68** in Appendix A). For instance, regardless of whether the player uses stealth kills or direct kills to overcome the enemies in the gameplay, there will always be the same consequence in the scripted dialogue of the NPC where he mentions the PC killing the 76 lookout guys<sup>10</sup>. Ludonarrative (ir)relevance consequence implies that narrative and gameplay are separated and the player could be more focused on either one of the concepts when they are not usually given simultaneously.

#### **7.3.3.6 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance – Guidance**

In Section 7.3.2.2, “ludonarrative resonance guidance” is defined as the narrative guiding or instructing the player what to do in the gameplay. In the category proposed here, the guidance given by the narrative for the gameplay and vice versa is irrelevant either because it is obvious, or it is implicit. In the *Beyond: Two Souls* study, from the observation of Michael’s commentary, it is shown that the visual prompt that the game provided to Michael is explicit that he treated the instructions from the character’s utterance in the narrative as being irrelevant:

[Recording 2014-08-02-16-21-44\_0001.ts Timing: 1:07:36]:

Michael: Ya. Like I need to find a stick.

---

<sup>10</sup> “The whole crew. The 76 lookout guys. Some fuckin' tourist killed 'em, killed all of 'em.” It is ambiguous whether the number 76 refers to the number of enemies the PC killed or the location where the PC killed them. <http://www.gamershell.com/faqs/thelastofusgamescript/>



In *TLOU*, when Robert is giving a speech in a scripted narrative sequence, it is providing subtle information to the player that s/he has to catch Robert within a time limit when he runs away after giving the speech. The narrative is not only providing characterisation for Robert, but also subtly instructing the player that Robert has to be caught within a time limit based on his character's action of running away. Alice mentioned that she did not know that there was a time limit until she failed the sequence of chasing Robert after taking too long. She ended up having to restart it to finish the gameplay sequence (**Transcript 3.38** in Appendix A).

### **7.3.3.7 Ludonarrative (Ir)relevance Prominence**

Elements from one concept such as the narrative or gameplay is incorporated by the player or the game to draw (ir)relevant attention to particular elements from another concept and this gives rise to a semantic expansion. In the *Bioshock's* study, Mary listened to the “enrage trial” audio log and assumed that the narrative was pointing to a future gameplay fight with a specific enemy later in the game:

[*Bioshock* File 04 41:20]:

Mary: I suspect I will be fighting this guy.

However, the audio log's narrative was actually introducing the “Enrage” Plasmid power to the player rather than introducing a new enemy.

In the *Bioshock's* study, the Houdini splicer is attempting to draw the player's attention to the new type of splicer through the narrative by seeking for the player's help. [*Bioshock* File 17 12:16]. However, Mary was exploring the secret puzzle area to unlock a door, and she treated the narrative information from the splicer as irrelevant for her gameplay at that moment.

### ***7.3.4 The player's experience as a contextual factor***

Although the focus of this study is not on the contextual factors external to the game, the significant contribution of contextual factors to the overall game experience cannot be ignored. For instance, Ang et al. (2010) investigated different forms of extrinsic play activities in an online virtual setting founded on activity theory and they articulated theoretical models which explicate game play in a sociocultural context. Mäyrä (2007) proposed a contextual game experience model which attempts to relate the individual to society. Hence, this study will discuss some relevant contextual factors. From the findings of the empirical study, players do not only rely on the ludonarrative relationships to make choices in video games. Other contextual factors in players' daily lives, such as their available time, personalities, play style preferences, prior gaming experiences, skill levels, and interactions with game walkthroughs (Watching "Let's Play" YouTube videos) play a large part in influencing or guiding decision-making processes in selecting specific narrative choices and/or gameplay actions. In this section, I will briefly discuss these factors.

Available time for playing games is a relevant factor from players' real life experiences which they use to guide their gameplay actions. In *The Walking Dead*, Jim ranked the available time he had for the game as the first factor which influenced his gameplay actions (**Transcript 3.70** in Appendix A). The time factor is related to the *situated attractor* proposed by Taylor et al. (2015) which is influenced by the mental or bodily responses in the physical context of play.

The second (personality) factor which influenced Jim's gameplay actions was based on his real life instincts in saving one of the characters. Based on instincts, he mentioned that he would choose to save children first, followed by friends (**Transcript 3.70** in Appendix A). Henry also mentioned he will save children first (**Transcript 3.90** in Appendix A). Henry

also used real life experience such as how good or evil people appear on television or other video games to make decisions in the game (**Transcript 3.87** in Appendix A). The third ranked (personality) factor is the perceived usefulness of the character. Jim and Henry (**Transcript 3.94** in Appendix A) choose to help or utilise characters whom they feel are more useful to them in both the narrative and gameplay. This is a contextual player experience because the participants reported that this is what they will do in real-life which influences their game choices. This experience is related to Taylor et al.'s (2015) *lived attractor* based on players' everyday experiences.

Other personality factors influence the player's narrative choices and gameplay actions. Personality factors include openness to experience (Atkinson et al., 2000). Jim and Nasir prefer to make choices that they felt are faithful to the canonical storyline of the *The Walking Dead* franchise and *Mass Effect* respectively. The reason for Jim is that this would help in his immersion (**Transcript 3.71** in Appendix A). For Nasir, he mentioned that it would be more meaningful to have a canon ending so that people can discuss about that ending and find out more about it (**Transcript 3.92** in Appendix A). Another participant reported playing the game to create a different storyline from the franchise. The reason he gave was that he felt video games are supposed to be "multi-linear" as they provide many ways to progress (**Transcript 3.72** in Appendix A). Participants also mentioned they choose to role play a good character when playing the game (*Mass Effect*) due to their personality (**Transcripts 3.124 & 5.30** in Appendix A). Mary mentioned her character is non-confrontational so she is influenced by her personality when selecting the dialogue options in *The Walking Dead* (**Transcript 3.128** in Appendix A). She experienced a difficulty in selecting dialogue choices when they were all negative in tone which caused her PC's relationship to become strained with the other NPCs.

In relation to the play style preference, some participants reported their preference in playing games that focus on the story (**Transcripts 3.76 & 3.84** in Appendix A), gameplay (**Transcripts 3.75, 3.109, 3.121, 3.135, 5.36** in Appendix A) or both (**Transcripts 3.77 & 3.139** in Appendix A). The player may also choose to immerse in the character's role when making a narrative and/or gameplay choice (**Transcript 3.19** in Appendix A).

The prior experience of the game, other games or gaming in general will influence the player's narrative choice and gameplay actions. This factor is related to Taylor et al.'s (2015) *conventional attractor* which comes from past experiences with representational type. Michael mentions that playing *Mass Effect 2* provides him with the knowledge that letting another character in his group die in the gameplay will decrease the relationship point with that character in the narrative (**Transcript 3.73** in Appendix A). This influences his narrative choice in *Mass Effect* where he chooses the conversational dialogue that he feels will minimise contributing to the negative relationship with the other character. He also chose not to bring side characters such as Garrus who are weak in combat to prevent their deaths from occurring during gameplay which would strain their relationship with the PC. Another participant mentions playing *Dragon Age* enables him to know that in *Mass Effect*, putting gameplay points in the character's "Charm" and "Intimidate" attributes opens up new dialogue or story options to offer new quests or give extra rewards (**Transcript 3.115** in Appendix A).

In relation to the player's skill level, higher skilled players<sup>11</sup> (**Transcript 3.78** in Appendix A) may have a tendency to switch off game hints to facilitate their immersion in the gameplay, but lower skilled players (**Transcript 3.79** in Appendix A) may have a greater

---

<sup>11</sup> The criteria to define their skill level depends on the players' input features (Buckley et al., 2013) such as their time spent overcoming the gameplay challenges or QTEs, their background such as the players' familiarity with the video game genre, and their field of study. For instance, Jim mentioned that because of his computer science background, he found it easier to overcome the counter-intuitive QTE challenges in *The Walking Dead* compared to Henry who has an economics background.

tendency to switch on game hints especially on their first few playthroughs. For instance, during the first session of *The Walking Dead's* study held in the lab, Henry was unable to find the pillow to progress the game when he switched off the UI hints. Therefore, on his subsequent playthrough at home, he switched on the UI helper. The player's skill level is also related to looking at walkthroughs to guide the player's narrative choices and gameplay actions. In the interviews, some players commented that they will explore the game on their own during the first playthrough and will not look at walkthroughs unless they cannot progress the gameplay (**Transcripts 3.127 & 3.137** in Appendix A). The reason is that looking at game guides or walkthroughs will contribute to the negative experience in their gameplay as they are no longer finding things out on their own in the game (**Transcripts 3.29 & 3.70** in Appendix A). Less skilled players may exhibit a greater tendency to resort to consulting game guides when the gameplay cannot be progressed. However, skill level is not the only factor that influences whether the player consults the game guides.

The ludonarrative relationship is also an important factor. For instance, from the empirical study, *Bioshock* players who did not focus on the narrative information from the optional audio logs were unable to progress the gameplay. The audio log's narrative provides the door code to a restricted area. Participants indicated that they consulted walkthroughs to understand the narrative more, to find out gameplay strategies (**Transcripts 3.70 & 3.74** in Appendix A) and to find hidden areas (**Transcript 5.22** in Appendix A). Some participants also enjoy watching YouTube video game walkthroughs before or after the study and it makes their game experience better when they played the games in the study (**Transcripts 3.125 & 5.40** in Appendix A). The reason, as uncovered from the interview, is that they are able to understand the game's mechanics in terms of the different story pathways based on the player's choices (**Transcripts 3.81 & 3.86** in Appendix A) or the gameplay actions they can choose or have to take (**Transcript 3.102** in Appendix A). Some participants such as

Mary and Loke (who consults walkthroughs) also discuss with each other about gameplay strategies (**Transcript 3.29** in Appendix A). Players also indicate they read the plot of the video game in the wikis (**Transcript 3.134** in Appendix A). The proposed ludonarrative model is updated as follows in Figure 68.



Figure 68 The ludonarrative model and the player's experience

#### 7.4 Application of Ludonarrative Model

In this section, I apply the proposed ludonarrative model to analyse *TLOU*' prologue to show how it can be used to analyse a video game. In the proposed ludonarrative model, I define "ludonarrative resonance balance" as the situation where the gameplay and narrative

balance is created by setting the challenge of the gameplay such that it does not hinder the player's narrative interpretation. At the start of the prologue, the player is given control of Sarah to look for her father, but the sense of urgency is not there. There is no time limit imposed by the gameplay for the narrative to progress. Thus, the game encourages the player to explore the gameworld and interact with objects to obtain more narrative to orientate themselves in the gameworld. The prologue also simultaneously serves as a gameplay tutorial for the player to familiarise himself with the controls.

The narrative also motivates the player to achieve the gameplay goals, to choose specific gameplay choices, or perform specific gameplay actions. This is classified under "ludonarrative resonance motivation" in the proposed ludonarrative model. When the player controls Sarah to explore the house, he is allowed to perform a restricted number of gameplay actions such as to interact with the birthday card, and later on, the newspaper, the birthday note stuck on the fridge, and the handphone on the table (Figure 69). If the player explores the house thoroughly, he will be able to obtain embedded narrative to deepen his understanding of the narrative, specifically, the relationship between Joel and Sarah and the current narrative state of the gameworld. Therefore the narrative not only motivates the gameplay actions, but the gameplay exploration and actions also feed back into the player's interpretation of the narrative which serves a contextualising function to the gameplay.

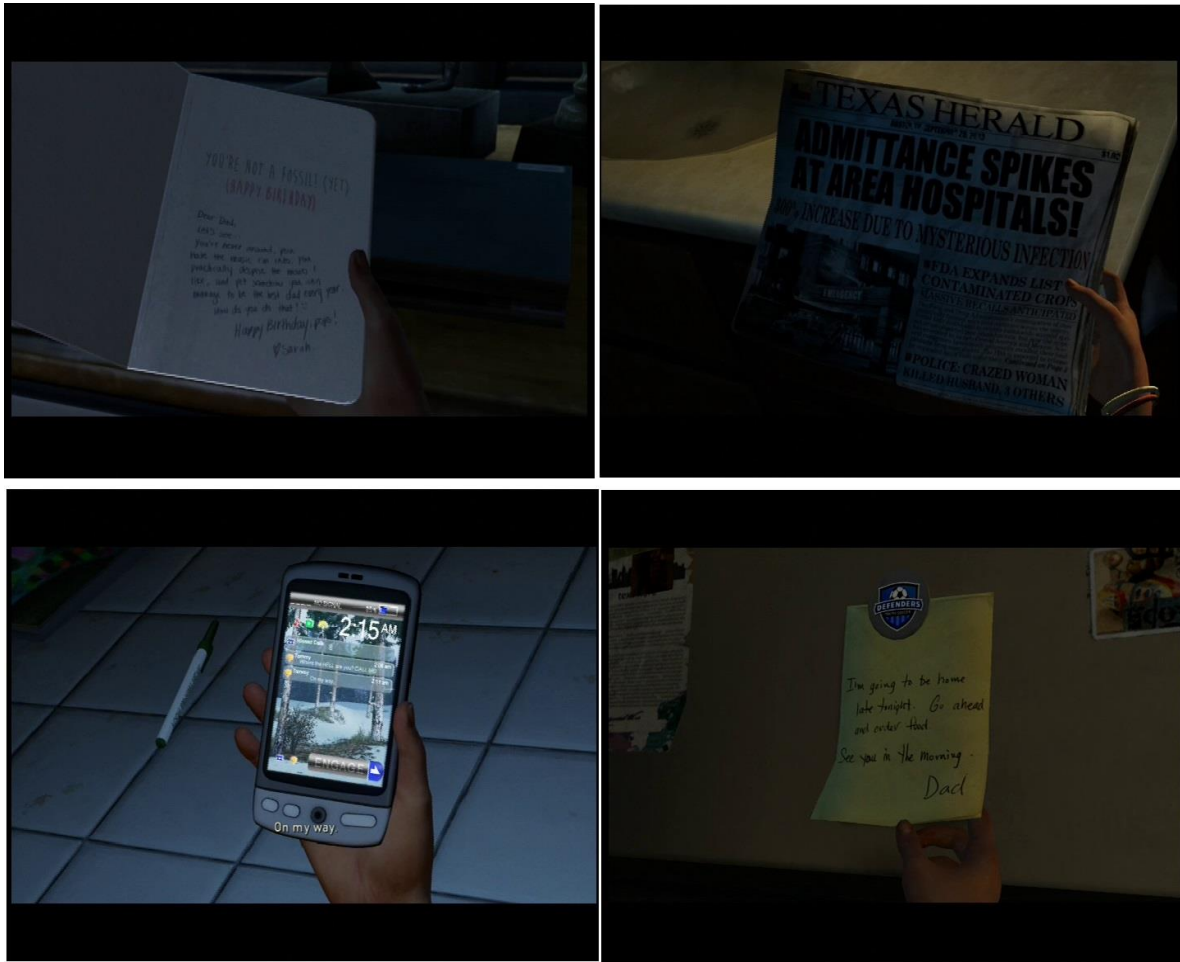


Figure 69 From top left clockwise – birthday card, newspaper, fridge’s note, and handphone

Compared to *The Witcher 2*’s tutorial which is given as a separate gameplay session from the main campaign, *TLOU*’ tutorial is integrated into the game’s narrative. The gameplay learning is paced at a balanced level with the narrative. At the beginning of the game, the player is given control of Sarah to learn how to navigate the PS3 controller for basic movement. More advanced movement controls such as running and crouching for combat are only unlocked for the player after the session containing Sarah’s gameplay.

The other subcategory in the proposed ludonarrative model is “ludonarrative resonance prominence” where it is defined as elements from one concept which may include the narrative or gameplay drawing attention to particular elements from another concept and this gives rise to a semantic expansion. For instance, in this part of the game, the more the



player explores the gameworld using Sarah, the more narrative information is being highlighted to the player. As the player continues to control Sarah to search for Joel in the house, the player is drawn to the television where the news provides the narrative information of the infection and the symptoms in the infected humans such as increased aggression (Figure 70). The narrative information of the infected's behaviour also draws the player's attention to them as a potential enemy later in the game. Then the simultaneous explosion on the television and the nearby building (Figure 71) outside Sarah's house highlight the narrative tension and foreshadows the gameplay movement later when Sarah, Joel and Tommy have to abandon their house during the apocalypse outbreak.



Figure 70 Infected's gameplay characteristic – increased aggression



Figure 71 Simultaneous explosion at nearby building

The ludonarrative subcategory of “resonance prominence” is present at the part of the game where Joel shoots the Infected without remorse (Figure 72). Joel’s action in the cutscene not only highlights the apocalyptic narrative setting of the game, but also brings into prominence the gameplay characteristics of the first Infected type known as the Runner. Runners cannot be negotiated with and runs straight at the player and therefore must be killed once the player is discovered by them. The other ludonarrative subcategory of “resonance guidance” is also present where it is defined as giving the overall objective or guiding the player to formulate the general and specific gameplay strategies/actions. By showing Joel killing the Infected, it gives the player the general idea that the main gameplay action to interact with the Infected is to kill them.

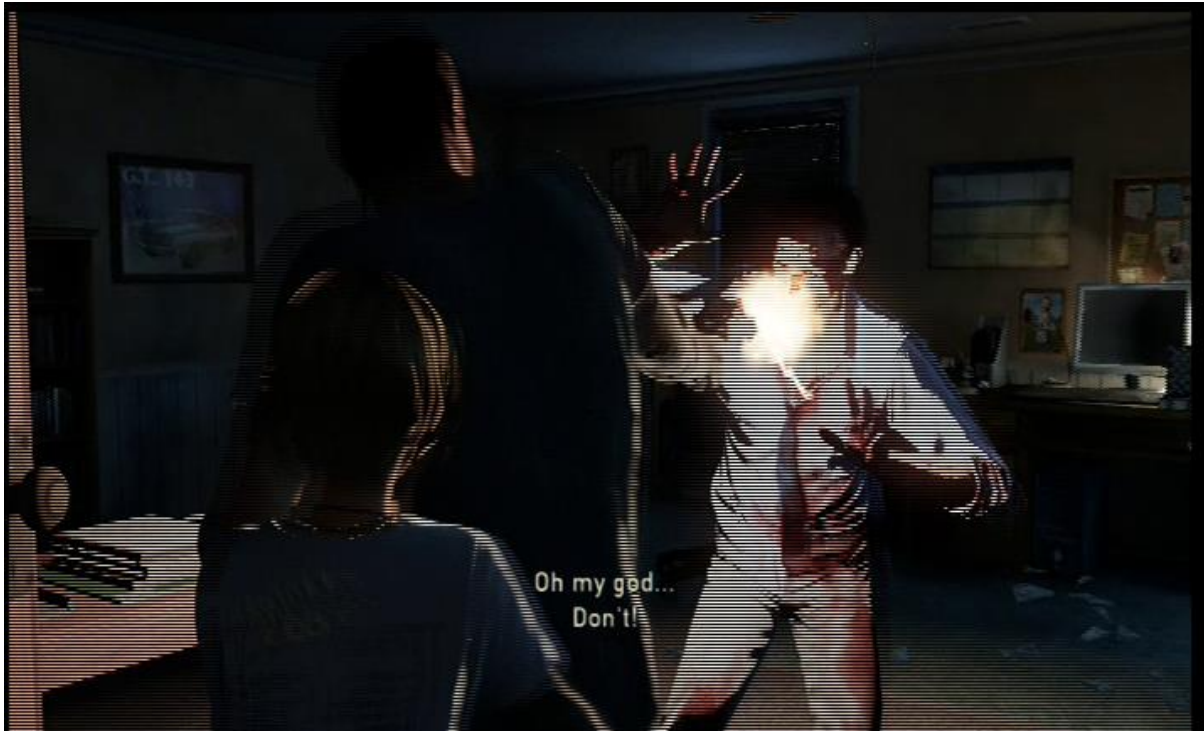


Figure 72 Joel shoots the Runner without remorse

When Tommy drives Sarah and Joel towards the checkpoint away from the infection, the player is given some free play movement in the gameplay to turn around and look at the surroundings (Figure 73). “Ludonarrative resonance prominence” is present here where the gameplay serves to support the narrative by providing more narrative information to the player. The player can choose to look outside the car windows at the surroundings or listen to Sarah, Joel and Tommy’s dialogue which contrasts their characters with each other. The player may also choose to do everything simultaneously.



Figure 73 Freeplay movement in the car

The ludonarrative subcategory of “resonance motivation” is present in the part of the game where the narrative in the cutscene shows Sarah's injured leg (Figure 74). The cutscene contextualises the gameplay by bringing a broader context and meaning to the gameplay. The narrative motivates the player to achieve the gameplay goal of bringing Sarah to safety. The ludonarrative subcategory of “resonance guidance” is also present where the game is sequentially organised in a linear manner. The gameworld is depicted to be spacious, but specific narrative tricks (Figure 75) such as the explosion causing the electrical pole to fall down and Tommy's directions to Joel subtly guides the player in the direction he is supposed to move in the gameworld. The ludonarrative subcategory of “resonance guidance” gives us an idea that *TLOU*' prologue is heavily scripted. The environment indicators (Figure 76) in the narrative setting also serves as gameplay guidance to the player to point him in the direction he should move. The use of language signs such as “open” above the door, the use of lighting, and the yellow ribbons are environmental indicators for the gameplay.



Figure 74 Sarah's injured leg



Figure 75 Subtle narrative tricks



Figure 76 Environmental indicators

The ludonarrative (sub)categories analysed in *TLOU*' prologue show us how the prologue's gameplay is well designed to facilitate the player's learning of the gameplay. The prologue functions as an introduction to the enemies such as the Infected's gameplay characteristic. It also allows the player time to learn how to control the character's movement

and basic actions in the gameworld. Environmental indicators in the narrative setting are carefully placed to enable the player to understand how to progress the gameplay. The prologue's gameplay is not the full combat gameplay compared to the later parts of the game as it is a gameplay tutorial integrated into the narrative. The analysis also shows that the prologue functions to set up the Joel's backstory with the gameplay functioning to highlight the narrative elements such as the characters, the backstory, and the setting.

### **7.5 Summary of Chapter Seven & Answering Research Question Three**

In this chapter, I have proposed the ludonarrative model for video games. This model provides the analytical lens for the ludonarrative analysis of video games by integrating the proposed narrative analysis model in Chapter Five and the proposed gameplay analysis model in Chapter Six. I use this model as an analytical lens to focus on the ludonarrative relationships between the 5 different video games selected for the study. I create open-ended interview questions to understand the participants' gameplay actions, interpretations of the narrative and ludonarrative relationships during the retrospective protocol analysis. The gameplay recordings and the open-ended interview data are used to develop the ludonarrative model in this chapter.

The ludonarrative model highlights the various ludonarrative (sub)categories in the selected video games by foregrounding the interaction between the narrative and gameplay concepts. This enables the analyst to understand *how* and *why* different players understand the (narrative, gameplay and ludonarrative) structures of games differently. Here, I attempt to answer research question three proposed in Chapter One. Based on the study of players, the three main categories of the ludonarrative model are "ludonarrative dissonance", "ludonarrative resonance", and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance".

I expand Hocking’s (2007) concept of “ludonarrative dissonance” to build further subcategories which include “contrast”, “incomplete information problems”, “anagnorisis”, “player-(game designers’) character dissonance”, “negotiation”, “demotivation”, and “imbalance”. The new subcategories are created from the multimodal discourse analysis performed by the analyst on the participants’ gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis which involves negotiation with the players using open-ended interview questions. This main category is defined as the disjunction between the narrative and gameplay concepts based on the players’ experience. The various subcategories of “ludonarrative dissonance” are presented in Table 24 below.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Ludonarrative Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
7.3.1.1	Dissonance Contrast	Constituents from one concept function as a contrast to constituents from another concept.
7.3.1.1.1	Incomplete Information Problems	Players possess limited knowledge about how their gameplay actions/choices affect the narrative and vice versa.
7.3.1.1.2	Anagnorisis	Usually occurs during a “recognition scene” or plots during the principle reversal or peripety that occurs from acquisition of knowledge previously withheld but when known, contributes to a decisive change (in the gameplay).
7.3.1.1.3	Player-(Game Designers’) Character Dissonance	Player’s knowledge of the gameworld is more or less than what they think the game designers know about the PC.



7.3.1.2	Dissonance Negotiation	Constituents from different concepts result in a macro-shift in meanings and this involves re-contextualisation to bring about a reconciliation between the meanings from the different concepts.
7.3.1.3	Dissonance Demotivation	The narrative demotivates the player from achieving the gameplay goals, choosing specific gameplay choices or perform specific gameplay actions.
7.3.1.4	Dissonance Imbalance	Either one of the concepts, the gameplay or narrative is more dominant than the other.

Table 24 The subcategories of ludonarrative dissonance

The concept “ludonarrative resonance” originates from Wattsman (2012). However, the concept has not been validated by studies conducted in an academic context. Therefore, I first create new subcategories based on the literature review. Next, I use the multimodal discourse analysis approach to analyse the gameplay recordings to create open-ended interview questions to negotiate the subcategories with the participants of the study. Finally, the subcategories are refined after I conduct the retrospective protocol analysis with the participants. This main category is defined as the congruence between the narrative and gameplay concepts based on the players’ experience. The various subcategories of “ludonarrative resonance” are presented in Table 25 below.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Ludonarrative Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
7.3.2.1	Resonance Motivation	The narrative motivates the player to achieve the gameplay goals and vice versa.
7.3.2.2	Resonance Guidance	The narrative instructs the player what to do in the gameplay. Also refers to the sequential

		organisation of the game.
7.3.2.3	Resonance Metaphor	The gameplay mechanics are presented to the player through the narrative elements and vice versa.
7.3.2.4	Resonance Semiotic Metaphor	Metaphorical shifts which occur when the functional status of gameplay elements is not preserved as new narrative elements and gameplay mechanics are introduced.
7.3.2.5	Resonance Balance	The gameplay challenge does not interfere with the players' narrative interpretation and vice versa.
7.3.2.6	Resonance Consequence/Contingency	Player's gameplay action creates a narrative outcome and vice versa. The consequence can only be observed after the narrative or gameplay option has been made after some time.
7.3.2.7	Resonance Causality	The gameplay action creates an immediate narrative outcome that is apparent to the player and vice versa. The player may be able to predict the outcome.
7.3.2.8	Resonance Succession	A gameplay event's transition to a narrative event and vice versa, but there is no strong link between the events.
7.3.2.9	Resonance Parallelism Integration	Configurative elements from the gameplay concept function to correspond with the interpretive elements from the narrative concept

		and vice versa.
7.3.2.10	Resonance Prominence	Elements from one concept are incorporated to draw attention to particular elements from another concept and this gives rise to a semantic expansion.
7.3.2.11	Player-(Game Designers') Character Resonance	Player's knowledge of the gameworld aligns with what they think the game designers know about the PC.
7.3.2.12	Resonance Information Solutions	To solidify the empathetic connection between player and character, game designers may encourage players to perform gameplay actions or make important decisions by providing them with explicit knowledge of how to overcome the gameplay challenge(s) or make a narrative choice. The gameplay consequences are explicitly shown to the players as feedback in the narrative setting.

Table 25 The subcategories of ludonarrative resonance

The concept “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” is coined based on the modification of Watsman’s (2012) “ludonarrative alienation”. Similar to the above two categories, open-ended interview questions are created based on the multimodal discourse analysis frameworks proposed in the previous chapters. These questions are used to build and negotiate the ludonarrative (ir)relevance categories with the participants. This main category is defined as the narrative and gameplay concepts having a weak relationship with each other

based on the players' experience. The various subcategories of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" are presented in Table 26 below.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Ludonarrative Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
7.3.3.1	(Ir)relevance Gameplay Focus	Players focus more on the gameplay such that the narrative is backgrounded when they play the game.
7.3.3.2	(Ir)relevance Narrative Focus	Players focus more on the narrative interpretation such that the gameplay is of secondary importance to the narrative.
7.3.3.3	(Ir)relevance Incomplete Information Problems	The game does not provide sufficient information to the players via either of the concepts to unlock more gameplay or narrative information.
7.3.3.4	(Ir)relevance Metaphor	Players interpret the information conveyed by the narrative appearance of game objects to teach them the new gameplay feature as being irrelevant.
7.3.3.5	(Ir)relevance Consequence	Player does not know the consequence of the gameplay action on the narrative and vice versa which contributes to its irrelevance.
7.3.3.6	(Ir)relevance Guidance	The guidance given by the narrative for the gameplay and vice versa is irrelevant either because it is obvious, or it is implicit.
7.3.3.7	(Ir)relevance Prominence	Elements from one concept such as the narrative or gameplay is incorporated by the player or the game to draw (ir)relevant attention to particular elements from another concept and this gives rise to a

		semantic expansion.
--	--	---------------------

Table 26 The subcategories of ludonarrative (ir)relevance

I conclude this chapter with an example application of the ludonarrative model to analyse *TLOU*' prologue. In the next chapter, I will conclude the thesis by summarising how the research questions have been answered in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. I also address the research aims raised in Chapter One to highlight the contribution to knowledge this thesis provides. Finally, I discuss the limitations, implications, directions for future research and conclude the thesis.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION

#### 8.0 Overview

This chapter summarises the main findings for the research questions proposed in Chapter 1 Section 1.11 by highlighting the analyses performed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven towards the formulation of the ludonarrative model. Following the discussion, the limitations of the proposed framework will be outlined. The final part of this chapter will discuss the implications of the proposed framework, outline future directions for research and conclude the thesis.

#### 8.1 Discussion

- i. *What is the players' cognitive interpretation of the video game narrative? This interpretation has been analysed using the multimodal discourse analysis framework, and has been discussed in Chapter Five.*

In Chapter One, I define video game narrative as the cognitive interpretation of the player's ergodic interaction and/or interpretation of the gameworld in both the scripted and non-scripted sequences. The cognitive approach draws upon and expands Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps which places emphasis on the spatiality of the gameworld, defined by Murray (1998, 2011) as one of the distinctive attributes of digital media. Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps are complemented by Fludernik's (1996) natural narratology and cognitive parameters which form the higher level analysis.

One of the findings in relation to understanding the narrative goal(s) of the video game is the feature of *redundancy* important for the interpretation of the video game narrative. This concept has already been discussed in Chapter 5 Section 5.1.1

and reiterated in Chapter 5 Section 5.4. The empirical data in the *Beyond: Two Souls*' study highlights that Michael was unable to decode the information about the narrative goal for the mission in the flashback. Even though the flashback consists of both linguistic and visual semiotic resources, the lack of lighting used in the flashback prevented the player from clearly seeing the narrative goal. The use of image repetition and shift from dark lighting to normal lighting in the present day of the video game enables the player to recognise the *obligatory* object in the narrative. This finding suggests that the multimodal semiotic resources in video games are used *redundantly* to emphasise the importance of the *obligatory* object to the player.

The concept of *focus* is also an important factor that influence whether the player is able to interpret a narrative when playing the game. In Chapter Five, I have mentioned that players are usually only able to focus on the visual mode when they are engaged in the gameplay. It is only during the retrospective protocol analysis that I am able to elicit some narrative from the players by reviewing the videos together with them. This shows that the *MANIPULATING* frame is dominant over the *REFLECTING* frame during gameplay. From the analysis conducted using the multimodal discourse analysis model proposed in Chapter Five, the ludonarrative subcategories of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” during the gameplay session and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus” during the retrospective protocol analysis are proposed.

Using Ryan's (2003) category of *spatial relations* to understand the players' cognitive interpretation of the narrative highlights that players either seldom form a narrative during gameplay or the narrative formed during gameplay was not as much as the gameplay. In Chapter Five, I have provided the example of *Bioshock*'s escort mission of the Little Sister where the players focused on the gameplay goal of keeping

the Little Sister alive. Therefore, they interpreted the *spatial relations* according to the *strategic* or *instrumental* actions that the PC takes to protect the Little Sister when she is harvesting from the corpse. The players did not think much of the narrative and did not form their own interpretation of the narrative during the escort mission. They view it as more of a gameplay event and were more focused on the narrative consequence. The analyses help to create the ludonarrative categories of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – consequence”.

The presence and absence of specific multimodal semiotic resources may cause the player to focus more on the gameplay rather than interpret a narrative during gameplay. In the *Beyond: Two Souls*’ study, the lack of clear affordance and dark lighting used in the setting prevented the player from evaluating the *spatial relations* between his PC and the narrative goal. Thus, he perceived it as more of a gameplay event compared to a narrative event based on his difficulty in evaluating *spatial relations*. The ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” was created in Chapter Seven through the proposed narrative analysis model.

Ryan’s (2003) cognitive map of *mapping style* highlights the use of clear affordance for the player to understand the meanings conveyed via the multimodal semiotic resources. In *Mass Effect*, the players demonstrated understanding of the different colour codings in the dialogue wheel based on their experience of playing previous games. These previous games include *Mass Effect 2* (for Michael) and *Star Wars Knight of the Old Republic* (for Nasir) which also have similar “good” or “badass” dialogue choices. The “good” or “badass” dialogue choices are distinguished based on the linguistic resources used (For *KOTOR*) and colour coding (Dialogue interrupts in *Mass Effect 2*). Inconsistent colour coding for the affordances in *Beyond:*



*Two Souls* confused Michael and delayed his learning, interpretation, and thus enjoyment of the game's narrative.

Iconic narrative objects such as Wrex's armour in *Mass Effect* and Sarah's photo with Joel in *TLOU* unlocks further backstory for the player. Inhabitants' notes also add to the realism of *TLOU*'s gameworld. These iconic narrative objects immerse the player in the gameworld. However, in *Beyond: Two Souls*, the presence of *iconic narrative objects* by themselves is insufficient to facilitate the players' uncovering of narrative in the gameworld. There is also a need for an *indexical mapping style* which orientates the players towards the narrative information that they can interact with. The combined use of the multimodal affordances which include language, audio, and visual indexical prompts successfully indicate to the player narrative information in the gameworld that they can interact with. The analysis using Ryan's (2003) cognitive maps of mapping style has been used to propose the category of "ludonarrative resonance metaphor" and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance metaphor" in Chapter Seven.

The *interactive character movement* of the player may create a cognitive map which is used by the player to understand the plot progression. However, based on the empirical data from the interviews, players do not necessarily interpret a conflict in the narrative based on the enemies they encounter in the gameworld who constitute the gameplay obstacles. The conceptual analysis has been used to create the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus" in Chapter Seven. Similarly, the cognitive map of *interactive character action* in the gameplay does not necessarily map to the characterisation of the characters in the narrative. The empirical data indicated that the participants perceived the narrative characterisation to be done primarily during the scripted sequences such as the cutscenes and more optional narrative is present in the gameplay. During the interviews, the attempt to

elicit the player's narrative during the gameplay was also not always successful as the players were more focused on the gameplay fights with the enemies and did not think too much of the narrative. The analysis using the concept of *interactive character movement with action* has been used to propose the ludonarrative categories of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus” and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – metaphor” in Chapter Seven.

*Interactive character action and movement* may intersect during exploration to uncover embedded narrative in the gameworld. The empirical data from the interviews indicate the formation of multiple interpretations of the inhabitants' backstory based on their personal experience of the story. A static character movement/action makes it easier for players to focus and interpret the narrative compared to engaging in the gameplay fights/PC's customisation and interpreting the narrative when it is given simultaneously with gameplay. The ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus” has been proposed based on the analysis in Chapter Five.

Different character movements and actions contribute to a different type of narrative experience in the player. In *TLOU*, the favouring of the stealth movement for Ellie and the flexibility in play style for Joel highlight the narrative characteristics of these PCs (**Transcript 3.36** in Appendix A). Furthermore, the interdependence of Joel and Ellie in the narrative is highlighted by their different gameplay styles. As the narrative progresses, these characters also develop a symbiotic relationship with each other in both the narrative and the gameplay. Based on the analysis in Chapter Five, the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative resonance metaphor” is proposed.

Fludernik's (1996, 2003) 'Natural' narratology and cognitive parameters have also highlighted the importance of cultural and contextual experience in the

interpretation of the video game narrative. Although the empirical data has indicated that players seldom interpret narrative out of the gameplay events, players do sometimes link the gameplay to the narrative context. This makes it easier for them to understand, learn and be able to engage with the gameplay mechanics by placing the gameplay event in a narrative context. However, the linkage to the narrative context is only elicited during the retrospective protocol analysis so care has to be taken when interpreting the findings. The first example that was provided in Chapter Five was the gameplay tutorial in *TLOU* where the game taught the player how to use the medical kit passed to Joel by Tess after the explosion (**Transcript 3.34** in Appendix A). The second example was how the player interprets Aiden's gameplay actions in *Beyond: Two Souls* by linking Aiden's gameplay actions to Jodie's emotional state in the narrative (**Transcript 4.16** in Appendix A). In this case, the analysis creates the ludonarrative category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – gameplay focus" during the gameplay session and "ludonarrative (ir)relevance – narrative focus" during the retrospective protocol analysis.

Cultural experience is an important factor to enable the player to immerse in the video game narrative and relate to the PC. From the empirical data in Chapter Five, the disjunction between the PC, Jodie and the participant, Michael was highlighted when a different cultural cognitive frame was used to interpret the narrative goal, the garage's location. The different cultural cognitive frame slowed down the player when he was exploring the house to find the *obligatory* object in the narrative. Therefore, the player has to first embark on the *optional* object of exploring the house based on the available affordances to facilitate the completion of the *obligatory* object of finding the garage. The difference in the cultural cognitive frames between the

player and the game designer has contributed to the creation of the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance metaphor” in Chapter Seven.

- ii. *What specific players’ instrumental and strategic actions are involved during the players’ interaction with the video game and how do these actions build up to form the gameplay? This research question is discussed in Chapter Six.*

The model proposed for gameplay analysis includes the micro players’ actions which are the instrumental and strategic gameplay actions and the higher level gameplay interactions which are the gameplay exchange, gameplay phase, and the gameplay stage. The micro players’ actions build upon Manninen’s (2003) interaction forms in online games modified for analysis of single player games. Based on the analysis of the empirical data of the players’ gameplay, the micro actions are in turn divided into instrumental gameplay actions which are more instinctive and strategic gameplay actions which require more thinking. Instrumental players’ actions are usually time sensitive but not always so. Time sensitive instrumental players’ actions include those actions that require players to complete an action within a set amount of time. These actions include selecting a dialogue option or completing a series of actions before the time bar runs out in *The Walking Dead*, defusing a number of bombs in *Mass Effect* within a time limit, and beating the mini games in *Mass Effect* and *Bioshock* before the timer is up.

Time sensitive information can be given implicitly in the narrative and may require the player to fail the gameplay event before s/he realises that there is a time limit. For instance, in *TLOU*, Alice mentioned that the time limit in catching Robert was discovered only after she failed it when she made a wrong turn as she was not

able to receive the gameplay hint given via the narrative (**Transcript 3.38** in Appendix A). This analysis was used to create the ludonarrative category “ludonarrative (ir)relevance – guidance” in Chapter Seven. Instrumental actions although performed by the players may also be actually done by the game. In this case, the players’ agency is restricted as they do not have any choice in changing the game state of their characters or the gameworld. One example given in Chapter Five includes the game’s gradual upgrade of the PC into Big Daddy in *Bioshock* through the player’s actions of finding the various Big Daddy parts. The category of “ludonarrative dissonance – demotivation” has been proposed based on the retrospective protocol analysis.

Strategic gameplay actions require critical thinking by the players. They usually require preplanning and take more time to implement. Hence the game does not usually give a time restriction for this type of action but when it does, it makes the gameplay more challenging as the player is given less time to think. Strategic gameplay actions include puzzle solving in all the games. Strategic actions also include PC customisation in *Mass Effect*, *Bioshock*, and, *TLOU*. The overcoming of the environmental obstacles in the form of enemies also involve deliberation where players think about the actions that they would use against specific enemy types in specific contexts. In *Mass Effect*, critical moments occur where the players have to think of a squad member to save in which saving one will sacrifice the other. The death of a side character will result in the loss of both their narrative and gameplay abilities. In *The Walking Dead*, although there is a time limit given to save, spare or kill a specific character, it is still classified under strategic actions when the players are observed to vocalise their thoughts when and after making the choice. The reason is that the players still reflect upon their decision when making it during the gameplay.

However, in *Bioshock*, the saving or harvesting of the Little Sisters is classified under instrumental actions. The reason is that the players do not think about whether to save or harvest them. The empirical data shows the players understood the gameplay benefit is greater and their real life personality also influences them to save the Little Sisters so it becomes a more instinctive choice. Based on the analyses, the ludonarrative category of “ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration” has been proposed in the previous chapter where narrative interpretation and gameplay action occurs together.

The higher level gameplay interaction model builds on Fabricatore’s (2007) model of gameplay mechanics which is integrated into Martin and Rose’s (2007) exchange structure. This model enables the analyst to understand the players’ interaction with the gameplay on a macro level based on how the players perceive the feedback given to them from the game. The benefits of this model is the minute details in which the players’ moves are understood in the context of a gameplay phase. In Chapter Six, an application analysis of a players’ gameplay actions in the Asian general’s boss fight in *Beyond: Two Souls* has been performed. Depending on the play style (active versus passive), the analyst is able to understand the player’s learning of the gameplay mechanics which is motivated by the gameplay preferences. Michael and Matt’s different gameplay actions resulted in two different pathways – one of narrative interpretation and the other of gameplay interaction. The two players’ different pathways changed the micro narratives within each chapter of *Beyond: Two Souls*. Based on the analysis conducted in Chapter Five, the ludonarrative categories of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance: narrative focus”, “ludonarrative resonance parallelism integration” and “ludonarrative resonance causality” have been proposed for the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven.

iii. *What are the different (sub)categories of ludonarrative relationships in video games?*

*This research question is discussed in Chapter Seven.*

In Chapter Seven, the ludonarrative model was proposed in which the three main categories of “ludonarrative dissonance”, “ludonarrative resonance”, and “ludonarrative (ir)relevance” have been discussed. The three main categories have been further refined using the method of multimodal discourse analysis proposed in Chapters Five and Six towards the main aim of creating further subcategories in the ludonarrative model in Chapter Seven. The retrospective protocol analysis used in the open-ended interviews complements the multimodal discourse analysis framework by providing the empirical data to develop the ludonarrative model.

To summarise, “ludonarrative dissonance” occurs when there is a contrast between the information conveyed via the narrative and gameplay concepts. This contrast can contribute to various effects such as the disjunction between the player and the PC s/he is controlling. This contrast is both positive and negative as seen from the empirical data depending on different player types. Players who prefer to play games for the narrative may become motivated to progress the gameplay to uncover more narrative explanation to reduce the disparity of the knowledge between the player and his/her character. Players who prefer to play games for the gameplay prefer the narrative to be conveyed to them in a clear and holistic manner instead of being enticed by plot hooks to keep on playing the game.

“Ludonarrative resonance” occurs when the narrative and gameplay concepts are so integrated with each other that they cannot be separated. When this occurs, the players feel a heightened emotional experience when the gameplay actions that they

perform is equivalent to the actualisation of the narrative. Narrative may also help the player to understand and learn the gameplay mechanics and vice versa. Metaphorical shifts in the narrative or gameplay functions of the mechanics may also contribute to gameplay challenge. Meaningful outcomes produced as a result of the choices made in the narrative or gameplay may also contribute to player agency.

“Ludonarrative (ir)relevance” takes place when the players focus on one concept without taking into account or backgrounding the other. For instance, some *Bioshock* players such as Peter, John, and Loke chose to focus on gameplay and neglect the narrative information from the audio logs which they deemed to be irrelevant to their game experience. In *Beyond: Two Souls*, Michael was focused on mastering the gameplay controls and the narrative became irrelevant to him. The conveying of subtle information through one of the concepts (narrative and gameplay) by the game to interlink the two concepts may also contribute to the players’ inability to form the ludonarrative link resulting in ludonarrative (ir)relevance.

In summary, the main contribution of the thesis is the validation of Watssman’s (2012) concept of “ludonarrative resonance” and Hocking’s (2007) concept of “ludonarrative dissonance”, and the introduction of the concept of “ludonarrative (ir)relevance”. The empirical data which are used to develop and refine the subcategories include the gameplay recordings and the retrospective protocol analysis used to analyse the open-ended interviews.

## **8.2 Limitations**

The present study proposes a conceptual model to analyse video games in terms of the ludonarrative relationships, narrative, and gameplay. However, the proposed model has only been built and refined from 5 video games such as *Mass Effect*, *The Walking Dead*, *Bioshock*,



*TLOU*, and *Beyond: Two Souls*. More video games need to be used to test and further develop the proposed model to ensure its applicability to video game analysis.

In this study, a qualitative approach in the form of interviews is used to provide the empirical data to develop the theoretical model. A total of 37 participants signed up for the study. 11 participants have completed all sessions in the game study where some players play a few games. As a result of the qualitative approach used, the results obtained from the study may not be generalisable and as such, this study is treated as an exploratory study. The exploratory study builds on existing research and paves the way for future research to be done on ludonarrative relationships in video games.

Another limitation from the approach used in the interview is that it is subjective and it would not be easy to understand why a specific interviewee understood a ludonarrative relationship or interpret the video game narrative in a specific manner. In using interviews and conversational analysis, it is not easy to access the cognition or emotional standpoint of the interviewee, and there might be private issues that the interviewee chooses to withhold from the interviewer. For instance, Jim in *The Walking Dead's* study mentioned that there were some personal issues he would rather not talk about when I questioned him further about his choices made in the game. Hence, much of the findings would have to depend on the interviewer's interpretation.

The selection of participants for the game study is also a limitation. Participants were chosen from the National University of Singapore with the age range between 19 to 33 years old. Some participants were also chosen from the researcher's gamer friends. Finally, some participants were obtained via snowball sampling where the current participants introduced their friends for the study. As a result, individuals selected did not fulfil all criteria. These criteria include a balanced gender ratio, experience of playing video games of the selected

types in the study for more than five years, and players from diverse background. This means that the study is more of an exploratory study and the findings cannot be generalised to the female population as there are more male gamers than female gamers in the study.

The researcher may also form another limitation to the study. He may interpret the data to suit the proposed model and this forms the researcher's bias. Guiding questions have also been used in the interview questions when the participants did not provide a detailed answer. Some participants also did not understand the interview questions so the questions have been reworded to better convey the meanings. Care has to be taken in interpreting the responses obtained in this manner.

Although the model has attempted to take into account the players' personality types by using Yee's (2007) taxonomy of player's motivations in online games adapted for the analysis of the players' experience in single player games, it is not easy to correlate the players' personality types with the ludonarrative categories because of the different games used in the study. For instance, players who are both oriented towards "achievement" in gameplay and "immersion" in narrative could sometimes face a conflict in choosing whether to focus on the narrative or gameplay in specific contexts. For instance, Mary mentioned that when she was listening to *Bioshock's* audio logs in a corner, an enemy came to fight her thus distracting her from focusing on the narrative interpretation (**Transcript 3.10** in Appendix A). Henry is also an "achievement" and "immersion" player personality type. When playing *The Walking Dead*, he was able to experience "ludonarrative resonance" in instances where the gameplay actions are integrated with the character's narrative. Therefore, different types of games will affect the correlation of the player's personality types with the ludonarrative categories. Players also possess different shades of personality types and it is hard to restrict the players to a single personality type according to theoretical models.

### 8.3 Implications and Future Research

The findings from the game study could highlight some aspects of the ludonarrative relationships in video games which are underutilised. For instance, in *Bioshock*, gameplay hints have been given in the narrative through the audio logs but they were too subtle to be picked up by the players. The empirical data from the interviews highlights that some players treat the audio logs' narrative as noise as they do not understand the language used in them. The game developers could also minimise the interruption or dissonance between the different modes and concepts such as the narrative and gameplay when designing video games. Clearer affordances could be used in *Beyond: Two Souls* to guide the player during the gameplay to reduce incidences of confusion. Using the proposed model, video games with both narrative and gameplay could also benefit from a balancing of both concepts through playtesting. For instance, when the playtest reveals the dominance of the category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance", the developers may redesign the game so that both narrative and gameplay could be more integrated with each other. Video game designers could also learn to make certain aspects of video games more fun. For instance, interview data has revealed that memorising door codes in *Bioshock* is tedious and participants chose to play the hacking mini games to overcome the gameplay obstacles. *Bioshock 2* has improved upon this aspect by showing the door code before hacking after the players have uncovered it in the audio logs. Perhaps narrative can also be integrated into the gameplay as a form of puzzle or riddle such as those which have been used in *The Witcher* series.

From the discussion in Section 8.1 where I provided the answer to research question one, an important finding in the game study is that players do not usually form their own narrative during the gameplay. Players treat the pre-scripted narrative in the video games as the canonical story that they adhere to (**Transcript 6.4** in Appendix A). Out of the five video games used in the study, the most emotionally engaging video game in which the players

were able to form an emotional bond with the PC was *The Walking Dead*. In this game, some of the players such as Henry and Walther mentioned that the gameplay and narrative are interlinked with each other such that they cannot be separated. On the one hand, the gameplay actions that the players performed in *The Walking Dead* contributed to their emotional engagement with the video game characters. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Seven Section 7.3.2, the player, Henry who performed the gameplay action of killing the PC's brother felt empathy towards the character he was controlling.

On the other hand, in some of the other games, the players separated the narrative from the gameplay when they were more focused on fighting the enemies (*Bioshock*, *TLOU* and *Mass Effect*) or figuring out the gameplay controls (*Beyond: Two Souls*). As such, how gameplay could be used in narration is not clearly understood in game studies. When playing the game, players need to care about the PCs in the gameworld. Their emotional connection to the characters arise when their morality is being judged during critical moments where they were asked to make a difficult choice or perform a morally ambiguous action. This type of difficult choice seldom occurs in the selected video games except for *The Walking Dead* and *Mass Effect* when the ludonarrative relationships are interlinked. Difficult choices occur for a few events in *The Walking Dead* (**Transcripts 6.1 & 6.2** in Appendix A). For instance, when players are forced to make a dialogue choice which clashes with their personality (**Transcript 6.1** in Appendix A) or when they are forced to side with a character (**Transcript 6.2** in Appendix A). However, Jim mentions that he uses his real life personality to immerse himself in the character role so it was not always hard for him to make the choices as he selects the choices based on his instincts (**Transcript 6.3** in Appendix A).

Another instance of difficult choice occurs when the players are forced to side with a specific character. The game will penalise them when they remain neutral, where the other characters reprimanded them for doing so. When this occurs, the narrative outcome is that the

PC's relationship with the other characters would deteriorate (**Transcript 6.2** in Appendix A). A difficult choice occurs in *Mass Effect*, where the players have to sacrifice one of their squad members (Chapter 6 Section 6.4.2.4). From the game study, more complex emotional judgements of the video game characters such as empathy did not happen when players concentrated on the controls. Instead, more basic emotions relating to “winning” or “losing” the game such as (in)capacity, (dis)satisfaction or (un)happiness arise due to goal-related evaluations in the gameplay (Toh, 2015). Future research could be conducted to find out how gameplay can be used in video games to evoke more complex emotions and create emergent narrative in the players.

Ludonarrative relationships could also be calibrated to target the different types of players with different playstyles. To target gameplay focused players, instead of giving the narrative in the audio logs in *Bioshock*, perhaps narrative can be conveyed via the gameplay actions such as those in *The Walking Dead*. On the one hand, in *Bioshock*, narrative and gameplay can be seen to be clearly separated and this distinction creates ludonarrative dissonance when the narrative is interrupted by the gameplay. On the other hand, in *The Walking Dead*, the emotional engagement of the player with the PC is achieved when there is a seamless integration of gameplay action with narrative which creates ludonarrative resonance.

Future research could be conducted to understand how the factor of player personality is related to the model. To reduce the number of variables in the study, players could be asked to play the same game. Their personality types could be confirmed via interview or survey questions. Their corresponding gameplay actions, strategies, narrative and ludonarrative interpretations will be recorded down to be coded as empirical data. Then the ludonarrative categories could be labelled based on the analysis of the coded data. Finally, the players' personality types will be correlated to the ludonarrative categories.

Based on the interview data, different ludonarrative models could be created based on the different categories proposed in Chapter Seven. These ludonarrative models could be correlated with the video game genres based on the participants' understanding of the ludonarrative relationships in the different video games. These relationships could highlight the similarities and differences between different video games. These ludonarrative models could also highlight the distinctive features of well designed video games. These distinctive features could serve as a template or model in which designers could take inspiration from when designing newer games. Designers may also integrate different distinctive features of various video games to create a new genre based on the proposed model.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

The key contribution of this thesis is the refinement of Watsman's (2012) "ludonarrative resonance" and Hocking's (2007) "ludonarrative dissonance", and the introduction of the concept of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance". In particular, Watsman's (2012) concept of "ludonarrative resonance" is refined with empirical data and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative resonance" are expanded based on the study of the players' experience. Hocking's (2007) concept of "ludonarrative dissonance" is refined using empirical data and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative dissonance" are expanded based on the players' experience. The refinement of the concepts are conducted using 5 different video games and the different personality types of players are taken into account using Yee's (2007) and Mett and Nils' (2013) player's motives. The new concept of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" is introduced and the subcategories in the main category of "ludonarrative (ir)relevance" are expanded using the empirical data.

The ludonarrative model in Figure 65 is used to highlight how the various constituents in the model are interlinked to each other. For instance, "quest" is able to form the plot when

the players are able to link the gameplay actions to the narrative interpretation to form a sequence of narrative events using ludonarrative resonance causality and consequence. Similarly, when “actions” and “strategies” are able to be linked by the players to “characterisation” and “character development” in the narrative and vice versa, “ludonarrative resonance metaphor” occurs. The implication and importance of the contribution is on viewing video games as “ludonarrative” and the understanding of the different relationships between narrative and gameplay in video games. It also provides a framework for researchers, game developers, industry professionals and gamers to discuss and understand their subjective experience when playing the game.

## REFERENCES

- Aarseth, E. 1997. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Aarseth, E. 2001. Computer Game Studies, Year One. *Game Studies - The International Journal of Computer Game research*. Vol. 1, Issue 1, July 2001.
- Aarseth, E. 2004a. Genre trouble: Narrativism and the art of simulation. In N.Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan (Eds.), *First Person: New media as story, performance, and game*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Aarseth, E. 2004b. Playing Research: Methodological approaches to game analysis. *Game Approaches - Papers from spilforskning.dk Conference*. Aug 28-29, 2003. Spilforskning.dk 2004. Available from <http://www.cs.uu.nl/docs/vakken/vw/literature/02.GameApproaches2.pdf> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Aarseth, E. 2012. The Narrative Theory of Games. *FDG'12 Proceedings of the International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games* (pp. 129-133). ACM.
- Aarseth, E. 2014. "Game Ontology". In *The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies*, B. Perron & M.J.P. Wolf (Eds.). New York: Routledge, pp. 484 - 492.
- Abbot, H. P. 2002. *The Cambridge introduction to narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Adams, E. 2010. *Fundamentals of Game Design*. Berkeley: New Riders.
- Ang, C. S., Zaphiris, P., & Wilson, S. 2010. "Computer Games and Sociocultural Play: An Activity Theoretical Perspective." *Games and Culture*. 5(4), pp. 354 - 380.
- Anthropy, A., & Clark, N. 2014. *A Game Design Vocabulary: Exploring the Foundational Principles Behind Good Game Design*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River: Addison-Wesley Professional.



- Aristotle. 1999. The Project Gutenberg Ebook of Poetics. Available from <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1974/pg1974.txt> (Accessed: 27 Sep 2013).
- Atkinson, R. L., Atkinson, R. C., Smith, E. E., Bem, D. J., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. 2000. *Hilgard's Introduction to Psychology*. 13th edition. Orlando, Florida: Hancourt College Publishers.
- Aylett, R. 1999. Narrative in Virtual Environments – Towards Emergent Narrative. *Proc. Am. Assoc. for Artificial Intelligence (AAAI) Symposium on Narrative Intelligence*. AAAI Press, 83 – 86.
- Äyrämö, Sanna-M, & Koskimaa, R. 2010. ‘Narrative Definitions for Game Design: A Concept-Oriented Study of Nine Computer Game Design Guidebooks’ In Richard Van Eck (Eds.). In *Interdisciplinary Models and Tools for Serious Games: Emerging Concepts and Future Directions*. Information Science Publishing. Ebook Available from <http://www.igi-global.com.libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/gateway/chapter/full-text-pdf/41479> (Accessed: 10 Sep 2013).
- Bacon, H. 2007. Cognition and the aesthetics of reexperience. In J.D. Anderson and B.F. Anderson (Eds.). *Narration and spectatorship in moving images*, pp. 260 – 276. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Bal, M. 1985. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press.
- Barthes, R. 1966. “Introduction à l'analyse structurale du récit.” essay in *Recherches Semiotiques. L'Analyse Structurale du Récit. Communications 8 : 1-27.\**. (S. Heath, Trans.). (1977). *Introduction to the structural analysis of narratives*. Essay within *Image-Music-Text*. London: Fontana.
- Bateman, C. (Ed.). 2007. *Game writing: Narrative skills for videogames*. Boston, MA: Charles River Media.

- Bateson, P. 2005. The Role of Play in the Evolution of Great Apes and Humans. In *The Nature of Play - Great Apes and Humans*. Anthony D. Pellegrini and Peter K. Smith (Eds.). New York, London: The Guilford Press.
- Ben-Arie, U. 2009. The Narrative-Communication Structure in Interactive Narrative Works. In Ido A. Iurgel, Nelson Zagalo, and Paolo Petta. (Eds.). *Interactive Storytelling*, volume 5915 of Lecture Notes in Computer Science, pages 152–162. Heidelberg: Springer Verlag.
- Bioware. 2007. *Mass Effect*. Multi-platform: Microsoft Game Studios & Electronic Arts.
- Bizzocchi J., & Tanenbaum, J. 2011. “Well Read: Applying Close Reading Techniques to Gameplay Experiences”, *Well-Played 3.0*, ed. Drew Davidson, pgs. 218-315, ETC Press, Pittsburgh, PA. Lead Author.
- Björk, S., & Holopainen, J. 2005. *Patterns in Game Design*. Massachusetts: Charles River Media.
- Black Isle Studios. 1999. *Planescape Torment*. Interplay Entertainment.
- Blizzard Entertainment. 2010. *Starcraft II: Wings of Liberty*. Blizzard Entertainment.
- Blizzard Entertainment. 2012. *Diablo III*. Blizzard Entertainment.
- Blizzard Entertainment. 2013. *Starcraft 2: Heart of the Swarm*. Blizzard Entertainment.
- Bogost, I. 2007. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Brown, E., & Cairns, P. 2004. A grounded investigation of game immersion. In *Proceedings CHI*, pp. 1297 – 1300.

- Bruchansky, C. 2011. The semiotics of video games. Available from <http://www.slideshare.net/bruchansky/the-semiotics-of-video-games> (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Bruner, J. 2004. Life as narrative. *Journal of Social Research*, 3(71), 691–710. Available from [http://ewasteschools.pbworks.com/f/Bruner\\_J\\_LifeAsNarrative.pdf](http://ewasteschools.pbworks.com/f/Bruner_J_LifeAsNarrative.pdf) (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Bryan, J. S. 2013. *The Dynamics of the Player Narrative – How Choices Shapes Videogame Literature*. Masters Thesis. Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Buckley, D., Chen, K., & Knowles, J. 2013. Predicting skill from gameplay input to a first-person shooter. 2013 IEEE *Conference on Computational Intelligence in Games* (CIG), 11 – 13 Aug 2013. Available at [http://eldar.mathstat.uoguelph.ca/dashlock/CIG2013/papers/paper\\_80.pdf](http://eldar.mathstat.uoguelph.ca/dashlock/CIG2013/papers/paper_80.pdf) (Accessed 29 Aug 2015).
- Bunting, B. S. Jr. 2013. Game-to-Film Adaptation and How *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* Negotiates the Difference between Player and Audience. In *Game On, Hollywood!: Essays on the Intersection of Video Games and Cinema*. Gretchen Papazian and Joseph Michael Sommers (Eds.). North Carolina, Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.
- Butler, M. 2013a. The Future of Storytelling. Chapter 5 Storytelling in Digital Games Unit 2 Gameplaying and Storytelling. Available from [https://iversity.org/my/courses/the-future-of-storytelling/lesson\\_units/4817](https://iversity.org/my/courses/the-future-of-storytelling/lesson_units/4817) (Accessed: 3 Dec 2013).
- Butler, M. 2013b. The Future of Storytelling. Chapter 5 Storytelling In Digital Games Unit 3 Scenes and Actions. Available from [https://iversity.org/my/courses/the-future-of-storytelling/lesson\\_units/4820](https://iversity.org/my/courses/the-future-of-storytelling/lesson_units/4820) (Accessed: 2 Dec 2013).

- Bycer, J. 2013. Narrative Dissonance in Game Storytelling. Gamasutra. Available from [http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JoshBycer/20130628/195316/Narrative\\_Dissonance\\_in\\_Game\\_Storytelling.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JoshBycer/20130628/195316/Narrative_Dissonance_in_Game_Storytelling.php) (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Caillios, R. 1961. *Man, Play, and Games*. Librairie Gallimard, Paris: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc.
- Calinescu, M. 1993. *Rereading*. Yale University Press.
- Calleja, G. 2011. Narrative Generation in *Lord of the Rings Online*. *Ring Bearers: The Lord of The Rings Online as Intertextual Narrative*. Manchester University Press.
- Calleja, G. 2013. Narrative Involvement in Digital Games. *Foundations of Digital Games 2013 Conference Proceedings*. Available at [http://www.fdg2013.org/program/papers/paper02\\_calleja.pdf](http://www.fdg2013.org/program/papers/paper02_calleja.pdf) (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Cardboard Computer. 2013. *Kentucky Route Zero*. Windows, Mac OS X & Linux.
- CD Projekt RED. 2007. *The Witcher*. Atari, Inc.
- CD Projekt RED. 2011. *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*. Multi-platform: CD Projekt.
- Chandler, R. 2007. *Game writing handbook*. Boston, MA: Charles River Media.
- Chatman, S. 1978. *Story and Discourse*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.
- Chew, A. L. Evelyn. 2013. How does the interactive aspect of an autobiographical video game affect how someone's life story is told? NM6660 Report.
- Crawford, C. 1984. *The Art of Computer Game Design*. Berkeley, Calif. : Osborne/McGraw-Hill.
- Crawford, C. 2005. *Chris Crawford on interactive storytelling*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1990. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Harper & Row.

- Culler, J. 1975. Structuralist Poetics. *Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dansky, R. 2007. Introduction to Game Narrative. In *Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames*. Chris Bateman (Ed.). Boston, Massachusetts: Charles River Media.
- Delgado, M. R. 2007. Reward-related responses in the human striatum. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. Vol 1104, Reward and Decision Making in Corticobasal Ganglia Networks, pps. 70 – 88, May 2007.
- DeMarle, M. 2007. Nonlinear Game Narrative. In *Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames*. Chris Bateman (Ed.). Boston, Massachusetts: Charles River Media.
- Dena, C. 2010. Beyond Multimedia, Narrative, and Game - The Contributions of Multimodality and Polymorphic Fictions. In Ruth Page (Eds). *New Perspectives on Narrative and Multimodality*. Taylor & Francis.
- Dorst, K., & Dijkhuis, J. 1995. Comparing paradigms for describing design activity. *Design Studies*. Vol. 16, pp. 261 – 74.
- ElderPredator. 2010. Singleplayer Storytelling. Available from <http://www.moddb.com/groups/starcraft-fan-group/features/singleplayer-storytelling> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Entertainment Software Association. 2015. 2015 Sales, Demographic and Usage Data – Essential Facts about the Computer and Video Game Industry. Available from <http://www.theesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ESA-Essential-Facts-2015.pdf> (Accessed: 25 Dec 2015).
- Erickson, D. 2009. Writing for Role-Playing Games. In Wendy Despain (Ed.). *Writing for Video Game Genre*. A.K. Peters, Ltd. Wellesley, Massachusetts.

- Ericsson, K.A., & Simon, H.A. 1993. *Protocol Analysis Verbal Reports as Data*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Eskelinen, M. 2001. The Gaming Situation. *Game Studies - The International Journal of Computer Game research*. Vol 1, Issue 1 July 2001. Available from <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/eskelinen/> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Eskelinen, M. 2004. Ludology – Towards Computer Game Studies. In *First Person: New Media as story, performance, and game*. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Eds.). Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- Eskelinen, M. 2012. *Cybertext Poetics: The Critical Landscape of New Media Literacy Theory*. London, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Eskelinen, M., & Tronstad, R. 2003. ‘Video Games as Configurative Performances’, in M.J.P. Wolf and B. Perron (eds) *The Video Game Theory Reader*, Routledge, London, pp.195-220.
- Fabricatore, C. 2007. “Gameplay and game mechanics design: a key to quality in videogames”. In *Proceedings of OECD-CERI Expert Meeting on Videogames and Education*, Santiago de Chile, Chile, 2007. [online] Available from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/39414829.pdf> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Fernandez-Vara, C. 2009. *The tribulations of adventure games: integrating story into simulation through performance*. PhD Thesis. Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Fernandez-Vara, C. 2011. Game Spaces Speak Volumes: Indexical Storytelling. In *Proceedings of Digital Games Research Association 2011 Conference*. Available from <http://www.digra.org/wp-content/uploads/digital-library/Game-Spaces-Speak-Volumes.pdf> (Accessed: 22 Mar 2016).
- Ferri, G. 2015. Narrative Structures in IDN Authoring and Analysis. In H. Koenitz, G. Ferri, M. *Interactive Digital Narrative*. New York: Routledge.

- Fisher, W. R. 1984. Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication monographs*. 51, 1-22.
- Fludernik, M. 1996. *Towards a 'natural' narratology*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Fludernik, M. 2003. Natural Narratology and Cognitive Parameters. In David Herman (Eds.). *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*. Stanford; California: CSLI.
- Frasca, G. 2003a. Ludologists love stories, too: notes from a debate that never took place. *Digital Games and Research Association (DiGRA) Conference 2003*. Available from [http://www.ludology.org/articles/Frasca\\_LevelUp2003.pdf](http://www.ludology.org/articles/Frasca_LevelUp2003.pdf) (Accessed: 20 Jan 2016).
- Frasca, G. 2003b. Simulation versus narrative: Introduction to ludology. In M. J. P. Wolf & B. Perron (Eds.), *The video game theory reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse*. Trans. by Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP.
- Gjørseter, T., & Jørgensen, K. 2012. "Combining Think Aloud and Comic Strip Illustration in the Study of Augmented Reality Games." In *NOKOBIT 2012*, Tapir Forlag.
- Glassner, A. 2004. *Interactive storytelling: Techniques for 21st century fiction*. Natick, MA: A.K. Perers.
- Graham, J., Zheng, L., and Gonzalez, C. 2006. A cognitive approach to game usability and design: mental model development in novice real-time strategy gamers. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*. Vol. 9, No.3.
- Granic, I., Lobel, A., and Engels, R. C.M.E. 2013. The Benefits of Playing Video Games. *American Psychologist*. DOI: 10.1037/a0034857. Available from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-a0034857.pdf> (Accessed 27 Nov 2013).
- Guillemette, L., and Lévesque, C. 2006. Narratology, in Louis Hébert (dir.), *Signo* [online], Rimouski (Quebec) Available from <http://www.signosemio.com/genette/narratology.asp> (Accessed: 27 Sep 2013).

- Hancock, H. 2002. Better Game Design through Cutscenes. *Gamasutra*. Available at [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131410/better\\_game\\_design\\_through\\_.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/131410/better_game_design_through_.php) (Accessed: 7 Sep 2013).
- Hartmann, T., and Klimmt, C. 2006. The influence of personality factors on computer game choice. In P. Vorderer & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Playing video games: Motives, responses, and consequences* (pp. 115 – 131). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Heaton, T. 2006. A Circular Model of Gameplay. *Gamasutra*. Available from [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a\\_circular\\_model\\_of\\_gameplay.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130978/a_circular_model_of_gameplay.php) (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Heckhausen, H., & Heckhausen, J. 1991. *Motivation and action* (2nd ed.). Berlin, Germany: Springer-Verlag.
- Herman, D. 1999. *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Herman, D. 2002. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln, NB : University of Nebraska Press.
- Hocking, C. 2007. Ludonarrative Dissonance in *Bioshock* – The Problem of what the game is about. Available from [http://clicknothing.typepad.com/click\\_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html](http://clicknothing.typepad.com/click_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html) (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Ip, B. 2010. Narrative Structures in Computer and Video Games: Part 1: Context, Definitions and Initial Findings. *Games and Culture*. Vol 6, Issue 2, pp. 103-134.
- Irrational Games. 2007. *Bioshock*. Multi-platform: 2K Games & Feral Interactive.



- Iuppa, N., & Borst, T. 2007. *Story and simulations for serious games: Tales from the trenches*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Jenkins, H. 2004. Game Design as Narrative Architecture. In N. Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan (Eds.), *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Available at <http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/lazzi-fair> (Accessed: 20 Jan 2016).
- Jenkins, H. 2005. *Game Design as Narrative Architecture*. Available at [http://interactive.usc.edu/blog-old/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Jenkins\\_Narrative\\_Architecture.pdf](http://interactive.usc.edu/blog-old/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Jenkins_Narrative_Architecture.pdf) (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Jewitt, C. 2013. Multimodality. *Glossary of Multimodal Terms: A MODE Initiative*. Available at <http://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/multimodality/> (Accessed: 8 Sep 2013).
- Jørgensen, K. 2012. Players as Coresearchers: Expert Player Perspective as an Aid to Understanding Games. *Simulation & Gaming*, 43(3), 374-390.
- Juul, J. 1999. A Clash Between Game and Narrative. *Danish literature*.
- Juul, J. 2001. Games telling stories? A brief note on games and narratives. *Game Studies, The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 1(1). Available from <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Juul, J. 2013. "Goal". From *Half-Real: A Dictionary of Video Game Theory*. Available from <http://www.half-real.net/dictionary/#game>. (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Juul, J. 2013. "Strategy". From *Half-Real: A Dictionary of Video Game Theory*. Available from <http://www.half-real.net/dictionary/#game>. (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).

- Keen, S. 2015. *Narrative Form: Revised and Expanded Second Edition*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Keogh, B. 2013. When Game Over Means Game Over: Using Permanent Death to Craft Living Stories In *MineCraft*. *IE'2013*, September 30 - October 2013, Melbourne, VIC, Australia. Available online at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2513002.2513572> (Accessed: 21 Nov 2013).
- Kirschner, D, & Williams, P. J. 2014. "Measuring Video Game Engagement through the Gameplay Review Method." *Simulation and Gaming*. Vol.45, no. 4 – 5, pp. 593 – 610.
- Koenitz, H. 2010. Towards a Theoretical Framework for Interactive Digital Interactive Storytelling: *Third Joint Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling* (pp. 176–185). Springer. [http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-16638-9\\_22](http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-16638-9_22)
- Koenitz, H. 2015. Towards a Specific Theory of Interactive Digital Narrative. In: H. Koenitz, G. Ferri, M. Haahr, D. Sezen, T.I. Sezen (eds.) *Interactive Digital Narrative* (pp. 91 – 105). New York: Routledge.
- Koenitz, H., Haahr, M., Ferri, G., & Sezen, T. 2013a. First steps towards a unified theory for interactive digital narrative. In: Pan, Z., Cheok, A. D., Mueller, W., Iurgel, I., Petta, P., and Urban, B. (eds.) *Transactions on Edutainment X*. Heidelberg: Springer.
- Krawczyk, M., & Novak, J. 2006. *Game development essentials: Game story and character development*. Albany, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.
- Kress, G. R., & van Leeuwen, T. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.
- Labov, W. 1972. *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P.

- Labov, W, & Waletzky, J. 1967. Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience. In J. Helm (Ed.), *Essays on the verbal and visual arts* (pp. 12-44). Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Lange, A. 2014. "You're just gonna be nice": How players engage with moral choice systems. *Journal of Games Criticism*. Volume 1, Issue 1. Available from <http://gamescriticism.org/articles/lange-1-1> (Accessed 14 Feb 2014).
- Laurel, B. 1986. *Towards the Design of a Computer-Based Interactive Fantasy System*. PhD Dissertation. The Ohio State University.
- Laurel, B. 1991. *Computers as Theatre*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- LeBlanc, M. 2000. Formal Design Tools: Emergent Complexity, Emergent Narrative. *GDC 2000*, San Jose, Lecture 5304 (not in proceedings).
- Lee, B. 2012. Telling Stories: The continued rise of emergent gameplay. Available from <http://www.xbox360achievements.org/news-2905-Telling-Stories--The-Continued-Rise-of-Emergent-Gameplay.html> (Accessed: 31 Oct 2013).
- Lee, K. M., Park, N., & Jin, Seung-A. 2006. Narrative and Interactivity in Computer Games. In Peter Vorderer and Jennings Bryant (Eds.). *Playing Video Games: Motives, Responses, and Consequences*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Leino, O. T. 2010. *Emotions in Play: On the Constitution of Emotion in Solitary Computer Game Play*. Doctoral dissertation. IT University of Copenhagen.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 1978. *Myth and Meaning*. United Kingdom: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Linderoth, J. 2013. Superheroes, Greek gods and sport stars: Ecological empowerment as a ludo-narratological construct. In Mitgutsch, K. Huber, S., Wimmer, J., Wagner, H. G.,

- & Rosenstingl, H. (Eds.) *Context Matters! Proceedings of the Vienna Games Conference 2013: Exploring and Reframing Games and Play in Context*. Vienna: New academic press, pp. 17 - 30.
- Lindley, C. 2003. Game Taxonomies: A High Level Framework for Game Analysis and Design. *Gamasutra*. Available from [http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/2796/game\\_taxonomies\\_a\\_high\\_level\\_.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/2796/game_taxonomies_a_high_level_.php) (Accessed: 11 Sep 2013).
- Lindley, C. 2005a. Story and Narrative Structures in Computer Games. In Bushoff & Brunhild (Eds.). *Developing Interactive Narrative Content: sagas/sagasnet reader*. Munich: High Text.
- Lindley, C. 2005b. The Semiotics of Time Structure in Ludic Space As a Foundation for Analysis and Design. *Game Studies – The International Journal of Computer Game Research*. Vol. 5, Issue 1. Oct 2005. Available from <http://www.gamestudies.org/0501/lindley/> (Accessed 20 Aug 2015).
- Lindley, C., Nacke, L., & Sennersten, C. 2008. ["Dissecting Play – Investigating the Cognitive and Emotional Motivations and Affects of Computer Gameplay"](#). *Proceedings of CGAMES 08*, November 3–5 (Wolverhampton, UK: University of Wolverhampton).
- Liu, Y., & O'Halloran, K. 2009. Intersemiotic texture: analyzing cohesive devices between language and images. *Social Semiotics*. Vol. 19, No.4 December 2009, 367 - 388.
- Lowe, N. J. 2000. *The classical plot and the invention of Western narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Mallon, B., & Webb, B. 2000. Structure, causality, visibility, and interaction: Propositions for evaluating engagement in narrative multimedia. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 53, 269-287.
- Manninen, T. 2003. Interaction Forms and Communicative Actions in Multiplayer Games. *Game Studies - The International Journal of Computer Game Research*. Vol. 3, Issue 1, May 2003.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. 2007. Working with discourse: meaning beyond the clause (2nd ed.). London and New York: Continuum.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. 2008. *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. London: Equinox.
- Mateas, M. 2001. A Preliminary Poetics for Interactive Drama and Games. *Digital Creativity*, 12(3), pp. 140 – 152. <http://doi.org/10.1076/digc.12.3.140.3224>
- Mavers, D., & Gibson, W. Unknown date. Mode. Available from <https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/mode-2/> (Accessed: 18 Mar 2016).
- Mawhorter, P., Mateas, M., Wardrip-Fruin, N., & Jhala, A. 2014. Towards a Theory of Choice Poetics. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games 2014*. Available from <http://games.soe.ucsc.edu/sites/default/files/choice-poetics-fdg-2014-camera-ready-v2.pdf> (Accessed: 16 July 2014).
- Mäyrä, F. 2007. “The Contextual Game Experience: On the Socio-Cultural Contexts for Meaning in Digital Play.”, pp. 810 - 814 in *Situated Play, DiGRA Proceedings*. Tokyo.
- McCarthy, D., Curran, S., & Byron, S. 2005. *The complete guide to game development, art & design*. Cambridge, UK: Alastair Campbell.

- McGonigal, J. 2011. *Reality is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. New York: Penguin Books.
- McIntosh, B., Cohn, R., & Grace, L. 2010. Nonlinear Narrative in Games: Theory and Practice. Available from [http://www.gamecareerguide.com/features/882/nonlinear\\_narrative\\_in\\_games\\_.php?print=1](http://www.gamecareerguide.com/features/882/nonlinear_narrative_in_games_.php?print=1) (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Mette P., & Nils S. 2013. Narratification: Unifying Narrative and Gameplay. Paper submitted and accepted for the 9th Student Interaction Design Research conference (SIDeR'13). Available from <http://sider2013.au.dk/fileadmin/sider2013/0125-paper.pdf> (Accessed: 17 Jul 2015).
- Mitchell, A. 2014. "Defamiliarization and Poetic Interaction in Kentucky Route Zero", in *Well Played Journal*, 3 (2), ETC Press, p. 161-178. Available from <http://press.etc.cmu.edu/content/volume-3-number-2-seriously-weird> (Accessed 12 April 2016).
- Mojang. 2011. *Minecraft*. Multi-platform: Mojang & Microsoft Studios.
- Montfort, N. 2003. *Twisty little passages: an approach to interactive fiction*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Montfort, N. & Bogost, I. 2009. *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System*. Cambridge, The MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Morrison, B. 2013. Meaningful Choice in Games: Practical Guide & Case Studies. *Gamasutra*. Available from [http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/BriceMorrison/20131119/204733/Meaningful\\_Choice\\_in\\_Games\\_Practical\\_Guide\\_Case\\_Studies.php](http://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/BriceMorrison/20131119/204733/Meaningful_Choice_in_Games_Practical_Guide_Case_Studies.php) (Accessed 16 July 2014).

- Moulthrop, S. 2004. From Work to Play. Available from <http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/molecular> (Accessed: 15 Apr 2016).
- Murray, J. H. 1998. *Hamlet on the holodeck: the future of narrative in cyberspace*. New York, The Free Press.
- Murray, J. H. 2012. *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as Cultural Practice*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Murray, J. H. n.d. *Humanistic Design for an Emerging Medium: Glossary*. Available from <http://inventingthemedium.com/glossary/> (Accessed: 3 Jan 2016).
- Myers, D. 2003. *The nature of computer games: Play as semiosis*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Nacke, L. E., Drachen, A., Kuikkaniemi, K., Niesenhaus, J., Korhonen, H., van den Hoogen, W., Poels, K., & IJsselsteijn, W. 2009. "[Playability and Player Experience Research](#)". *Proceedings of DiGRA 2009: Breaking New Ground: Innovation in Games, Play, Practice and Theory*. September 1 (London, UK: DiGRA).
- Naughty Dog. 2013. *The Last of Us*. Sony Computer Entertainment. Playstation 3 and 4.
- Naughty Dog. 2014. *The Last of Us: Left Behind*. Sony Computer Entertainment. Playstation 3 and 4.
- Nell, V. 1998. *Lost in a Book: The Psychology of Reading for Pleasure*. Yale University Press.
- Nintendo R&D1 & Intelligent Systems. 1986. *Metroid*. Nintendo, Multi-platform.

- Nitsche, M. 2008. *Video Game Spaces: Image, Play, and Structure in 3D Game Worlds*. MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass, USA.
- Numinous Games. 2016. *That Dragon, Cancer*. Numinous Games. Ouya, Microsoft Windows, OS X.
- Odden, K. 1998. Retrieving childhood fantasies: A psychoanalytic look at why we (re)read popular literature. In D. Galef (Ed.). *Second Thoughts: a Focus on Rereading*, pp. 126 – 151. Wayne State University Press.
- O'Halloran, K. L. 2007. Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) approach to mathematics, grammar and literacy. *Advances in language and education*, ed. by A. McCabe, M. O'Donnell and R. Whittaker, 77-102. London and New York: Continuum.
- O'Halloran, K. L. 2008. Systemic Functional-Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA): Constructing ideational meaning using language and visual imagery. *Visual Communication*. Vol. 7. No. 4. pp. 443-475.
- Oxland, K. 2004. *Gameplay and Design*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Parker, L. 2009. Once upon a time: narrative in video games. *Gamespot*. Available from <http://www.gamespot.com/articles/once-upon-a-time-narrative-in-video-games/1100-6214951/> (Accessed: 30 Oct 2013).
- Patrickson, B. 2009. PLAI: staged encounters in computer-mediated environments. *IE2009: Proceedings of the 6th Australasian Conference on Interactive Entertainment*.



- Pearce, C. 2004. Towards a Game Theory of Game. In *First Person: New Media as story, performance, and game*. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Eds.). Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press.
- Pinchbeck, D. 2009. *Story as a function of gameplay in First Person Shooters*. PhD Thesis. University of Portsmouth.
- Polsinelli, P. 2011. Storytelling and video games. *Gamamoto*. Available from <http://gamamoto.com/2011/11/08/storytelling-and-video-games/> (Accessed: 10 Sep 2013).
- Poole, S. 2000. *Trigger happy: videogames and the entertainment revolution*. New York. Arcade Publishing.
- Prince, G. 1973. *A Grammar of Stories*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Pynenburg, T. 2013. Projecting the Self: Forming Empathy through Ludonarrative Mechanics. *Project Cognizance*.
- Quantic Dream. 2013. *Beyond: Two Souls*. Playstation 3.
- Richard, R. 2004. *Game Design: Theory and Practice*. Wordware Publishing, Inc.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. 1983. *Narrative Fiction*. London: Methuen.
- Robertson, J. 2013. Open Worlds vs. Authored Narrative: The Battle for the Next-Generation. Available from <http://www.xbox360achievements.org/news-3220-Open-Worlds-vs--Authored-Narrative--The-Battle-for-the-Next-Generation.html> (Accessed: 31 Oct 2013).
- Rohrer, J. 2007. *Passage*. Windows, Mac OS X & GNU/Linux.

- Rollings, A., & Adams, E. 2003. Attempting to define gameplay. Available from <http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=98123> (Accessed: 9 Sep 2013).
- Rollings, A., & Morris, D. 1999. *Game Architecture and Design*. Coriolis Group Books.
- Rovio Entertainment. 2009. *Angry Birds*. iOS: Chillingo/Clickgamer (iOS and PSP versions) & Rovio Entertainment.
- Ryan, M.-L. 1991. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ryan, M.-L. 1997. Interactive drama: Narrativity in highly interactive environment. *Modern Fiction Studies*. 43(3), 677-707.
- Ryan, M.-L. 2001. Beyond myth and metaphor - the case of narrative in digital media. *Game Studies*. Vol. 1, Issue 1, July 2001. Available from <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/ryan/> (Accessed 8 Feb 2014).
- Ryan, M.-L. 2003. Cognitive Maps and the Construction of Narrative Space. In David Herman (Eds.). *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*. Stanford; California: CSLI, pp. 214-242.
- Ryan, M.-L. 2005. Narrative and the Split Condition of Digital Textuality. *Dichtung-digital*. <http://doi.org/10.14361/9783839404935-011>
- Ryan, M.-L. 2006. *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ryan, M.-L. 2009. From narrative games to playable stories: Towards a poetics of interactive narrative. *Storyworlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, 1(1), 43 – 59.
- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. 2003. *Rules of Play: game design fundamentals*. MIT: Cambridge

- Salminen, M., & Ravaja, N. 2008. Increased oscillatory theta activation evoked by violent digital game events. *Neuroscience Letters*, 435, 69–72. doi:10.1016/j.neulet.2008.02.009
- Searle, J. 1975. “Indirect speech acts.” In *Syntax and Semantics, 3: Speech Acts*, ed. P. Cole & J. L. Morgan, pp. 59–82. New York: Academic Press. Reprinted in *Pragmatics: A Reader*, ed. S. Davis, pp. 265–277. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (1991).
- Sinclair, B. 2007. Q & A: Diving deeper into *Bioshock*'s story. Available from <http://www.gamespot.com/articles/qanda-diving-deeper-into-Bioshocks-story/1100-6179423/> (Accessed: 7 Feb 2014).
- Sinclair, J., & Coulthard, M. 1975. *Towards an analysis of discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, E. 2015. Open World games like *Mad Max* are becoming the bloated fast food menus of this industry. Available from <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/open-world-games-mad-max-154310915.html> (Accessed 15 Sep 2015).
- Square Enix. 1987 - 2013. *Final Fantasy* Series. Multi-platform: Square Enix.
- Square Product Development Division 1. 1997. *Final Fantasy 7*. PlayStation and Microsoft Windows: Eidos Interactive and Square Enix.
- Suits, B. 1978. *The grasshopper: games, life, and Utopia*. London: University of Toronto Press.
- Sylvester, T. 2013. *Designing Games: A Guide to Engineering Experiences*. O'Reilly Media, Inc.
- Tale of Tales. 2009. *The Path*. Microsoft Windows & Mac OS X.

- Talib, I. 2011. Narrative ebook - Chapter One. Available at <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellibst/NarrativeTheory/chapt1.htm> (Accessed: 6 Sep 2013).
- Tanenbaum, J. 2015. *Identity Transformation and Agency in Digital Narratives and Story Based Games*. Doctoral dissertation. Simon Fraser University.
- Tanenbaum, K., & Tanenbaum, J. 2009. Commitment to Meaning: A Reframing of Agency in Games. Paper presented at the Digital Arts and Culture Conference (DAC'09), Irvine, USA.
- Taylor, N., Kampe, C., & Bell, K. 2015. Me and Lee: Identification and the Play of Attraction in *The Walking Dead*. *Game Studies*. Vol 15, Issue 1, July 2015. Available from <http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/taylor> (Accessed 3 Aug 2015).
- Team Ico. 2005 & 2011. *Shadow of the Colossus*. Sony Computer Entertainment. Playstation 2 & 3.
- Telltale Games. 2012. *The Walking Dead*. Multi-platform: Telltale Games.
- Theodorou, E. 2010. *Let the Gamers Do the Talking: A Comparative Study of Two Usability Testing Methods for Video Games*. University College London. Available from [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucllc/studying/taught-courses/distinction-projects/2009\\_theses/TheodorouE.pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucllc/studying/taught-courses/distinction-projects/2009_theses/TheodorouE.pdf) (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).
- Thompson, J., Berbank-Green, B., & Cusworth, N. 2007. *The Computer Game Design Course: principles, practices and techniques for the aspiring game designer*. Thames and Hudson Ltd.
- Tønnessen, E. S. 2005. *Practices of reading: On paper and screen*. Available from <http://www.uia.no/no/content/download/93495/1508397/file/Microsoft+Word+-+Practices+of+reading-1.pdf> (Accessed: 13 Dec 2013).

- Toh, Weimin. 2015. Chapter 5 – Gamers and their weapons: an appraisal perspective on weapons manipulation in video games. In Sharon Y. Tettegah and Wenhao David Huang (Eds.). *Emotions, Technology, and Digital Games*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Turbine, Inc. 2007. *The Lord of the Rings Online*. PC & OS X (Beta): Turbine, Inc. & Midway Games.
- Unknown author. 2014. Experience Point. Available from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience\\_point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Experience_point) (Accessed 6 Feb 2014).
- van Someren, Maartem, W., Barnard, Yvonne F., & Sandberg, Jacobijn A.C. 1994. *The Think Aloud Method: A Practical Guide to Modelling Cognitive Processes*. London: Academic Press.
- Vella, D. 2015. No Mastery Without Mystery: *Dark souls* and the Ludic Sublime. *Game Studies*. Vol. 15, Issue 1, July 2015. Available from <http://gamestudies.org/1501/articles/vella> (Accessed: 5 Aug 2015).
- Vuorela, V. 2007. *Pelintekijän käsikirja*. [Game-Maker's Handbook.] Helsinki: BTJ Finland Oy.
- Walther, B. K. 2003. Playing and Gaming: Reflections and Classifications. *Gamestudies - the International Journal of Computer Game Research*. Available at <http://www.gamestudies.org/0301/walther/> (Accessed: 8 Sep 2013).
- Wardrip-Fruin, N. 2010. *Expressive Processing*. The MIT Press.
- Wattsman, J. 2012. Essay: Ludonarrative Dissonance Explained and Expanded. *Escapistmagazine*. Available from <http://www.escapistmagazine.com/forums/read/9.389092-Essay-Ludonarrative-Dissonance-Explained-and-Expanded> (Accessed 17 Jul 2015).

- Williams, P. J., & Kirschner, D. 2013. Experts and Novices or Expertise? Positioning Players through Gameplay Reviews. *Defragging Game Studies: Proceedings of the DiGRA 2013 Conference*. Atlanta, GA.
- White, M. M. 2014. *Learn to Play: Designing Tutorials for Video Games*. New York: CRC Press.
- White, R. W. 1959. Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review*, 66, 297 – 333.
- Wlodkowski, R.J. 1989. Instructional design and learner motivation. In K. A. Johnson & L.J. Foa (Eds.). *Instructional design: New alternatives for effective education and training*. New York: McMillan.
- Wolf, M.J.P. 2012. *Encyclopedia of video games: the culture, technology, and art of gaming*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood.
- Yanow, D., & Schwartz-S. 2006. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretative Turn*. M.E. Sharpe.
- Yee, N. 2007. Motivations of Play in Online Games. *Journal of CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 9, 772-775.
- Zhou, X. 2012. Designing games to be retold. MA Thesis. National University of Singapore.
- Zimmerman, E. 2009. Gaming Literacy - Game Design as a Model for Literacy in the Twenty-First Century. In *The Video Game Theory Reader 2*. Bernard Perron and Mark J.P. Wolf (Eds.). New York and London: Routledge.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Selected Interview Transcriptions

##### Transcript 3.1

[Post Reflection Part 2 [Nasir] 01:44]

Instance 1:

I guess another conflict was that erm ya there was one side mission in the citadel while I was doing the side mission I think there was one near the near the bar. I forgot what it's called. The the what no no not the not the Chora's Den, it's the the other bar er the other bar in in er Citadel. There's was one er there's some quests where I think he was asking me to er what you called that? Hack er use some program and help me calibrate some program about gambling. So ya at that point in time, I was like er hmm I'm trying to make a good Shepherd I don't think a good Shepherd would actually be supporting this kind of even though you know you are not doing anyone harm inside, it's like you are helping some you are helping him make a program that help people cheat on this gambling games where people aren't supposed to cheat. So that's so like the option to take the quest was there and ya obviously taking the...if you complete the quest, you will get experience points and all that but it just didn't feel comfortable for me taking that mission. So ya as in the that was one that was another situation where I felt a gameplay, a conflict between narrative and gameplay even though there are benefits for me like doing that quest but I don't think that the good Shepherd that I was trying to play er would have actually done such a er what do you call that? Erm er action. Er quest. Oki.

##### Transcript 3.2

[Post Reflection Part 2 [Nasir] 03:11]

Instance 2:

So ya and the last one is about the keepers, the side mission about the keepers. Er ya side mission about the keepers. Er initially, I did I did like okay like why not just scan them since since it seemed alright then I found out then later as as you talked to more people, you find the other guy in C-Sec and found that erm ya as in he was trying to get the other guy killed because he was trying to I don't know? Tell C-Sec or something? So basically things just got a bit more messed up. You will realise it wasn't just a straightforward scanning even though if you did complete it. Ya as in this guy wanted to find out more about the keepers. I guess as I was trying to play I was trying to play the good Shepherd here. So in the sense that eventually, dawned on me that ya scanning the keepers was probably against the law and it was and that guy he did try to get the other dude arrested. Er or at least try and might might have been might have wanted to get the other dude killed and all that. So as much as I think the main reason why I wanted to do the quest initially I didn't mind scanning the keepers because they they I found them weird initially like okay, who are these crawly things that I can't interact with through that I see throughout the entire Citadel. So I did want to find out like more backstory and I guessed that if I scanned more then I'll find out more about the backstory about the keepers which I eventually did in the in the main

storyline because ya they are kind of related to the main storyline about them receiving the signal er and ya and I don't know, er letting the reapers come or something like that. Ya so about the signal thing so as much as me personally been a law person. I wanted to find out like oh what are these er keepers about. At the same time, I it seemed as though the the means about going er doing it like getting Shepherd to kind of er bend or break the law by scanning the the keepers and helping these people who initially seemed like a innocent scientist but after a while, as in after a while, it seemed as though they were doing some I don't know er dubious research I'm not sure but ya it just seemed as though like the good Shepherd wouldn't be involved in this and I think there was one part about turning the guy in. So I think the good Shepherd would turn the guy in because of all these er rules or the the things that he wasn't supposed to do. So sticky situation so I thought Shepherd would just ya er would get the person arrested. And and I did. I did played that even though personally, I wanted to find out more about the story but because I wanted to play a good Shepherd, I don't think he would do this thing that he will go on he will keep this quiet from the police. So ya because of that I I felt I was driven to play the good Shepherd and just get the person arrested even though personally, I would have like to just scan all the keepers and find out find out more about what what's happening to the keepers.

### Transcript 3.3

[Post Reflection Part 2 [Nasir] 06:10]

Instance 3:

And okay and I guess one ya one more part was on Noveria. I think the the the business place. Ya because I was playing the good Shepherd I wasn't interested to do some like think some there were some er quests offered about having to spy spy for spy for people or get get some information from them as in basically, just do some bad things supposedly. Or as in some unethical or against the law thing which I didn't think Shepherd would want to do it. As in want to abuse his authority as a Spectre to help in help gain this information for these people who just want a profit so that was also another conflict in the sense that in the sense that all these quests give er some form of benefit to to the character but it doesn't really it isn't in line with the good Shepherd that I was trying to play so those were the those were the instances where I did felt a conflict between gameplay in the sense that there was benefits and also like narrative like what kind of Shepherd I was playing. In this case I was playing a the the good Shepherd, the paragon Shepherd. So I didn't think these are quests should be take up by Shepherd and continued and ya. As in even though I I I'm not sure whether I in the long run I suffered in terms of experience points but at least at that point in time, I I didn't feel like I don't think that Shepherd should have completed those quests.

### Transcript 3.4

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm [Nasir] 2:22]

Interviewer: When you play *Mass Effect*, and you make a conscious decision to follow a good pathway...

Nasir: mm hmm.



Interviewer: Does it make it easier for you to play the game or is it harder?

Nasir: mm. It's a bit more complicated I guess as in only on my second play through did I found out like erm certain quests that I didn't pick up because erm I felt it was a bit like Noveria some Noveria stuff that I didn't pick up. Because it seemed a bit er not good right? Or dubious.

Interviewer: Like bad bad bad quests ah? Do bad things ah?

Nasir: Ya. Something like that but I didn't realise that there was a good option to do those quests also as in like for example, the let's say on the example, on the Citadel the the gambling, you supposed to help the person er tap tap the tap the gambling machine or something like that right? Ya then I realised that you you can actually accept that quest then you go to the instead of doing what the person says you go to the club owner as in ya club owner then you passed them the machine. So like you are turning you are you are turning the bad person in lah. So I didn't realise that there were good options of as in good ways paragon ways to also complete this bad quest. Initially, I thought the quests were quite linear like because he can actually tell you to do something, you didn't do that thing. So only on my second play through did I realise that you could approach it as in there was an option for you to still be good.

Interviewer: So you mean when you turn in the illegal stuff.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: To the authorities, you can get paragon reward?

Nasir: I think so ya. I forgot should be paragon.

Interviewer: In *Mass Effect* also?

Nasir: Ya in *Mass Effect*.

Interviewer: erm oki. So now you realise that so it's easier for you to play the game?

Nasir: As in ya as in it's less, as in I'm more willing to pick up side quests lah because I know that it's not that, it's more flexible than I thought.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 3.5**

[Post Reflection Part 1 [Nasir] 16:58]

Okay so question seven, are there moments where you think there is a conflict. Er ya. Okay so mm okay so sometimes I guess like the the options that comes up right? Like ya for example, like the I think I mentioned this informally but ya in the interview for the Wrex. The part about er Wrex getting all angry at the Krogan er Krogan er breeding fa-factory facility thing, that you have to actually convince him if you don't want him dead. Ya so, that part initially, in my first choice, I as in the I at that point I did have enough charm. And so I could have chosen the blue option. While while er while trying to convince him but at that point in time, I felt that the the white options that were available, some of them seemed as though it would it would have a positive impact so I wanted to try like trying to convince him without having to use the blue

option. Because it seemed to me like like the blue option it's like the the it's like the easy way out. Just choose the blue option and good things will happen. So I was wondering like if there would have been er a bit a bit harder to convince him but at the same time, it's still possible to be successful in convincing him, so I decided to choose like the most erm encouraging I think. At at least at that point in time. The most encouraging amount, the white option. Because it it sounded like a nice answer compared to the blue answer. But only after then I realised that oh he's going to die if I choose that as in he will he did die when I choose the option. So and I really didn't want Wrex to die for such a stupid reason. Then I guess at the same time when I read the wait ah, I probably need to see this again but when when I read the blue option, at at least the small text that they gave as as a choice, when because you don't see the full thing that is going to happen. Just see that the small text it seemed as though the the white one seems to be more persuasive than the blue one. Because like I think it says something like er the the Krogran aren't er those are not real Krogran or something like that. Something about er you wouldn't want the Krogran under Saren's control. I think that he he only elaborated about Saren you wouldn't want the Krogran been under Saren's control as in you wouldn't want to have them as slaves. I think he only elaborated later on which would make a lot more sense to to put it there so that you know you are encouraging him but it just seemed to me I forgot what the exact phrase was. It seemed to me that that the phrase er hold on let me check so that I can give a more thorough answer...Okay so like based on the option there it it says that these aren't your people the the quoted text on the paragon option said that as in suggested me telling Wrex these aren't your people which makes me feel weird. Because they are Krogran and just seems wrong to like differentiate between the Krograns and his like okay these are not like your people. But you are Krogran but you shouldn't. I just felt a bit weird for me to choose that option. It just didn't seem as though it would convince him to stop er er stop been angry or at least save him so it seemed to me as though like there was one white white text er white option which says calm down which I thought would actually get him to calm down but in the end it didn't. So ya as in at that point there was a bit of a conflict because I thought ya it it doesn't seem as though the blue option at least that part of the text, it doesn't seem as though it would get Wrex to calm down and and not get killed. So in that sense, there was a conflict. So once I realised that once I did get Wrex killed by choosing the calm down option, the white option even though it's called calm down, white option so in the end he gets killed, so I was like mm didn't really feel so I had so I replayed just that part so that and choose the blue option which I could erm in order to save Wrex so ya that's that's one part about the gameplay er conflict that I have.

### **Transcript 3.6**

[Session 6 Facial Capture 1:08:25]

Walter: They used another thing that I was quite irked me about the game was you know it's supposed to be very realistic setting. They made it so that everything is kind of realistic. But whenever you kill enemies, whatever they drop seems to be random. So it's like this guy has a gun, you clearly see he's just reloaded. He's taken a shot and then you kill him and he's got no ammo. So it's kind of like you know...

Interviewer: Very random ah?

Walter: I mean they want to make it random so that the resources are is kind of controlled. They can control the flow of resources to you but erm it breaks immersion a little bit in those those sequences. Er ya those sequences.

Interviewer: But when you play the game, you don't think so much ah? It's only reflecting on it then you...

Walter: Oh playing the game I definitely thought about it a lot. I was thinking like oh this guy has a shotgun, he should be dropping shotgun ammo. He's no, he's dropping pistol ammo. And sometimes, he drops arrow. It's like it's kind of very weird and doesn't quite gel with everything else. But I see what they are trying to do. They are trying to control resources but it's just kind of annoying.

### **Transcript 3.7**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 37:29]

Walter: I mean you saw how I was playing. Near the end level, I was basically going like I got all these nail bombs, I got all these molotovs. I'm full so I throw whatever oh one zombie I just throw at him. So er ya they they make it clear that you have limited resources but if you are very good at this game, you will max you will have a maximum of everything anyway. So er it was sort of like I mean when I finished the game I had like a full full clips for my assault rifle. So it was it's definitely a game that wants to that is trying to show that yes you have limited resources but at the same time, it is also saying that yes that's why you should play stealth and that's why you should do melee attacks you should conserve ammunition. But at the same time, erm they give you so much resources anyway that if you were to waste them all the way you are going to be full of everything. So I supposed maybe they are trying to force you that oh you have all these ammo, why not use it and shoot people? So I guess it sort of like trying to give you more variety but er in terms of showing the limited scarcity of the thing, at the start yes, it felt very little but later on it was kind of like no lah, they give you quite a lot of everything.

### **Transcript 3.8**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 42:15]

Interviewer: There was one gameplay component that the resources they were using the same resources for making for crafting the...

Walter: Yes. Er I think molotovs and er I think med kits.

Interviewer: Does it give you a very hard choice?

Walter: No, not really. Because er I had a lot of molotovs and I also have a lot of med kits.

Interviewer: So...

Walter: I actually rarely use molotovs so usually I wouldn't use molotovs, it's really like oh I'm full of med kits er I still have a lot of stuff but I need to but I need I'm I've just found this sort of whatever material that is used by er only by what's it called? Er molotov but not the med kit, but I still have stuff to make more med kits anyway so I'm okay I'll use the molotov now to make use of that but other than that, I think the

bigger concern was that the shiv and the weapon upgrade was the used the same item which was that scissors thing. This is the only reason I remembered. Because the scissors thing was the most common thing you needed for for shivs. But er other than that, it was er the stuff that was shared was kind of mm not really very consequential. Didn't really affect. I mean I was I was I was like later on I was like full smoke bombs that I never used in the entire game. Er I was constantly running around with full nail bombs. So it was er not really a difficult decision at times. It was just sort of like hmm I maxed out all my stuff. I need to use up something, so just used lah that kind of thing. Like you know, sometimes like oh er I've got this new ingredient for med kit but my med kits are full so I just but I've got a little bit of damage so I just use the med kit, waste the med kit. Something like that ya.

Interviewer: So it's actually the excess resources ah?

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: So there's some disconnect between the story and gameplay?

Walter: I don't think that has anything to do with the story.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: It's basically a gameplay choice. Nothing to do with the story.

Interviewer: I mean for me there's some, it doesn't connects so much with the story because the setting is telling you that there's not so much resources in the gameworld.

Walter: Oh you are talking about the ludonarrative dissonance. Er yes and no. Yes but er I mean at the end of the day, if I wanted to say that you know, I could I had so much resources that I could throw a molotov every battle, no, I can't do that. But erm because the game does actually **drip feed** you resources, er you actually have to be careful with how you use your equipment, which is fair. But I wouldn't say that you know, it's so little that I always save up and never use anything. So it's sort of like the nice balance lah like er I mean like yes the game will drip feed you er ammo and er and loot to help you progress, but I never felt that you know they give me so much that I was like I said, they gave you enough that you only maximum hold like three med kits, three molotovs and whatnot which is in an average game that is not a lot but in this context, it is kind of okay, so I would say er it would kind of support the narrative, but...

Interviewer: It's quite balanced?

Walter: I would ya I would say it's quite balanced. But I never really put any thought into the narrative. Because the narrative didn't, the whole part you know about the limited resources neither the narrative part. It literally was a piece of text that came up, earlier on in the game where they went like on you have limited resources, you have to be careful with how you use it. Nobody actually said that to you in the entire game.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: So ya it's technically purely a gameplay decision but it sort of adds to the setting that you are in a post-apocalyptic world, you have to scavenge all that stuff which is fine.

Interviewer: But the relationship is not not so much ah? Because they they don't affect each other.

Walter: It's more about it affects the atmosphere, not necessarily the narrative. It didn't really affect the narrative at all.

Interviewer: It's just the overarching...

Walter: Because because if you want to look at narrative, all your companions have unlimited ammo. Makes no difference.

Interviewer: Ya. So it's just the overall atmosphere?

Walter: mm.

### Transcript 3.9

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 56:30]

Interviewer: So this part when he controls you to kill him ah, do you find you have some lack of control?

Mary: Yah. Because I mean I guess they are just trying to...I mean I guess they are trying to prove the point about the point about the whole "Would you kindly" thing. So ya when I was playing this part, I was so mind blown because I was thinking like the whole "Would you kindly", even though I was controlling Jack, they are also controlling me in a sense in my actions. So this part again they are trying to like emphasise that I have no control because the whole "Would you kindly" is controlling what I'm doing you know what I mean? So I thought it was quite cool actually.

Interviewer: Does it feel anticlimactic? Were you thinking you are going to fight him?

Mary: No. No. It wasn't anticlimactic at all. I felt that like I mean oki lah maybe if you look ah like so bloodlust like want to kill him but at this point, after the whole revelation part is like I wouldn't want to kill him already. It's like he's not my main target. Like you know and the whole build up, the whole atmosphere, the whole music at that point, the whole part about him screaming the the slave obeys whatever thing, thought everything built in very well. It wasn't anticlimactic at all in my opinion.

Interviewer: But the part where you lost control, how you find it?

Mary: It was just like a cutscene to me lor.

Interviewer: Did you want to have like more control?

Mary: I mean I guess they cannot really give me the control right? Since I wasn't fighting Andrew Ryan at that point. No ah at least at that point, I wasn't really like wanting the control. It was alright with what they give me. Ya...Because you see ah, it's like how I saw it was like Andrew Ryan was not the big bad guy already at that point lah. He wasn't the the biggest villain already. This whole thing it was Fontaine after the whole operation. So I didn't need to have that feeling of killing him. Like I didn't need it lah like because he wasn't the guy that I want to kill already.

Interviewer: But then do you find any...

Mary: mm-hmm.

Interviewer: When you see this fight with Fontaine and the fight and the cutscene Andrew Ryan...

Mary: mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Do you find any conflict between these two events ah? Like one is more you have more control, the other one you cannot control.

Mary: No, no. I I I don't get the I don't think so. After defeating Fontaine, I was discussing with Loke, we were so disappointed to be honest. It was too easy. Ya. Fontaine was too easy. And the ending was not very like it doesn't make up for it lah. It doesn't make up for how easy it was ah. Like the whole like the whole Little Sisters they have a new life, you know that sort of thing? I I felt it wasn't enough to make up for how easy this battle was lah. Ya. Just our own discussion. Because it's like usually for the game I played right, after you defeat the boss, then you will have like phase change, then they will become even more powerful. Then they will kill you. You know, this sort of thing. Like it gives a challenge ah to keep like you know like everything you worked up to and then you have to fight this new boss. I felt it was too easy. I couldn't...at the end, I used the stupid electric gel and killed him already. It's like it's so easy like what the hell man so ya lor. Like I felt that it was a bit disappointing lah in that sense.

Interviewer: So there was no no conflict?

Mary: I mean it was disappointing more than anything lah. Yah.

### **Transcript 3.10**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 1:22:45]

Interviewer: The gameplay was it interrupting your listening to the audio logs ah?

Mary: It no I mean I guess they give me time to listen. There was only one part, I think it was in Hephaestus where I was squatting in the corner listening to my audio tape and then one guy suddenly appeared and tried to fight me so I was like...

Interviewer: Cut off ah?

Mary: Ya. That that was the only part where I was quite irritated lah.

Interviewer: So so did you have any conflict?

Mary: No no no no conflict.

Interviewer: I mean conflict in understanding the story when...

Mary: As in sometimes while listening to the audio logs or when someone is talking and then you have to fight all the splicers, it's a bit interruptive lah.

Interviewer: Are you like conflicted between wanting to listen to the story or...

Mary: Play the game is it? Ya ya ya.

Interviewer: Like there is some conflict?

Mary: Ya I suppose. Ya. I mean I won't really say conflict lah. It's just that I have to like do each one separately in a sense lah. Otherwise, I I would ya be interrupted lah.

Interviewer: But you still feel some kind of a dilemma lah.

Mary: Ya like should I continue first or should I like listen to this first this sort of thing? Ya? If I continue, will it spoil whatever I was about to listen. If I listen would it spoil what I was about to do later, this sort of thing. I don't know. Something like that lah. Ya that part was so annoying. I was like I was squatting peacefully in a corner listening to my tape then some guy came up whoa.

### **Transcript 3.11**

[Session 1 First Interview 26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead 2* – 7 pm [Jim] 36:24]

Jim: Does the gameplay affect my narrative choice? Ya that time bar affects it.

Interviewer: So you think that the time bar is a gameplay mechanism?

Jim: Yes, it is to simulate our actual conversation. If they, sometimes, in real life, when you are talking, sometimes they will expect people to answer fast. Sometimes, you have this pressure like if you don't, if you do not act natural, they will see something in you. It's sometimes, it's trying to simulate what happens in real life. That's what I am thinking. Especially for those especially for those pressing issues they will expect you to think fast, having street smart, that's what we call and...

Interviewer: So does it make it easier for you to make the decision or does it make it harder?

Jim: Harder. To be honest. First, your morality, you only have limited choice, limited amount of time to decide who to save, what to do, and it happened that you have to decide quickly.

### **Transcript 3.12**

[25 Jul 2014 *Bioshock* 12.30 pm – 3.30 pm Part 2 [Peter] 01:56]

Interviewer: Can you understand what is she saying?

Peter: Think she just been taken advantage of by Andrew Ryan, is it? Been exploited by him? Then eventually we went in and we saw that she was been killed and er mutilated by him right?

Interviewer: Ya. The corpse. Then you see this image.

Peter: A flashback of the family?

Interviewer: Whose family?

Peter: Jack's family?

Interviewer: Do you know why Andrew Ryan killed the person just now? When you played the game, can you understand the story?

Peter: That Jasmine is it?

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: mm not that I know of.

Interviewer: Do you know how are you related to her? What is Jack's...

Peter: Probably his mistress or something?

Interviewer: I mean do you know what is your relationship with Jasmine Jolene?

Peter: No.

Interviewer: How how is your character related to her? You don't know?

Peter: What's the relationship?

Interviewer: er your mother ah.

Peter: Really?

Interviewer: Ya. You don't know ah?

Peter: No.

Interviewer: You didn't go and read the wiki ah?

Peter: No. Oh no wonder there is a flashback.

Interviewer: So now you understand.

Peter: Oh if I have known, if I have known, then it will make me hate that Andrew Ryan even much more right.

Interviewer: It will give you even more motivation?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: In the gameplay.

Peter: To to get to the bottom of this issue.

Interviewer: So when you played it, you were just more focused on the gameplay ah?

Peter: mm hmm.

### **Transcript 3.13**

[10 Oct 2014 10 am – 12 pm *Bioshock* third session Interview [John] 50:00]

Interviewer: So the flashback ah.

John: Ah huh.



Interviewer: Fourth flashback ah.

John: Ah.

Interviewer: Then just now you see the ghost and the flashback do you know what are they saying in the story?

John: er they are just saying that I'm something related to Andrew Ryan. I guess.

Interviewer: Do you know what Andrew Ryan did to Jasmine Jolene?

John: er he killed her lah.

Interviewer: Do you know why he killed her?

John: Why? Because I think he has something to do with Fort...er the Jasmine has something to do with Fontaine? This is her corpse hehe.

Interviewer: Do you know whose corpse is this?

John: Her corpse lor.

Interviewer: Her corpse?

John: I think so.

Interviewer: Do you know what did she do?

John: She aborted the baby? Or she didn't take precautions then she had a baby? Is it?

Interviewer: You mean she aborted the bay?

John: I don't know. It's either one of it lah.

Interviewer: I don't think so.

John: I think is they had a baby that's why.

Interviewer: Ya. Then what happened to the baby?

John: Got taken out lor.

Interviewer: Got taken to where?

John: I don't know. Is it him?

Interviewer: Who?

John: Is it the character that I am playing? Could be?

Interviewer: Ya. But how do you know he's your character?

John: I don't know. I just guessing.

Interviewer: You never go and read the wiki ah?

John: Never.

Interviewer: How do you guess he is your character?

John: Now then I guess. That time inside I don't know.

Interviewer: But how do you guess? How did you form the link?

John: Because the this is the father what he is the father what.

Interviewer: mm.

John: I mean the Andrew Ryan is the character's father. Then he must come from somewhere what. Then this is the only where they come from what. So that is the only link I can make lah.

Interviewer: So when you know that you are they are your parents ah.

John: Ah huh.

Interviewer: Then what how do you feel now?

John: (Laughs). Oki lah.

Interviewer: When you see this Jasmine Jolene's story.

John: Sad lor. How to feel?

Interviewer: Do you feel emotional for the characters? Or do you still cannot relate to them?

John: A bit lah. The I have to kill my parents you know. My father killed my mum. Maybe quite bad.

Interviewer: And then how do you feel about Andrew Ryan now after you find out about the story of Jasmine Jolene?

John: He's bastard lah, that's why. That's why going to kill him. (Laughs).

Interviewer: So does it give you some motivation to kill him?

John: Oh. Maybe lah. That time no.

Interviewer: So I'm guiding you a lot here.

John: Ya.

Interviewer: But if I don't guide you, do you think what do you think of the Jasmine Jolene's story? After you hear it.

John: er ya lah, I think if I can relate lah maybe I will have motivation to kill Andrew Ryan.

Interviewer: mm.

John: Ya.

Interviewer: But now you if I never tell you you still cannot relate lah?

John: Ya. Cannot relate.

Interviewer: mm. So that means the game's narrative is not very strong.

John: er I think it's more if you are native, I mean how to say ah? If you are better in English, you more focused. Then ya. For me I think right, *Bioshock* no.

Interviewer: Because so far, my participants, when they play *Bioshock*, they are not very focused on the story. They don't feel very emotional about the story.

John: As in...

Interviewer: They just play the game lah.

John: Is how to say ah? Is is a is a like it's a norm ah nowadays. You play games. Nowadays, the game is not like this one. That's why.

Interviewer: Like what games?

John: Like all the all the games all like this. Like the story you can just skip. It's more focused on like online games. You just focus on levelling.

Interviewer: Like can you give any names of the games?

John: Say *Maplestory*. Popular. Then you just focus on levelling. They have a lot of story behind. But rarely people will go and read the lines.

Interviewer: But *Maplestory* I don't find a lot of story.

John: The quests lah. The quests. You know, each quest has all the dialogues mah. And you have all then like *Skyrim* all these. *Skyrim* is something like that. But have a lot more freedom. Ya they also have a lot story but...

Interviewer: *Skyrim* the story is not is not what ah? Is also not very important?

John: Ya so like the nowadays the game more like you can just don't focus on the story and play the game mah I'm trying to say.

Interviewer: But I think it also depends on what kinds of games you like to play.

John: Ya. I guess.

Interviewer: There's some story based games ah.

John: I guess the general trend is that even though we care about the story, all these kind of games.

Interviewer: But there's some games that the story is very important.

John: (Laughs) Like what?

Interviewer: Like I mean if you don't like those kind of games then it doesn't matter lah. You don't play that kind of game also.

John: I think the only kind of games that story matters is the it's like the visual novel you know?

Interviewer: Visual novel? You mean the Japanese...

John: Ya. The Japanese...

Interviewer: Japanese CRPG games ah?

John: Ya the you clicked, you choose the option.

Interviewer: Point and click game ah?

John: Ya. Point and click ah. This kind you have like very heavy gameplay inside then you put story inside. Of course, people are more inclined to completing the game rather than listen story.

Interviewer: So you think it doesn't work very well if like this ah?

John: Ya. Like the culture is not there lah for playing game and then focusing on storyline.

Interviewer: I mean there are also some other games like *Walking Dead*, *Mass Effect*, the story is very important.

John: Is it?

Interviewer: So if you never play those games then you will not you will not know that some games the story will be important.

John: Orh.

Interviewer: Is it?

John: I think so.

Interviewer: And then you also like to play the game for the gameplay also.

John: Ya.

Interviewer: But er the gamers nowadays is it they are more focused on the gameplay ah?

John: I feel leh like my friend also. Like focus more on gameplay than the the story. Like recently saw my friend play this X-Com ah. Is it X-Com? Ya X-Com. Then it's very gameplay one. It's the strategy gameplay. Strategy ya.

Interviewer: I think game when you play game for the gameplay you just want to relax ah?

John: er.

Interviewer: You don't want to think about. But for those who play for the story is for what ah?

John: For enjoyment.

Interviewer: They want to think more is it?

John: Orh. Maybe ah.

Interviewer: When you play game, you don't think a lot ah?

John: You think also what, you think.

Interviewer: Normally, you just want to play and then relax.

John: Ah huh.

Interviewer: Talk with friends.

John: Ya. (Laughs). Depends on what kind of thinking you want ah maybe is the narrative one is more of those like people like like to read. That kind of people then can. Like but for me I don't really like.

Interviewer: But people who don't like to read like to play games because when you play games, you don't need to read.

John: Ya lah that's why.

Interviewer: It's very visual.

John: So when you put two together, then you just choose one lah. Unless the people like both ah.

Interviewer: Ya.

John: Some more inclined to the gameplay ah.

Interviewer: So after this study, you still don't like to play games with story?

John: It's not I don't like ah. It's just that this one hor, I'm not really used to reading the things and playing the game. Maybe after this study, I when I play game, I will be more focused on narrative also.

Interviewer: Ya.

John: Ya so it's like this ah.

.....

Interviewer: So does it motivate you?

John: I think lah if you understand. To me it didn't lah in the game.

Interviewer: But when you play that time, you just kill him ah?

John: Ya just kill.

Interviewer: But now after you understand, do you have a different impression of Andrew Ryan?

John: Ya.

Interviewer: Like what kind of impression? Like do you feel sorry for him or?

John: I feel that...

Interviewer: Do you feel sorry for your own character or?

John: Ya lah for my own character. Sad storyline. Then Andrew Ryan is a...

Interviewer: Do you or do you feel angry with Andrew Ryan?

John: Angry. (Laughs). A bit lah but he want to build his city also what.

Interviewer: mm.

John: So ya he may have his like motivation to to do this sort of thing. I mean. So ok lor. Mixed feelings.

### Transcript 3.14

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 1:55:25]

Interviewer: When you chose the Geth, this choice is a narrative choice also?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: And then when Ashley tells you that she knows about what are the Geth, do you find that your character doesn't know as much as her?

Michael: er I think this is more for the player. Ah. To the average casual gamer like me who never... actually, I have played *Mass Effect 1* so it is still oki.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah. Did I? I think I did. Or did I started with *Mass Effect 2*?

Interviewer: I think you started with 2 is it ah?

Michael: Ya I started with 2.

.....

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Walter] 1:57:45]

Interviewer: So when you played this part, you didn't think that Shepherd was not so much knowledgeable as Ashley?

Michael: er.

Interviewer: Or were you in character or out of the character when you played this part? I mean...

Michael: It should be out of character lah.

Interviewer: mm. So you think that the game is talking to the gamer instead of the character?

Michael: Yes. For obvious reason, I think if you have knowledge of the commando units ah. The commandos and their snipers hor.

Interviewer: hmm.

Michael: Do you know that the snipers are the most smartest and most knowledgeable of all? The units? The soldiers? So if you want to catch a...if you want to get information, you actually captures commando snipers. Because they have the most intel, they have the finest brains. So for people like Shepherd, you are talking about a Commando who like what save the whole earth and...

Interviewer: So she should know everything.

Michael: She should know everything.

Interviewer: Most of the things ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: So your real life experience because of your real life experience so you know that this one is not in the character?

Michael: Ya. It seems funny lah. If you think about it.

Interviewer: If you don't have the real life knowledge, then maybe you will have some...

Michael: You would not suspect it lor.

Interviewer: You just think it doesn't matter lah?

Michael: Orh.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's like you know you watch anime this kind of thing always comes out ah. Mm.

Interviewer: You mean the anime they will speak directly to the viewer?

Michael: No. There will be this character who grow up with you. So when there is something going on at the...person who grow up with you will start saying, "Last time I was with him, then he will do what. So last time he will cry, now he doesn't cry. Wah." Something like that.

Interviewer: So it's quite sudden ah?

Michael: So it's a way the...

Interviewer: Orh their style of presentation ah?

Michael: The way they present the plot to you lah.

Interviewer: How how they present it ah?

Michael: To the viewer so that the background information gets conveyed to the viewer with the least hassle.

Interviewer: But for you, it's oki lah? You already know the way is like this lah? It's not disrupting?

Michael: er...

Interviewer: Or is it quite...

Michael: They always think of some way to introduce to you the background lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: The worst way they can possibly do it...no, the usual way that they use it is through the codex. If you...

Interviewer: But that one nobody want to read.

Michael: Yes, nobody want to read.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah. So if it is important enough, they will put something like this lor.

Interviewer: Do you think there is any better way to present it ah? Or is it ok? This is the best way?

Michael: Another way is to tell you to sit down and look at documentary. In the tutorial. Hi, this is a Geth. A Geth is a synthetic guy, shoot him now, pia. He's dead. Sounds familiar right?

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.15**

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] 30:40]

Interviewer: Then she say she learn about the Geth inside the class.

Nasir: mm ya.

Interviewer: Then did you wonder why Shepherd don't know about the Geth?

Nasir: er...

Interviewer: He's so high ranked.

Nasir: mm ya as in now that you mentioned it ya it seems a bit conflict. But I guess I didn't feel the conflict because I also didn't know. So since as in I'm as in the the point is to make Shepherd as in supposedly I'm Shepherd right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya so I guess the game like assumes you don't know as well.

Interviewer: Is it because there's a there's a what? What's that called? There's a disjunction between the player and the PC?

Nasir: Ya.



Interviewer: So the PC knows more information than the player so that's why they are giving the player all these information?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: In actual fact, the PC already knows all these information?

Nasir: Ya I guess so but I don't know I guess it might be possible that Shepherd don't know about the Geth because they haven't been seen until now right? So but ya she learn...

Interviewer: She would have attended some classes.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Since she's more higher rank than Ashley.

Nasir: He said she learnt it in school right?

Interviewer: History class ah?

Nasir: Ya. As I'm not sure. I could. There is a way to justify it because at least for the what ah? At least for this one, he was a colonist on Mindoir right? So maybe maybe he didn't know about it. He didn't attend the class. I'm not sure. Ya because Ash ya Ashley's from you know she's a colonist also.

Interviewer: But the Geth is so well known is it? Is it well known in *Mass Effect* ah?

Nasir: At this point? I don't think so. As in they they know who the Geth are but as in no one has seen as in if you are talking about *Mass Effect* 1, I think at this point, no one has seen the Geth until before this attack. Only the Quarians have seen the Geth. Because the the Geth never travel outside the Perseus Veil. So people heard about as in people study and heard about them but they don't know much about them. Like they just know that they are synthetic race who overthrew their Quarian masters blah blah blah.

Interviewer: But the thing I'm wondering is why Shepherd doesn't know.

Nasir: Ya so as in I guess that's a bit of a disjunction now that you mentioned it. I'm guessing ya.

Interviewer: They are just giving the info to the player?

Nasir: Ya I think it's more for the it's more for the sake of the player. Because if they have seen Shepherd lost then it will it will feel like impersonal like okay but how come I don't know but my character know.

Interviewer: Is it because of the dialogue options they are designed this way so so erm you choose this option then they Shepherd will ask Ashley Ashley to tell you?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Instead of Shepherd telling us himself ah?

Nasir: But Shepherd is supposed to be us you see. So that's why I think that's why they didn't choose that option. They didn't design it that way. As in the point of this game is that you are Commander Shepherd. So if you don't know then Shepherd shouldn't know either. As in although it doesn't make sense why he why he didn't know lah but I'm guessing at this point, the things they for the sake of the player they have to do this ah.

Interviewer: Ya because I'm thinking there can be other methods to tell the player.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: This this method is a bit disjunction.

Nasir: Ya a bit lah but...

Interviewer: Because of the dialogue option.

Nasir: Ya but as in I'm not sure how ya maybe you could go on some terminal and learn about the Geth from the computer.

Interviewer: Ya the Codex ah.

Nasir: Ya but ya. But it will be very hard to make that Shepherd know and you don't know and try to solve the disjunction. Because there is already a disjunction. You can't exactly avoid it.

Interviewer: So this kind this issue is a very realistic issue?

Nasir: Ya it's a practical issue ah.

Interviewer: When you want to design a game, it's the game designer's issue.

Nasir: Ya but I I don't see any other way to make it less disjunction.

Interviewer: But the player will not feel it so much ah.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Because they are so immersed in the game, they don't think about it.

Nasir: Ya ya.

### **Transcript 3.16**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 2:07:40]

Interviewer: When you mentioned that you cannot find the garage...

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Even though you lived in the house for the entire life ah.

Michael: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you find that there's some disjunction between yourself and the character you are playing as ah?

Michael: Of course.

Interviewer: So that means can I say that you still cannot relate to the character?

Michael: Let me ask you this question ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Do you have a garage in your house?

Interviewer: No.

Michael: No right?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: I don't have either. Already cannot relate. Where's the garage. To us, where do you usually park your car?

Interviewer: Carpark ah.

Michael: Carpark right? Must be downstairs right?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: This one is not. Most garage are beside the house.

Interviewer: Do you think that this one is made more for a American audience ah?

Michael: Probably.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah.

### **Transcript 3.17**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 2:08:11]

Interviewer: This part when this person first meets Saren, they were not giving you the story motivation why Saren was coming to Eden Prime.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Were you curious why he came here ah? When you played this part.

Michael: Maybe. But there are only like so many characters you know?

Interviewer: mm. When they first introduced Saren, do you think he is a major character?

Michael: I think so.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: All evidence points to it.

Interviewer: When you watched this part, do you know what is he doing?

Michael: er er sucking something.

Interviewer: So you are not very sure lah?

Michael: I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Does it make you more curious to progress the game?

Michael: er.

Interviewer: I mean does it motivate you to keep on playing the game?

Michael: It motivates me to kill him at the earliest possible time.

Interviewer: Why is it so?

Michael: He is dangerous.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: For obvious reason lah, he's a bad guy lah so...

Interviewer: Were you very confused when you played the game at the start?

Michael: Confused by Saren or his action or what?

Interviewer: By Saren. I mean they were showing what he was doing but not explaining what is he doing.

Michael: er for me, it's a very normal process eh.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: I play enough RPG to know leh. He is doing something evil. Full stop. Stop him at all costs.

Interviewer: So you are not so confused ah?

Michael: mm oki lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's like he is flying into the sky. Oki we will get to know what he is doing later.

Interviewer: In the er later half of the game when they revealed Sovereign, the Reaper spaceship ah.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: er and then were you clearer about Saren's character ah? I mean the spaceship got tell you about Saren ah?

Michael: It is no surprise that Saren is a enemy lah. Because all narrative points to that mah.

Interviewer: So they reveal his motivation only later lah?

Michael: Ya. So the question is his motivation lor.

Interviewer: So do you mean that his motivation makes you curious about him? I mean when they don't tell you. When they don't reveal his full character?

Michael: er yes orh.

### Transcript 3.18

[18 Jul 2014 2:10 pm – 5:35 pm *Mass Effect* Nasir 35:24]

Interviewer: So there is another part er when after you speak with Ashley, you can recover some items in the gameplay.

Nasir: mm hmm.

Interviewer: In part 12. Then you can recover these items.

Nasir: mm hmm.

Interviewer: er did you wonder where these items come from?

Nasir: Ya I did.

Interviewer: They never explained ah?

Nasir: Ya. Eh no I did as in ya as in eventually, I realise that these are Ashley's weapons. So ya and because you you control as in the whole squad's items you carry right? So to me it's like this should be Ashley's weapons I think.

Interviewer: But isn't it er isn't Ashley already equipped? Isn't she already equipped the weapon?

Nasir: mm hmm. Can I see that part before this? Oh oki. Ya ya that is a bit strange. Now you mentioned it. Ya I did. I didn't really. I guess to me I just looked at the gameplay reward. Before I was saving her I think.

Interviewer: So when you played the game, you eh wait. So when you played the game, you didn't wonder why?

Nasir: Ya. Not really. I didn't. It was more like I guess it was an opportunity for them to teach me how the equipment thing works.

Interviewer: It's not too sudden ah?

Nasir: The the receiving the items?

Interviewer: Ya receiving the items.

Nasir: Ya as in it was but but once but once you clicked they say they give you instructions right? So it's sudden but at least they guide you through it so you are not too lost about it.

Interviewer: The the transition is a bit...

Nasir: Ya as in the transition is sudden. But...

Interviewer: Because they never give the narrative explanation.

Nasir: er ya.

Interviewer: So do you think they should give some...they should link the dialogue to the gameplay?

Nasir: Ya ya. In as in...

Interviewer: But it's also hard to do so.

Nasir: They did it in *Mass Effect 3* in the sense that I think I think Tali gave Tali gave Shepherd a new weapon that the Quarians developed. So it's like she she we developed this then she...

Interviewer: Got some some motivation ah?

Nasir: Ya so as in it makes it's more smooth than oki she gave me this weapon because she developed it from the previous game then I oki you picked up that weapon. This one was quite sudden ah.

Interviewer: So this one they never show Ashley give Shepherd the weapon ah?

Nasir: Ya. So ya. As in they could have they could have they could have like hey I found this somewhere or somehow here you can have it. Or something like that. Ya they could have put dialogue there I guess. To make it a bit more smooth.

Interviewer: So later on they improved upon this aspect lah?

Nasir: In later games I guess.

Interviewer: Maybe they get some feedback from the players.

Nasir: Ya maybe.

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 2:02:25]

Interviewer: After you finished talking with her, you get some item ah.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: er did you think why you were given these items ah?

Michael: I have no idea. And I don't really care.

Interviewer: So it's normal for you ah?

Michael: er...

Interviewer: Because you played other games also like this ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

### Transcript 3.19

[25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 6 – 7.30 pm [Henry] 50:52]

Interviewer: Then there's another part I I remember ah. Is the part you where Lee have to get the keys from...

Henry: Brother.

Interviewer: That part do you think the story and gameplay cannot be separated ah?

Henry: Oh ya ya ya. That part also cannot. Cannot be separated because the the cutscene is eh the story the story is that the the brother is brother working at the drugstore there what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then the keys with him. Then er confirm coincident that he's down there mah then...

Interviewer: So when you interact with him that time, you know you get more emotional ah?

Henry: Yes you...

Interviewer: Because you also...

Henry: You will feel more because you are more immersed into the the...

Interviewer: The Lee's dialogue?

Henry: Ya. Ya the Lee's dialogue. There is like it's like you imagine you you if that is you then you kill your own brother to get the keys very...

Interviewer: It's very sad ah?

Henry: It's very sad lah. It's very very sad lah so that is another case.

Interviewer: So the gameplay makes you even more sad lah?

Henry: er yeah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya. Correct.

Interviewer: So this is the part that the you think the game will work very very well? Is it?

Henry: Yes, yes, yes. It's it's quite it's actually that part is quite good.

Interviewer: The story and gameplay is so close together.

Henry: Yes, it's quite good.

Interviewer: They cannot be separated.

Henry: Yeah cannot.

### **Transcript 3.20**

[*The Last of Us* Session 4 Part 1 2014-07-03 29:55]

#### *Lack of proper equipment*

Okay. Ya so to comment on the relationship between gameplay and narrative I guess one of the things I noticed was that erm the the narrative part about this been a post-apocalyptic environment. And er you twenty years after the I don't know organised ah having a structured a proper civilisation. So basically like all your stuff you have no stuff. You have to scavenge for your stuff. So that incorporates into the gameplay about having to find all these items and crafting on this crafting and especially when you find you don't find stuff like one complete blade or one full binding and so on. But you actually find like pieces like half a blade, one quarter of a blade and and so on explosives, sugar all these. So this this kind of plays into the narrative about there's a lack of proper equipment so people need to like craft things out of using er what they can scavenge. That ya so that's one. The the pills I guess is like not your normal level up stuff. And also another part about gameplay is that ah.

### **Transcript 3.21**

#### *Limited character storage*

Oh ya, and one one realistic thing is you can't like like bring I don't know like you can't find and store ninety nine blades. You can only have three full blades and then if you find anymore anything else you can er you you can't carry them. So you need to like craft and use your stuff. So craft it er encourages you to er actually use the stuff and explore around so you have an easier time so like if you really don't want to spend all that time slowly clearing a group, you can just molotov them or something and so on.

### **Transcript 3.22**

#### *Limited ammunition*

Ya. So another part is about about the ammo. Because like for example, ya like my my shotgun only has eight bullets so I need to be careful with my shots. I can't just go in and shoot and keep shooting and keep missing. So willing to make sure the the ammunition er counts. Okay ya like this one I only got twenty one bullets given given for pistol. Ya. So as in I guess these elements are the gameplay the the narrative elements about there it been a scarce world and all that. That that plays into the gameplay. I guess.

### **Transcript 3.23**

#### *Human versus zombie enemies' artificial intelligence*

Ya so guess another one is that erm the as you can see from me fighting the humans just now, they were a lot smarter. They won't come straight at you. They will try to flank you. Come from the side or take cover and all that so you kind of need to outsmart them. Compared to the zombies where if they see you, they just go in a straight path. It's very easy to like er bait them to go somewhere by breaking a bottle



then most of them will just go straight to the sound. So those are some er narrative elements that play into the gameplay as well.

### **Transcript 3.24**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 41:45]

Interviewer: So after that part, you have to carry Sarah all the way to the checkpoint ah.

Nasir: mm. Yup.

Interviewer: Do you think that part the gameplay is building up the emotion in the narrative where Sarah is killed in the scripted cutscene? Do you think the gameplay is building up the emotions in the narrative? Because in the end, you cannot get to save her. Even though you tried to save her.

Nasir. Ya. Ya I guess that that part of the gameplay complements the as in it's it's integrated well with the narrative because you are carrying her so that so as in...

Interviewer: It's building up the narrative.

Nasir: Ya it really build as in ya correct. Builds up the narrative.

Interviewer: So you are able to understand the emotion that Joel felt to the loss of Sarah.

Nasir: Because especially you just played her a moment moments ago.

Interviewer: mm

Nasir: Then suddenly she's gone. It's like okay. Ya it really sets the tone for the game lah. It think it was a very bold and effective start to the game.

Interviewer: So you can understand how he turns out to be throughout the rest of the game?

Nasir: Ya. As in because most most apocalyptic games don't show you how it was like when things first started to go bad. So because of that, at least for this one, we know we know what Joel went through. So we can somehow relate to why he doesn't want to form an attachment with Ellie because he doesn't want to risk that happening again ah. So in that sense, it gives a bit more depth as to the character's motivations about about why he's cold or why he prioritises survival and so on.

Interviewer: Ya so the prologue is quite important in setting the...

Nasir: Ya. Yes definitely.

### **Transcript 3.25**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 1:17:03]

Interviewer: In the prologue when there is perspective change between Sarah and Joel, do you have any any comments about it? When there is a perspective change between

Joel's daughter and Joel. Does it does it give you any a lot of difference in the story or gameplay?

Walter: Definitely yes in the gameplay. er in terms of story is that she is probably going to die. That was the very clear indication.

Interviewer: So you find that there's less gameplay with Sarah?

Walter: Ya ya that entire prologue sequence was pretty much an on-rails kind of event. You just sort of go in one direction, follow people telling you what to do that kind of thing.

Interviewer: And then the gameplay when you play as Sarah in the gameplay, how do you feel about it ah? Do you feel that she's how how is her character?

Walter: She's a young girl walking around the house that's it. Still sheepish from sleeping. I don't even consider that gameplay like I said you just walk around and find stuff.

Interviewer: Does it does it er give you the help you to form the relationship with Joel when you play as Sarah?

Walter: er not particularly.

Interviewer: When you interact with the objects.

Walter: Not particularly. No, you don't actually do much. A lot of the objects you interact with sort of reveal what's going on with the zombie apocalypse like the tv and the news pieces. But in terms of Joel no not really. Well, there's that one card you found in the birthday card. But er even then no not really.

Interviewer: Do you think that Sarah's relationship with Joel, do you think that you can you can form her relationship with Joel? When you play as Sarah?

Walter: Huh?

Interviewer: Or was it too short? I mean can you can you see that this character is Joel's daughter and then...

Walter: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you manage to immerse yourself in her character and then see that you are Joel's daughter and then you are able to see their relationship better when you play as Sarah?

Walter: But you only play as Sarah when you start so...

Interviewer: Ya. Is it too short for you to?

Walter: mm no. I think it's well established at the start that they are father and daughter. Father and daughter and then you play her.

Interviewer: Are you able to see that your relationship is quite close when you engage in the gameplay?

Walter: No from the narrative. At the cutscene at the start there. The actual thing. I guess the card adds a bit of thing but I mean you just walk around, you don't even interact with him.

Interviewer: So the gameplay doesn't build up the narrative?

Walter: As far as I know, that entire intro sequence is not really gameplay. I mean you just walk around, you you get control but you don't actually do anything.

Interviewer: mm

Walter: Anything substantial at the very least. You just walk around.

Interviewer: So I mean that part, the gameplay doesn't help you.

Walter: Like I said, I don't consider that as gameplay.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: I don't know. Ya I don't consider that as gameplay.

Interviewer: So it's more of the story.

Walter: It's just it's just an entire a very loosely scripted story sequence so ya.

Interviewer: So there's not so much gameplay.

Walter: Yes.

Interviewer: When you switched to Joel, do you find that you have a need to save Sarah at the end of it? At the end of the prologue.

Walter: Yes because she is obviously injured and you start by carrying her. You don't have a choice.

Interviewer: So is the story motivating you also?

Walter: er yes because if I didn't then there will be no story.

Interviewer: In the final part, is there also not so much gameplay?

Walter: The final part?

Interviewer: Of the prologue when you were carrying Sarah.

Walter: As far as I am concerned, the entire prologue has no gameplay. You just go from point A to point B. You don't have any choice. I mean you can see where to look but you don't do anything besides that. Like I said, it's a interactive cutscene.

Interviewer: It's very scripted?

Walter: Ya. So no, I don't consider that gameplay. It's very different from the rest of the entire game so ya. Just like that.

Interviewer: So it's more narrative?

Walter: It's all narrative.

Interviewer: It's all narrative?

Walter: Ya.

Interviewer: So there's no gameplay.

Walter: Yes.

Interviewer: Can I check with you that do you consider quick-time events not gameplay?

Walter: mm. Quick-time events. Depends on the kind of quick-time event. Yeah but yes I would hazard a guess that it is technically gameplay. I mean I would hazard a opinion that it is technically gameplay but in a very very loose sense.

Interviewer: So in the prologue, how much gameplay do you find?

Walter: Very little.

Interviewer: If I ask you to give a percentage.

Walter: Percentage.

Interviewer: How much percent do you think?

Walter: Like five.

Interviewer: Five percent?

Walter: Like five percent. Actually ya five percent.

Interviewer: Did I ask you to er define narrative and gameplay in the previous session?

Walter: Can't remember. But I think you did ask me. Ya oki if you want me to restate oki er I consider gameplay to be sort of like you know where you make choices and you basically do stuff. And er it involves basically player actions. Then er narrative is basically the story that plays out and erm that may or may not be influenced by you but generally, it's something that has been pre-written.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: So even though you influenced the story, both influences the way the story goes is all pre-determined already. It's not emergent basically but clear actions can be emergent. So er that's how I look at it so I I'm opening it as player actions. And actions that you as a player actually has control over so like er like for instance, like *The Last of Us* prologue or like say *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare's* prologue where you just sort of can move your camera along. Yes you are controlling the thing but you are not actually doing anything. You don't have any agency in any of these actions.

Interviewer: So you don't consider that as gameplay?

Walter: er...

Interviewer: When you can move.

Walter: Like I said lah, it's gameplay in a very loose sense. It's very very...

Interviewer: It's only like five percent?

Walter: Like I said, it's five percent lah.

### **Transcript 3.26**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* 2:16:24]

Interviewer: Can I say that the narrative in this part is telling you the gameplay objective that you have to complete in this chapter?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: And then is it also giving you some hints that there's some enemies here to face? Like the entities.

Michael: Ya. This is the first time the entities from the rift came out.

Interviewer: Ya. So you can link it to the gameplay ah?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: But you can also separate the narrative from the gameplay?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.27**

[10 Apr 2014 *Bioshock* 4 – 6.30 pm [Loke] 05:22]

Interviewer: Then the Big Daddy, the cutscene ah, does it help you to give any strategy to fight him in the gameplay or not?

Loke: I can't remember what the cutscene is.

Interviewer: That one at the fleet hall ah. Fleet theatre. They show you the Little Sister get attacked by a...

Loke: The splicer right?

Interviewer: And then the Big Daddy come to the rescue.

Loke: Orh orh that one at the start is it?

Interviewer: Ya. The first cutscene.

Loke: Ya ya ya ya ya. In a way. In a way lah. Because like from the storyline, you know roughly how the Big Daddy will react. So like erm before you actually engage in the gameplay, before you actually engage the Big Daddy then you will for me, all I did was I hid behind the bar counter. Then I jump up er across then I hid under the that er before I even attacked the before I attacked him, he's going to be neutral what. Only when I attack him then he will react. So...

Interviewer: er so the cutscene like...

Loke: They give me the characteristic so I know how I am going to formulate my strategy.

Interviewer: Ya. They tell you that you don't attack him, he won't he will be neutral.

Loke: mm.

Interviewer: Okay.

Loke: And that he's also melee in a way lah. Ya so that you will know what to do.

Interviewer: But the cutscene doesn't show you...

Loke: But the cutscene didn't tell me the Big Daddies are different. Ya so that part I was like oh ya I didn't realise and then subsequently, I read it online, then I realise oh ya they are all different so that helped me in the fight so...

Interviewer: How how do you think is their difference?

Loke: Like I realised there are some Big Daddies can actually shoot projectile at you. Then even the the first Big Daddy, the Bouncer which I fought, I didn't know he had this like shockwave thing that will cause you to be disoriented.

Interviewer: Orh so the cutscene give you only limited info ah.

Loke: Ya. Limited info.

Interviewer: Okay.

Loke: But in way, er er it's not er so limited as like *Witcher*. It's like even though it is limited, you still feel that oh it's part of the challenge of the game rather than er it been like total disconnection between gameplay and narrative. Ya.

### **Transcript 3.28**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview Michael 5:21:57]

Interviewer: But in this way, do you think the game is guiding guiding you ah? Like it's helping you to know how to proceed?

Michael: er incidentally, I finish all the quests before I talk to them right?

Interviewer: mm

Michael: Ah.

Interviewer: So you think that the talking is not so important?

Michael: It become not so important in this case ah.

Interviewer: Because you are, your gameplay strategy is more free play is it ah?

Michael: Ah not necessary. So in normal games, in normal RPG, you cannot even touch the you cannot even enter the ground to do any quests. If you didn't activate it. So I think this might be a programming error already.

Interviewer: Is *Mass Effect 2* like this also?

Michael: It shouldn't be like this.

Interviewer: You haven't encounter any of this ah?

Michael: No. No except for this mission. It shouldn't be.

Interviewer: So it's not supposed to be like this?

Michael: It's not supposed to be sandbox.

Interviewer: Do you prefer it to be sandbox?

Michael: I don't care because if it's not a sandbox and suddenly. Okay you see ah, sandbox orh means you can do any mission at any time.

Interviewer: It's more free ah?

Michael: This one is you talk to the person, "Please do this quest". Bang. You have completed this quest.

Interviewer: So it means it's more linear ah?

Michael: It means that it gives me a confusion.

Interviewer: So that means do you mean that *Mass Effect* is more restricted?

Michael: It is supposed to be more...

Interviewer: The progression is very sequential?

Michael: Progression should be se- it's more sequential it should be ah. It's for casual gamer.

Interviewer: So that means does it mean that it's more guided?

Michael: It is more guided yes it was supposed to be ah.

Interviewer: To help the gamer ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: So this one is just guiding you also?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: It's more of guiding you, not motivating you?

Michael: Yes.

### **Transcript 3.29**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 00:10]

Interviewer: So far erm how much does do you think that consulting game guides and discussing with friends influence the gameplay in *Bioshock* ah?

Mary: er for *Bioshock* I don't really like look at because I don't want to spoil the game lah so I don't look at walkthroughs. What I do is like if I completed the medical area, then I I will go and check out the medical area lah to see if I got all the erm tonics and what not lah. But other than that, I consult my friend lah, Loke. I only consult Loke and then he reads Wikis and he tells me like oh ya electric gel is damn good against the Big Daddies. So the next time I played it, I used the electric gel lah. But other than that, no ah. Because we promised each other not to spoil for each other if we played ahead. But ya at most it's only look at strategies only lor like oh use the trap bolts or use the electric gel things like that.

Interviewer: So erm, is it twenty percent?

Mary: Sorry?

Interviewer: Like twenty percent affect your game experience? Like?

Mary: er I mean that one affected my battling strategy lah so I'm not sure. I cannot give a percentage lah. But it changed my battling strategy ah from using shotguns and what not to trying out the chemical thrower. So...

Interviewer: So at first, you never try out the chemical thrower?

Mary: Ya. Cos I thought it was quite hard to use. And it covers half of my screen so I'm very annoyed lah like it's very hard to see what's happening but ya eventually, I realised how good it was lah then I just used them.

Interviewer: But later erm did you learn how to use it by yourself?

Mary: Ya I tried using the napalm and that to fight who's the final guy again? Fontaine. Ya. I used napalm the napalm thing to fight Fontaine and I was like okay it was quite good. So ya I guess it did affect it quite affected my gameplay lah.

Interviewer: But do you find the weapons, the mastery of the control of the weapon is it quite intuitive ah?

Mary: It is. At least for *Bioshock* lah, it is. Ya. It's just click, hold you know. It's not it's not very hard. Maybe my aim is bad lah. But you know, that is just my aim.

Interviewer: But then the, just now you said the visual appearance.

Mary: Ah ya like especially for crossbow.

Interviewer: At first at first, you don't like to use it ah?

Mary: Ya.

Interviewer: It's quite big ah?

Mary: Ya. Especially for the crossbow, if I'm going to walk around the whole map holding the crossbow covering half of my screen, it's going to like make me very



vulnerable to things that jump from my side lah. So I rather hold on to my wrench or something. So ya.

### **Transcript 3.30**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 43:43]

Interviewer: There's another part where you first erm where you were first shown the Clicker who was trapped at the door. Do you see that part is giving you story information about the Clicker? Like Tess was telling you...

Alice: Yes. Because because you saw the Clicker erm you had to interact with it by moving it off the wall. Erm and then Tess also gave me information after Ellie asked her what that was. Erm and it told you that what it was and how it functions. Because they were talking about runners been able to see erm and hear but Clickers can't see and can't hear and then use echolocation and that was revealed in that sequence. Or that gameplay action.

Interviewer: So you see that part as a narrative event is it?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: Giving you some gameplay.

Alice: Yes through gameplay. It's a narrative event through gameplay yes. The one gameplay action where you had to remove the Clickers from the door here.

Interviewer: So that part was helping you in the gameplay?

Alice: Yes.

### **Transcript 3.31**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 1:32:44]

Interviewer: This do you see this as a narrative information? Or is it gameplay information?

Michael: Narrative.

Interviewer: Narrative ah?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: er is this narrative guiding you in the gameplay?

Michael: No.

Interviewer: So when you see this er and this one, it's separated from each other?

Michael: Let me put it this way ah. Imagine this is the first chapter.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: What would you have done? I'll be staring at the screen for thirty seconds you know?

Interviewer: er is it, why is it like that ah? Is it because the language used is not very...

Michael: It's assuming you, it's assuming that you'll remember that you must approach the blue colour dot.

Interviewer: mm. So that means?

Michael: So if you forget about it, you need to remember.

Interviewer: So there's some, you need to learn and then remember it?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So that means the gameplay for you is separated from the narrative?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: In this part.

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Because the gameplay control for you is in this part is still not very easy to learn? Is it ah? I mean the the affordance is still not very clear?

Michael: For *Beyond: Two Souls* hor if you forgot about a control hor...

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: That's it leh.

Interviewer: Because they are not consistent?

Michael: They will not they have no affordance to tell you what to do.

Interviewer: Because they only give it at at the beginning?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So if there's some words there it'll be better?

Michael: For a lot of games, it would be like if you stare at it too long, it will say approach the blue dot.

Interviewer: mm but this one there's no, nothing?

Michael: There's nothing. See, I look away already. Ah.

Interviewer: Is it because you also play very few PS3 games ah?

Michael: er ya it's back to that thing lor that you are suggesting lor. I play very little new PSP and Xbox games.

Interviewer: So you are more PC gamer?

Michael: I am a more PC gamer yes.

Interviewer: mm. So it's the experience lah?

Michael: Quick-time events, nah. Doesn't really rings a bell ah.

Interviewer: Because you play very few this kind of games?

Michael: Ya. If you compare to other let's say *Street Fighter*, *Super Street Fighter IV* right?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: These are actually recent games. I can play them. No problem. Even though I haven't touched it for ten years.

Interviewer: So that means *Street Fighter* you have some experience playing before?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So that one, I picked up I new *Street Fighter* that one I have no issue. The current *Marvel versus Capcom* there's only 1 button you need to press. For punch one button, you need to press for kick. That one also, I got no problem to pick up.

Interviewer: mm because you played before.

Michael: Because I've played fighting games before.

Interviewer: But this one?

Michael: Quick-time events, no.

Interviewer: Is it the first time you encounter?

Michael: It's not the first time lah but it doesn't sit well with me. Especially *Beyond: Two Souls* ah. The mechanism.

Interviewer: er can I say that it's the experience?

Michael: It's the experience.

Interviewer: Then you don't have so much.

Michael: You can say that lor.

### **Transcript 3.32**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 38:33]

Walter: And also the way the you know the the the the crafting system works where you have to collect different items. I really hated that part because you er at first I thought it was like you know you have the three you have like the three items. If you picked up an item, it represents one piece but later on I figured out that when you picked up something, it only fills up a part of that particular circle or whatever it is that we are using that pie chart thing it will segment so you will have to pick like three scissors to count as one scissors. Something like that which I thought was a

really silly system. Because it was difficult to read, it was difficult to ascertain it. And it was just generally erm ya it was difficult to account for the amount of stuff you use and you found so found so much stuff in the world anyway. Ya so it was how it is.

Interviewer: You mean the part is the way the interface makes it it's very hard to track it?

Walter: er...

Interviewer: Track your accumulation of resources.

Walter: Ya not because because I felt like I collected a lot of stuff. But because you know because they used a different I they used icons and I couldn't really tell the icons apart really. I honestly couldn't tell. I mean I recognise the scissors more than the weird er the weird cloth bit and you know but all the others were generally just like they blended into one another. I didn't really care what they were. I just figured that okay I'm missing scissors because that's the one I always use the most. And then like you try and find find find but other than that it was generally like it was a very like just throwaway system that I didn't read too much onto it. I just like collect whatever I have then make with what I have. There was no agency for me to actually look for anything because you can't. Everything was just like randomly spread out across maps anyway.

### **Transcript 3.33**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 2:09:10]

Interviewer: And then there was another part where Tess passed you the first aid kit at the beginning of the game.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: After the explosion.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Do you find that that part has any connection to the story in the sense that she was taking care of Joel when he was injured? Or do you see...

Alice: I don't know if it is a narrative in that. I would probably suggest more of a gameplay event because it is teaching you how to use the health kit.

Interviewer: Ya. But do you see some some some narrative in it?

Alice: No.

Interviewer: Like maybe a little bit.

Alice: I don't see any narrative in it. I just saw as her giving you a health pack.

Interviewer: So you see it as a one hundred percent gameplay event?

Alice: Ya. I would I thought it was just a one hundred percent to learn how the health pack worked.

### Transcript 3.34

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 51:15]

Interviewer: I think the first time is Tess passing you the health kit after the explosion.

Nasir: Ah.

Interviewer: That part do you find the gameplay is integrated into the narrative? Or separated? When she passed you the health kit, do you think that there's any narrative? Like she's taking care of you, or? Or do you find that there is only gameplay? Like teaching you how to use the health kit?

Nasir: Maybe at that point in time it makes sense for her to pass you the health kit. Because the explosion just occurred. You probably got injured, etc, etc. So only because of the context of that particular context that it becomes more related to the narrative.

Interviewer: The previous explosion?

Nasir: Ya so other than that, I would see it as a more gameplay opportunity?

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Ya so only because of that context it becomes related to narrative. But not the action itself.

Interviewer: Do you think the gameplay action is integrated into the narrative ah? Or is it separated?

Nasir: As in?

Interviewer: Tess passing you the health kit.

Nasir: Oki.

Interviewer: Is it separated or integrated into the narrative?

Nasir: mm, I guess like I said because of the context, under what context she passed you the health kit. Only because you just got injured through the through the explosion which explains why you had to move outside.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Only because of that, it's related to narrative.

Interviewer: So you think that it's integrated into the narrative?

Nasir: Ya. Only at that point in time.

Interviewer: Oki.

### Transcript 3.35

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 58:43]

Interviewer: And then there is also one part, after the explosion, Tess pass you the health kit.

Walter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Do you see that as a gameplay or a narrative event?

Walter: I think it is a narrative event. I don't...because she doesn't I would think she does it one more time later but er I don't know if it's a gameplay event like you know in er *Bioshock Infinite* where Elizabeth throws you stuff.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: I don't know if it's like that. Maybe it is but I've been running around with low health for a while so maybe it is.

Interviewer: It's a little. To me it's a little bit similar.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: But to you, it's more of a narrative event.

Walter: Ya because I don't think I mean like I said, I've been running around for the last ten minutes with like really low health and if she is going to give me a health pack she would probably give me a health pack but nothing has happened so I don't know if whether there's a gameplay element? Or it's just like a one off thing, okay, here's a health pack kind of thing.

Interviewer: Is there any reason why you see it as a narrative event? Is it because it's more scripted?

Walter: Well, it's scripted basically. That's why I look at it as a narrative event. It is also there to teach okay this is how you use a med kit kind of thing.

Interviewer: When she hands you the med kit, do you see Tess as taking care of you in the narrative or you don't see that?

Walter: er, no I don't see her as taking care of you. I think erm no I don't get the impression that she's actually she's actually how do you say? Picking up your slack. If this is what you are saying. I think it's quite fair, I think it is sort of like, like I said, it's probably a gameplay decision but I don't really see any narrative consequence. Like I said, it's just a scripted sequence really.

Interviewer: So you mean as long as it's a scripted, you see it as a narrative event?

Walter: er ya maybe it shouldn't be a narrative event. Ya but okay maybe I should change that. It's not a narrative event. It's just a tutorial to how to use med kits. So ya I wouldn't okay then it's not a narrative event. So ya that's that.

### **Transcript 3.36**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 48:15]

Interviewer: So that part where you played as Joel to rescue Ellie you feel very...

Alice: I actually felt a lot better playing Joel only because Joel, I noticed had more weapons.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: Had more weapons and also had a high level of skill with these weapons. So it made it a lot easier to deal with somebody. So for example, if you are sneaking up on somebody as Joel, and you needed to stab them, he would do it once and be done with it. Because physically you are stronger. But when you are with Ellie, and you had that one knife, you would notice that she would take have to stab them like three or four times which takes a longer amount of time to kill somebody.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: And also she only had like two weapons.

Interviewer: So do you mean that when you played as Joel, you are more reckless?

Alice: More reckless but also feel better.

Interviewer: And then...

Alice: When I play as Ellie, I feel like you are like more like more...

Interviewer: Insecure?

Alice: Concerned with what I do because Ellie Ellie...

Interviewer: Is like a little girl?

Alice: Is like a little girl and it's very hard to move from map to map. Like in terms of a huge map, Joel can take more hits so you can just go in guns a blazing and I feel like Joel, you know, sixty percent of the time will survive. But if you do that with Ellie, she will only survive like twenty percent of the time.

Interviewer: Ya so Ellie is like favouring a certain playstyle only lah? Like the stealth approach ah?

Alice: Ya I think that Ellie is definitely...

Interviewer: Joel Joel can have more options in the gameplay.

Alice: Ya also throughout the game as it turns out, because when Ellie is running away in that winter storm, she only has one health pack and one dagger to begin with.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: And when Joel starts off in the winter storm, he has all the weapons instead. He can pass in it.

Interviewer: So in this way, the gameplay mechanic is er is er what? Producing the story ah?

Alice: Ya it's kind of forcing you in into feeling a certain way. Because Ellie since she doesn't have a lot of weapons, she's ill equipped like you are being forced to play more stealthily and more conservatively and sneak around. Rather than Joel you can

just go and you know, shoot people because he already has ammunition. He has weapons. So...

### **Transcript 3.37**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 1:12:20]

Interviewer: Can you remember if any part of the game very challenging?

Mary: er the part where I had no control over my plasmids. The nearer to the end part. That was very challenging.

Interviewer: Orh when you take Lot 192.

Mary: mm mm mm. That one that one that one.

Interviewer: I remember you you talked that when you fighting the Big Daddy, then you lost control the the powers switched randomly at that time, and then you almost died.

Mary: Ya ya ya.

Interviewer: So that part, the did you find the story creating tension in the gameplay? The story event where you take...

Mary: Ya it's like they are trying to intersect ya the story and the gameplay lah like trying to show how ya lah you need the freaking Lot 192 or something like that lah. It was so annoying. I was so angry with that part but ya lah ya lah, that part was really tough in my opinion. Mm. Because every time they changed, you would automatically switch to a plasmid thing which it might not be a a fighting plasmid at that moment. So I keep attacking the Big Daddy with the stupid plasmid which doesn't help. So it was very annoying at that part. But er tension okay lah. I guess they are just trying to link lah the gameplay and the narrative at that part. Make the link even clearer. But tension not so much ah.

Interviewer: But challenging is it?

Mary: It is challenging lah it is definitely challenging at that part. What is the Fort Frolic one?

Interviewer: But how did your resolve the challenge?

Mary: Hmm? Just...

Interviewer: Cannot do anything?

Mary: You cannot do anything what. Just go find Lot find the other Lot 192. There there wasn't much I could do about it lah. Just maybe pay more attention to what my current equipment was but nah it was it was difficult lah that part.

### **Transcript 3.38**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 30:54]

Interviewer: That part is it showing like some kind of characterisation for Robert?



Alice: I would say you know that would probably be like the situation where the narrative and gameplay come together like before.

Interviewer: mm.

Alice: erm because because it's the start of a sequence but the thing is that you are not doing anything really. It's like it's not a cutscene, it's like grey area where it's not a cutscene but yet you are not really doing any sort of gameplay action except for standing there. Because you can't do anything and the game locks it. So you are standing behind a wall listening to Robert say something. It's equivalent to I think a cutscene because you are not allowed to do anything erm but it just look like a cutscene because you are in-game.

Interviewer: So you mean that that part is more cutscene or gameplay?

Alice: Okay well it's definitely not a cutscene so I think in that if you say that one it is definitely more gameplay but like I say before, it's in a grey area because the game locks it. You can't really move because Robert's doing his speech. So he's giving narrative. Erm but it's not a cutscene because you know it doesn't have that look of a cutscene.

Interviewer: So it's like somewhere in between?

Alice: Ya somewhere in between.

Interviewer: So in that sense erm the gameplay and the story is like complementing each other?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Does it also tell you that part the story does it also tell you the goal is to go after Robert? Is it also telling you?

Alice: erm ya because you see him run off so you know you have to chase him because your whole point was to find Robert. Erm but I did not know that you could lose Robert. I thought that sometimes because you know sometimes games they wait for you to trigger something? So the first time round, I hesitated, I went back and then the game ended. Because it said that Robert got away. So that's when I knew for sure that you have to go after Robert.

Interviewer: It doesn't tell you there's a timed gameplay event?

Alice: It did not tell you there is a timed gameplay event. Ya.

Interviewer: So that part it's only telling you the gameplay goal? Is to go after Robert?

Alice: Yes. But it didn't tell you that it was timed ya.

Interviewer: The timed event is another separated gameplay event?

Alice: Ya I mean you learnt that quickly in the game. Kind of ends and then it tells you.

### Transcript 3.39

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 15:19]

Interviewer: Do you think the narrative or gameplay is more dominant in *The Last of Us*?

Alice: Narrative or the gameplay. erm I want to say that they are both very important. I don't think you can have one without the other. Because you can have games where you would have a non, you won't have a story, I mean you just have a level based game where a racing game, racing games or fighting games don't are more gameplay than narrative. There would be no story. Erm but on the other hand, if you just have narrative, it would be a rather boring game. There would be nothing much there it's happening because you are essentially reading a book and you don't have choices. You don't have the freedom to make choices so I think that narrative and gameplay are for this game.

Interviewer: You think it's quite balanced? Is it quite?

Alice: I it's quite balanced. The story is went pretty quickly. It doesn't really take time to slow down or stop or pause. Er it's pretty much go go go. Erm and so the gameplay is definitely helps in terms of moving the narrative forward.

Interviewer: So generally do you play games for the story or gameplay? Or is it do you like both?

Alice: I think it has to be both because I think that if it's just one or the other, I would get really bored erm the same way that I don't play like *Mario* every day? Because that's purely just gameplay. Erm it is another question why I don't play like *Beyond: Two Souls* every day because it is more story than anything else. Er so I think that all the games that I really enjoy playing have a good balance of both so it gives me a choice of whether I want to focus more on gameplay er by doing certain things. Or focus on narrative by itself.

Interviewer: So you like *Assassin's Creed*?

Alice: I do ya. I think it might be one of my favourite series. *Tomb Raider* is my favourite series. That one is more story though. It is a good balanced game.

Interviewer: So far in *The Last of Us*, er do you like the cutscenes or are they interrupting the gameplay or do you find the cutscenes are quite integrated into the gameplay?

Alice: I think they are quite integrated. I mean normally, I don't like cutscenes because it's a break in the action. But I do understand that cutscenes are necessary in order to progress the story a lot more moving forward. Erm and it also a device to get your attention because if the narrative would be told and I had control of my character, I would be wandering around instead of actually paying attention to what is been said so the cutscenes as much as I don't like to sit there and watch them are pretty important for the game.

Interviewer: Do you mean that er you prefer the narrative to be given in the cutscenes opposed to given in the when you explore the environment? Because sometimes, they also give the story when you explore the environment.

Alice: Ya I think that if you need you need to tell a very important point in the story, it is better to do it in the cutscene. Because if it's in the environment, there is a tendency that you...

Interviewer: You get distracted by gameplay.

Alice: You get distracted by gameplay or you just sort of just wrapped in the gameplay. For example, if you I notice you collect a lot of like documents in-game. So if you retell people the story of what you know the narrative through those documents you collect, there is a chance that as collectibles, people might collect them and not spend the time to read all the details. Erm and thus be caught up on the gameplay. And so it's very important if you are telling the narrative to force the I guess the player to watch whatever is happening in that we can only do that through cutscenes.

Interviewer: So you mean do you mean that not giving an option is better for the players ah? Like the narrative.

Alice: I think not giving an option is definitely better. I think it's just a way of telling the story and telling the story to the player in this case is you are saying balancing okay you have to focus on words been said in front of you.

Interviewer: So that means in *The Last of Us*, the more important story information is given in the cutscenes but the less important story information is given in the notes, do you feel it that way?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: So in this way, er *The Last of Us* is quite is working quite well ah?

Alice: So far ya so far everything looks pretty balanced.

### **Transcript 3.40**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 28:42]

Interviewer: When you choose a good er dialogue choice such as consoling Ashley to make her feel better after you saved her on Eden Prime, and then helping the Feros colony er to restore their water supply and the power cells, etc.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: er do you find that there's any benefits or consequence in the narrative later on ah? I mean...

Michael: I can't remember leh.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: People live lah.

Interviewer: I mean is the do you think roughly is the consequence immediate for you or is it also long term type of consequence? Like I mean the consequence is it both you can see it immediately and then also there's some consequence that occur a long time after you choose that option ah?

Michael: er.

Interviewer: I mean is there both immediate consequence and long term consequence?

Michael: I think there's only immediate consequence leh.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because most of the time, this kind of choices in *Mass Effect* only affect the gameplay at that time.

Interviewer: You mean the rewards ah?

Michael: Ya. And er they purposely segregated the characters' side quests from the gameplay mah. Except for one or two people lah which would die lah.

Interviewer: mm. So it's quite er you mean the narrative and gameplay is quite separated ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So the outcome can be seen quite clearly?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Do you think there is some long term consequence like some of the choices you make in *Mass Effect 1* carry on to *Mass Effect 2* ah?

Michael: I think so. But it's about stats only what.

Interviewer: mm do you think there's also some story consequence ah?

Michael: I don't think so. I don't remember lah.

Interviewer: mm. Because I read that some choices you make in *Mass Effect 1* like you don't kill the Asari commando on on Feros ah, she will continue to appear on *Mass Effect 2*.

Michael: er...

Interviewer: Something like that lah.

Michael: Okay. I would not have known that unless I read the game FAQ.

Interviewer: FAQ. Mm. So you are more clear on the gameplay consequence?

Michael: I think so. Because I wouldn't have known that.

Interviewer: Ya.

Michael: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.41**

[1 Jun 2015 Michael *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 3:39:50]

Interviewer: So do you think that all these narrative all these are narrative choice ah?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: So er only all these other choices will make Jodie not be able to go out ah?

Michael: mm yeah.

Interviewer: Because ya because if you choose if Cole doesn't speak, then Jodie cannot go out ah. So all these choices will make Jodie cannot go out ah?

Michael: mm. So there's a clear distinct. So you need to choose speak lor.

Interviewer: So when you play the game, you want her to go out ah?

Michael: I don't know.

Interviewer: Because you choose speak is it?

Michael: It's a clearly a different choice right?

Interviewer: Ya. So this one you didn't, you just let it run through right?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: So you wanted her to go out ah?

Michael: Probably.

Interviewer: Do you think that if she is not allowed to go out, there will be a different outcome in the narrative ah? I mean if she's not if she doesn't meet the person in the bar that wants to do something to her, then in the next Chapter, she will be able to have a better date with Ryan?

Michael: I don't think it will have any effect ah.

Interviewer: For you, you don't think ah?

Michael: Don't think. There's clearly, there is clear quite clear that at this point right? Whatever choices you make will not affect other Chapters ah.

Interviewer: But this is the only choice that will affect the other Chapters ah.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Because if she doesn't go out, then she can have sex with Ryan in the next Chapter.

Michael: That one I won't know right?

Interviewer: Ya. Unless you read the FAQ.

Michael: Yes.

### **Transcript 3.42**

[3 June 2015 *Bioshock* Last Interview 3.40 pm – 6.40 pm [Loke] 2:51:33]

Interviewer: er did you reload the game for this part?

Loke: When it die is it? Ya. I reload.

Interviewer: mm.

Loke: Ya. Means like if they die then I start from a new save, I load from my save right? Ya.

Interviewer: Ya. Did you think that this part there will have an outcome in the narrative or do you think that...

Loke: Ya I think there will have an outcome in the narrative.

Interviewer: So you you will you think that you will make it the bad ending ah?

Loke: Ya.

Interviewer: But in actual fact, there's no outcome.

Loke: Ya. I didn't know. Just keep reloading.

Interviewer: mm oki.

### **Transcript 3.43**

[27 Feb 2014 *Mass Effect* 8 – 10.30 pm Michael 07:30]

Interviewer: So ah in this game, do you find whether there is a conflict between the gameplay and the narrative?

Michael: Conflict between the gameplay and the narrative...up to this point or?

Interviewer: Up to your knowledge.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Like whether the gameplay encourage you to keep getting more points ah to make the character stronger or to open up more dialogue choices.

Michael: Okay the actually, in *Mass Effect*, the more you get engaged in the narrative, the more advantage you will have over in the game eh. Ya so like just now, I saved the person, during the deployment, the outing, during the FPS time, I actually get more grenades. So it's actually encouraging me to do a lot of things outside the FPS at the normal storyline. To get all those like extra grenades, extra clothes, extra equipments.

Interviewer: So so in this way, do you feel is there any conflict?

Michael: er I would say there is no conflict. In fact, the storyline helps you a lot in the game.

Interviewer: Okay.

Michael: Ya. If you have played *Mass Effect 2* which I did right, you can only get certain equipment, a certain gun orh by talking to a person long enough. Of course, you wouldn't get the better guns.

Interviewer: Okay so you think the narrative helps out more gameplay.

Michael. Yes.

### **Transcript 3.44**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview Michael 3:46:16]

Michael: Okay. The right one is a gameplay. The left one is a narrative. I think...because if you continue playing right, if you choose the right hand side, some options will disappear. If you choose the left hand side, it will always be there. So the left hand side ones are information. The right hand side be has a direct impact ah.

Interviewer: So the right hand side is more optional?

Michael: Yes, more of gameplay. Usually lah.

Interviewer: So the left hand is the major arc lah.

Michael: The left hand the middle is information.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: The top and the left hand top and the bottom usually are paragon or renegade choices.

Interviewer: So the left hand is more narrative ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: But this one is the only one here.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Is also narrative ah?

Michael: So it becomes a...

Interviewer: Cannot choose ah?

Michael: You cannot don't choose eh.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah. If you cannot don't choose it, it becomes a narrative. Because the game will not proceed without you choosing it lor.

Interviewer: So it's something like the major arc lor.

Michael: mm.

### **Transcript 3.45**

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* Nasir 22:42 Part 1]

Interviewer: er when you don't want people to die, is it because...

Nasir: mm hmm.

Interviewer: You want to know their story better or is it to help you in the gameplay better?

Nasir: Ya. Story better because as in I was thinking that if I if I somehow need him in the future as in might find out more about him in that sort of thing. So it was more I guess and ya as in to maybe find out more about the story and also it just feels better not not for the characters to die I guess because in this case there is no gameplay benefit at all for him to die.

Interviewer: But the story is also linked to the gameplay.

Nasir: mm in this case?

Interviewer: er ya Ethan Jeong.

Nasir: But it doesn't contribute anything to gameplay what.

Interviewer: There's some consequence ah. In the gameplay.

Nasir: There is?

Interviewer: For the colonists ah.

Nasir: Orh as in in terms of narrative is it?

Interviewer: In the erm what's that ah? I think the narrative is tied to the gameplay.

Nasir: mm so wait so what happens if he dies?

Interviewer: If he dies then you have to your gameplay will be affected.

Nasir: Ya but how? Because I don't remember how he affected the gameplay.

Interviewer: er but can I ask you to say how you understand it first ah? How...

Nasir: Okay.

Interviewer: How how do you understand the gameplay er...

Nasir: As in to me when when I wanted to save him, it was purely for narrative purposes. As in, it might unlock some better ending or better story or something or in just just for the fact that I don't want characters to die. So I wasn't I wasn't aiming for any gameplay benefits at all. I was not under the impression that there was any gameplay benefits to...

Interviewer: Do you find that when he dies, the gameplay was harder? Or?

Nasir: Not really. Ya not really. As in if it did get harder, I didn't notice. Ya.

Interviewer: Because you didn't play the other pathway?

Nasir: er ya I wasn't aware there were multiple pathways so for whether he lives or dies so ya.



Interviewer: Because when he dies...

Nasir: mm hmm.

Interviewer: er you have to there's one part where you have to not kill a number a number of colonists is it? Fifteen or what?

Nasir: Ya that's unrelated right? Or?

Interviewer: It's related lah.

Nasir: Less is it?

Interviewer: er if you if you kill him, you cannot you have to save more of the colonists.

Nasir: Orh, okay. Mm okay.

Interviewer: So in that sense, the gameplay is related.

Nasir: Orh okay okay, I didn't know it will affect that so okay. Interesting.

Interviewer: So do you think the gameplay is a bit harder? Because...

Nasir: As in, I...

Interviewer: You have to be careful not to kill them.

Nasir: As in considering that I didn't know that this had any impact on gameplay right? So I didn't notice whether it was harder or not. I just played on. Ya as in I just thought that was that was a linear thing I had to save fifteen enemies so ya. So as in, I have no I have no base for comparison because I didn't know there was an effect.

Interviewer: But when you saved them, do you find that you have to concentrate more?

Nasir: A bit.

Interviewer: Because you cannot kill them.

Nasir: Ya as in I I try to hold my fire more as in I make sure that the...as in initially, I was confused about which which of the colonists I have to save then I realised that you can kill the normal zombies then only the colonists that have names will still be there.

Interviewer: Those that are normal lah?

Nasir: Ya. So only then did I realised. Then I had to time. Because I didn't use the grenade that often. So I had to practise shoot the grenade. Ya so and sometimes when I didn't make it through, I will replay that part, I think. But ya. So I tried to avoid clearing people there so ya I guess ya as in I guess that...

Interviewer: You have to be more careful lah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer But it's also not very challenging, that part.

Nasir: Ya. As in it wasn't a very big difference to me.

Interviewer: Because you never played the other pathway.

Nasir: Ya. As in on the second run, I managed to save him so I I didn't realise that there was a change in the number of colonists to save.

Interviewer: Orh but you when you saved him, you also saved the other colonists ah? You also go and saved all the colonists ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Still still all of them you go and save ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: They still tell you to go and save ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer Okay so there's no change in the story.

Nasir: mm ya story wise not no I guess. As in I think backstory they will say that er if you saved him then Exogeni will fund the colony, then I suppose the colony will be in a better shape. I'm not sure how it definitely doesn't affect *Mass Effect 2*. I'm not sure that it will affect *Mass Effect 3* because *Mass Effect 3* did mention about Zhu's Hope.

Interviewer: I think if you saved the guy, then you no need to save so many colonists ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: In the gameplay.

Nasir: Okay lor.

Interviewer: Is it ah?

Nasir: I'm not sure.

### **Transcript 3.46**

[25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 6 – 7.30 pm [Henry] 51:40]

Henry: It's like you imagine you if that is you then you kill your own brother to get the keys very it's very sad lah. It's very very sad what. So that is another case.

Interviewer: So the gameplay makes you even more sad lah?

Henry: er yeah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya correct.

Interviewer: So this is the part that the you think the game will work very well ah? Is it?

Henry: Yes yes it's actually that part is quite good.

Interviewer: The story and gameplay is so closed together.

Henry: Yes it's quite good.

Interviewer: They cannot be separated.

Henry: Ya. Cannot.

### **Transcript 3.47**

[File 18 Recording 2014-08-02 [Michael] 09:50]

Michael: The issue is because I was spending so many effort pressing the thing right? I became detached from what they are saying.

Interviewer: So that means when you press you are more focused on the gameplay?

Michael: Ya. I need to focus on the gameplay I get distracted. Then she cry I was like it was a very touching scene but I don't feel like crying because I was all too frustrated after pressing all the buttons. It's a distraction lah. The narrative lah. Can't concentrate on the narrative.

Interviewer: But just now the gameplay distract you lah?

Michael: The gameplay distract me a lot. Not during running.

Interviewer: During the emotional scene?

Michael: Ya then the what the quick-time events which later I find that we don't have to press anything anyway.

Interviewer: So it doesn't make a difference?

Michael: No difference lor.

Interviewer: So next time I see this kind of game I'm going to just put this thing aside and watch enjoy the movie.

### **Transcript 3.48**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 1:10:49]

Interviewer: Do you find the story pushing you in a good or evil direction?

Mary: I don't know leh maybe it's just me lah but I feel like you know you see how like the way Tenenbaum is like pleading you at that point. Give them a second life and everything like that and her her own motherly change and everything like that. It just shows you have to save the Little Sisters. I mean I don't know if people would still harvest after listening to what she say or not. I mean ya. Probably in that sense, it's pushing you towards the so called good side lah. But ya lor. I mean if they wanted to push you to the evil side, maybe like they can have some maybe Atlas can keep telling you like oh maybe you should kill them to get more stuff.

Interviewer: But...

Mary: Because he only said that at the beginning lah.

Interviewer: But you don't you don't follow Atlas' advice ah.

Mary: Ya he only said it one time lah he didn't constantly tell me to do that which means...I mean it shows that actually because Tenenbaum is continuously but not Atlas.

Interviewer: So you think it's pushing you more in the good direction?

Mary: In a sense ya I feel.

Interviewer: So you are thinking this also helps your gameplay ah?

Mary: mm. Ya lah it guides me in that sense. But okay lah personally I would have save them anyway lah so...

### **Transcript 3.49**

[28 July 2014 *Bioshock* 1 – 2.30 pm Part 3 [Peter] 28:31]

Interviewer: This one is the door code ah for the that one you are trying to find ah. The door code that you were trying to find.

Peter: Oh.

Interviewer: So when you play the game, you didn't know.

Peter: No, I didn't take notice. I didn't take notice. That's why because you see ah I was focused on the gameplay what so I didn't take note that the code was actually playing in the background.

Interviewer: Wait ah er this one you picked up from I think here ah.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: This one lah.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: I think this person is trying to this person is the paparazzi ah.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: Is spying on Fontaine ah.

Peter: er huh.

Interviewer: But when you read his story, you don't understand what is he talking about ah? You just ignore his audio log ah? Is it?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: You don't know what is he talking about ah?

Peter: er ya.

Interviewer: At that time, you just ignore it ah?

Peter: Ya. I was just looking for the code.

Interviewer: Oh.

Peter: I didn't expect to find it in the audio logs.

Interviewer: The code always in audio log one. So this one the link between the code and the door is you cannot link it ah?

Peter: Cannot that's why I went online to find.

Interviewer: Is it because the story is not interesting to you in the audio log?

Peter: Partly because of that. I don't know who is this paparazzi. Why should I listen to whoever is that.

Interviewer: It's like noise to you.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: All these bean bean pole you don't understand ah?

Peter: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.50**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 2:56:38]

Interviewer: But this part how come you fail to protect Jodie ah?

Michael: Because the camera angle went ki siao [Hokkien term which means crazy].

Interviewer: So you don't know what to do lah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh so you cannot see the blue colour thing?

Michael: Ya. That's what happened mah.

Interviewer: On the crazy people, there's blue colour orbs.

Michael: No, I can see but after I fought the first person, I looked up at the sky. And that's it lor.

Interviewer: er...

Michael: Ah you go back. It's a key framing ah. You go back some more. Ah oki. So you see ah. So I fought the first one ah. The second one I missed him mah. Then that's it lor.

Interviewer: Is it because you accidentally look at the sky?

Michael: Ya. Yes. You tell me what do I press to trigger the two things? Which button?

Interviewer: So that means the reaction is not fast enough ah?

Michael: Ya you must stare at the thing right?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's not so clear also you know? The you need to stare at the thing. For the two orbs to come up. Because usually the two orbs will come up automatically mah.

Interviewer: mm. So can I say that the narrative is clear er clearly linked to the gameplay but...

Michael: The narrative is clearly linked to the part that I need to take action.

Interviewer: But...

Michael: It doesn't tell me take what action.

Interviewer: So the specific actions for you is not so clear ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: But you know the action is to interact with the blue orbs ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So when you fail this one, the story end faster.

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: The outcome ah.

Michael: So by this time, I think it is motivating me to fail.

Interviewer: Why is it?

Michael: It saved my energy and...

Interviewer: The because you want to finish the game faster?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: But did you not intentionally want to fail? This part.

Michael: Up till this point, I'm still trying to play the game mah.

Interviewer: You still not trying to fail ah?

Michael: Ah no. I am still trying to play it. At this point.

Interviewer: Would you motivated to unlock more story? After this part? Were you curious to know what happens after this? After this part where you failed.

Michael: There wasn't many narrative choices after this mah.

Interviewer: I mean just the story lah. Were you curious to know how the story ends in this chapter? I mean the final part where Jodie gets to destroy the condenser. Were you curious to know about that part?

Michael: mm no.

Interviewer: Is there any reason why you didn't want to know? Because you are not interested in the story?

Michael: I'm not interested.

Interviewer: You don't like the story?

Michael: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.51**

[10 Mar 2015 10.40 am – 1.40 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 7 Interview [Matt] 1:16:09]

Interviewer: All the movement ah you performed in the game all the movement, all the interactions with the objects. Whether you choose to...like there was one part, I post on Facebook.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: You missed. There was one box on top of the cupboard you missed it ah.

Matt: Oh that's actually the...

Interviewer: You commented about it also.

Matt: Huh?

Interviewer: You said there's a box on top of the cupboard there. When Jodie was very young that time.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: But then you press the X thing and then...

Matt: Like eh never mind.

Interviewer: You cannot you cannot open the box.

Matt: Huh?

Interviewer: But actually, you can use Aiden to...

Matt: Knock open the box ah?

Interviewer: Interact with the box and then use Aiden to have a flashback.

Matt: Oh you can?

Interviewer: For Jodie. And then you can get more backstory.

Matt: Oh I didn't know that.

.....

Matt: So that's the box ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Oh I didn't know that. I didn't know I could do that.

Interviewer: Aiden is a very important gameplay tool to uncover more backstory according to my definition.

Matt: He is ah he is. Oh I didn't realise this not bad.

Interviewer: So it's just a flashback ah. Actually, I was wondering, that part where you were controlling...

Matt: hmm?

Interviewer: It just shows the backstory.

Matt: Oh Ya.

Interviewer: Of the foster parents.

Matt: mm mm mm.

Interviewer: Actually, I was wondering if you agree with me whether that part where you control Aiden to get the box and then channel the flashback. Do you consider it as a gameplay event? And then this part also, do you consider it as a gameplay event? Putting the box back.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: And then I was wondering only the flashback that part, only the flashback that part, the backstory is the narrative event.

Matt: mm let's see ah.

Interviewer: Because it'll be very hard to define gameplay event ah if we look er...

Matt: If we use that model right? Of a gameplay requiring a game state.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Right? A game state between vic...something like maybe a if you look for a lack of a better er system like er spectrum between victory and a defeat right? It's very hard to it's very hard to er very hard to to try and see where er *Beyond: Two Souls* has this kind of mechanic. Has this kind of event. So not so...

Interviewer: Because I was thinking whether the if the continuum of interaction is higher then we can define it more as a gameplay event. And less as a narrative event.

Matt: mm.



Interviewer: We define it according to a continuum ah.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: Not according to a very separated...

Matt: I guess I guess I guess we have to go with that.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: It's because it's so hard. Because you cannot because in a game like this...

Interviewer: It's very narrative driven.

Matt: Ya. So narrative driven. So you can't really separate the...you there's no clean there's no clean break between the two lah. It's hard to have a clean break between the two.

Interviewer: So I was thinking whether the gameplay event in the parts where you interact with the objects, is it like consider that as...

Matt: Maybe maybe maybe.

Interviewer: Is it like?

Matt: Maybe sorry hang on. Maybe a narrative event or maybe er maybe er a change in the game right? Would be when you get to learn more of a narrative. So it's like er it's like erm the more you know, the better your experience. So you can say, in a sense, it's kind of like closer to a win state. Because you learn more about Jodie.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Right? So in so in that sense, everybody wins lah. In that sense, everybody wins. But not in the but not in the sense where you er erm wow gosh.

Interviewer: It's very hard to separate?

Matt: It's very hard to separate.

Interviewer: *Bioshock* is very easy.

Matt: Ya for things like I mean like you said Aiden knocks down the box you know? Mm...

Interviewer: I was thinking it was more like that part is more of like a gameplay event. Contributing to a narrative event.

Matt: Ya oki. I guess so. It doesn't imply. Event doesn't imply choice. So I think can lah can lah. It's distinctly gameplay lah.

Interviewer: It's more like maybe seventy percent gameplay.

Matt: I guess so for for a lack of er you know? I guess so. You are right. I guess so.

Interviewer: For this model lah?

Matt: mm mm mm. That's right. Mm. Okay.

Interviewer: So the answer for this – it's very hard to separate ah?

Matt: Very hard to separate.

Interviewer: Ya.

[10 Mar 2015 10.40 am – 1.40 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 7 Interview [Matt] 2:06:30]

Matt: er so I would have been more interested.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: If I had known. The problem is I didn't know.

Interviewer: There's no prompt ah.

Matt: There's no prompt. There's no suggestion. If I have known that er well you can use Aiden to go and do all these fancy things, then I would have you know I would have done it more.

Interviewer: Ya but do you think that in this way, it's better for you? You have to explore by yourself.

Matt: er hmm Okay let's just be fair lah. It's a single play through? Correct?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Let's be fair to me here. I don't think that was a...I think it wasn't er...

Interviewer: It's very hard to figure out.

Matt: Ya.

Interviewer: In the last play through.

Matt: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.52**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 5:34:34]

Interviewer: This part you mentioned that Shepherd was a fugitive running away from the law but the story still like progress like Shepherd hasn't done anything wrong ah.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Do you find the conflict between the gameplay given by the side quests?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So there's a conflict ah.

Michael: Yes.

### **Transcript 3.53**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview Michael 5:21:13]

Interviewer: When these people don't want to tell you. When they asked you to go and speak with another person, er how is your experience ah? When they don't want to tell you everything. About the place. Erm does it motivate you to go to that person?

Michael: It doesn't motivate me to. It forces me to.

Interviewer: So it's er restricting your gameplay action ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: But do you feel curious?

Michael: No. I feel pissed off. I don't feel curious.

### **Transcript 3.54**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 2:34:24]

Interviewer: So you find the cutscene too long in *The Last of Us*, is it ah?

Walter: No, I don't think they are too long. They are too long if you are playing it again and you can't skip them of course lah that'll be too long. Because you have already seen it.

Interviewer: So the first time the balance is quite good lah?

Walter: It's alright. It's not too bad.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.55**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 1:04:39]:

Interviewer: Do you know why you get +9 renegade points and +8 paragon after you killed the husked Saren?

Michael: I have no idea.

Interviewer: Why is it that you get both?

Michael: I have no idea.

Interviewer: mm

Michael: I didn't read it up ah so...

Interviewer: So the outcome is not clear?

Michael: No.

### **Transcript 3.56**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Interview 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim] 1:50:00]

Interviewer: So the question is when the first time you played it, do you feel any difficulty?

Jim: Difficulty?

Interviewer: In this part.

Jim: Quick tapping?

Interviewer: In progressing like this part ah?

Jim: No.

Interviewer: You are not stuck in this part ah?

Jim: Because I am a computer scientist right? I assume they actually programmed in this thing. If you can last for at least 5 seconds, you can just let go.

Interviewer: mm.

Jim: I think that's the game, how they designed this part.

Interviewer: So you know, you already know how it works ah?

Jim: Because right? It's so different from other quick-time events. Other it goes like from the worst situation to the best. If you can make the two arrows together, you win. For this one, it's the other way around.

Interviewer: Because quite long already, still cannot. So there must be something else to do?

Jim: Yeah then it's a hint already. At least for computing student, that that's how it looks like.

Interviewer: And then the next question is do you see that they are trying to integrate the gameplay into the...

Jim: This guy should be a YouTube celebrity.

Interviewer: Ya. And the other question is do you see that the they are trying to integrate the gameplay into the story? Because...

Jim: You mean been forced down?

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: This is not so story at all.

Interviewer: No I mean gameplay.

Jim: Huh?

Interviewer: Were they trying to integrate the gameplay into the story? In the sense that you have to let go of the controls. So that...

Jim: Somebody saved you?

Interviewer: Lily can save you.

Jim: In fact if you let's say if you look at it like a movie right? Supposed I play this game. You look at me like a spectator right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: I last like one minute plus long right? In reality right? Erm well either one of us will die. One minute plus somebody will sure. Oh something I feel very weird is that so many people look at us fighting and nobody...

Interviewer: Helped you ah?

Jim: Yes they all like morons standing right there.

Interviewer: Is it like reality like sometimes in reality, people don't like to...

Jim: The first ten seconds I can understand. Imagine if that one minute situation actually happening.

Interviewer: Nobody helped you.

Jim: Nobody helped us. It's like what?

Interviewer: But when you play the game, you didn't think about it ah? It's only now that you think about it.

Jim: No, I already am aware of the fact that nobody comes out to help until Lily comes out with a gun.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: And its gameplay and it's so dissociate because let's say if you are succeeding like this econ guy right? When you look back right? This is like what? Yes. The longer you survive, the more it gets weirder.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: But depends. After all it's a game. It's a game. If you are too realistic with it right? You kind of accept it, you won't find it fun. Yes, once again, I salute this guy.

Interviewer: But in this sense, er the question I'm asking is that were they trying to put the story together also with the gameplay?

Jim: No, I don't feel a tint of a story at all. In fact, it's so dissociate this part. Everyone just stand there. It's just a fight. That's it. No more. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Interviewer: Ya I mean the part when Lily shoots that part is also not story ah? To you ah?

Jim: er...

Interviewer: It's also gameplay?

Jim: Ways to means to an end I guess.

Interviewer: Ya so to you, it's...

Jim: I think Lily was guarding Danny throughout the time when I leave the farm to the house right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: Ya so to you, it's also gameplay ah?

Jim: Yeah that part is...

Interviewer: Lily helping to.

Jim: No that entire part right? The struggling now now that I think of it right? It doesn't make sense. A bit. Especially for the fact that so many spectators watch there like WWF. Ya.

Interviewer: So it's mostly gameplay lah?

Jim: I mean Brenda is already taken down.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: That entire, that Danny is already taken down. It's just Andy left. I mean come on man we can just mob him.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: It's filler really.

Interviewer: When er Lily helping you that part, in the fight ah...

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Do you feel er grateful to her when she helped you?

Jim: Grateful?

Interviewer: Or any emotions?

Jim: Wow. Mm.

Interviewer: Or do you feel nothing?

Jim: No.

Interviewer: You feel nothing?

Jim: No.

Interviewer: But you still feel that your choice matters ah?

Jim: Ya. No. And I'm a kind of person who rarely develop emotions with fictional character.

Interviewer: er what do you mean?

Jim: er I'm not the kind of person who call an anime wife a waifu.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim: I'll never live that kind of life. I actually swore to myself to not fall into that kind of addiction.

Interviewer: Orh so you see it more as a gameplay?

Jim: I mean I played this one game called Max Payne 3. It resonates with me because of his pitiful story.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: erm I like the character because of the story.

Interviewer: mm.

Jim: erm because to me to fall in love with a character that is fictional is a sign of severe game addiction. Yes.

Interviewer: I mean in this case, it's not falling in love but just like...

Jim: Creating a sentiment? Right?

Interviewer: Ya like.. er she's helping you when you helped her in this...

Jim: In *Mass Effect*, I also like trying to think oh okay who will eventually be my romantic partner.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: Ya I'm standing from Shepard's perspective but not mine because I'm not really a person who you put romance into games. It's just too creepy for me. No, this is just so not me.

Interviewer: So she's more of a gameplay tool for you?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.57**

[1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm [Mary] 05:44]

Interviewer: So er you find that after you helped Lily, she helps you later on lah.

Mary: Ya. She saved me what. From the Saint the ya this part.

Interviewer: This part you are trying to find out how come you...

Mary: Ya I was like am I supposed to die or what like like like...

Interviewer: You are supposed to let Lee...

Mary: Let ya he was supposed to let this...

Interviewer: And then she will save you lah.

Mary: So that's why I started letting go here. But you know, it's instinctive that you know you want to save him. It's like I don't know whether I...

Interviewer: So this part of the gameplay do you find it quite interesting ah?

Mary: Ya. I was quite...it's counter-intuitive like you know usually, you have to "Q" [refers to quicktime gameplay action] like mad but then for this part, you shouldn't "Q" like mad.

Interviewer: So does it give you like a kind of emotional engagement ah?

Mary: Em- I won't say emotional engagement. It was just more refreshing lah like a change in the game, the way the game works. But then...

Interviewer: It's trying to...integrate the gameplay into the story?

Mary: Ya. Like ya what you said.

### **Transcript 3.58**

[3 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* Session 3 11 am – 1 pm [Henry] 57:47]

Interviewer: This part can you remember?

Henry: Huh?

Interviewer: You are doing the quick-time event for about more than one minute ah.

Henry: This is which one? Er...

Interviewer: Keep pressing the "Q Q Q" that part. Cannot then you cannot progress.

Henry: Oh this one hahaha. Ya I remember because when he was he was attacking me then I was "Q Q Q Q" then I after a while, I realised eh why got why got...

Interviewer: Why cannot?

Henry: Why why cannot progress one then I okay maybe I should let go lah. I let go. Then that one. Then the the the gameplay continue.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Because I was wondering whether I can like "Q". Because I thought it's the quicktime event, I "Q Q Q", then after that, I reverse him or something like that ya.

Interviewer: Is it like different from the other quicktime events? It's quite different ah?

Henry: It's it's different in the sense that there's no there's no er usually you the quicktime event is to...



Interviewer: Finish it ah?

Henry: Finish the thing and then er you can continue.

Interviewer: This one is...

Henry: This one is to not finish the thing and continue. So it's slightly different. But...

Interviewer: Do you find it quite interesting?

Henry: Ya I was like eh why like that? Then I it's it's different from the rest then I okay.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: It's like it's like in a sense it's like oh so I'm supposed to purposely lose to lose to him in a sense that kind to for me to continue fighting him. Ya.

Interviewer: In a sense, does it tell you about life like you have to let go of things ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Letting go of things?

Henry: er no lah not really ah that one the connection.

Interviewer: Too weak?

Henry: Too too far lah no.

Interviewer: And then do you think that they are trying to integrate this gameplay into the narrative ah? Or is it separated ah?

Henry: Put the gameplay into narrative. (Yawns). As in this part is where all the no lah actually this one is more of gameplay what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ah the because you already know that got something wrong with the farm. You already know what what what the Saint John brothers doing already. Then this farm is fucked up then...it's just erm gameplay to...the narration is they got narration but it's not not as strong as before. Like cos you already know all of that all all of things before already what. Then is now is just er...

Interviewer: The boss fight ah?

Henry: Ah like the boss fight ah. Getting the the getting past them lah. Ah.

Interviewer: Do you see any narrative in this part ah?

Henry: Narrative?

Interviewer: Or is it entirely gameplay?

Henry: I narrative ah? Very little.

Interviewer: Like when Lily saves you, is it a gameplay or narrative?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: When you let go.

Henry: Orh that is...

Interviewer: Do you see it still as a gameplay or narrative?

Henry: It's it's narrative lah. But compared to the entire thing, it's the narrative is very small.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: And then did you think about the other people standing around looking at you fight Andy without helping?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Do you think that it's some kind of conflict ah? Like your other group members just stand around and watch?

Henry: er Kenny Kenny never helped what. Then I was like I I already know that I already know that Kenny against me already then he don't want to help. Then he just okay. Then then like what what a asshole and then er okay ya but ya it's just like that orh.

Interviewer: And then when Lily helps you was it very emotional for you? Mm. I mean when she helps you ah. Do you feel anything?

Henry: erm not much honestly it's not much because er...

Interviewer: Just a way to progress the game?

Henry: Not say a way to progress. Just that as in I didn't feel that much compared to I think I felt more than er more of more when Kenny decided not to help me than Lily helped me.

Interviewer: Oh you mean you were more angry with Kenny.

Henry: Ya, I was more angry with Kenny than grateful to Lily.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: eh when you were angry with Kenny is it because you support him in the past?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then after that, er he he he I angry with him because he because he angry with me for not eh for not killing er eh Larry what which is a bit unreasonable what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then you know, I angry I angry lor.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.59**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Interview 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim] 41:24]

Jim: Okay the next question right?

Interviewer: Lee's brother.

Jim: Lee's brother oh oh oh oh oh oh oh. Okay clicking on the trapped walker. You mean right under the lamppost.

Interviewer: er this part, you see the gameplay is still producing the story ah? When you clicked on the walker, it will zoom in on Lee's brother to let you...

Jim: You mean his pharmacy suit, shirt.

Interviewer: His badge ah? Badge.

Jim: Oh badge.

Interviewer: It will show you his badge.

Jim: er...

Interviewer: So it's like gameplay is is it supporting the story in this sense?

Jim: Ya. Because still, he's Lee's brother.

Interviewer: mm. It's not story supporting gameplay ah?

Jim: For this part...

Interviewer: Or is it also game...story motivating the gameplay? I think it's both ah?

Jim: er okay I'm going to need some time to think about this. Did he mention Lee's brother before actually seeing the zombie fight version?

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Jim: Oh oh I remember now. He tore a photograph before seeing Lee's brother.

Interviewer: Ya the family ah? Family photograph.

Jim: Ya. I don't know what did he feel before seeing Lee's brother. Did they get along well? I can't remember anymore.

Interviewer: I think they were quite living apart from each other. Is it ah?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: They didn't give a lot of information about it?

Jim: I remember he didn't get along much with the parents. I don't know about brother.

Interviewer: I don't get a lot of information about this.

Jim: Me too. It's...

Interviewer: It's a gap in the game.

Jim: It's smoky. So mm gameplay supporting narrative. Ya this part you ya you need to click to get over it to get more story because for this particular background right? They don't give you much. So in for the entire game right? It's not always narrative support gameplay or gameplay support narrative. It depends on how much they willing to tell you. That's what I am thinking. I felt I don't know much until I clicked on Lee's brother. And he just simply said, "I'm sorry" blah blah blah. "I know you take care of parent." Even so, these few sentences don't talk much. He just there to, you know try to forget them. Honestly, I don't know what's wrong with these four people. What makes them so cynical, I guess.

Interviewer: So it's not really gameplay supporting story or story supporting gameplay?

Jim: Gameplay more towards supporting narrative for this part.

Interviewer: For this part ah?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: It's still together with the story ah?

Jim: It's relevant but it feels like the gameplay dominates because the narrative wasn't that clear to be able it doesn't doesn't I don't choose that because I know about happened. I choose that because I want to know what happened.

Interviewer: mm so in a sense, it's also motivating you to find out more about the story?

Jim: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.60**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 23:48]

Interviewer: Do you think the characterization of the characters is very realistic in this game?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Because the characters are not one dimensional?

Nasir: mm hmm. As in like I can see some character development like like how Joel changes as the game goes along. How how like you see different sides of Tess. Ya

you see different sides of David. Er you see different sides of Henry and Sam. So ya. Because they they do spend some time developing the characters. So that's why it's less one dimensional.

Interviewer: Is it because they also have some kind of flaw? That's why they look more realistic ah? In the narrative.

Nasir: Ya I guess so. Ya as in you know all of them have flaws so ya. As in I guess you can relate to them better. As in it gives you a better a a more whole picture of the character. Rather than just a one-dimensional individual.

### **Transcript 3.61**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* [Walter] 2:55:05]

Interviewer: Do you find the characters they are very realistic because they are morally ambiguous ah in *The Last of Us*? I mean...

Walter: No. They are not morally ambiguous. They are I would say without morals. They killed people with impunity. They pretty much only look out for their immediate group. They have no desire to help other people. They are not morally ambiguous. They are literally immoral. They are in a world where morals do not exist. That's the way I look at it. So...

Interviewer: Are they realistic?

Walter: I don't know. They are in a post-apocalyptic environment where they kill people like nobody's business. So I would not. I don't know if it's realistic or not because I've not been through the situation. But if you were to ask me if the world did go to shit.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: And people react and these people were the result of that. A product of that I would say is that believable? Maybe, yes. I would say that's believable. That's the extent. I won't say they are realistic. I won't say that they I I can buy into the fact that they behave that way. I can believe their actions. But I won't say it's realistic. And I don't think they are morally ambiguous. Ya.

Interviewer: Are they closer to the human beings found in our world? Or do you find that...

Walter: Again, I don't know because they are in a very weird situation. [inaudible]

Interviewer: But compared to other games, do you think you are able to relate more to these characters?

Walter: No, I don't relate to them at all.

Interviewer: You are unable to...

Walter: They kill people with impunity and ya steal shit. Ya no no.

Interviewer: I mean the emotional...

Walter: Oh emotional.

Interviewer: Can you feel their..can you are you able to empathise feel...

Walter: er.

Interviewer: Like think about how they their perspectives are like?

Walter: Maybe about mostly but not entirely.

Interviewer: Like for example, how the prologue gives the backstory for Joel and then explains why he turns out the way he is for the rest of the game?

Walter: Okay er yes I can believe that but in terms of...

Interviewer: In this sense ah...

Walter: Empathising...

Interviewer: In this sense.

Walter: mm. Basically, okay I will say that the characters have motivations. The characters have characterisations. They have emotions.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: That I find believable.

Interviewer: In their world lah.

Walter: Yes. I can buy into it.

Interviewer: Because the story is quite well done for you lah.

Walter: Yes. It's crafted quite well. Written quite well.

Interviewer: They giving a lot of motivations for the characters main characters.

Walter: Yes.

### **Transcript 3.62**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 1:57:10]

Interviewer: And then one of the parts er before you reached the place where Tess was killed. Ellie was telling you that she cannot swim.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: The part you find that it's a story info ah?

Alice: There's definitely narrative info. Because we don't have I don't have to carry her across any sort of water but it kind of set up everything that happened afterwards.

Interviewer: It tells about the future gameplay mechanic?

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Okay. So in this way, the story and gameplay is together?

Alice: mm. In the scene where she's giving that information where she can't swim, I think it's a purely narrative thing.

Interviewer: Ya but it's only connected to the later gameplay events.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Where Joel has to ferry her across the water.

Alice: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.63**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 1:58:18]

Interviewer: Do you think another good feature about *The Last of Us* is that it is very realistic in terms of the character portrayal?

Alice: I thought it was quite realistic ya.

Interviewer: Like all the characters are very morally ambiguous. Like the...

Alice: Ya. I thought that it was very accurate in terms of depicting humans because it didn't really depict humans as...

Interviewer: One dimensional?

Alice: One dimensional. Even with the cannibals right? Which you know is a very bad thing in rural society. You can see kind of why they went in that direction because...

Interviewer: They are driven to that...

Alice: Ya because they were forced to in order to survive, they needed to eat something.

Interviewer: And then they, they also have women and children.

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: In some parts of the game, they were the story was showing.

Alice: So ya I mean they painted they definitely created characters that were very very...

Interviewer: Realistic.

Alice: Grey. Ya they were not black and white. They were very grey.

Interviewer: So you like it very much.

Alice: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.64**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Interview 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim] 45:49]

Interviewer: When you killed Lee's brother, do you see that story and gameplay is occurring together?

Jim: Story...

Interviewer: Like because you are using the axe to kill him at the same time so...

Jim: Oh.

Interviewer: I was trying to ask if you are feeling emotional.

Jim: No, I don't feel it at all.

Interviewer: Were you feeling quite sad when you killed Lee's brother?

Jim: I just find it, honestly, a bit annoyed. Annoyed. What's wrong with your family? Ya er...

Interviewer: Because there were some participants saying that they feel quite sad ah.

Jim: I feel annoyed. I don't know what makes Lee want to screw his life so badly and they don't talk much about it. So I'm more annoyed than sad.

Interviewer: But you still feel some kind of feeling lah.

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: Just different emotions ah?

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: But the gameplay and story is still together in this part?

Jim: Ya although not as close as some other parts.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.65**

[3 June 2015 *Bioshock* Last Interview 3.40 pm – 6.40 pm [Loke] 55:10]

Interviewer: Okay so the narrative is quite separated from the gameplay?

Loke: As in I I did make the effort to remember but I think at that point in time, I was deciding is it worth trying to remember?

Interviewer: I think you have to write down.

Loke: I wrote down somewhere and then after that, it was like never mind, I should just hack it lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Loke: It's more fun to hack then to remember this.



Interviewer: Ya remembering is more tedious ah like studying.

### **Transcript 3.66**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 1:45:07]

Interviewer: This part when Jenkins die...

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: In the cutscene ah.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Do you find a conflict between the gameplay where squad mates can be revived but Jenkins cannot be revived?

Michael: er there's no conflict.

Interviewer: No conflict ah?

Michael: Obviously he dies specially.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: They created a cutscene for him to die.

Interviewer: So you don't think he can be revived ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: Why do you think they they put Jenkins in the beginning of the game ah? And then let him die so fast? Do you think it has any reason?

Michael: I do not know.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: At that point, I won't know.

Interviewer: It doesn't matter ah?

Michael: er having know how *Mass Effect* play out it might not matter also.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.67**

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 2 15:43]

Interviewer: There's a part at the beginning of the game where Jenkins died ah...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: In the cutscene but in the gameplay, when your other squad mates die, they can be revived. Do you find a conflict between the story and the gameplay?

Nasir: A bit like yah as in now that you mentioned it yah as in like how come you can't revive Jenkins and you can revive everybody else. So yah I guess so. Yah but as in er...

Interviewer: Is it because *Mass Effect* the game is about personalisation lah...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: So when it takes control away from your character, you find that there's some kind of conflict?

Nasir: A bit I guess yah. But as in I guess deep down when I was playing that, it didn't occur to me initially because I knew they were just making room for another character. As in but I didn't realise that Jenkins and also I didn't realise that Jenkins like it didn't occur to me that yah you can revive everybody else but you can't revive Jenkins. Yah and also I guess because the only experience you had with Jenkins is like one dialogue as in as in three lah as in you talked to him like three different dialogues. But other than that, you don't interact with him anymore so his loss doesn't feel as er his loss doesn't feel as heavy as let's say losing Kaidan or Ashley as in having to make that choice. So yah.

Interviewer: So the Jenkins the dialogue is only on Normandy ah? Only...

Nasir: Yah only on the Normandy.

Interviewer: So there's not much bonding ah?

Nasir: Yah so as in even when he died, it's like okay fine.

### **Transcript 3.68**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 3 [Nasir] 53:48]

Interviewer: When Tess er Tess revealed to you that she was infected at the museum er did it make you feel emotional for her?

Nasir: Ya. As in because I I like Tess as a character so as in even on the YouTube when I was watching it was like damn she's gone so fast. It was like okay, fine. Because I found her a very compelling character. So it was like...it's it's quite sad to just...

Interviewer: So you mean you you form a very strong emotional...

Nasir: Ya. I thought she was a pretty cool character like because she she was like the boss right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: She was guiding you through.

Interviewer: Because the other participant said that she cannot form a very strong link to her because Tess doesn't appear very long in the game.

Nasir: Ya as in for me lah for for me it was long enough lah for for me it was long enough.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Because as in in the sense that to to me she's a significant character because she's not er as in as a female she's not a side character lah. In this case, she is a main character who die.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya so as in so to to me that is very er compelling about her ah. She's not she's not there to just support Joel. She's the one who's actually leading this group. As in she's the one guiding they they are kind of equals lah but you can see that Tess is more of the brains of this operation.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya so in that sense, I admire her as a character lah so because of that I it's enough for me to actually care about her.

Interviewer: Then my question is...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Does your emotional connection to her affects your gameplay later on ah? Do you want to fight harder later? Or it doesn't impact your gameplay?

Nasir: Not not really because as in there...

Interviewer: You want to escape.

Nasir: As in if if there was if the last part where the military came, if they give you an option to somehow fight it out with Tess right? Then try to hold the ground as long as you can, then maybe I would be I would be tempted lah but because the game as in once she asked you to go and she stands there to hold her ground, the next time you see her is that she's been shot dead. So it's not like it's not like anything you do would save her. If if it did, then I would have taken a choice lah. But because it didn't, then too bad lor.

Interviewer: So the influence on the gameplay is not so much ah?

Nasir: Ya. Because because there was no consequence as in you can save her, then it would change my gameplay lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: But because it doesn't then it doesn't lor. Yah.

Interviewer: So it's more story?

Nasir: Yes. We just know that she died orh.

Interviewer: mm.

**Email exchange follow up from interview:**

On Sun, Jan 4, 2015 at 3:36 PM, Toh Weimin <weimin\_c38@hotmail.com> wrote:

In the last interview, you mentioned that Tess' sacrifice does not cause you to fight harder in the gameplay. I would like to ask though whether her sacrifice in the cutscene motivates you in the gameplay to continue escorting Ellie to Tommy.

Nasir's email reply:

As for whether Tess' sacrifice motivates me to continue escorting Ellie to Tommy's, her sacrifice doesn't really motivate me even though she was an interesting character and I was sad that she died quite early in the game. I was motivated to find out how the story continued, which motivated me to keep playing.

### **Transcript 3.69**

[28 July 2014 *Bioshock 1* – 2.30 pm Part 3 [Peter] 22:48]

Interviewer: This one I want to ask you Fontaine using the Code Yellow. Can you remember?

Peter: What is that? Code Yellow, I have no idea what is that? At this point of time I focused on getting rid of my enemies so I didn't really focus on that.

Interviewer: Wait, I show you.

Peter: It's probably another way of him controlling me.

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: Think that's how he another exploit he uses to reduce my life. My maximum health. Is it?

Interviewer: Ya. So when he used this Code Yellow to lower your health ah? Does it influence your gameplay?

Peter: Yes, it makes you it makes me more anxious to find the antidote so that I will er so that my life will not be lowered anymore.

Interviewer: Ya so it makes your gameplay more tensed ah? Is it?

Peter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: So you are afraid that your health will get lower and lower until you die ah?

Peter: Ya so...

Interviewer: So the longer you go and find the antidote, your health will...

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: Become lower and lower until zero.

Peter: So I will I will faster go and find lor.

Interviewer: Ah so so there's a kind of time limit ah?

Peter: I'm not sure.

Interviewer: But the time limit is very long one ah?

Peter: Ya it will reduce in intervals what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: After a while, it will reduce a bit. After a while, it will reduce a bit.

Interviewer: So it's like a kind of fixed interval ah? So it makes, it's quite impactful lah?

Peter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: So it makes you try to finish the game faster lah?

Peter: mm hmm.

### **Transcript 3.70**

[26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 7 pm [Jim] 33:15]

Interviewer: When you want to make a narrative...

Jim: When you are asked to make a narrative or gameplay choice, how to decide which option to choose? So by narrative choice, you mean choice that continues the story and by gameplay choice, it's something that violates my desire to continue the story. It's just to see what happens to me right?

Interviewer: Has some kind of reward lah. Reward for the player.

Jim: Oh you mean okay so by gameplay choice, it's something that I chose not for the sake of story but you choose because of game, because of because I want to get like steam achievement like for fun or maybe for my sadistic...

Interviewer: For the points ah.

Jim: Ya for my sadistic desire perhaps. Ya just joking. Sadistic desire, achievement, points, high score, blah blah blah. And narrative would be like continue the story right? Okay, my number one criteria would be time, my actual real time and how much time I have for this game. And it also depends on that game itself. If that game doesn't offer me much. Typically only see myself continue the story. There are some games that are quite, okay funny like Grand Theft Auto V, Grand Theft Auto in general. Well you can choose to play story or you can just, you know, run around shooting people, blow up stuff, that would be gameplay choice. If they put steam achievement that says blow up one hundred police cars for example, yes. Outside the story mission, I will just do it. It depends. It depends how they design the game. And how much time I have. Er and whether or not I am attracted to their gameplay choice their mechanism. If it is not GTA V, mm if it is not GTA, maybe I will do less of the gameplay choice. Er and as for *Walking Dead*, I don't see any opportunity for that. So it's just continue the story, continue the story. Reading like a book.

Interviewer: So it's less of a gameplay choice?

Jim: Yeah. Much more narrative.

Interviewer: More narrative choice.

Jim: For gameplay choice, maybe if you guys play *Grand Theft Auto*, I'll just do it. I will just spend one hour with experiment some of the time to play mission, and some of the time, I'll just do some the crazy stuff. You will just try to make you laugh. Ya that would be gameplay choice. Yes.

Interviewer: Ya and then for the narrative choice, how do you know how to make a certain choice? Like when you were given the conversational dialogue. There's there's three choices to give you to choose.

Jim: How do I make a choice?

Interviewer: mm how do you know which one to make?

Jim: I assume myself to be Lee Everett. That's how I choose. So er...

[26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead 2* – 7 pm [Jim] 40:20]

Jim: Experience in other games to make decisions in this game. Hmm *Mass Effect* perhaps? But they are of different settings. And I think by understanding the developers, you can use this general rule to, sometimes you can't really use what happened in galaxy to do things in a zombie apocalypse setting. Like when you read a sci-fi book, you can't really use whatever they think in totally correlates to each other. Decision, difficult decisions.

Interviewer: Because you want minimal assistance.

Jim: Mainly of what I would do as with my own personality in real life. And at times, once in a while, actually I have this urge to look at walkthroughs on google. Because of gameplay, because of what I will get maybe a particular weapon I will get later if I choose this conversation. This and that and maybe make friends with one particular yeah **I actually have this urge of looking at walkthrough. But I'll try not to. If you look at walkthrough too much, you have a lot of spoilers** so a little bit of instinct, mainly of what I will probably do in real life. Er some yeah yeah there are actually some experience in other games that I will use here and a little bit of walkthrough but I will try to minimise the walkthrough. Yes. Then in terms of age, children are always a priority. Then er friends and family are priority. Top two priority. Then the third type of priority would be how much of erm but you cannot really say that these priorities are isolated from each other. I'll have to consider them all. There will be some priorities that overwrites other priorities but there will be some scenarios those priorities actually depend on each other. Overwrite each other sometimes.

Interviewer: So your main priority, when you make the choice is...

Jim: For this game, kids first, then friends first, then whoever is useful first.

Interviewer: So the you mean the kids first and the friends is not game er game related, it's your...

Jim: It depends on the karma for the second choice.

Interviewer: Is it your real life based on your real life experience ah?

Jim: Pretty much. Then the second priority where I talked about is for example, Carley, Carley, I think she accumulated some karma within me. She actually helped me some so of course I'll save her more first. But help me more...

Interviewer: So...

Jim: If he or she is not that appreciative...

Interviewer: The they can help you more is it more of the gameplay or narrative? Narrative?

Jim: Narrative.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim: Help me on narrative but ya sometimes it can be gameplay, for example, they will offer you a high powered weapon. Just for the sake of gameplay like it makes your gameplay easier yes.

Interviewer: For *Walking Dead*, is there any any?

Jim: No, none. It's mostly narrative. You won't get you won't get an M4 rifle in *Walking Dead* so why why bother.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.71**

[26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 7 pm [Jim] Session 1 22:05]

Interviewer: So erm you will still want to replay the game to see your other choices?

Jim: If I have time but by default, I will choose according to my what I think. Unless unless I know a big deal about the character, how he behaves maybe I'll just follow his.

Interviewer: Oh so you mean that...

Jim: Ya I always put creator's priority before my desire, priority so meant for us to play like them, we play like them. That is just me.

Interviewer: Okay. So you mean...

Jim: If Lee Everett behaves this way, I'll follow his psychology. But if Lee is designed to take up our gamer's personality, he doesn't have his own, he has that's when I'll play like my own.

### **Transcript 3.72**

[1 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* [Aloy] 1 – 4 pm 02:32]

Interviewer: So do you think when you interact with the characters, do you want to try to make the story like the same as the tv series or what?

Aloy: Well, no because okay honestly, when I know the tv series right then I see certain characters say or do certain things right, I personally feel that I will have done it differently. So these games like like *The Walking Dead*, the game itself allows me to do that different way ah.

Interviewer: Okay so you like the different choices ah.

Aloy: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.73**

[*Mass Effect* gameplay file 03 [Michael] 09:45]

Michael: In *Mass Effect*, if you let someone die, it will affect their relationship point with you.

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 2:22:47]

Interviewer: This part you talked about er if you let the squad members die, then your relationship point with them in the narrative will decrease ah?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: mm do you do you mean that it also occurs in *Mass Effect* ah? Or is it only *Mass Effect 2*? This...

Michael: The...

Interviewer: er is it also in *Mass Effect* ah?

Michael: I can't remember.

Interviewer: I'm not very sure.

Michael: Ya I also not very sure but I think it will be ah.

Interviewer: Because it's not very explicit ah.

Michael: Ya so it doesn't affect a lot lah but it will affect it. That's all I remember.

Interviewer: So you mean if they die in the gameplay, the narrative will also be affected ah?

Michael: er yes. There will be a tipping point lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So you cannot cross that line lor.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So which is also why you cannot let Garrus to go out to battle with you ah.

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.74**



[17 Mar 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 1:20 – 3.20 pm [51:01]

Interviewer: But then after you have played one time ah, after you know everything already, then then you which what what information do you use to decide? Or is it based on your prior gameplay experience ah?

Interviewee: er as in personally, okay, I've I've read up on *Bioshock* so I know like what happens, whichever way you go. So like erm firstly, I I know what it looks like to kill a little girl, kill a Little Sister. I I watched it online, I didn't play through the game. And I read up so I know that for the fact that saving in the end, gives more. So like knowing that, once you play through the game, it's like it makes more sense to harvest lah because you are doing the morally wrong thing and in the long run you are getting less so ya based on that, that's my decision lah.

Interviewer: Ya so you used both the story information and gameplay information to make the choice?

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.75**

[29 May 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 5.20 – 6.20 pm [John] 09:43]

Interviewer: So in general, er do you play games for story or gameplay? I think you play for gameplay.

John: Ya gameplay.

Interviewer: er is there any specific reason why why you prefer gameplay? Is it you like the fast paced action?

John: mm I prefer to like see more of the effects, the skills and the things rather than to read a story. Generally, I don't really like to er read story when I play game. (Laughs).

Interviewer: Okay.

John: Usually I if I want to go for the story, I will go for a movie or something. Rather than play game.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.76**

[22 Apr 2013 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* session 1 [Nasir] 10:25]

Interviewer: So in this game, do you think the story or gameplay is more important? Or is it both equally important?

Nasir: So far this one, I think I think narrative a bit more important lah because I generally like stories. As in I like finding about backstories and stuff so as in I supposed the gameplay is good lah in a sense that it it keeps you as in it makes the game exciting. Because otherwise then it's just like just people telling the story mah. But as in this sense, you you like progress and slowly find out the narrative. So ya as

in although gameplay is important to keep you feeling excited in the game, that I think narrative is the driving factor lah. Ya.

Interviewer: So you think both are equally important?

Nasir: mm maybe narrative more than gameplay. But ya I think both are important ya.

Interviewer: So in general, do you play games for the story or gameplay?

Nasir: erm more for the story. Like like at least at least cos when I played *World of Warcraft*, I do read the quest texts ah. Unless I happened to have already played that that particular quest before then maybe I would go faster and but usually I will I will actually read the quest texts one. And find out what's ya what was the story behind it so for for me when I play games, in general, ya I like the story that's why I like to like just now I was exploring backstory more so ya. I like to do that kind of thing in games.

Interviewer: So erm how do you compare *World of Warcraft* with *Mass Effect* ah? The story?

Nasir: er okay lah I've heard good things about *Mass Effect* in terms of story so that's partially why I chose it. Er ya so I don't know but *World of Warcraft* is a different form because like mm I guess in in a single player game, and that kind of MMO game, the the story is a bit different. In the sense that, in this kind of game, you are you are personally involved in the story. But for for for *Warcraft*, for *World of Warcraft*, because it is a MMO right? So as in it's not just you that's involved in the story lah. It's...

Interviewer: More of the social aspect ah?

Nasir: Ya as in the sense that they they will never refer to you personally lah. They always refer to some adventurer out there or brave general brave adventurers but in the sense that you don't feel that you feel that you are just part of the effort that helped to push the story along lah. You don't feel that it's just you but in this case, it's mainly just you lah. Because you are the only character and it's a single player game. Ya. So in that sense, the I guess so in a sense *World of Warcraft*, the story is a bit bigger because there's there's a whole lot more as in because it's a bigger world so more stories can be put inside. Ya so that's the difference lah. This one is more in a way linear, or at least, more smaller lah. More focused. Mm.

Interviewer: So you find *World of Warcraft* the story is more expansive ah?

Nasir: mm ya because there's a lot of characters and a lot of things happening at different points in time. So it's like different there's always a main plotline obviously. But there's always like side stories like in this certain place, this happens then the story will just pause there for a while. So you you are also interested to find out about what happened to this character. But they can't expand all characters at the same time lah so they they will take their time lah, they will leave stories' holes here and there. If they want to come back, they will come back and expand the story. So ya.

Interviewer: So far, *Mass Effect* do you find any side quests ah?

Nasir: Any what?

Interviewer: Side story. Or is it just the main story?

Nasir: So far, now as far as I play it just seems like the main story.

Interviewer: Like nothing can be skipped ah?

Nasir: Ah skipped?

Interviewer: Cannot cannot be skipped ah?

Nasir: Ah as in because there's no there's no side story I think.

Interviewer: So far lah?

Nasir: mm. So far I don't notice any side stories.

### **Transcript 3.77**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 16:36]

Interviewer: So generally, do you play games for the story or gameplay? Or is it do you like both?

Alice: I think it has to be both because I think that if it is just one or the other, I will get really bored. Erm it's the same way that I don't play like Mario every day. Because that's purely just gameplay er there's another question why I don't play like *Beyond: Two Souls* every day. Because that's more story than anything else. Er so I think that all the games that I really enjoy playing have a good balance of both. So it gives me a choice of whether I want to focus more on gameplay er by doing certain things. Or focus on narrative by itself.

Interviewer: So you like *Assassin's Creed* very much.

Alice: I do yah. I think it might be one of my favourite series. I think *Tomb Raider* is one of my favourite series but that one is more story, it's a good balanced game.

### **Transcript 3.78**

[26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 2 – 7 pm [Jim] 38:36]

Jim: Besides the time limit, something else to help me make choices. Actually, there's this one thing in options where they can open, it's called game hint. So sometimes, if you choose one particular conversation, choose one sentence, choose what to answer like sometimes, the game will just tell you okay, Carley will remember that which means you need to think carefully of all these choices, what would they think of you, in the future. And what happens if something happened they which means what you say may possibly be used against you or to help you.

Interviewer: So do you mean that you will switch on the AI helper or you can choose standard or?

Jim: Oh oh oh I chose to switch it off. The very first time I play.

Interviewer: So how does it affect your making decision? Is it easier or?

Jim: Ya you have to think even more like Lee Everett. You have to be even more immersed. Too many hints and you feel like that's easy, I don't feel like okay I'm in

the story, I just click whatever I like. Or that's not me actually but I assume there will be some gamers that will do that. They will need hints to help to immerse but after one gameplay, I don't make auto reloads. Now you make auto links. Everything is turned off. I am that gamer type.

Interviewer: But do you find any, does the setting inside the game, other setting, do they provide you with any gameplay information ah?

Jim: Subtitles. I always turned that one.

Interviewer: To help you make the narrative choice.

Jim: Game hints I turned it off. And whatever there is. It's just control settings and graphics. That's all. There isn't much for this game.

### **Transcript 3.79**

[*Walking Dead*101 Ep 1 Part 1 2014-08-20 [Henry] 1:00]

Henry: mm, choose a display style. Well, that time I tried minimal which was totally it turned off all the hints. And you know quite hard to find so let's just go for standard where they will give me all the all the erm hints and choices.

### **Transcript 3.80**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 3:29:08]

Interviewer: er this prompt do you see it...do you see these choices as prompts in the narrative that is hinting to you that you still have to do something in the gameplay using Aiden? I mean is this when they give you this narrative choice, is it helping guiding you in the narr er in the gameplay?

Michael: Yes. But before that, the narrative already say to disable the camera mah.

Interviewer: mm so the narrative is helping in this part.

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: So this one is also narrative choice ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Or is it gameplay choice ah?

Michael: I think it becomes a gameplay.

Interviewer: But this choice do you see it as gameplay or narrative?

Michael: I see it as gameplay.

Interviewer: mm because it changes the gameplay?

Michael: mm.

### **Transcript 3.81**

[1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm [Mary] 4:38]

Interviewer: So there's another part where you helped Lily to save her father in the...

Mary: Oh ya in the...

Interviewer: Slaughterhouse ah. Then later she helps you to fight against the Saint John brothers.

Mary: Ya.

Interviewer: So this part how you find it ah?

Mary: Ya ya ya it's quite interesting because the fact that I know what would happen if I supported Kenny lah. **It's like because I I saw before gameplay and they chose Kenny ah certain people chose to support Kenny ah which means Lee will actually smash Larry's head lah. But then at the back, Lily refused to move but it was Kenny that saved him. So like I said again, the story won't have any major changes lah but it just depends on the which character does it lor like who you would be closer to in the end lah.** But I felt that at that point, it was more correct in the sense to help Larry lah because although Larry is a dick and everything but then like as Lily explains it like I feel like I could sympathise lah although Larry is quite mean to Lee lah but then ya I feel like I could understand what. So it's like it's not logical to just kill him like that lah. Oh wow.

Interviewer: So er you find that after you helped Lily, she helps you later.

Mary: Ya.

Interviewer: Ya she saved me what from the Saint ya this part.

### **Transcript 3.82**

[9 Dec 2014 3 – 5 pm *Bioshock* third session interview [John] 42:27]

Interviewer: This part you know what he is trying to do?

John: Kill you lor. They are trying to kill the character. That's all.

Interviewer: But then why does he, didn't he try to kill you immediately?

John: He says that he can't what.

Interviewer: mm.

John: He he previously, I think he try to kill you using the command what.

Interviewer: Yah.

John: But he cannot already. Then he has this another method but didn't kill you straight off the bat. So he cannot immediately kill you lah.

Interviewer: mm.

John: That's all.

Interviewer: er then this story event ah this event.

John: Ya.

Interviewer: Where he tries to kill you by reducing your health, at timed intervals throughout the game ah.

John: Ah.

Interviewer: Does it increase the tension in the gameplay ah?

John: Oh...

Interviewer: When you try to find the cure for your condition ah?

John: A bit lah a bit.

Interviewer: Like do you were you afraid that you were going to die already?

John: Ya but...

Interviewer: Or it doesn't matter to you?

John: But maybe if they put a timed limit down there, you know then maybe you scared more.

Interviewer: But if put the time limit there, will be not be very realistic ah?

John: (Laughs) Then you die then you have to go back to the save lah like...

Interviewer: Ya.

John: Like you know the Fontaine boss, they are also don't allow you to save what. Same thing what, they can do that.

Interviewer: mm. So er does it create more tension for you in this part?

John: A bit lah.

Interviewer: Does it create more tension in the gameplay?

John: A bit, they would need to, if you want to really create more tension, maybe they will have to make the background like look a bit blur something. Not enough ah. Only a bit.

Interviewer: But every time your health decreased, they will inform you ah.

John: Ya ya. They...

Interviewer: So er when it tells you that, does it give you tension or do you need?

John: A bit lor.

Interviewer: A bit only?

John: A bit only.

Interviewer: So you need more?

John: Ya ya. (Laughs).

Interviewer: But if they give you more, I think will it be not very immersive?

John: Not very what?

Interviewer: Not very immersive for you? Because...

John: er...

Interviewer: How come they give you a lot.

John: I don't know eh. Like suddenly shocked ah. Like got some horror movies.

Interviewer: So you think so how how how does it need to be changed to be better?

John: mm. Like really like those like some kind of shooting game all this when your health is low, your background is suddenly changed, all the colours. Like become darker or something. To inform that you are going to die. Like that lor.

Interviewer: mm.

### Transcript 3.83

[25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 6 – 7.30 pm [Henry] 07:50]

Interviewer: So in *Walking Dead*, you find the narrative more important than the story or than the gameplay ah?

Henry: erm because if there is no er narrative ah or if you don't understand the narrative right? Then it will you won't really you won't really know what to look out for in the entire game.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Like like like for example, the the got one part I got stuck at the motel there.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Supposed to take the pillow and then er stuff the stuff the zombie but then I I cannot I cannot find the pillow, took me very long. Ya.

Interviewer: It's because there's not much story that part ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Is it?

Henry: No probably because I I also turned off the I turned off the hint settings what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Because if I think there's the hint settings then they will like prompt me more more significantly.

Interviewer: So you mean from the start, you turned off the...

Henry: From the start, I turned off the...

Interviewer: Already turned off?

Henry: Ya already turned off. Then cos I tired eh a bit lost don't know what to do. Like I keep going back forth back forth from the bus to the brick wall to the truck there eh have the truck. Then cannot find. Cannot find something like as in as in I know I know I need to find something to go and to...

Interviewer: Progress the game.

Henry: Progress the gameplay but I just cannot find the thing. Ah.

Interviewer: But er can you explain again ah? I don't really understand how come you are stuck ah.

Henry: Orh no. Because...

Interviewer: Why you cannot find the pillow?

Henry: No because somehow the when I er er okay at the brick wall right?

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then I look up I look up is the zombie, then I look left, eh I look right is the is the car what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then search the area don't have. Then alley nothing. Then I look left then I think I just I just miss the pillow like I just keep finding everywhere except my pillow because I didn't I didn't really notice the ground. I was looking more like oh is there weapon at the at the other side of the wall. Behind.

Interviewer: Oh so you just...

Henry: I missed it lah I missed it.

Interviewer: Look above the wall and then look to the right side ah.

Henry: I looked over the wall, look to the right side, I look to the left also what.

Interviewer: But you didn't look at the floor lah.

Henry: I never look I thought I thought it was just just some useless er like debris that kind.

Interviewer: You just look over the wall lah.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: You didn't look at the ground lah.

Henry: The ground?



Interviewer: I mean the ground.

Henry: Ah I didn't look at the ground. As in I look at the ground, but but I didn't I didn't I just thought it was a like those...

Interviewer: Just props lah?

Henry: Ya just props like those newspaper fly everywhere that kind ah.

Interviewer: Ah so so the gameplay gameplay object is not prominent enough ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: For you lah.

Henry: For me...

Interviewer: When you play.

Henry: Only for that part lah. The rest is okay.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: The the...

Interviewer Ya the rest is quite one choice only ah?

Henry: Ya. The rest is...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya. Correct orh then this only. I think also because I turned off the hints. Then cannot find anything. Ya but other than that it's okay.

Interviewer: But do you think is it also because they the story never give you a lot of hints in that part ah? Like the characters talking doesn't really help you to find the pillow?

Henry: Got the when I talked to the characters, they will they say they say it's either you have to use the eh you have to get weapon...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then when I went to the truck eh when I went to the truck ya then I saw the pick then I know that is probably the weapon to use. But then to get inside then it's another thing. Then I saw one zombie down there then I know I have to kill the zombie. I have to kill the zombie sitting at the car first before I can proceed. But I think is the I cannot find that thing lor. Ah like I I know what I am supposed to do. But I don't know where's the object to to take it from.

Interviewer: So that means the story the character they never give you the direct information lah, for the gameplay lah?

Henry: mm.

Interviewer: They give like...

Henry: I remember they only say something like...

Interviewer: Like only...

Henry: You need to find weapon. Then after that, need to like there's one part, the when we saw the zombie at the car, we were saying orh the car the car can be used to do something. But the zombie is down there.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: So means that the zombie needs to be moved or killed lah. Which so I in the end I know the zombies need to be killed but I just cannot find the object. It's really I cannot find the object.

Interviewer: So so the characters never tell you er what to do lah. Basically, you have to find out yourself lah.

Henry: Ah ya ya. Correct. The characters never say say directly lah. Which is as in is okay lah just that I think at that part I a bit blind. I blind I cannot see the...

Interviewer: But the part so far, you find it quite fun, is it?

Henry: That part?

Interviewer: Quite fun is it?

Henry: When I finding the pillow?

Interviewer: Ya is it quite fun for you?

Henry: er when I cannot `when I cannot find, I a bit I a bit irritated lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: eh where's the object, where's the object?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Then other but after I find then it's okay.

Interviewer: Do you find that part quite different from the other parts in the episode one ah?

Henry: Different ah? Er not really ah it's about the same what. It's just that like for example, the at the drug store.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: When I supposed to go out and take the key. Then have to use the brick to throw eh use the remote control eh press the tv.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Then use the use the brick. I see the brick. I know the brick meant for the throwing at the window one.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But then er ya lah it's it's the same lah just that I I can find the object for the drug store one but the...

Interviewer: That one is less obvious lah.

Henry: Ya less less obvious ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: mm so just now you got say the story is more important ah for *Walking Dead*.

Henry: For *Walking Dead*.

Interviewer: I'm...

Henry: er I think erm not really more important lah but er but I think both complement each other. Like the narrative one you see is the ah is the narrative is more as in sometimes, it will base your choice on the narrative. Then sometimes, it is totally independent of the narrative. So it really depends on the situation.

Interviewer: So you think both the story and the gameplay, they are equally important?

Henry: Ya. As in for a good game...

Interviewer: *Walking Dead* ah I mean for *Walking Dead*.

Henry: Ah for *Walking Dead*. Important ah for *Walking Dead*, let me see ah. I think I think it's more or less equally important lah but for me for me ah for *The Walking Dead* lah, I I find that the I think without a story, you cannot really you can't really say that it's a it's a er ya I think for *The Walking Dead*, it's more of the story.

Interviewer: So you mean the story cannot be left out lah.

Henry: mm.

Interviewer: But the gameplay can be left out lah.

Henry: Not not saying that the gameplay can be left out or anything lah but as in I would say that if say if say there is there is okay if say like extreme lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: There is there is a story and no gameplay. And another situation is there is no er no story but got gameplay. I think the one with the story one and no gameplay would be better?

Interviewer: For *Walking Dead* lah?

Henry: For *Walking Dead*. Ah.

Interviewer: You mean it still can work lah.

Henry: It it may not work lah as well as this lah, but...

Interviewer: But still can work.

Henry: But it still can cos it's most of the time, it's you see a cutscene then you understand what's going on.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Like for example, if you don't see the cutscene for like at the start where the the guy then you don't know, you don't know his relation with his family, where he live and whether he live at the mason there.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah that kind then you you won't really know what for example, the dialogues you don't know what to say that kind. Ah.

Interviewer: So in that sense, you feel the story is more important ah?

Henry: Ya in that sense. For *Walking Dead* lah.

Interviewer: The dialogue choice is so so many dialogue choice.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: It's such a big part of this game.

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: mm. So er there's only er if it's the the scenario is that the gameplay is only present ah then the story is left out, you think it cannot work or it still can work?

Henry: Sorry again?

Interviewer: If the if there is only gameplay ah?

Henry: If there is only gameplay.

Interviewer: And then the story is left left out in *The Walking Dead*.

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Do you think it still can work ah?

Henry: I think it still can work but just that it will be it will be a bit it will be a bit it will be a funny game lah.

Interviewer: Fighting game ah?

Henry: No it will be a funny game that it's just you just oh you go there to do this then you go there to do that. Then as in it follows the same thing like go here.

Interviewer: Like just er like progressing progressing from one point...

Henry: From one point to another. Ya.

Interviewer: Like for one level to another.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Like Pacman those kind.

Henry: eh...

Interviewer: Quite simple one lah.

Henry: Probably not like Pacman lah. But probably like those ah you know those sometimes, online those flash games that kind. Then you go from one point to another point. Then got no story. Then it's okay like just go here do this go here do this then after that, you go next level okay do this this this. Then no story lah then I think it will be a bit er a bit sian (Hokkien term which means boring).

Interviewer: But the flash game you think it's not sian lah.

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Those type of...

Henry: I find I personally don't like that kind of flash game so ya I prefer got a bit of story one.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: At least you can connect with the story a bit like you understand the thing a bit more.

### **Transcript 3.84**

[25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 6 – 7.30 pm [Henry] 18:24]

Interviewer: So the next question ah.

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: In general do you play the game for the story or gameplay?

Henry: Oh hehe.

Interviewer: Like you I think the info sheet you say you play a lot of games ah?

Henry: Ah. It really depends on what kind of genre of game. If for example, it's platform eh like ah okay no like platform games, like it usually Indie games right, it's that one is obviously it's like there's not much story to it so so I'm okay with just er the gameplay itself. But then if say like it's like er er...

Interviewer: More commercial games?

Henry: More ah more commercial games like like this one *Walking Dead* or say like er er let's say maybe er like *Borderlands*.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Or er whatever lah that kind of game then I think the story is important. Like more important. So it's like this kind of game, it's like the the you need story to to to spur on your...

Interviewer: Gameplay action.

Henry: Your gameplay action lah. Yah but like say games like Counterstrike that kind all the FPS one, you don't need you don't need story what. You just need to piang piang then can already.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah so it depends on what kinds of games lah. But er I would prefer those that got a bit of story one. So you can ya so you can...

Interviewer: So you can relate to it.

Henry: Ya relate to it lah. It's ya that's for me lah.

Interviewer: So you mean must have some story lah.

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Those games you play.

Henry: er best is have lah as in I would prefer those that have story one lah. But those no story one it's still it's still it's still playable, it really depends on what kind of genre it is ah.

Interviewer: So can you give examples of games that you play ah?

Henry: Examples?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Of games that I play?

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: As in with related to story or what?

Interviewer: I mean like just now you say you like some games you like to play games with some story one.

Henry: Ah like like like Borderlands lah. Borderlands 1, Borderlands 2 that kind of game. Then they will follow this story. Er you don't need me to say the story right? No need? Ya like probably that kind. Er ya. Or like er you play like er er what games do I call? The the the er oh ya like the is it *The Last of Us*?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: *The Last of Us* is also story story based what. You that kind of games lah. Ah.

Interviewer: So you have played *The Last of Us* or you just watch it?

Henry: No no. I just watch. I only watch like er a few a few videos of it. Then I know it's like really story based.

Interviewer: So you mean you like like those kind of...

Henry: er I would prefer that lah. Er If I have to make a choice, then I say yes lah those with story. Is probably better lah. But I can play both lah. I can play I can play.

Interviewer: But more but generally, you you like those with story more?

Henry: Ya lah. Ya ya.

Interviewer: But so far, do you play any games that don't have any story?

Henry: Don't have any story?

Interviewer: Ya like *Counterstrike*? Do you play those kind?

Henry: Got I got play *Counterstrike*. Like *Counterstrike*, er orh *Counterstrike*, then I got play what games ah? Like...

Interviewer: *DOTA*?

Henry: *DOTA* I got play. *League of Legends* I got play. Er...

Interviewer: mm *Path of Exile* you got play or not?

Henry: Orh that one I never play. I want to I want to download

Interviewer: Free to play one.

Henry: Ya lazy ah if I download, then then er I think I will be addicted to it.

Interviewer: So those kinds you also got play ah? Those kinds is more more the gameplay focused ah?

Henry: Ya. Ya that one is more gameplay focused. Cos that one not really much story what. Like there's no story in going around and shooting shooting the...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Other person lah so that one is just gameplay lah. Ah.

Interviewer: So all those you also got play lah.

Henry: Ah I got play.

Interviewer: But not er you it's not one of your most favourite kinds ah?

Henry: er I would not say it's favourite or...

Interviewer: Because you say...

Henry: What lah but I will play...

Interviewer: You will prefer those with some stories.

Henry: I will play almost all games lah but I will prefer those that have story lah.

Interviewer: Ah.

Henry: If ya lah.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.85**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead 2* – 4 pm [Henry] 1:34:35]

Interviewer: And then the last part of the game where you moving through the walkers that part.

Henry: Ah huh.

Interviewer: Do you see only gameplay ah? Or is it gameplay together with narrative?

Henry: The only narrative is when we saw Clementine's parents what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: And when Lee er collapsed what.

Interviewer: So is it separated from the narrative ah? When you are moving through the walkers.

Henry: As in...

Interviewer: The gameplay is it separated from the narrative?

Henry: As in the narrative was just as in I just wanted to...

Interviewer: Or was it together with the narrative?

Henry: Together lah together because I wanted to get out as quickly as possible. Then just so happened that we fainted and we saw the parents and we fainted.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ya but it's together.

Interviewer: Was it emotional when you engaged in this part of the game?

Henry: When I when I faint?

Interviewer: Ya. I mean when you saw Clementine saw her parents.

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Did you feel quite emotional?

Henry: No not really. Because I'm not Clementine what. As in it's Clementine's parents, not my parents.

Interviewer: mm.



Henry: It's just that like oh no, how is she going to feel. Like worried about Clementine only.

Interviewer: mm. And then any other comments about this part ah? Like...

Henry: I I thought that it was going to rain. Because got the got the thunder.

Interviewer: You thought it was going to rain?

Henry: I thought it was going to rain.

Interviewer: Oh so you were quite scared that the walkers will discover you ah?

Henry: Ya when it rained, then it washed off the blood what then they...

Interviewer: So you you you feel that you have to quickly progress the game.

Henry: Ya. This one I feel that I have to quickly progress the game.

Interviewer: So the narrative is motivating the gameplay?

Henry: Ya okay.

### **Transcript 3.86**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 17:54]

Interviewer: And then can you also try and define narrative and gameplay event ah?

Henry: Event?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Wah. (Laughs). Er...

Interviewer: Because I want to clarify everything ah.

Henry: Okay can. Narrative event ah. Wah. Narrative event is mm...

Interviewer: Is cannot be avoided?

Henry: Oh.

Interviewer: Gameplay event is something you can...

Henry: Avoid?

Interviewer: Choose to change ah?

Henry: Okay.

Interviewer: Something like that ah?

Henry: But the thing is sometimes you don't know. Most of the time you don't know whether this thing can be avoided or or not.

Interviewer: Ya. But after you finished the game, you will know more.

**Henry: Ya like okay like for example, erm erm I think er as in I think the fifth episode ah when Kenny died, as in after that I went to I went to to see see another ending. As in after I finished the thing I went to see another ending.**

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then I realised that no matter what Kenny will die.

Interviewer: So that one is a narrative event lah?

Henry: That's a yah that one is a narrative event.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But just how he die is different lor. Ah but say like er erm for example, I can er okay say for Ben right? Ben in the end dies.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: But he can die at the eh episode 4 he can die at episode 5.

Interviewer: It's just whether he dies early or later lah.

Henry: Ya that one is gameplay choice ah?

Interviewer: You mean when you can choose to save him or not.

Henry: Ah as in at the bell tower there.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah that one I think is gameplay choice ah because as in I I know he dies at the end lah but I I choose to save him like at the fourth episode so he doesn't die.

Interviewer: So let me think how you define narrative event. So narrative event is happenings in the story that you cannot change it ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: And then gameplay event is happenings in the story that you can have a choice.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Like whether to prevent the character from dying sooner or later.

Henry: Yeah correct.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Or also also your your your er choose to side who also lah that kind also considered event lah.

Interviewer: You mean...

Henry: As in after after you choose to side then they will...

Interviewer: Narrative event ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Or gameplay event?

Henry: eh wait ah when you choose to side when you choose to side with...

Interviewer: I think it's both gameplay and narrative.

Henry: mm both ya both. Ya but ya lor like the previous definition one. Ya. It's probably like that.

Interviewer: And then all the interaction parts, interaction with objects is only gameplay event.

Henry: Ya. Interaction yeah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Correct correct.

### **Transcript 3.87**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 24:53]

Interviewer: And then when you play the game did you like use your experience from other games.

Henry: How to use my experience from other games?

Interviewer: Like you played other games like this before? Or is it your first time playing this kind of games?

Henry: er as in like the?

Interviewer: *Walking Dead* ah.

Henry: *Walking Dead* ah? Erm...

Interviewer: Is it the first time you play this kind of...

Henry: eh it's...

Interviewer: Or is it er last time got some other games like this?

Henry: I'm trying to...

Interviewer: A little bit.

Henry: I'm trying to recall like...

Interviewer: Like graphic graphic adventure games ah? Point and click adventure games.

Henry: I think got. Yeah got play before. But...

Interviewer: Cannot remember ah?

Henry: Ya. I cannot remember any of the titles because it's quite long ago. Ya.

Interviewer: It's also a bit like this ah?

Henry: Got ya there's like choice. Then you click, then you choose. Ya but I can't really remember. But I think the the whether I use any experience from other game...

Interviewer: Is definitely ah?

Henry: Is ya is it's probably more of er I I use experience from like life because some events you you see or some you see tv or you watch drama.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Or you see some other video game, then you will know that er like he looks evil then maybe shouldn't trust him that kind. Ah something like that lah.

Interviewer: It's your general...

Henry: It's just a general...

Interviewer: Life experience?

Henry: Ya probably just general thing so...

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.88**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 1:08:54]

Interviewer: Do you find that the narrative and gameplay they influenced each other? Or is it so far it's quite separated? After you finished the game?

Henry: I thought after I finished the game ah?

Interviewer: Ya I mean when you choose the choices, does it change the gameplay? Or is it er still the same ah?

Henry: er it got it does affect lah. Confirm affect one lah. As in like er the...

Interviewer: It affects is in terms of the character's reaction to you ah?

Henry: Ya. In terms of the characters' reactions. Like the relationship lah like whether you choose one then after that you side with one, the other one will not not very nice. Then both will affect lah.

Interviewer: They will affect each other is more in terms of the the story sense ah because this game is very story focused.

Henry: Ya. Just in terms of story lor cos as in the story is like for example how how the thing turns out to be what so ya.

Interviewer: It's mostly the relationship.

Henry: Ya more of the relationship.

### Transcript 3.89

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 1:13:20]

Interviewer: And then Lee also keeps talking to himself when you clicked on the environmental objects ah.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: er do you find that he's providing you with the gameplay hints?

Henry: Ya ya ya definitely.

Interviewer: To progress the story.

Henry: It does it does.

Interviewer: And then when Lee talks to himself, do you find that it is hard to immerse?

Henry: When he talks to himself?

Interviewer: Do you find that it is hard for you to immerse in his role ah?

Henry: er I think he's...

Interviewer: Do you find him something crazy or what?

Henry: No lah as in er I I I know the the the game creator is they they when he talked to himself means he's providing information for for you lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But as in reality people don't don't do that like I would say oh I see a I see a box, I see I see a pillow on the floor. That kind like maybe I can use this pillow. They will just think in the head what. It's but I think it's I think it's easier like...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: It's providing hints what. But it doesn't make it hard for me to immerse in his character leh. I know I know I won't talk out loud lah I won't say oh maybe I can do this maybe I can do that.

Interviewer: You know it's part of the game lah?

Henry: Ya. I know I know it's part of the game. I used to it lah.

Interviewer: When Lee talks to you do you find it's narrative ah?

Henry: When Lee talks to himself ah?

Interviewer: Ya do you find that it is it's a narrative ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Giving you gameplay hints?

Henry: Ya. It's a narrative giving gameplay hints. Yes. Correct.

### **Transcript 3.90**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 1:43:00]

Interviewer: And then giving the food to Lee's group, do you find it quite hard ah?

Henry: Huh?

Interviewer: er because you have only 4 pieces of food to give.

Henry: I only have 4 pieces.

Interviewer: It's quite hard ah?

Henry: er ah it's definitely a hard choice but er okay there were I think nine nine people right? Around there? Then I chose I definitely chose to give to the kids.

Interviewer: Ya I think you explained it already.

Henry: Ya. It's not not that hard lah.

Interviewer: And then Kenny and Lily is because they are the most important people.

Henry: Ya they are the most important people.

### **Transcript 3.91**

[3 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* Session 3 11 am – 1 pm [Henry] 05:12]

Interviewer: I think going to the Dairy is the only way the story can progress ah?

Henry: mm hmm. Going to the Dairy. Erm I think is the only way it can progress. As in as in if you, the probably the only thing, actually I don't know. Er as in if I choose to when I choose to stay, I think they will ask me to go also.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Because I think got a lot of people say want to go right?

Interviewer: Yes.

Henry: Ya then either way, it has to go. Just that I whether I stated whether to go to the Dairy Farm or I remain at the the erm motel.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: And that one will affect my not say reputation lah but more like the my erm relationship in that sense? Ya. Probably lah they will see like oh he don't want to...

Interviewer: Then they will go against you.

Henry: Ah something like that.

Interviewer: mm. And then when your choice does not have influence on changing the narrative, what do you feel ah? Like you have no choice but to go ah.

Henry: If I have no choice but to go then...er as in...

Interviewer: Like is it oki for you?

Henry: I forgot what I did I choose? What did I choose? Did I choose not to go? Oh ya I choose to go. Ya er ya I think as in erm like that like that it was meaningful ah? Ah as in whether my choice was impactful. Er I think er although going to the Dairy is the only way to progress, I think I think it er it is more of a general consensus to go...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Together. Ya so as in I wanted to go ah so so cos we needed food and everything and supplies. Then ya lah kind of meaningful. It's just that my view happened to side along with other people.

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.92**

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* session 1 [Nasir] 44:16]

Interviewer: So for *Mass Effect*, so far you find is kind of more good and dark character ah? Not...

Nasir: For?

Interviewer: Grey character.

Nasir: In the sense that I think it's more that I want to know what is the good side ending first. As in the good Shepherd ending. Then later I want to find out what's the bad Shepherd ending, the extremes. Then from there, I will slowly start exploring the middle ground ah. As in because if you know like what's the worst, what's the best that can happen and the worst that can happen, then then it will be interesting to see how how much as in the the centre areas like ya how will it change ah. As in I want to, I would like to know the extremes first. And from there then you know how the the middle choices that you make how how the game will how the narrative will change as a result of that.

Interviewer: So you think *Mass Effect* also have kind of grey areas ah?

Nasir: mm ya ya ya I think it will have. Because you will just be inconsistent lor. Like certain things you choose this certain things you choose that, then I think there will be grey areas lah. Ya.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you think it will affect the story ending also?

Nasir: The story what?

Interviewer: Ending.

Nasir: Ya I think so. Ya as in I haven't played...

Interviewer: I think is three endings ah?

Nasir: *Mass Effect*. Oh there's three endings is it?

Interviewer: I I also haven't completed.

Nasir: Ya as in I'm not ya. I'm not sure but I'm just assuming there's like four endings or something. Like a super good, super bad and slightly good, slightly bad ending. That kind of ending. But ya. But mm I'm assuming that it's that one ah. I know that *Bioshock* it has only two endings.

Interviewer: No. *Bioshock* has three endings.

Nasir: Three ah?

Interviewer: Also the same.

Nasir: Oh oki oki can. Ya. So okay lah. As in I don't know. Like after a while, like like I used to I used to like this kind of like multiple endings. But nowadays, I I'm leaning more towards one I prefer one solid ending. Regardless of...in a way, not not regardless of your choice ah but ya I prefer like to have one ending so that people can discuss about that ending. And find out more about it.

Interviewer: Like more canonical ending?

Nasir: Ya. I prefer more canon as in more canon endings ah so that...otherwise like if you give so much options then if it's not canon then what's the point? Ya.

### **Transcript 3.93**

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* session 1 [Nasir] 52:01]

Interviewer: Do you think erm non-linearity is it better or worse than linearity? Story and gameplay?

Nasir: It depends on how the linear...how the non-linear thing is executed. Like I think ah like in terms of like *Walking Dead* right? At least for for the first for the first season ah the the first season because I I...

Interviewer: It's quite linear ah?

Nasir: Ya as in the sense that it's non-linear in the sense that okay you can save this character now. But whenever you saved a character, you know that that character is just going to die later on. It's not like the character will stay through with you until the end. So I found that a bit superficial ah. Like okay it's interesting in the sense that you get to see what that character er er is doing in that part of the game while they are still alive ah. But you know that they are going to just die later on.

Interviewer: Ya I think it's the good things you do or the bad things you do.

Nasir: For *Walking Dead* is it?

Interviewer: Ya. The kind of emotion you feel.

Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya.



Interviewer: Like are you hopeful or are you more pessimistic.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Depending on your choice.

Nasir: Ya but but that's in terms of the...you interacting with the characters right? How they react to you. But I'm referring to like those situations where they force you to save one character now and the other one will die right? But then like like after once you get used to *Walking Dead* games you will know that this character you save now will just die later on lah. As in it's interesting to find out what will happen to them that kind of things they contribute to the narrative. But you know that in the in the bigger picture, it doesn't matter lah because they are just going to die later on and the the main story will still continue.

Interviewer: So *Walking Dead* is the non-linearity is mainly in the sub subtle things ah?

Nasir: Ya as in in in season one ah, I think season two they are trying out new things. But in season one, I found it a bit superficial ah. The the non-linearity. As in if if the non-linearity can can affect the story in a big way or maybe multiple endings okay lah that that would be good. Multiple if it do have multiple endings. But because *Walking Dead* only has a single ending mah and it doesn't it's more like branched out then it just converge again. I find that a bit superficial ah.

Interviewer: So for you it's quite not so impactful so far?

Nasir: For as in now you mean?

Interviewer: You have you played it?

Nasir: No but I did watch it ah on YouTube. So ya in that sense, after a while I will just like okay doesn't really matter but as in okay lah you can save this guy but in a way, in your mind you know that he's just going to die again. As in he's just going to die later on so in that sense ya as in I don't really like it that much if the story just converges like it makes your choice very superficial.

Interviewer: So...

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: So far, are you attracted to *Walking Dead* or don't like it?

Nasir: As in I like *Walking Dead* because of the story. Just that I think ya as in it's just a direction that it chose ah in terms of they decide to make. Because they I think because they want a canon ending so that's why they don't have multiple endings. So that the the the fans or the people who discussed about the storyline can can converge and discuss on the same things ah. So in that sense, I I can appreciate a linear story. Then but if you want to have a linear story, then I would rather not really have that minute choices ah. Like ya like like *Bioshock Infinite*, you even though you had certain choices here and there, you you as in once you finished the game, you know that that doesn't affect the story at all mah. Whatever you do so I I find that better as in if it is going to be a superficial choice in non-linearity, I rather not make that choice and just have a linear as in because it's essentially it's a non-li...if it's a linear game,

it's a linear game mah. If you just introduce this kind of branches that converges later on, like like boliao (Hokkien term meaning meaningless) mah.

Interviewer: So you mean if it's linear, you only all the way linear ah?

Nasir: As in maybe have some fun choices. Like...

Interviewer: Like more impactful?

Nasir: er as in ya if it's a linear story, it's like I don't I don't really have a need to make to make it to to have it any any linear choice. As in any er impactful choices. If it's going to be a linear story right? As in you don't I don't think there's a need for me to do any impactful choices. Because if it's going to converge then it's useless.

Interviewer: So it's like no point ah?

Nasir: Ya but like in a sense that like when the Elizabeth like in Infinite when you can choose you want the cage pendant or the the bird pendant, as in it doesn't change gameplay at all mah. But in this kind you see how it impacts at least she she's going to wear that thing lah so those kinds of choices were fine lah as in I'm oki I enjoy those kinds of choices. But if you, ya but the good thing is that they didn't ask you to do any impactful gameplay choices lah which I can appreciate because they are going for a linear story.

Interviewer: So erm why do you like the choosing pendant?

Nasir: Ya it in a way, it it makes you seem relevant in the game mah. In the sense that like because...

Interviewer: Like the symbol, symbolic ah?

Nasir: Ya as in...

Interviewer: The story?

Nasir: As in I even though I don't change the overall gameplay right? The symbolic the symbolic thing is there because in the sense that that Elizabeth will wear that thing throughout the entire game lah until the end.

Interviewer: So...

Nasir: So...

Interviewer: You can connect to it emotionally ah?

Nasir: Ya. As in ya you are right.

Interviewer: In the story?

Nasir: mm. As in it makes you make the it personalises your narrative lah even though it doesn't change the story but it personalises it to some extent.

Interviewer: So in *Bioshock* Infinite, there's also no not so much connection between the story and gameplay?

Nasir: mm ya.

Interviewer: Like that part, the pendant choice.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Doesn't affect the gameplay?

Nasir: mm but I don't know I think I think there were other there might have been other choices right? I don't know whether the one about...

Interviewer: Ya you choose to throw the ball at the Negro couple or you choose to throw the ball at Jeremiah Fink.

Nasir: Ya but...

Interviewer: And then the gameplay reward will be given by different NPCs later.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: It will affect the gameplay.

Nasir: Ya as in ya it won't really affect the gameplay that's true.

Interviewer: But it will affect the gameplay reward lah. Who will give you the reward.

Nasir: The ya but the reward itself is the same right?

Interviewer: I'm not sure.

Nasir: mm. oki but ya.

Interviewer: I think it's a little bit different.

Nasir: Okay if if if the reward is the different then okay lah. It affects gameplay. But if the reward is the same, I think it's the same but I'm also not sure. Then ya.

Interviewer: I think it should be different. If not no point ah.

Nasir: Ya but but the whole point as in the whole idea they are trying to push in *Bioshock Infinite* is that these choices are just variables mah. It doesn't matter, it's about constants and variables right? So I think that's the idea that they are asking you to make this kind of non these trivial choices lah that they are trying to show you that okay there can be a lot of choices in the game. These are all variables. And but there will always be a constant in the game like the important events that happen in the game. So I I think they they they purposely gave you trivial choices to to push the message further lah. Like they are trying to push in the game.

Interviewer: Like give you some kind of control ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Illusion of control?

Nasir: Ya as in the sense that because in the the idea behind *Bioshock Infinite* was about multiple worlds and and constants and variables right? So these choices like mirror that that the idea they want to push on you lah. So that you can appreciate the idea better in the whole context of the game. So I think that's why these non, these

trivial choices fit the narrative they are trying to push forward. Which is about constants and variables. Ya so in that sense, even even though I initially I found it a bit boliao (Hokkien term meaning meaningless) that ok you can just use the pendant then so what? But later on when you learnt about the the deeper meaning in the game about constants and variables, I can I can appreciate all these random choices that that seems not to matter ah. Ya. So I think it it really depends on how you craft the story. If you can if you can craft the story then that the gameplay can support then okay lah as in even though it can be even though generally I I don't like boliao choices, but if you can give a reason for the boliao choices for existing, I can appreciate that ah ya. So for me, it depends on the narrative.

Interviewer: So for *Bioshock Infinite*, you think it's okay lah because...

Nasir: Ya ya.

Interviewer: It supports the theme.

Nasir: Ya because it fits the theme of the game of the narrative. Ya but in *Walking Dead*, it's like okay lah if you want to make the point that it is a apocalypse and your choices doesn't really matter then okay lah fine. But...

Interviewer: So you cannot connect emotionally to *Walking Dead* ah?

Nasir: erm...

Interviewer: Because you feel that...

Nasir: I wouldn't say that I don't connect emotionally, it's more like like there's those certain parts like okay like those certain parts that pull me away a bit from the game but I can still connect with like the main characters lah like like Clementine and Lee. As in the choices that they make but in terms of like but in the sense that I just adapt to to what to how the game is designed lor as in it's designed such that...

Interviewer: So it's just not your type of game lah.

Nasir: mm as in I would play it. I would play it but ya as in how ah? I would I think *Walking Dead* would would be a bit better if you're your choices actually mattered. Ya as in because I would think that in in a apocalyptic universe, your choices would matter lah.

Interviewer: But if it's doesn't matter, then I think it gives you the message that your actions has some inevitability?

Nasir: mm ya.

Interviewer: So it somehow supports the theme of the game.

Nasir: True. As in I guess like it depends. Because like for *Infinite* they clearly stated that okay this is the theme of the game right? Constants and variables right? But in apocalyptic settings, it really depends on on the player and how you interpret the environment ah. Like for me, I like *The Last of Us* a lot. Because like it seems as though like you fighting through and bothering to to get to whatever to to the end place, it mattered ah but so in that sense, I can appreciate that kind of fighting through in an apocalypse to try to make things...

Interviewer: So *The Last of Us* is more...

Nasir: More hopeful in that sense? Less less giving impact.

Interviewer: Give you more choices?

Nasir: As in not not not really choice.

Interviewer: Like a more what ah?

Nasir: As in the theme of the game I see is about you trying to adapt to this post-apocalyptic environment lah. Whereas *Walking Dead* is more like because for Last of Us is been like twenty years right? The setting. So it's like people have been living with this truth that they bobian (Hokkien term for having no choice) lah they have to make make do with this kind of world that they live in now. They have to adapt.

Interviewer: So it's the different theme ah?

Nasir: mm different theme ah. Like for *Walking Dead*, it wasn't that long mah. As in the infection, people still had memory about their past be before the infection. So ya it's a different theme of the game ah. So I guess if they are trying to make the message that your choices are inevitable because apocalypse is here, then okay lor but ya in a sense that I like I like er Last of Us more because I just like the theme more about about seeing a world that has been like twenty years into the infection and ya like the...

Interviewer: You erm you just watch it but you never played it lah? Or you?

Nasir: mm no I I didn't play cos I don't have PS mah but I watched through the entire thing already lah. So I I know what happens ah in the game ya.

Interviewer: Okay. But you say you like Last of Us better than *Walking Dead*.

Nasir: Ya I think because okay lah as in ya I think overall Last of Us also better designed game. But then again *Walking Dead* wasn't meant to be challenging. I think ah it's not it's not super challenging game that depends on your skill and all that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Is it because you like *The Last of Us* is because the gameplay is more more balanced with the story?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Because *Walking Dead* is more story dominant.

Nasir: Ya. As in I I can I can enjoy *Walking Dead* ya but if you ask me to compare between *Walking Dead* and *The Last of Us*, I will definitely prefer *The Last of Us* lah because...

Interviewer: Because there is more gameplay.

Nasir: Ya because you you get a sense that you are progressing through a story. And you okay lah as in I like challenges along the way lah. As in I like to be challenged. As in depends lah like for this one, I choose normal because I don't want to be over

challenged. I don't know what's the basic level. Still learning the game mah. Like some challenge would be nice lah. Ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.94**

[3 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* Session 3 11 am – 1 pm [Henry] 47:30]

Interviewer: And then asking Kenny to get the gun.

Henry: What's the other options ah?

Interviewer: Asking Lily to take the knife.

Henry: What's the last one?

Interviewer: Wait ah.

Henry: er er okay the dot dot dot is out of the question. Er Clementine, I was thinking of getting Clementine or Kenny get the gun cos Lili grab a knife is er like knife is just the set the set the normal eating knife. I think the gun more useful.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: So I asked Kenny to grab the gun.

Interviewer: Oh so it's not that you are trying to side with any of the characters.

Henry: No no no. It's not not trying to side any characters. And it's the first option. Maybe if the Lily get knife option was in front, maybe I would have chosen that but...

Interviewer: Oh so it is also very instinctive ah?

Henry: It's er it's it's instinct like oh I see I see I see Kenny get the gun oh then the the gun that very obvious.

Interviewer: mm it's the most useful.

Henry: Ya. It's probably the most useful what.

Interviewer: And then do you see this as a gameplay dialogue choice? Or is it a narrative or is it together?

Henry: It's more of...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: It's more of this one ah? I think it's more of a gameplay choice ah. But it's a gameplay right? That doesn't really matter what. Like the event will still be the same.

Interviewer: Gameplay in the sense that you have a choice ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: But the narrative cannot be changed.

Henry: The narrative cannot be changed.

Interviewer: That's why it's a gameplay choice.

Henry: Ah. Cos I think either way either way the the the Danny will take the gun.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Definitely one lah. Cos they want us to run one ah.

### **Transcript 3.95**

[3 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* Session 3 11 am – 1 pm [Henry] 50:06]

Henry: er whether it was because of Clementine. Erm partly lah. But not as much as the fact that giving Larry the benefit of the doubt. Ya.

Interviewer: So this one is is it more of a narrative choice ah?

Henry: mm I think it's both eh. It's both narrative and gameplay. Right? Er cos I actually more of narrative but it's it's linked together lah cos more narrative cos cos have to use have to use previous previous information to choose what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ah like before that like the ah is is information even from episode one when when ah Duck was Duck was covered in blood. Then give him the benefit of doubt. So ya I should do the same.

Interviewer: So it's like a mirroring of the situation.

Henry: Ya it's a mirroring of the situation. Just that the role is reversed.

Interviewer: Is it about seventy percent narrative?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: About there seventy percent. And then when Kenny still bashed Larry's head do you do you find that the choice was meaningful ah?

Henry: er as in the choice to either I should kill him or...

Interviewer: Ya you choose to not to kill him but then he still...

Henry: I still think it's meaningful. Because I still don't think it's right for Kenny to kill Larry. As in my my my er my side still stands lah like oh er er I won't be killing Larry even though he even though he will die in the end but I'm I'm not I'm not going to take part in that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Ya and then you see Lily helping you later, the consequence of this choice.

Henry: As in did I see the...

Interviewer: I mean after you saved, choose to save the Larry.

Henry: Ah...

Interviewer: Were you able to see that the story changes is Lily helping you later?

Henry: Can can...

Interviewer: When you fight the Saint John brothers. Instead of Kenny ah.

Henry: er that one I don't know. As in I I cannot as in I don't know. I only know that Kenny was was very angry with me. And maybe we will fall out. In the end, we fell out after that because because of the the this thing then then because I think when we were escaping right? Er Kenny can tell Kenny didn't want to er er help me with escaping Lily.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Then I was like then can tell that he against me already. But I didn't I didn't see the consequence of like Lily helping me when I was like fighting the Saint John brothers.

Interviewer: It's only later on then you...

Henry: Ya later on then I realised oh that action caused me caused me to be better with Lily and worse with Kenny.

Interviewer: Ya this part you were just trying to be to be doing the correct thing.

Henry: Ya. Correct.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.96**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Reflection 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim]]

Jim: Okay er for this record right, I'm just going to summarise what er decides what makes what makes my decision on the narrative and er gameplay, it goes like this. I will give you some general form of rule first. And there are some, yes the rest it may be a bit difficult but I'm going to make some of the things easier for you is that okay as long as there's this portion of the game you do nothing to understand the narrative. You just play for the sake of advancing narrative, that part is mostly gameplay. Weimin's smiling. Anyways, er another thing is in the middle of clickity things, advancing the story, they the guy talks you to you more about how you saw the things like oh remote control does not work whatever right? That is more of gameplay than narrative. Because doesn't handle the narrative issues at hand that's what I feel. And another thing is ahem, stop laughing. Anyways, another thing is er if say you have a room, most of the of you clicked on is just look at look at and then comment on it right? That's extra narrative. Not much gameplay. Er unless when you say you click on something, you look at something, then you find eh you can advance the story through this way, then it's slightly more gameplay. Yes and what else did I miss? Oh the conversation. Okay say supposed, how you convince someone to eventually join you or not right? That is for me fifty fifty. Say you say like this, your charisma this lousy and he doesn't want to join you anymore to search Clementine. Or you choose this other conversation and then he decided to join you, that is like very good mix of



the two. That's what I'm thinking. So ya these are general my general rules of that's how my mm er instinct works for this er project. Mm hmm.

Interviewer: er wait ah. But there's also some parts where you cannot separate gameplay from narrative ah?

Jim: mm. Say there's this one part where I didn't choose to say anything because I just let the narrative won. Oh another thing is erm how much of how much of er thing is narrative or er gameplay right? They are two major factors, how does the gamer want, what do how do they tackle the thing and how the developer develop the portion. So yes, I can tell you is complex even if you hand it over to me and try to write for you, I also need some time. Yes. I know it's difficult task for you Weimin. So ya. Hope you can find out conclusion, you can tidy out some conclusion and I don't know if they actually accept er inconclusion ah?

Interviewer: I think the very hard part is trying to separate gameplay and narrative. Because...

Jim: It's hard.

Interviewer: Like last time we talked about the choices...

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Is both gameplay and narrative.

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Ya. So it's quite hard to separate them.

Jim: Ludonarrative when I looked at your slides, it's er ya artsy thing sometimes also difficult to, it's like a mash up, it's like a mash potato. Ya so it depends on your purpose, it depends on what the gamer feels er how he reacts at time because it also affects on how the developers build up that part of the game. Ya.

Interviewer: And then for *The Walking Dead*, er generally, how do you find the relationship between gameplay and narrative? Is it like quite separated from each other?

Jim: There's a pattern to it. Sometimes, it's separated, sometimes it is mingles well. Depends on what they want.

Interviewer: Do you find that as the episodes progress into the later episodes, is the narrative becoming more dominant ah?

Jim: Oh er...

Interviewer: Er is it becoming more and more narrative?

Jim: I think it's a bit like this. A bit like you get your hands together and hands separate, hands together back to end of episode, hands separated like that.

Interviewer: So you mean that sometimes separated and then comes together again.

Jim: Say *Mass Effect* what I felt is erm what I felt is er is a tree branch style. I think its narrative is a branch out style.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: *Walking Dead* is the DNA style.

Interviewer: So...

Jim: The helix style.

Interviewer: Branch out come back again.

Jim: Ya. The helix style.

Interviewer: You mean branch out and then come back again. Come back again is together ah?

Jim: Ya although for sorry *Walking Dead* season two right? There's slightly separated endings so it's like helix a little. Er the helix a little and they branch out a bit at the end.

Interviewer: You mean season 2?

Jim: Yes. Season 2.

Interviewer: I haven't played that so I'm not too sure.

Jim: mm hmm. So I ya I see where your hardship is now Weimin ya. Er *Bioshock* is very linear. I think it's one of the easiest to analyse.

Interviewer: *Bioshock* is...

Jim: Oh wait wait wait there's 2 endings so it's easy to analyse.

Interviewer: Three endings.

Jim: Oh three? *Bioshock* 1 right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: Ya it depends on how much of this little kids you want to turn into ADAM. Ya. That one is clean cut.

Interviewer: *Bioshock* is quite separated. Quite separated. Narrative and gameplay.

Jim: Yes. Until you decide somebody's fate. Then they are together.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: You can start from *Bioshock*. If it's complicated.

Interviewer: Ya that's why I finished *Bioshock* already.

Jim: Ya *The Walking Dead* is quite hard to analyse that's also how I feel right now.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: *Mass Effect* not as hard. *Walking Dead* well...

Interviewer: The most difficult is which one ah?

Jim: *The Last of Us*?

Interviewer: The *Witcher 2*.

Jim: *Witcher 2*?

Interviewer: The other difficulty is that the game is too long. So people are not committed to finish the game.

Jim: And there are so many things to remember.

Interviewer: So I may have to drop the game lah.

Jim: Ya ya ya. It's too many things to put in the head.

Interviewer: Too much commitment.

Jim: And you need a very sharp head to catch the easter eggs, catch the er you know, some of the pun, some of the not pun say...the...

Interviewer: The intertextual reference ah?

Jim: Yes something like that. The reference. If they don't expose enough right? They miss a lot of things.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: But there are so many of them.

Interviewer: If they are very tired when they play the game, they will just rush through the game lah.

Jim: Ya. Exactly.

Interviewer: But I think if I can finish the game, it will be also very good lah. Because the game is quite good also.

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: But it's quite hard to finish it. Because it's too long.

Jim: mm hmm.

Interviewer: er so what else ah? And then er when the parts where narrative and gameplay they are working together, do you find that you are very immersed in the character role?

Jim: Ya I enjoy the whole process. I enjoy *Mass Effect*, I enjoy *Walking Dead*. I haven't try *The Last of Us*. I need a PlayStation and what's that other game? *Bioshock* ya. *Bioshock* is more action oriented. You just run and gun and shoot.

Interviewer: They can just focus on the gameplay.

Jim: It's more action oriented.

Interviewer: My data is that they just focus on the gameplay.

Jim: Yes mostly on gameplay. The narrative is more you see more environmental, more integrated into environment rather than your choice. The environment tells the story. Not your choices. Less of your choices actually.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: It's the world.

Interviewer: But in *Bioshock* the gameplay will disrupt the the understanding of the story. Because the gameplay is very dominant.

Jim: Very yes. I admit that. Audio logs will help dilute a bit.

Interviewer: And then they also don't like the audio logs very much. Because audio logs is not very integrated into the game.

Jim: It's a fragmented backstory unless you manage to find them all.

Interviewer: Ya.

Jim: It is also because they open some of the things to open to interpretation.

Interviewer: Ya some people don't like this.

Jim: mm I can understand.

Interviewer: The method of those.

Jim: hmm hmm bits and fragments here and there.

### **Transcript 3.97**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry]]

Interviewer: So I think we start with the most important thing first.

Henry: Oki can can.

Interviewer: er I think the first interview you say that you think there's no narrative choice ah?

Henry: No narrative choice?

Interviewer: Ya. Can you remember?

Henry: Wah that one I forgot also. No mention that...

Interviewer: er wait ah, do you want to listen to the first interview?

Henry: eh yah okay lor the first. This one I can't remember. Narrative choice as in there's no I say there's no narrative choice?

Interviewer: Ya.

.....

Henry: Orh anything that I have no say is narrative ah? Is as in why? What about it?

Interviewer: Because if it's like this then it will be a bit complicated for the analysis ah.

Henry: Ya er...

Interviewer: Because I was talking with the other participants, they say *Walking Dead* is er have some narrative choices.

Henry: As in there are there are eh erm wait wait wrong as in I don't get it as in those those narrative as in like for example, I'm I'm saying like assuming that narrative choices are the dialogue choice that give you narrative information lah. Is it?

Interviewer: I think I will have to ask you to define it. Can you try and define it ah?

Henry: er as in define what again?

Interviewer: Narrative choice and gameplay choice. How you distinguish between them.

Henry: Narrative...

Interviewer: Because the first interview you say that narrative choice you have no say eh no no er narrative you have no say so there's no choice.

Henry: er no ah cos the thing narrative information as in like the narrative I'm assuming the narrative choice is probably the narrative information given through like possible dialogue choice right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Dialogue choice. So as in you mean like the extra option to ask about the...

Interviewer: Ya to get more backstory from them.

Henry: Orh. Orh as in part of my gameplay choice ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Orh.

Interviewer: I was also discussing with the participants that the dialogue option is also a kind of gameplay ah so sometimes the narrative and gameplay is together.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: So *Walking Dead* is harder to analyse than *Bioshock*.

Henry: Some sometimes, is as in some some of them, they will they will like leak a bit of narrative information like...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Like as in like like some of them they will suddenly talk about oh ya the for example, at the Hershel farm, the woman, I cannot remember her name. The the the mother ah the mother suddenly talked about the the...

Interviewer: Katjaa ah?

Henry: Ah no no no not Katjaa, the the one that the one in charge of the barn. In charge of the farm. With the two boys.

Interviewer: Kenny ah? Kenny is it?

Henry: No no not Kenny, the mother.

Interviewer: The mother?

Henry: You know got two boys, one is er can't remember the name already. As in both of them as in the family that eat the ahem that eat the...

Interviewer: Brenda ah?

Henry: Ah Brenda ya. Er ya then she that time she as in I giving example lar and then she she starting talking about er she started talking about er her son and her past.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Like the father like that kind of thing. Then I think they they very not say lonely but they very sad that kind. Ya then that one is er like a narrative information through a dialogue choice. No is it? No that one, I think she mentioned it on her own. Like but if you think about it er it's like I went to talk to her to find out more about the entire situation lah. So I know whether I can access whether the farm is safe or not. So I've to ask, I rather ask everything. So it is like my gameplay choice? I choose to go and talk to her.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: But when you choose to talk to her, it doesn't progress the story yet?

Henry: Ya it doesn't progress the story.

Interviewer: So it's also some kind of narrative choice is it?

Henry: As in you are asking me whether it's narrative or it's not? Or are you telling me?

Interviewer: I'm asking like how do you define a narrative choice?

Henry: Orh.

Interviewer: Compared to gameplay choice ah how do you distinguish between them?

Henry: I oh the narrative choice is probably any no no it's it's probably any choice that gives me er...

Interviewer: Story information?

Henry: Story information ya. More information on the like on the background of the characters. Then gameplay choice like when I have to really like for example, the more important ones right? Like er saving Duck over er the other person, or saving er Doug over er...

Interviewer: Carley?

Henry: Ya something like that.

Interviewer: Because I am thinking that during the saving of one of them is it also gameplay together with narrative choice?

Henry: Ya because there's a few that's together one. Like they will like er but for for the Carley and Doug's case right? The very first episode, the that one is er gameplay choice cos before that, ah I went to talk with Duck. Ah Doug then Doug Doug mentioned that she was very good with IT stuff what. Like that sort then er later on, er Carley Carley was seen shooting like she she's like quite proficient with guns and stuff. Then I think about it which one to save more. Then I saved Carley because I felt is more more practical to save her because now is zombie apocalypse what then I think er ensuring our survivability is more important than your than IT stuff. As in IT stuff is good lah. For example, he helped me with the remote control. But I think the survivability part is more important. So I chose Carley ah. That one is that one is narrative information before the game. Ah gameplay choice. And then narrative information before gameplay choice so that is like different parts. I can't remember whether there was any that is together. If it's together er...

Interviewer: The Saint John brothers when you choose to kill or spare them ah?

Henry: Orh erm okay that one is er okay the reason I chose not to...

Interviewer: Is because of Clementine?

Henry: Ya because of Clementine because Clementine was looking. In that case, it was er as in it's both together. Ya lah. Cos it was they...if Clementine wasn't there, maybe maybe I would have shot...

Interviewer: Because both the story and gameplay influence you ah?

Henry: Ya that one both both influence me. Because okay if if say maybe Clementine wanted...the the main reason which I didn't shoot er er the brothers was because Clementine was looking then ya I don't want to...if I was Lee I don't want to spoil my image mah.

Interviewer: Ya you explained already.

Henry: Ah huh. Then that one that is like both together. Narrative choice and dialogue choice.

Interviewer: And then I was also wondering if you define narrative choice as changing the characters' relationship with other characters. Does it also involve narrative choice ah?

Henry: As in...

Interviewer: When you...

Henry: For me?

Interviewer: Ya. When you choose one kind of dialogue with one of the characters, then it changes your relationship with the other characters. Do you include that as a narrative choice ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Later on in the story. Because *Walking Dead* is like that lah.

Henry: mm.

Interviewer: The change in the story is all like that.

Henry: hmm. That one ah. It's a choice. I choose. As in it gives it might give information but it probably is a gameplay choice.

Interviewer: Ya I mean the outcome it will be changed ah.

Henry: Ah the outcome will change ah that one that one is not my choice what as in that one I cannot choose already what.

Interviewer: I mean you choose you also change the outcome ah. Do you consider it as a narrative choice if it changes the outcome ah?

Henry: If it changes the outcome ah? Like like for example, like...

Interviewer: Like you choose to support Ken...Lily then Kenny will be angry with you.

Henry: Orh.

Interviewer: In at the end of episode 4, you want to save Clementine, he will say something to you. He will say that you were not always be there for him.

Henry: Oh okay. Hehe hmm er that one ah er whether I consider is narrative choice or gameplay choice. Erm I think it still falls under gameplay choice because because I before before the episode 4 er as in when I side with Lily, then I already choose er I think the the act of me choosing one dialogue or the other is a gameplay choice but when they give me the option of like the option is probably narrative ya and before and the information before that or the entire situation like when they were getting angry then it's like oh all the information that says them that's narrative lor. Then other that is gameplay choice. I think. What what what what is your definition of as in what is the correct definition of the gameplay choice?

Interviewer: That is no correct definition. Because this is a arts way of looking at things.

Henry: As in okay what is what is usually the the I just want to see it.

Interviewer: How I see it is that as long as it change your relationship with the other characters it will be a narrative choice.



Henry: Oh.

Interviewer: And then getting the backstory from the characters it is also a narrative choice.

Henry: Ah huh that one yeah. The changing my relationship that one I I'm not that one is cos I...

Interviewer: The option is a gameplay option but the outcome is a story outcome.

Henry: But sometimes you don't know...

Interviewer: It's also part of the story because it will change...

Henry: Orh.

Interviewer: Your relationship.

Henry: It will change my relationship er but the thing is I don't know the I don't know my I don't know exactly what outcome will have ah...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: So...

Interviewer: But sometimes they will show the at the top left hand side they will show something.

Henry: Ya. As in no but that's only after you make the choice what. Like for example, if you like for example I like for example, like the dialogue then the the time running what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then for example, the first one is er like side with side with okay for example, side with Lily, then second one is side with Kenny. Last one is like er just stay silent or something like that then then that one is like er just that one is just like you you you assess the situation then you choose which one. Is but they don't say what's the outcome what. As in you might guess lah but you like for example, some is important event, some is...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Some important event.

Interviewer: So you mean that...

Henry: Some you don't know.

Interviewer: When you choose it you don't know.

Henry: Ya you don't know what. As in...

Interviewer: But I was wondering if when you choose it you feel that it will change your relationship with the other characters, do you find that it's a narrative choice ah?

Henry: er if I feel that I will change the relationship ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: I think it's a bit of both eh but okay lah you can change it to narrative choice if you want.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: To make it easier.

Interviewer: I think it's both ah.

Henry: Ya it's it's it's really both it's like overlap so...

Interviewer: Because gameplay dialogue is also a kind of gameplay mechanic.

Henry: Ya. A bit hard to differentiate.

Interviewer: *Walking Dead* is very hard to distinguish.

Henry: Ya it's a bit hard to differentiate to an extent.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: But I guess you can say both lah. Ah.

Interviewer: Okay. So the gameplay choice how do you define it ah? I think easier to define ah?

Henry: Gameplay choice is ya is when I make like usually I make any decision that kind orh. As in like for example, er er whether to cut off my arm or don't cut off my arm that kind.

Interviewer: Ya. And then...

Henry: It's a choice. Then it's a gameplay choice what.

Interviewer: You also consider dialogue options as a kind of gameplay choice also?

Henry: Dialogue options ah?

Interviewer: Because it is sometimes together lah.

Henry: Ya. Sometimes together ya lah.

Interviewer: And then interacting with the objects is also a gameplay choice ah?

Henry: er interacting with objects ah? Ya interacting with objects is a gameplay choice.

Interviewer: But some objects.

Henry: eh wait no no no. Interacting as in I sometimes interact with an object to find out more of for example like what can I do with it. So maybe that's like trying to give me information.

Interviewer: You mean narrative information?

Henry: Some lah. But most of them I think is gameplay choice. As in...

Interviewer: So that means some of the gameplay interaction is both story and gameplay?

Henry: Some of the gameplay interaction...

Interviewer: Like you say you want to get story information how to progress the story. So it's both a gameplay choice and story choice ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Or is it just the story?

Henry: Story story er...

Interviewer: I mean if the kind of gameplay choice cannot be avoided. Do you think that is a narrative choice ah? Or it's still both ah?

Henry: If cannot be avoided ah? Meaning you need that one to carry on?

Interviewer: Ya mm.

Henry: Then if if for example, I need to that one is narra narra er story choice ah? As in if if I cannot if I need to do that thing to proceed then it's story choice ah.

Interviewer: But it's also a little bit gameplay choice ah? Because you have to interact with it.

Henry: Ya. Because you have to go and find out oh I've to do this, I've to do that then okay...

Interviewer: Like the erm the pillow part cannot be considered story choice ah? Because that one is only gameplay ah?

Henry: Ya ya ya. That one is.

Interviewer: But Lee's brother that part is gameplay ah? Gameplay and story?

Henry: Ya Lee's brother is gameplay and story.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Cos it also gives information ya.

Interviewer: And then can you also try and define narrative and gameplay event ah?

Henry: Event?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Wah (Laughs). Er...

Interviewer: Because I want to clarify everything ah.

Henry: Okay narrative event ah. Wah. Narrative event is mm.

Interviewer: Is cannot be avoided?

Henry: Oh.

Interviewer: Gameplay event is something you can...

Henry: Avoid.

Interviewer: Choose to change ah is it?

Henry: Oh okay.

Interviewer: Something like that.

Henry: But the thing is sometimes you don't know. Most of the time, you don't know whether this thing can be avoided or or not.

Interviewer: Ya but after you finished the game, you will know now lah.

Henry: Ya. Like like like for example, erm erm I think er as in I think the fifth episode ah when Kenny died as in after that, I went to I went to see another ending. As in after I finished the entire thing, I went to see the other ending.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then I realised that no matter what, Kenny will die.

Interviewer: So that one is a narrative event lah.

Henry: That's a ah that one narrative event.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But just how he dies is different lor. Ah but say like er erm for example, I can er okay say for Ben right? Ben in the end dies.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: But he can die at the he eh episode 4, he can die at episode 5.

Interviewer: It's just whether he dies earlier or later lah.

Henry: Ya. That one is gameplay choice ah.

Interviewer: You mean when you can choose to save him or not.

Henry: Ah. As in at the bell tower there.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah that one I think is gameplay choice ah because as in I I know he dies at the end lah but I I choose to save save him. Like at the fourth episode. So he doesn't die.

Interviewer: So let me think how you define narrative event. So narrative event is happenings in the story that you cannot change it ah.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: And then gameplay event is happenings in the story that you can have a choice.

Henry: Ya ya.

Interviewer: Like whether to prevent the character from dying sooner or later.

Henry: Yeah correct.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Or also also you're your er choose to side who also lah. That kind also considered event what.

Interviewer: You mean...

Henry: As in after after you choose to side after that they will...

Interviewer: Narrative event ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Or gameplay event?

Henry: eh wait ah when you choose to side when you choose to side with...

Interviewer: I think it's both gameplay and narrative.

Henry: mm both. Ya both. Ya but ya lor like the previous definition one ya. It's probably like that.

Interviewer: And then all the interactions parts, interaction with objects, is only gameplay event?

Henry: Ya interaction yeah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Correct correct.

### **Transcript 3.98**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 00:35]

Interviewer: er this interview is done with *The Walking Dead* and then the participant mentioned that there is no narrative choice in *The Walking Dead*.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: er but I let you listen to it first then I want to ask you if you have any comments or not.

Alice: Okay.

Interviewer: Ya so what do you think?

Alice: He played *The Walking Dead* right? I've never played *The Walking Dead*. But his in terms of how he defines a narrative choice and a gameplay choice. Er it seemed but it was very black and white for him. Like a gameplay choice is just pure...

Interviewer: You can change it ah?

Alice: Ya where it would for gameplay cos he mentioned that gameplay is only when he could control things in the game instead of dialogue which is also gameplay.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: Which is to me not how I view it. I view dialogue as part of narrative. Because giving you information. Gameplay is just...but I would assume that it would be like *The Last of Us* where gameplay and narrative are kind of blended together at times. I would say eighty percent of the time, gameplay is gameplay and narrative is narrative. But then the twenty percent of the time where there is narrative being fed to you in the gameplay.

Interviewer: So that you mean that it's a it's a degree of how much...

Alice: Yeah it's a degree of how much...

Interviewer: The two are mixed together.

Alice: The two are mixed together. I've never played *The Walking Dead*. So I can't exactly comment on...

Interviewer: But have you ever played any games that have dialogue choices ah?

Alice: Like choose to so it's like you choose to do A, you choose to do B?

Interviewer: Like they give you a dialogue.

Alice: What do you mean? Can you give an example?

Interviewer: Have you played any games with dialogues ah?

Alice: With dialogue. Like how?

Interviewer: Like choose your own adventure games ah? Er like last time there's some books. Have you read those types of books?

Alice: Oh ya like if you if you choose to do this go to page whatever?

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: Ya. I haven't played. I don't figure I played any games like that.

Interviewer: *Mass Effect*, *Witcher 2*. *Mass Effect* have you played it?

Alice: No, I've seen someone else played *Mass Effect*.

Interviewer: You still don't have time to play it?

Alice: I still don't have time to play *Mass Effect*. Erm no I haven't played any games that really affect, like any reactions really affect how...

Interviewer: So those dialogue choices I don't know if you have any comments ah? Whether they are gameplay or narrative choices?

Alice: If you are talking about like if the concept is still the same like those adventure books, I would say that more of a narrative choice than gameplay choice. Because...

Interviewer: They can change the story?

Alice: It has more of a tendency to change the story than it has to affect how that stage is going to turn out. There's more ripple effect with the narrative.

Interviewer: You mean it will change the overall story?

Alice: I would assume so given a choice. Oh if you are talking about like erm the Ellen Page game, *Beyond: Two Souls*. That...

Interviewer: That one that one doesn't really have a lot of impact.

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: So that one do you see it as a gameplay or narrative choice?

Alice: I see it as a narrative choice? Because if you are talking about *Beyond: Two Souls* right? And she has a choice to like kill somebody or not kill somebody...

Interviewer: It still affects the minor...

Alice: It still affects the minor...

Interviewer: The story...

Alice: The story, a moment, the storyline in some way.

Interviewer: Within the chapter?

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: Ya so you still see it as a narrative dialogue choice ah?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you see any gameplay within the dialogue choice ah? Or is it pure narrative choice?

Alice: I think that it can it's firstly a narrative choice because you are making the decision to let's say if you are talking about *Beyond: Two Souls* right? You kill somebody, you don't kill somebody. Firstly, it's a narrative choice because er you are deciding whether to take the so and so called good path or the so and so called bad path. And then after you make that choice, there is some sort of gameplay that would be affected based on that. If you choose not to kill a person, maybe the level is easier. Because you don't have to deal with it. But if you kill somebody, it's like maybe you have to fight your way through the following level so it does affect both. But I think that it may have a larger effect on the narrative than it has on the gameplay.

Interviewer: But it depends on the specific context ah.

Alice: Ya it depends the degree in which the choice is I guess.

Interviewer: Ya but do you think is there a hundred percent pure narrative choice ah?

Alice: No.

Interviewer: When is it when they are giving you story, backstory, do you consider it as a one hundred percent?

Alice: When they are just giving you backstory, I feel that it's a one hundred percent narrative event? Do you say narrative choice? There's no choice if you are just saying like watching a cutscene.

Interviewer: I mean sometimes you can choose the choices. They give you the backstory also. Like in *The Walking Dead*.

Alice: So when you asked them questions and they...

Interviewer: You can choose dialogue er choice 1, dialogue choice 2, dialogue choice 3, like...

Alice: Can you go back and then do all three?

Interviewer: Like the, "What do you do in the past", dialogue choice 1. Dialogue choice 2, "What do you feel now?".

Alice: But can you sort of if I choose dialogue choice 2, can I go back and then ask dialogue choice 1?

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: And then dialogue choice 2?

Interviewer: After dialogue choice 1 finish then you, that one will be eliminated. Then you go to the next dialogue choice to get more backstory.

Alice: And your question is that it's one hundred percent narrative?

Interviewer: Is it is it considered as a one hundred percent narrative dialogue choice? Or is there still some gameplay ah?

Alice: I still feel there's some gameplay. Because you can choose to ignore asking those questions.

Interviewer: Okay. And then there's one more interview I want to ask you ah.

Alice: Okay.

Interviewer: er wait ah. The participant says that the dialogue choices they are part of gameplay and also part of narrative.

Alice: Okay.

Interviewer: Ya.



Alice: er I agree with him more than I agree with the first one. I do agree with that dialogue is essentially part of the gameplay decision. Erm and the fact that you can choose to get one answer and not the other answer. In *The Walking Dead*, it seems that it's more of a gameplay like more of a gameplay because the narrative is just the backstory but if you are talking about a decision in like *Beyond: Two Souls*, I think that it's still more of a narrative decision than a gameplay decision.

Interviewer: So you mean in *Walking Dead*, the dialogue choices are more narrative or gameplay?

Alice: In *The Walking Dead*, it seems that the dialogue choices based on the example you gave me where it says like you know, how are you feeling, like who are you? All these things, it seems more of the gameplay because you can choose. You can choose to listen to an answer. Or you can choose not to listen to an answer. And this narrative if it's just the backstory doesn't really affect how it is going to turn out. But in terms of *Beyond: Two Souls*, if it's a dialogue to kill somebody or not to kill somebody because it's telling her you know, her brother or whatever to kill somebody or not to kill somebody. In that case, it's more of a narrative decision because whatever she chooses to do which is a dialogue choice will ripple throughout the rest of the game.

Interviewer: So your narrative dialogue choice, it must change the game ah? Change the story in the game?

Alice: I think it depends actually. Because you are talking about your dialogue choices right? So in terms of it depends which game it is in. Sometimes, it seems more of a gameplay decision. Sometimes, it's more of like a narrative thing.

Interviewer: If it's giving you story information, do you consider it as more of a narrative dialogue choice? Like backstory of the characters.

Alice: We but the thing is that are you saying that I have the choice to to listen to it or is it just purely giving it to me?

Interviewer: You can choose which dialogue option.

Alice: And it's just backstory?

Interviewer: Yes. Do you consider it as a more narrative dialogue choice?

Alice: I consider it, if it's just backstory and it's asking me to choose, I consider it more gameplay because I can choose not to listen to it. But if it's ordering me to do something so it says if it's a dialogue choice between two actions like in *Beyond: Two Souls*, when she tells someone to you know, tells her brother to go kill somebody or to leave them alone, that is more of a narrative decision. Because she's essentially, you are essentially choosing how the game you want to go.

Interviewer: So if the backstory doesn't affect the how the story progresses, you see it more as a gameplay dialogue choice?

Alice: I think backstory gives you a representation of how the characters are and how the characters may act. But in terms of how it will affect the game, if you are talking about *The Last of Us*, it gives, backstory gives you an idea who the character is and you project how the game is going to go but on the other hand, nothing you do really

affects how the characters are going to turn out. In *The Walking Dead*, I guess if you give backstory, you can predict how characters are going to act. And I guess later on in the game, you can choose to make a decision based on how you see that character or not.

Interviewer: So if it affects your perception of the character, do you also see it as a narrative choice?

Alice: I think it's a mixture of both. I know this is messed a lot but if it is giving you information, it's clearly painting a character in a certain way. So that's changing the narrative and how you treat that character and how you perceive that character but also could be a gameplay decision where you choose not to trust that character, you choose to trust that character by giving them certain things.

Interviewer: Ya. But in this sense how much degree do you see both narrative and gameplay? Is it both?

Alice: For *The Walking Dead* in terms of backstory?

Interviewer: Ya. Is it equal like fifty percent?

Alice: When it is just the backstory, like you were talking about in the clip of the narrative, I think it is about maybe seventy five percent gameplay because it's like you can choose to listen to the different dialogue choices. Erm twenty five percent narrative because it doesn't seem like it will affect the story, the story will split after listening to one over the other.

Interviewer: It only indirectly affects your choices?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.99**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 4 pm [Henry] 16:33]

Interviewer: And then when you used the telescope, can you remember? Er and then the telescope introduce the Molly ah.

Henry: Ah huh.

Interviewer: This part do you see that the gameplay action is together with the narrative?

Henry: erm is is more of the narrative eh more of the eh it's more of the narrative been produced from the the gameplay. Ya ya correct.

Interviewer: So it's like the Crawford marking that one?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: It's a bit separated ah?

Henry: er no this one is this one is together what.

Interviewer: Together?

Henry: But it's just that one produce the other.

Interviewer: That means the gameplay produce the narrative?

Henry: Ah. As in if I don't look there then Molly won't come down.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: I won't see Molly what. But then I saw Molly after I moved to the left side I think left side of the telescope.

Interviewer: mm. And then when you first see Molly, how do you feel about her?

Henry: At first, cos I thought she was going to kill me. Then I thought as in I thought she was going to kill me then after that, I will restart the thing. But then, at first I saw er er as in can er like suspected that she's the the one that keep ringing the bell because she's the one that wears the hood what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Then but I don't know whether she's the same as the same person as the stranger so like er a bit...

Interviewer: So you are quite curious about her?

Henry: Not say curious but more of wary like who are you that kind. Ah like...

Interviewer: But later on you know more about her.

Henry: Ah then after that I realised it's not...

Interviewer: Then she joined your group ah?

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: And then when you fight Molly, is it only gameplay?

Henry: Gameplay...

Interviewer: Like do you see any narrative? When you were fighting with her?

Henry: As in...more of gameplay lah. Narrative is very few cos in the in the gameplay event, it was like very rushed.

Interviewer: I mean the gameplay event does it have any characterisation of Molly?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Like she's a very capable female character?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: In the setting.

Henry: Ya lah as in it's like...

Interviewer: She can take care of herself.

Henry: Ah can take care of herself what then just...

Interviewer: So there's some narrative.

Henry: A bit ah. If you put it that way. It's very little lah.

Interviewer: But when you play the game, you only notice the gameplay only?

Henry: No lah as in can tell that she's very strong lah. Then then er she can handle herself on her own. But it's just like that only lor.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Not much narrative ah.

Interviewer: About...

Henry: That's the only narrative.

Interviewer: Ten percent ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: And then when Clementine calls her and then saved you from, saved Molly...

Henry: mm hmm.

Interviewer: From killing you.

Henry: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Do you see this as a narrative event?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Or is it your gameplay action producing the narrative? Like...

Henry: That one is narrative because it's like she stopped after Clementine after Clementine tell her to stop. Then it's like...

Interviewer: That means it's like after the gameplay then it's the narrative. It's like causing the narrative?

Henry: Say again?

Interviewer: I mean is it occurring after after your gameplay fight with Molly? So it's like...

Henry: Ya it's...

Interviewer: It's like your gameplay action is causing that narrative or is it just leading to the narrative?

Henry: I think it's just leading to the narrative.

Interviewer: It's not causing?

Henry: Ya it's not causing. Because I also didn't know Clementine was there what.

Interviewer: mm. So it's a kind of surprise.

Henry: Ya it's a surprise. Cos Clementine was supposed to be at the house what.

Interviewer: mm. So leading is like a succession of events ah?

Henry: Ya. A succession of events. It's like one lead to the other lead to the other.

Interviewer: Not very strong link?

Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya. Not not very strong. But then I remember I saw when I saw er Clementine then I was like Ben didn't do his job.

Interviewer: Were you like very scared that Clementine will become injured ah? When you saw her?

Henry: As in...

Interviewer: Because she suddenly come by herself ah?

Henry: er not as in I was as in like worried how how she managed to get through...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Follow us without without er without any danger lah. But then she's here already so not that bad. It's just that the process of it.

Interviewer: It's just more of a surprise?

Henry: Ya as in I wanted I wanted to. The reason I tell her to stay put at the house cos I didn't want her to like I didn't want to put her in any danger. Or in the event that the stranger comes and then fights us.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: So it was more of a it's more of the process but once once she's here, I also cannot do anything so just not that not that concerned about her now. As in during the thing lah.

Interviewer: Ya it's also no matter what she will also come.

Henry: Ya. No matter what she will come lah, I realise in the end.

Interviewer: And then Kenny's gun going off is a narrative event also?

Henry: Ya narrative event. It just as in it's a it's a...

Interviewer: Cannot be avoided.

Henry: Ya. It's a like a cutscene and then pew and then oh all the zombies come.

Interviewer: Ya. All the zombies come is a gameplay event ah?

Henry: er er...

Interviewer: Where you have to escape, is it ah?

Henry: When when the zombies come, I it's a more of a er ya cannot cannot avoid what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: So so have to escape. Ya it's a gameplay thing. Got got a bit of narrative.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.100**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 4 pm [Henry] 1:05:18]

Interviewer: I think this part you got explain. Whether to saw off the arm or not. It will have some change in the gameplay and narrative ah?

Henry: I think have.

Interviewer: Like what is it ah? I cannot remember.

Henry: As in if I saw off, I will still die what.

Interviewer: You will still die lah?

Henry: Right? No meh. As in I only checked that after I played the episode what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But then you asking me what?

Interviewer: I mean do you see any change in the gameplay or story? Er...

Henry: When I when I choose to do that?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: er I think as in I choose to I choose to not saw off my arm lor cos er I...

Interviewer: Ya. Ya.

Henry: I don't think...

Interviewer: You don't think the story will change ah?

Henry: I don't think as in I I will...

Interviewer: If you saw off your arm ah.

Henry: I think if I saw off my arm, I will be at a I will be at a higher disadvantage.

Interviewer: So you think that there will be some change ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: In the gameplay ah?

Henry: If I saw off?

Interviewer: Is it ah?

Henry: I ya mm to a certain extent as in I want to be like as in I at that time I our goal was to get out of there.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then the main goal was to save Clementine and then er kill not say kill lah but er get get the stranger out of the picture lah. Then to do to do that, and to save her, and to to prevent him back from coming back to us then I probably have to...

Interviewer: Ya you say that it's more practical.

Henry: Ya it's more practical. More practical to keep the arm. Like two arms is better than one arm obviously. Even though I got bitten. But it'll take a while lah like how we saw Duck.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: It just that I will die lah the main goal. After this, I realise, I decide that the main goal was to save Clementine, whether I die or not doesn't matter.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya lor.

Interviewer: And then the when you choose to keep your arm, do you see that there's some story change like you keep fainting?

Henry: erm.

Interviewer: I mean is this the story change?

Henry: I don't get the question. Why?

Interviewer I mean...

Henry: It's just like that lor.

Interviewer: Ya. I mean if you choose not to I mean if you choose to saw off the arm maybe that will not happen.

Henry: er as in it's it's the like cost cost and benefit lor.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Cost and benefit analysis lor.

Interviewer: So it's the mostly the story influence there?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Ya caused you to make the gameplay choice.

Henry: Yes.

Interviewer: And then when you choose to keep the arm, does it make the gameplay more tensed?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: er like...

Henry: What do you mean by when I choose not to saw...how?

Interviewer: When you choose to keep the arm ah.

Henry: Ah huh.

Interviewer: Does it make the gameplay more tensed? Because you feel that you have less time to find Clementine?

Henry: A bit lah. It's a bit rushed.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: But it's a it's something like I already decided that okay never mind I should just save Clementine.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: So to do that I need to ahem I need to be er...

Interviewer: So it's like cost and...

Henry: Ya cost and benefit analysis lah.

Interviewer: Ya. Like more practical but then...

Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: It would make you turn faster.

Henry: Ya. Correct lor.

### **Transcript 3.101**

[1 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* 1 – 4 pm 11:29]

Interviewer: Do you find a conflict between the gameplay and narrative? In this game.

Interviewee: For this game?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Particular? Erm gameplay and narrative. Conflict. So far, no. It's quite ok.



Interviewer: Because sometimes gameplay is like giving you more points ah then the story is telling about the character's story like sometimes, these two will clash ah.

Interviewee: Well, now that you mentioned it, I I I have I think there was once er where I won't say clash, but it sort of rubbed against each other. Like erm the point where they give you the option apparently for the main character which is who you play, Lee, okay to hide his background from whoever whoever he met right? But in the options they give you the choice you know, to everyone you talks to right to tell them who you are and stuff. Like that. But you know, that I I'm guessing from what I played, they want you they want you like I mean the character is the main character is supposed to hide his background from the people which I didn't get. You see I want to tell everybody who I am. But apparently, the erm the main thing to do er is to hide your background.

Interviewer: So you think the story the character doesn't want to tell his background ah?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: But you want to tell ah?

Interviewee: Correct. Ya.

Interviewer: Oh so the thing the thing that we want to choose to tell you think it's part of the gameplay lah. But the character's story is narrative?

Interviewee: Correct. It's the clash of this kind of thing because they allow the player er freedom of choice and stuff like that right? They are the narrative that that that they use or they make or the storyline, this fellow's personality and stuff like that. It's very very restricted. Because of that freedom of choice. Correct so it's I mean on their part, I believe it's very difficult lah I mean there's if you put too much, if you give too much freedom to the player right? Then there's too many routes.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Or paths we have to make.

Interviewer: Like sandbox game ah.

Interviewee: Correct yeah it it's very it's too huge. Sometimes a project to do. Giving them too much freedom.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya so it's sometimes good to restrict the player lah I mean there's many reasons but it's good if you restrict the player from too much choices or stuff like that ah. But I mean they could have I I guess at that point in fact, that particular point of time, that er, that you know, I played about Lee trying to hide his background and stuff like that right? Maybe they could have er scripted it.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: A bit better. Something like that? I don't know.

Interviewer: You mean they can provide more options ah?

Interviewee: Ah well maybe if they they want the player or they want to hint to the player that you know, Lee's character or supposed to hide his background. They should have done it better. Maybe that options could have been scripted better lah so that eh the player can have a hint on what the the the erm game wants the player to do. Cos now you just put the player in a world where you can basically can choose from a variety of options or paths to follow and yet you don't give him a hint. He doesn't know what he just picked a point and oh shit road block. Oh just trying this way. Oh I don't know what I'm doing. This kind of stuff. Sometimes it may get to that lah. That's a lot of choices, you see?

Interviewer: Okay. But that part where you mentioned you want to I forgot what I want to say.

Interviewee: Take your time.

Interviewer: That means you want to tell about Lee's story to the others ah?

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: Do you consider that as a player's narrative also? Your own...

Interviewee: mm. Wah yes. Yes and no. erm yes because that's what I want to do but no because it's the choices that they options that they gave me. That you know led me to think in that direction. And there were other choices probably I could have gone another way. You know what I mean. But you know there are choices but then it is restricted choices as I see it so basically like you know, there's only, there are paths, many paths to go but only that number of paths. It's not like infinite number. You know what I mean? Ya. So erm player's narrative. I would say it's...

Interviewer: It's a bit restricted you think?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.102**

[1 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* 1 – 4 pm 28:55]

Interviewer: Do you find any er narrative information that helps you to make the gameplay choice ah? Or is it your own experience?

Interviewee: It's my own. **It's basically like what I have seen in other games or in tv series or in zombie zombie zombie movies, zombie series, zombie games that I have played or watched last time to tell me these are the typical stuff that survivals will do in this situation lah.** So when they put me in a similar situation, that is what I am probably going to think of first. Until I realise oh that's not an option that the game makers are giving me lah. So then I won't go and find every single thing like what is there else to do.

Interviewer: So you don't find your conversation dialogue with the characters helping you to make the gameplay choice ah?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Like...

Interviewee: Sometimes yes.

Interviewer: Like ya the battery that one.

Interviewee: Ya the battery that one does. But that's only like sometimes only. You know anything happens erm like erm but not really because the girl doesn't say battery, is the player has to go and find himself like he has to flip. **I watched the walkthrough before this game right?** The guy didn't know that there was the he missed that flip over option. So he was trying press all the button but he didn't know. He put down the radio, going around you know? Not knowing what to do or what's oh that he has to find the batteries. Until he come came back and oh he found the second time you know. That's what I mean. So I mean this sort of thing they hint to go that oh check the back. The batteries at the back. I don't know whether the batteries inside there. I mean they do give you a hint that the girl doesn't know what she's doing at all so it could be probably it's just er she's she's IT retarded or something. I don't know. But probably so but because of that right? That I have a sense of I know what to do which is to switch and check for batteries lah but like erm as with most players right? I will I press the on buttons first, it doesn't then. You know it's just normal thing what you do. If you just press on button, it like it's nothing wrong with the hardware but you know, there's no light, there's no online right? It's not working right? You check the batteries right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: That's the normal thing to do right? So that's what I did. No batteries. Then everything I found out for myself. There's no narrative that says you know I think it's the batteries. Or it could have been the batteries. Or you didn't the batteries were already in the store, okay and I went around the whole store, the batteries were not interactable. Or they weren't there. I'm not sure. It's only after I checked the the thing right? Then I went again was I able to interact with the batteries.

Interviewer: So erm so you go two rounds then you can find ah?

Interviewee: Ya the first time was before I checked the radio.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: After I checked the radio, I realised so I need batteries right? Then I went around again then okay. Found the batteries.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you erm like want to skip this part ah? Or did you did you want to help her?

Interviewee: Help lah.

Interviewer: Why did you want to help her? Is there any reason?

Interviewee: er okay from my experience, this kind of things right? That you help certain characters, will give you plus points to get into their good books and stuff like

that. So maybe I know I'm guessing later in the game, that will benefit you in some way like erm get them inclined to help you. For example, you know. You never know.

Interviewer: Orh so you think they can help you later in the gameplay?

Interviewee: Correct so that's why I found certain candy bars right? Candy bars right? I give them to people I like lah. So basically, hopefully they will help me next time. Mm.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.103**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead 2* – 4 pm [Henry] 36:41]

Interviewer: And then later on, inside Crawford...

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Can you remember that part where the car fall down?

Henry: Ah.

Interviewer: And then the car horn sound.

Henry: Ya it's a...

Interviewer: Do you see this as a narrative event ah? Because it cannot be avoided.

Henry: Ya it's a it's a narrative event lor. It's not a gameplay choice what. I think I cannot do anything to stop the car from falling down.

Interviewer: Ya. And then it also does it create tension in the gameplay?

Henry: Ya la of course. Because the zombies started coming. The Walkers started coming then I have to faster...

Interviewer: Take the battery.

Henry: Get the battery and then faster get out. So got tension lah.

Interviewer: So this part is it the gameplay and narrative is together or separated ah?

Henry: mm wait ah. It's together lor.

Interviewer: It's together?

Henry: Ah.

### **Transcript 3.104**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead 2* – 4 pm [Henry] 38:00]

Interviewer: This one is all gameplay action is clicking on the camcorder.

Henry: Camcorder to watch all the tapes is it?

Interviewer: Ya. Do you see it as a gameplay action that produce the narrative?

Henry: I think it's more of narrative. As in there is very little gameplay. The gameplay action is just click...

Interviewer: Clicking to start the narrative.

Henry: It's just clicking to start the narrative only.

Interviewer: It's like activating it only.

Henry: Ya. It's just activating it only.

Interviewer: So narrative is eighty percent.

Henry: Ya. Ya. A lot more narrative.

Interviewer: So it's separated lah?

Henry: er ya separated. As in cos the the...

Interviewer: You have to do different actions...

Henry: Ya do different actions.

Interviewer: Make the narrative progress.

Henry: Not the same event what.

Interviewer: mm. And then do you find the narrative is is explaining the gameplay for you?

Henry: er explain the gameplay?

Interviewer: Like like er when you explore Crawford, you found the sonogram at first. But then the sonogram at first does not give you a lot of narrative ah.

Henry: Sonogram is?

Interviewer: Sonogram is the woman who got...

Henry: Pregnant?

Interviewer: Molly's sister is it ah?

Henry: The pregnant one is it?

Interviewer: Molly's sister who is...

Henry: Oh okay why? Erm...

Interviewer: At first is find the sonogram is don't have narrative yet ah?

Henry: Ya at first don't have narrative.

Interviewer: Only after you watched then...

Henry: Ya only after I watched then is like everything slowly er get into place.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Bits and pieces lah. Completing the picture.

Interviewer: Ya so in this way, do you think that the camcorder recording its narrative is contextualising the exploration of Crawford?

Henry: erm of Crawford ah? Erm...

Interviewer: Because later on, when you moved on further in the story, then they will tell you they will explain to you the earlier bits of the gameplay exploration.

Henry: er I think is...

Interviewer I mean at first when you explore Crawford, it doesn't really explain to you ah?

Henry: I think the gameplay exploration doesn't really, it's a it's different from the narrative that they producing here. Cos the narrative they producing here I think the one was the Molly then after that the the pregnant lady one.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then is like it's just it doesn't really it doesn't really link...the only link is that oh I realised how how Crawford died cos er the the pregnant woman slept er stabbed the doctor then the doctor died. Then the doctor died from inside.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then after that slowly spreaded from the inside that's why Crawford died.

Interviewer: Oh you mean the doctor become the zombie?

Henry: Ya the doctor become the Walker what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: As in possibly ah. It's okay unless you are talking about the the part where er Molly went and like keep bashing the the...

Interviewer: Doctor?

Henry: Is it the doctor? I think the Walker. Ya ya the doctor the doctor. The same doctor.

Interviewer: Because...

Henry: Cos of the sister. Or something like that.

Interviewer: But later on is is just the camcorder that gives you...

Henry: Ah that one is the camcorder. Then as in only...

Interviewer: I mean is the...

Henry: That one provides...

Interviewer: Camcorder explaining to you the gameplay ah?

Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Ya because at first when you see Molly attacking the doctor...

Henry: er huh.

Interviewer: You don't know why she is doing that.

Henry: Ya. Then now is okay makes sense.

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.105**

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 4 pm [Henry] 42:40]

Interviewer: This one is it you see it as a narrative event ah?

Henry: As in the one that the...

Interviewer: Like the who is that called ah?

Henry: I can't remember.

Interviewer: The old guy.

Henry: The the the...

Interviewer: Vernon ah?

Henry: Ah ya correct Vernon.

Interviewer: Vernon telling you to search the doctor for the tape.

Henry: Ah. As in ya la.

Interviewer: You see this as a narrative event?

Henry: Ya it does. It's a narrative event. As in he tells you...

Interviewer: There's some gameplay hint?

Henry: It's a gameplay hint ah. Gameplay goal.

Interviewer: Gameplay goal.

Henry: What to do that kind ya.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: And to get more tapes lor.

Interviewer: Okay and then the tape also explains.

Henry: Ya explains ah so ya.

### Transcript 3.106

[9 Feb 2015 *The Walking Dead* 2 – 4 pm [Henry] 47:50]

Interviewer: Then the question is the question is whether being honest with Clementine this one is a narrative event ah?

Henry: mm. Is a narrative event...

Interviewer: And then do you do you do you feel that it caused the gameplay event where Clementine ran away or is it?

Henry: I think I I...

Interviewer: Do you think that this narrative event is the cause of Clementine being abducted by the Stranger?

Henry: mm.

Interviewer: Or you cannot link it ah?

Henry: I don't know leh honestly because cos it might...cos I don't know what will happen if what will happen if she if I said I lied and said yes? I don't know whether she will still be abducted by the Stranger.

Interviewer: But I think she will still be abducted by the Stranger.

Henry: I think she will right. But...

Interviewer: So...

Henry: This one is more of a not narrative leh, it's more of a gameplay choice leh.

Interviewer: Gameplay choice?

Henry: Cos it's I decided not to lie to her.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: I don't want I don't want to lie to her that's why I choose that one. Although in the end, it doesn't matter. But I think it I think it eh in the end, she will still be abducted by the Stranger. But I think it's still gameplay choice. Like the the like the the I I didn't want to lie to Clementine what so it's like being influenced by the story by Lee himself lah.

Interviewer: er any reason why you see this as a gameplay choice ah?

Henry: Cos as in also it doesn't matter later on ah. But it's like I choose not to lie to her what. That's why...

Interviewer: It is like personalisation.

Henry: Ya. It's about personalising.

Interviewer: Even though the story doesn't really change.



Henry: Ya even though the story doesn't really change. I think it's just just this it's a very very rare occasion that I I see a ahem a narrative event as a gameplay choice.

Interviewer: Oh so this is a very rare rare event?

Henry: Ya a bit. Ya. Because I didn't want to lie to her. That's the that's one of the main reasons.

Interviewer: Ya. In this scene, were you also very bonded to Clementine?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Because...

Henry: Ya as in...

Interviewer: You don't want you don't want her to feel sad ah?

Henry: Ya I don't want her to feel sad. Although I know she will feel sad because her parents...

Interviewer: You just want her to know the truth?

Henry: Ya. I I it's like it's like how at the start you you cannot say that kind of thing but then you know sooner or later that you have to say this so...

Interviewer: So...

Henry: It is like...

Interviewer: It is better to say.

Henry: It's like er if you if you adopt a child then you never tell him like when he very young oh you are adopted then like oh like only slightly later then you will tell him what. You cannot tell him directly what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: But you also cannot tell him too late what. So it's like somewhere in the middle. A bit quite personalisation lah. Ya. It's quite personalised.

Interviewer: So you say that you cannot link it to the later on when Clementine was abducted by the Stranger.

Henry: As in she might have she might have gone to find the Stranger on her own lah in this case. As in cos cos she a bit sad and a bit angry with me...

Interviewer: Cos she keeps secretly talking to the Stranger in the what's that called?

Henry: Ya in the walkie talkie.

Interviewer: So I mean the link with the...

Henry: The kidnapping?

Interviewer: Ya were you able to form er any link ah? Or is it quite separated?

Henry: As in later on when I explore the house is it? When I sleep then she's not there.

Interviewer: Ya and then you were looking for her. Did you did you like thinking that she she has been abducted ah??

Henry: er I think as in I I I know when after I have say this right? Then er er she a bit sad and upset. And then maybe maybe she went to find her find the Stranger on her own. Like cos she got talk with the Stranger also what. Then maybe she went off to find on her own. But it's linked lah.

Interviewer: mm a little bit link lah.

Henry: A bit ya.

Interviewer: So that part when she ran away, do you see it as a gameplay event?

Henry: When she ran away?

Interviewer: Or is it still narrative ah?

Henry: That one would be narrative. It's only the part of...

Interviewer: Looking for her is the gameplay. Is it?

Henry: No as in for this entire choice right? It's only the part where er I choose to say I choose to be honest that's the only...

Interviewer: That's the gameplay choice?

Henry: That's the gameplay choice.

Interviewer: So that means the gameplay choice is a little bit causing the narrative event ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: Where she was abducted by the Stranger.

Henry: Yes.

Interviewer: So that is opposite of what I put in the question.

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: And then it also caused Lee to be bitten.

Henry: Cause Lee to be bitten. I think that one is inevitable.

Interviewer: It's it's also still causing.

Henry: That kind it's indirectly causing what ahem.

### **Transcript 3.107**

[15 Mar 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 23:19]

Interviewer: So far do you find any story information that helps you to make a gameplay choice ah? Like speaking to the different characters, do they help you to progress the gameplay?

Interviewee: Ya they help me to understand er what am I supposed to do next. And where am I supposed to go so I won't be won't feel lost. Ya otherwise, I mean the map is so big right? I also don't know where to go but with their help right? They act as like er guiding ah they will guide me along. They will guide me along the game and they also help me kill enemies ah. Ya. Like they they will mm they will provide feedback to the character.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 3.108**

[15 Mar 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 25:41]

Interviewer: Do you sometimes feel that the gameplay information will hinder your story choice? Or is it mostly helping you?

Interviewee: Most of the time is helping ya. Most of the time is helping. I haven't for this game I haven't erm experience it hindering my progress for the story.

Interviewer: Ya I think...

Interviewee: Or not yet ah.

Interviewer: How you customise your character will maybe help you or hinder you.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Ya. Like if you don't put any points into the Intimidate, and Charm then I think the story will be less interesting.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: I think this is a spoiler.

Interviewee: Okay. Okay.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Okay maybe I can try that ah when I play it again.

### **Transcript 3.109**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 11:53]

Interviewer: So in general, do you do you play games for the story or gameplay?

Interviewee: erm that's always a hard question but I think I will put more emphasis on the gameplay than the story. Because after a while, you play games, because it's fun. I mean even if the story is really good, but the gameplay is really bad, then you might as well watch a movie or something.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Ya. You play games because you want to play it. Ya but obviously it would be the best if they have both good in the story and gameplay. So but mostly is for gameplay.

Interviewer: So you play games like *Skyrim* ah?

Interviewee: Ya. As in ya because like *Skyrim* there isn't really a story per se. I mean there's really a loose, it's loosely, it's just there but you don't really have to erm really have to go and concentrate on it. It's more like in a way, you create your own adventures and do whatever you want. You can choose not to save the world. I mean the world will not be destroyed. Cos the dragon waits for you to kill him. It's a bit unrealistic but it's it's fun in a way because you can do whatever you want. And not like script, you must do A, you must do B, you must do C. So ya it's more for the gameplay.

### Transcript 3.110

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 13:55]

Interviewer: So far, do you find the gameplay is mostly supporting the story?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Or is it?

Interviewee: It's more like it's just there to have the player so far, it feels like okay erm to make sure that this is not a movie you have some parts to play here around. Ya. And ya there's a bit of disconnect. Because because it's obvious from the story that these Geth things are quite powerful but when you play the game, they seem rather weak. You can just kill them by your own. Your team mates does not even have to do anything.

Interviewer: But you are playing on normal. So...

Interviewee: Ya maybe.

Interviewer: So not much challenge.

Interviewee: But as in I guess normal is like they are recommended choice or something. Ya so it's more like the gameplay is like disconnected from the story. It's just there. I mean there's a part where they gave you a new character, and they give a sort of like a story. But other than that, while you are like fighting itself, there isn't much in the way of story. It feels more like a game, rather than a story. Ya.

Interviewer: Oh so you still feel it feel that it's like a game ah? A game with a story?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Oki.

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 19:28]

Interviewer: So far do you find any conflict between story and gameplay? Er...

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. The fact that there's a huge disparity between the threat of the Geth and the gameplay threat. Ya because they painted it like oh some very powerful as some very ruthless species but they seem rather ya.

Interviewer: The Geth story is er where did you get it from? Is it from the dialogue or the Codex ah?

Interviewee: Ah I I see it from the cutscene. The cutscene is like sort of set the stage for them. Like they impaled this guy so that tells you that oki these people are obviously not very civilised. Ya and they look robotic so obviously there's no need no room for negotiation. You just shoot them. Ya. Ya.

### **Transcript 3.111**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 1:50:58]

Interviewer: This part when they showed the Geth, impaling the people on the thing.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: Do you find it very intimidating?

Michael: You ask me ah?

Interviewer: The first time you see it how you find it?

Michael: I see worse shit than this ah. So asking me might not be a good choice.

Interviewer: So you find it quite expected ah? I mean quite normal ah for you?

Michael: It's er but you noticed that there's no blood ah so it's oki.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: General rule of thumb is when there's no blood, it's oki.

Interviewer: Do you find any characterisation of the Geth in the cutscene ah? Like do they show that do they show any characteristics of the Geth?

Michael: er they look like robots ah. That's all.

Interviewer: Do you think that they are they can be easily killed when you see them?

Michael: er yes. For obvious thing when you look at the placement of their eyes. It's like attached to the head with one hinge.

Interviewer: So they are not very challenging?

Michael: I don't think they are challenging.

Interviewer: In the gameplay?

Michael: Ya I think killing the Husk is tougher.

### **Transcript 3.112**

[Session 3 18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 2 29:02]

Interviewer: mm the narrative representation of the Geth do you find any conflict with the gameplay like in the cutscene when you first see them they were quite intimidating.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Then in the gameplay, they are quite easy to kill?

Nasir: mm I guess like then again to be fair, you are supposed to be I don't know, some special, very skilled soldier compared to the very normal soldiers. So maybe that's why you can kill them easily. Maybe it's just a relative thing.

Interviewer: So for you there's no conflict ah?

Nasir: Not really. Ya.

### **Transcript 3.113**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 16:20]

Interviewer: And the the the one the Saren's scene ah. Is it helping to contextualise your gameplay?

Interviewee: Ah as in Saren and?

Interviewer: Saren and Nihlus ah.

Interviewee: Ah okay.

Interviewer: That part.

Interviewee: As in because...

Interviewer: Do you find do you find...

Interviewee: Ah huh.

Interviewer: It er useful for you or understand it?

Interviewee: Oki.

Interviewer: How to progress the game?

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: Or is it like not connected?

Interviewee: Ya. It's more like it doesn't seem to be much connection with the gameplay.

Interviewer: So far?

Interviewee: Ya it's just like a story. It's like a motivation for you to find out more. But because you don't really encounter them in game, you don't see them shooting.

Interviewer: So far you never encounter.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: But you will be encountering Saren much later.

Interviewee: Ya er ya I suspect that because he seems like the main big main bad guy. So there probably will be a boss battle of sorts.

Interviewer: But so far, not much connection to the...

Interviewee: Ya so far not much connection.

Interviewer: Do you feel that you want the bad guy to appear more often in the gameplay?

Interviewee: er...

Interviewer: The Saren guy. Because I think he only appear quite rare quite rarely.

Interviewee: Ya. As in well, it does it depends I mean if he appears earlier, it feels like he's not much of a mystery, you know? Because right now, I think it's like the story is not giving much information about him.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: So I think they want him to remain some sort of like a mysterious guy you don't know his intentions, stuff like that. It it drives the players to find out more. Like okay you continue playing, you continue shooting more so you can advance to the next plot point?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya

Interviewer: So far he only appears in the cutscene ah.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: You cannot interact with him.

Interviewee: As in the enemies don't have much personality. They are just like robots and stuff like that. You don't know much about them so yeah.

### **Transcript 3.114**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 22:05]

Interviewer: So there's no other parts where you think that there is conflict between story and gameplay?

Interviewee: mm let me think. Well there's a part well this one affects a lot of games. Ya it's like the first part where you're the Jenkins fellow he died. Okay so he died permanently. And then later when you are playing the game, your character can die but sort of revived at the end, so there's no explanation. Why why is it different between this guy dying in the game, and this guy who died in the cutscene. So it's a disconnect here. Why must this guy die? Why mustn't that guy die?

Interviewer: Oh so you mean the Jenkins guy there's not much explanation.

Interviewee: Ya. It's just poof he's dead and then why why can't we revive him? I mean later my characters can die too. But they don't die permanently. So that's it's more you can tell there's a gameplay reason and there's a narrative reason.

Interviewer: So it's kind of disconnected lah.

Interviewee: Ya. It is disconnected.

### **Transcript 3.115**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 36:36]

Interviewer: So you also got put some points in the "Charm" and "Intimidate" ah?

Interviewee: Ya but that's more because of previous experience. Because I've played *Dragon Age*.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: So if you put some points in something right? The "Charm" equivalent.

Interviewer: Then there will be more story options,

Interviewee: Ya then there will be more conversations. And these conversations may open up like new quests or give you extra rewards and stuff like that.

Interviewer: But so far your your later dialogue options they never give you yet?

Interviewee: No no not yet.

Interviewer: Blue and red colour options.

Interviewee: No no.

Interviewer: Because you never, you missed some side quests ah?

Interviewee: Could be could be that could be it.

Interviewer: So er *Dragon Age* is the is it the same company as *Mass Effect*? Bioware? Bioware also?

Interviewee: eh is it? No. No. No. eh no let me think. *Dragon Age*. Ya. Ya. It's by the same company.

Interviewer: Bioware?

Interviewee: Ya. It's by the same company.

Interviewer: Ya. So you used your previous game experience.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Similar game so you sort of expect kind of expect what kind of things going to come out cos similar company.

### **Transcript 3.116**



[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 37:40]

Interviewer: So you think that helping others will assist the gameplay later?

Interviewee: Ya cos I imagine there will be some advantage the more Paragon points you get. Ya anyway for the “Charm”, you need to I think I read that you need certain level of ranks in Paragon.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: So ya.

Interviewer: Then they can open up the dialogue.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.117**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 40:38]

Interviewer: So far are there any gameplay that influences you when you make the story choice?

Interviewee: No. Definitely no.

Interviewer: So the only one is you want to get the Paragon points.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: That is the only one.

Interviewee: That’s the only one. Cos you can’t kill the NPCs. They are immortal.

### **Transcript 3.118**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 15:13]

Interviewer: So far do you find the scripted sequence interrupting your gameplay?

Interviewee: er so far, it’s oki but it seems to be a bit too much cutscenes like every time you come to a battle, there seems to be a cutscene.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya. But I guess they need to introduce the things to you.

Interviewer: The main antagonist?

Interviewee: Ya. The main antagonist and well the cutscenes show a lot of things that your character is not supposed to know. So it’s a bit weird because you as a player knows what’s going on. But you have to pretend your character doesn’t know anything. Ya.

### **Transcript 3.119**

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* Session 1 [Nasir] 24:30]

Interviewer: erm do you find the cutscene is it able to link with the gameplay ah?

Nasir: mm link with gameplay ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Cutscenes as in when when the ship land that kind of cutscene or is it the the talking kind of cutscene? Like like...

Interviewer: There's some cutscene like there's one part where Saren shoot...

Nasir: mm

Interviewer: Shoot shoot who ah? The Nihlus ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: That one is a cutscene.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Then that part do you think there's a conflict with the story ah? Eh with the gameplay?

Nasir: mm ya. As in initially, I was like er how come how come I see him as in how come I see this part because Shepherd wasn't there right? And all the stuff. So I was like initially I was wondering er was he a bit in front or what? Then I was like but oki lah as in then later you found out that this guy was was sleeping behind the crate. Then he he found out so I supposed that was his perspective ah.

Interviewer: So you think it's his flashback ah?

Nasir: mm I think it's that other guy's er the other guy's perspective ah the the guy who was hiding behind the crate.

Interviewer: The smuggler?

Nasir: Ah as in I thought it was him that as in it was his perspective that saw that part. So then later Shepherd knew about it. But oki lah as in initially it was when I first saw it, it was like but Shepherd isn't there what. Why am I seeing this?

Interviewer: Like quite sudden ah?

Nasir: A bit a bit sudden. But as in it's not something that I would find, it's not something that I will object lah. Initially it was just a bit sudden but oki lor, then so so this this game let's you see things from as in from like like when like when Saren was heard about heard about he was what was angry on his own ship like ok lah, then if you are going to adopt this I I can I I can adapt to it. That doesn't really matter but initially, it feels a bit sudden lah. Mm.

### **Transcript 3.120**

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* Session 1 [Nasir] 26:40]

Interviewer: erm I think I don't know why just now you cannot add some of the points ah?

Nasir: Oh oki.

Interviewer: To Intimidate and Charm.

Nasir: Oh oki oki.

Interviewer: Have you spent the points ah?

Nasir: The...

Interviewer: Is it is it because you spent on the others?

Nasir: The character points is it?

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: I didn't spend leh that's why don't know whether.

Interviewer: How because you level up I think you should be able to spend.

Nasir: But I didn't have points leh at the bottom. Unless it's auto level up lah then maybe it will have some.

Interviewer: I mean when you level up you can you can plus the points ah.

Nasir: Ya but the point was zero mah in the end.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya I also don't know why.

Interviewer: I think when you go home you can go and explore lah.

Nasir: Oki oki. So as you level up you get more points ah?

Interviewer: Because when you add points to the Intimidate and Charm, then the dialogue option will become more.

Nasir: Orh I see. Ya but...

Interviewer: So it will change the story.

Nasir: Ah I see. I see but ya. I also don't know why it didn't add.

Interviewer: So that one is gameplay will how you customise your character it will affect the story.

Nasir: mm oki oki. I understand ya.

### **Transcript 3.121**

[23 May 2014 *Mass Effect* 10.30 am – 1.30 pm 13:54]

Interviewer: So in general do you play games for story or gameplay?

Interviewee: Ah normally is because the first person shooter right? So I will give it like I would play more for gameplay. Like 40-60. 40 for you know, erm story and 60 for gameplay or sometimes the game is really good like you know, Battlefield and stuff. Actually Battlefield has no ya so it's like 70-30 70 ah 30-70. Ya.

Interviewer: So you like the gameplay more?

Interviewee: Ya. The gameplay ya because I think it's just the different type of people with different like game choices because for me is first person shooter right? And for that you also need a like you also need a game plot like you know like erm ya ya. So you just need the game plot to follow like oh you you just need a game plot to actually erm know that erm where the missions you are doing.

Interviewer: To give the context?

Interviewee: Ya. Fits inside a bigger picture.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Ya so ya. Just that.

Interviewer: er since you mentioned your gameplay you you want to focus more on the gameplay.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Do you think you will choose the story options to give you more gameplay kind of reward ah?

Interviewee: er like like you know the option that give you more time to gameplay, instead of like sitting and listen to people?

Interviewer: Something like that.

Interviewee: Ah. It is a hard question.

Interviewer: Or will you also still select the story to look at it.

Interviewee: Because just now it's like because ah for me, ah the story is that it is very new so I need to like I try my best to like you know like sometimes it just gets boring lah. So you just listen to like every information. Like you know you just click everything like every option I can to give to you know get a sense of like you know because obviously it's like if because because the first part right? There's so much time the developers spend on you're the the narrative right?

Interviewer: The building up ah?

Interviewee: Ya the building up so it so there's no point for you to go to for the gameplay. Because the gameplay is so short anyway so you bet it like so I feel like oh so I figure out that you know you better listen to gameplay ah to the narrative right? To get the best out of like oh to see what what what they try to bring you at. Ya because I can like you know just I can like I also have the habit of like in the like the not so important like Call of Duty right? Just normally can oki you listen to him like for the first ten five to ten seconds oki it's like oki. Ya you get the very you get the

gist of it but you don't listen to the whole thing. But now I have to listen to the whole thing. Ya.

Interviewer: So for *Mass Effect* the story is more important?

Interviewee: Ya. I think the story is more important. So that's why I chose like actively chose to listen to the gameplay ah the the the...

Interviewer: Story.

Interviewee: Ya the story.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 3.122**

[Session 1 23 May 2014 *Mass Effect* 10.30 am – 1.30 pm 42:04]

Interviewer: So far er do you find the story and gameplay are they divided from each other ah?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Or are they closely related?

Interviewee: They are quite closely related ya because I think instances that's the way they are kind of intertwined together but this is not very interesting. It's just tripping and not very interesting that way. Ya.

Interviewer: er can you give any example where you think story and gameplay are together?

Interviewee: Are together.

Interviewer: They cannot be separated.

Interviewee: Like like in the game just now right? Like the part when you know like erm first we have like three members in your squad right and then after the first attack right, you like one died. Like one was killed. So it was like oh so er it is quite funny that you know like the whole scene starts with a narrative. That you know one guy walked into a open field and he was attacked by like enemies right? And then he was killed. And then er it's opened the the like space for you to actually like erm you know like go out there and you know just like like kill the enemy first and then after you kill the enemy, you returned to that like...

Interviewer: And then you speak to him again.

Interviewee: Ya you speak to him again. So I think it's a very like ya it's a example of...

Interviewer: Cause and consequence ah?

Interviewee: Ya. It's it's it's make it very clear that you know oh oki so instead of like watching like a movie right? Because somebody that's just how what happened in a movie which is a pure narrative stuff right? It's happened in movies that oh you watch.

Interviewer: Like you do something then something will happen.

Interviewee: Then you kill, you saw you see yourself killing like or you see the character killing someone else. But you know without you like controlling the characters, but now the character you can control the character like a certain stage in that whole sequence. Ya.

Interviewer: So er in that way you are more you are more er immersed in the game lah?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Oki.

Interviewee: In a way. More immersed in the game.

Interviewer: More more present in the game compared to the movies.

Interviewee: Compared to?

Interviewer: Compared to the movies.

Interviewee: Movies? What?

Interviewer: Movies.

Interviewee: Movies?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Oh I guess. Ya I guess but ya it also depends on what kinds of movies you are watching lah. It is like if you are watching Avengers then I will like I will like Captain America then oki you can't you can't control your character that well.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya. So ya. That's why I think it depends.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But generally, ya it gives you a sense of involvement like you have a say in what thing is there and you I think a sense of accomplishment ya a sense of accomplishment. Like oh you just kill someone. Or you just destroy something. You have a sense of accomplishment. Like for movies, it's just like it has a tension but it's also like sometimes you just have the feeling that oh it's only scripted. No. Captain America is supposed to win this kind of thing. But for now, you you had you face a very real threat of you know being killed.

Interviewer: In video games ah?

Interviewee: Ya. In gaming.

Interviewer: So in games, the difference is that you will feel some kind of accomplishment?

Interviewee: Accomplishment, involvement.

Interviewer: But movies you won't feel.

Interviewee: You won't feel. You only feel the tension and then after the the erm protagonist right actually has gone and has moved on, achieved what he is supposed to achieve right? You feel like oh oki then you then he's defused the tension. But it's you just didn't feel very you feel like ah yes yes yes yes yes but you didn't that that yes is different from...

Interviewer: Not that involved ah?

Interviewee: Ya that doesn't...you are not involved in the whole process.

Interviewer: In the movie.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 3.123**

[24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 13:19]

Interviewee: Then gameplay twist I would say my choices lor influencing the influencing each event and everything. Like er gameplay is like it's quite direct leh I find like mm your application for gameplay events like you can choose because of your through your interactions you can choose what can happen after that. Then by then you earn er different points mah it's like the last part I could have said the council was blind then you earn renegade points that's direct impact on your outcome next time mah.

Interviewer: You mean outcome of the story?

Interviewee: For the story ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Or is it? I'm not sure this whole Renegade and the the top Renegade points will give you certain options later right?

Interviewer: In the dialogue.

Interviewee: Ya lah ya lah.

Interviewer: But you have to add points to the Charm and Intimidate ah.

Interviewee: Oh is it?

Interviewer: So far you haven't add lah.

Interviewee: Oh hahaha.

Interviewer: I can see you focusing more on the gameplay.

Interviewee: Ya the gameplay itself ya ya ya.

Interviewer: So you are less focusing on the story.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Because you prefer more to gameplay.

Interviewee: Prefer more ya ya ya. Then ya I thought like that one never mind la hahaha.

Interviewer: So later on you can explore see which one you like and then add the points lah.

Interviewee: Can lah.

### **Transcript 3.124**

[24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 20:02]

Interviewer: But then the story choice most of the choice is it you try to be good to the other people?

Interviewee: Ya. Try to be good lor. Be compassionate ah ya. Not very objective.

Interviewer: Is there any reason ah why you want to?

Interviewee: It's just the way I am ah as a person. Like I prefer I prefer to I would want people as I prefer to ya lah I ya lor like that lor. Prefer to interpersonal skills rather than to be real objective. Ya.

Interviewer: er...

Interviewee: So you could say like my choice in the gameplay is a reflection of how a person I am. Ya lor.

### **Transcript 3.125**

[24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 28:38]

Interviewee: I think I'll just start again. I'll probably read the wiki like thoroughly before I...because I don't want to miss out on anything ah.

Interviewer: Ya can ah.

Interviewee: Ya. But even for *Bioshock* right? I haven't played I already read the whole storyline of *Bioshock* because the whole storyline of *Bioshock* very intriguing ah. *Bioshock Infinite* and everything. Then the juxtaposition of the different worlds very deep. I haven't touched played the game I already watched the YouTube walkthroughs until almost the final stage because I know I scared so I watched first. Ya.

Interviewer: So it doesn't spoiler for you ah? Is it?

Interviewee: For me not really as in when I watched someone playing it is as if I am playing already lor.

Interviewer: mm.



Interviewee: But of course if I am playing it myself, I will get more er er satisfaction out of it ah. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Oki.

Interviewee: I don't mind watching games people talk. Ya.

Interviewer: Ya that one can.

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.126**

[Session 1 26 Mar 2014 2 – 6 pm *Bioshock* and *Mass Effect* 29:30]

Interviewee: Ya actually same for *Mass Effect*. Ah because I as in maybe because I haven't played the game enough. But I don't see any benefit in trying to be the bad guy. Because erm you are on the good side. So I just try to like make all the good decisions try to get everybody on my team. So that erm it will make er playing the game er much easier definitely because er people will follow you and ya I think you get more benefits on the good side than the evil side. So ya.

### **Transcript 3.127**

[Session 1 27 Feb 2014 *Mass Effect* 8 – 10.30 pm [Michael] 23:59]

Interviewer: But when you replay it again, do you choose another choice?

Michael: Usually I will for this kind of game I will run it through four times ah. If I have the time ah.

Interviewer: Do you choose the same choice when you re-run or you will still choose the Paragon?

Michael: er the second time I might try total Renegade. Just for the fun of it.

Interviewer: Okay.

Michael: But the third and fourth time, I might want to open up easter eggs. That means I will be looking at FAQs ah. At the third and fourth time.

Interviewer: So you the easter egg er you will not looking by yourself ah. You need the guide to know where to find. You will not try to find it by your own?

Michael: mm. I can spend 90 hours probing every box. Or I can read a guide and finish it in 30 hours.

Interviewer: But usually, you will read the guide?

Michael: First time playing I will try not to read the guide.

Interviewer: Have you succeeded without looking at the guide?

Michael: I have. I have.

### **Transcript 3.128**

[Session 1 1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm 45:25]

Interviewer: Then this one also not hard decision ah?

Mary: Oh yeah now that you mentioned it. This was this was difficult. Ya. Ya. Damn this was a difficult decision. But did it have consequence? I don't remember about this part honestly. I said you murdered Larry right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: Which is pointing out a fact lah. Ya they are all bad.

Interviewer: So is it hard to make a choice?

Mary: Oki at that point yeah I supposed. It isn't logical for Lee to shut up at that point lah so...

Interviewer: Is it because you played the game already so you find it easy to make the choice now?

Mary: No it is not because I played the game already. It's like this sort of dialogue is I actually don't remember them in the when I saw the walkthrough. But when I played it by myself, it was tough ah but erm as in like they the choices are limited in a sense for such dialogues but it doesn't happen very frequently lah. So it's not that bad honestly.

Interviewer: But they are asking you to make a lot of...

Mary: Not every decision is tough.

Interviewer: Negative choices.

Mary: No not every decision is tough ah. Some are expected. But this one...

Interviewer: Expected because you watched the walkthrough already? Is it?

Mary: No no no. Don't don't blame at everything to that. I don't remember anything from that one. Only the story like the gist of what's going to happen. But no no it's like it's not difficult because it's like logically you would say something like that. Like for me lah at least, I would say something like that so I don't find it negative or anything because in that situation, that is what I would say lah. But ya maybe for such situations, I'm not so confrontational so it was quite difficult because Lee was being confrontational. But then er for most of the other times, it's not that bad. It's like it's just logical that you would talk like that.

Interviewer: But the your previous experience will have some help help to you in making the choice ah?

Mary: erm...

Interviewer: So it will be easier.

Mary: So called good outcome lah but then again for such like dialogues, I wouldn't remember every single dialogue right? My memory is not that good. But ya this sort of dialogues I wouldn't remember them so I would say that the walkthroughs have no

impact on these decisions ah. Maybe the bigger decisions lah like whether I should kill Jolene or not. Whether I should hand Irene the gun or not. Such things I can remember but for this tiny dialogues, I wouldn't remember. As in the walkthroughs wouldn't impact at all.

Interviewer: So for all those choice with negative ones, you will find it harder to make the choice?

Mary: Like this situation?

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: Yes. Like especially if it clashes with my own character like my my personality lah. To ya.

### **Transcript 3.129**

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 11:50]

Interviewer: And then any experience you want to talk about when you play as Sarah? Do you find, how do you find her character?

Walter: Who which character?

Interviewer: er Sarah. Joel's daughter.

Walter: er Sarah is...

Interviewer: In the prologue ah.

Walter: er...

Interviewer: mm do you find that in the beginning were you more focused on learning the gameplay or did you like were very invested in the character?

Walter: mm er like I...

Interviewer: Like when you played as her, did you find that you can relate more to Joel's character?

Walter: erm not really. Erm the way I the way I am sort of looking at it is as though she is a child. And you are trying to just throw I think they just wanted to frame the perspective that you know you were sort of like er try and experiencing this apocalypse that was starting from her eyes first and then the I think they then did the transition shift when there was a car accident which then shifted you over to Joel. So er I thought that it was I guess it was straightforward but at the same but playing as her didn't really feel like anything. I thought it was a bit that when you started, you know you walk, you wake up, you answer the phone. And then as you walk, if you enter the bathroom, you can read the newspaper. And which give you some background information. I thought that was rather weird. Because you are a child and then you are looking for your dad, you wouldn't be paying attention to weird things like that.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: So it's a very er very odd choice of what you wanted to add into that.

Interviewer: So you mean the story is kind of sometimes out of character ah?

Walter: Well not to say the story I mean her that whole...

Interviewer: The interaction.

Walter: Interaction was a little bit out I wouldn't ya I wouldn't say it's out of character. It's not what I would think a child who's scared who want to be...

Interviewer: Ya I mean it's...

Walter: And I feel odd that you couldn't run.

Interviewer: I mean it's sometimes the disjunction between the PC like a character who is one.

Walter: A bit ya. It was like a little of misstep.

Interviewer: Because they are trying to give you some backstory first to immerse in the character role.

Walter: But but the thing is that whole aspect is technically you could have actually missed it completely.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: So but it was just odd that you could do that I mean the news the news on the tv was actually quite nice. That was okay but I mean that's a kind of technique that has been done many times before so...

Interviewer: Does watching the news make you feel more vulnerable? The girl. Like you are feeling that there's going to be some kind of danger. Er...

Walter: er...

Interviewer: Does it make you feel you want to find Joel faster?

Walter: er yes I mean I had the feeling but at the same time, it's at the start of the game, you are playing a child character and I don't know. As someone who has been playing games for a long time, you know that if you have a child character, erm...

Interviewer: You will expect it to sometimes something will happen to her.

Walter: Ya and usually if you are playing at the very start, they are not going to challenge you with gameplay. It's probably going to be either a scripted event or something that...

Interviewer: A tutorial ah?

Walter: Ah. Like ya probably a tutorial of sorts. Which is er quite straightforward so it's it's the kind of thing like oki I want to immerse myself but at the same time, I can't really project myself into these characters because er I kind of figure what's going to happen. It's still the prologue. A lot of not many things. I mean if I was playing a RPG, I'll be thinking could it be differently. Because RPGs tend, I mean

especially like non-linear RPGs I tend to think more about the choices I make but in a game like this where it's supposed to be very narrative heavy, I assume generally that...

Interviewer: It'll be very linear.

Walter: mm well I don't know if this game is very linear. I I it could be linear but usually, early on, I mean well there could be choices I it's still I'm too fresh to be really able to think about it enough.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: It's kind of like I guess you could say it's like where I was playing *The Walking Dead*, the first few sequences I was kind of like just taking whatever was interesting and then later on, oh oki these choices actually start to make sense. But...

Interviewer: *The Walking Dead* I think the first scene is the police officer.

Walter: Yes ya like...

Interviewer: They say it's just still figuring out what is happening.

Walter: Ya. But er a lot the first time I was playing that, a lot of the responses I just missed or forgot or just er...so it was very much you know still like stumbling through.

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.130**

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 45:50]

Interviewer: Oki. Do you feel that any instances where they (Story and gameplay) cannot be separated?

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: Or do you think that you cannot find any? Anytime where they cannot be separated?

Walter: I suppose the introduction prologue scene where you are running with Sarah.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: And then like it's very obvious that they are things happening and you can look left and right. That one I would argue is kind of gameplayish and kind of narrativeish but I er not really narrative lah, it's sort of just you can see what is happening but it doesn't actually progress the narrative.

### **Transcript 3.131**

[Session 1 24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 06:05]

Interviewer: So far do you find any conflict between story and gameplay? Er...

Interviewee: mm. Ya I find it a bit leh like I find the council I don't know why the council talk is like I know Saren is the top guy already but then it's like at this point in

the future, they sure there's a lot of evidence to show that Saren was the guy. Isn't that was the guy that killed. Ya lah. That's one part. I don't know ya lah maybe to make the story more interesting ah. I feel that at this point in time ah, it should be inevitably, it should be obvious that like how can Nihlus die, how can a spectre die if they are so like held so highly in the council's eyes. Basically one of the best, how can they die like that, obviously must be some possible explanation what. The Geth can't be so powerful to overcome the er Nihlus also Nihlus. Ya.

Interviewer: So you mean the story needs to explain more lah.

Interviewee: I guess so lah.

Interviewer: To make the gameplay.

Interviewee: The story should make ya should explain more. Ya lah ya lah.

Interviewer: To make the gameplay to be more connected?

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Something like that. But the story can do better lah as in...

Interviewer: I think in most of the this kind of story games, at the beginning, they don't...

Interviewee: Ya lah.

Interviewer: They don't reveal much.

Interviewee: They don't reveal much ya lah.

Interviewer: They want you to keep on playing.

Interviewee: Keep on playing ya lah ya lah. That's why ya lah.

Interviewer: Ya and then *Witcher 2* the other participants also mentioned like this is bad storytelling ah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Because *Witcher 2* at the beginning there's a dragon appear. Then they don't explain why the dragon appear. Then he say this one the storytelling very bad.

Interviewee: I feel that *Mass Effect* is generally oki lah. It's ya ya but I'm not like I feel I am sure what to do I mean like ya lah. Maybe I'm not used to playing this game it's like first time probably why ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Ya so I'm probably going to read up on everything. Ya.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: I cannot really gauge for sure yet lah. Ya.

[Session 1 24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 21:30]

Interviewee: And like the beacon also like very I don't know leh like they a lot of things, a lot of questions are not I think is left unanswered like ask you to say what? A war, and what but I didn't really see anything. I couldn't even er infer anything from the flashbacks that the guy got from the beacon.

Interviewer: That's why this kind of story at first they don't want to reveal so many things to you.

Interviewee: Ya lor. Ya lor. And then the Saren they also he suddenly start floating right? After that, the cutscene cut off. Then I don't know what happened like...

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Did he kena (Hokkien/Singlish term meaning something happened to him) anything or was he did he do that on purpose?

Interviewer: They don't want to tell you what happened.

Interviewee: Ya lor. Ya lor.

Interviewer: Ya. Like this is it do you find it oki for you?

Interviewee: I don't really find it...I prefer to be...

Interviewer: Everything tell you.

Interviewee: Ya la ya la. But ya la ya la to a large extent, ya we rationalise lah. All these flashbacks like what are they about. Like I don't know maybe it was a bit but I see a lot of flashbacks, I couldn't I couldn't infer what kinds of images they were also and then then the question they suddenly ask you in the gameplay, the dialogue ask you what? A war, a death or what? I can't even know what option to choose sia. Ya lah. Ya lor.

[Session 1 24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 24:15]

Interviewer: But then I'm thinking just now you say the what? You don't know how to choose.

Interviewee: Like the last part, after you wake up in the space ship right?

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Then the the they ask you about your images then like there's so many...

Interviewer: Ah then you say you got nightmare.

Interviewee: All the options. Ya all those options actually I want to explore one. Like ya but then they only give one to choose.

Interviewer: Oh you can only choose one.

Interviewee: Ya I can only choose one. Ya so ya lah. So wasn't I didn't really feel in control of it even though I was given three choices. And also when I choose nightmare then they say nightmare about what? Then the best answer I would say I

don't know lah but they only give us three. It was like "war", er "death", or "the Geth destruction" and ya la basically these three only then ya. Ya lor.

Interviewer: So basically when you play the game, you want to explore all the options ah?

Interviewee: Ya I prefer to be I'll prefer to know whatever's going on. Exactly whatever's going on ya lah. Unless the game is meant to be very very er mysterious and everything then oki lah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: But I prefer to know what's going on lah ya.

Interviewer: I think there's some choices they only let you choose one.

Interviewee: Ya lor ya lor.

Interviewer: mm. To make the story one direction.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Cos otherwise you becoming like Skyrim ah. Something like that already.

Interviewer: Skyrim ah.

Interviewee: As in it will be too complicated already what. The game, whole gameplay ah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 3.132**

[22 May 2014 *The Witcher 2* 4 – 7 pm 03:28]

Interviewer: Just now do you find any conflict between story and gameplay?

Interviewee: mm not so much a conflict between gameplay and story but at the start when you are supposed to recall the events sia, er honestly, I will I will have preferred it to play in chronological order. But when the interrogator ask the Witcher question what happened in the what happened during the assault, it doesn't really you don't really know which is which.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: So I thankfully I choose the first option lah because it was the first option. So it became er quite chronological. Apart from that there was this thing about the dragon which I totally, it came out of the blue. Like I I never seen him in the gameplay or no one talked about it before. So I don't really know what happened.

Interviewer: There's no story about the dragon ah?

Interviewee: Ya before the dragon appears.

Interviewer: It's only in the gameplay ah?



Interviewee: Ya it's only in the gameplay. That's why the but during the narrative, during the cutscene that asked the options it cues one about the dragon.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: It mentions the dragon before I even see the dragon. So I don't know what's that about lah.

Interviewer: erm did you select that option to read about the dragon just now?

Interviewee: er...

Interviewer: I think you didn't choose.

Interviewee: Right at the start? I didn't because I don't know what dragon it was talking about lah.

Interviewer: Ya so you think that they need to explain more about the dragon? Is it?

Interviewee: Ya lah they suddenly come out with a dragon and I don't know. I don't know how this dragon is related or what so...

Interviewer: Ya I think this kind of game they trying to give some kind of surprise ah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: By hiding the identity of the dragon.

Interviewee: No I think it's just a bad storytelling ah.

Interviewer: Okay but later on...

Interviewee: After playing the game ya then I realised what's it about lah.

Interviewer: If you want to comment then you can comment lah and record your comment.

Interviewee: Ah ya lah can.

### **Transcript 3.133**

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 44:24]

Walter: In terms of gameplay event, er significant gameplay event. It's probably the scene where you find the guy who's crushed under a wall and then you have to shoot him in the head. That one I would say it's a significant gameplay event that also has some narrative consequence. Basically says that you kill people with impunity. Because up until that point, you don't really know whether you are violent or whatever. And when that happens, it's like like the guy you are shooting doesn't look like he cares he wants you to do it. Tess is also going like just do it quick like she doesn't even give you doesn't even give a second thought about about you know, I'm ending another man's life. It's basically like just get it over that kind of thing. So that was a I would say it's a I think that's a good say for indicating that oh people people's lives are really worthless in this world.

Interviewer: So do you mean that this gameplay event is also linking to the narrative?

Walter: Ya. It I it it leads to the whole idea that you know, this world is really bleak and human lives are worthless.

Interviewer: Oki.

### Transcript 3.134

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 26:25]

Interviewer: So far the story do you find anything interesting about it?

Matt: The story itself?

Interviewer: Or is it quite typical?

Matt: er it starts off as a it starts off as a typical horror story ah. So it's like it's like a it's really like er I mean I've played Fear. So I've played like the Fear series. So er all these like paranormal things happening around people is is...

Interviewer: Quite expected ah?

Matt: Ya lah it's not unexpected to me lah. On the other hand, it's you want to try and er oki I've read the synopsis before lah you know haha. I read the plot in wiki. Oki lah. Erm

Interviewer: So far nothing stands out ah?

Matt: It's oki. **Maybe maybe cos I have read the plot before so it's kind of dulled out on me.** So the plot has dulled on me. So er what I find it stands out like against like other er stories ah in general is that there is let me think. I don't recall there being any other stories that look like this. But er even that said, I am not er I mean this this is not my area of interest. I am not particularly interested about it. So I really don't have that much to say about it. Ya lah. Mm.

### Transcript 3.135

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 34:24]

Interviewer: So just now you say you play games mostly for gameplay.

Matt: That's right.

Interviewer: er any any further comments ah?

Matt: Further comments?

Interviewer: About your own preference ah.

Matt: My own preference. I mean well, story wise is nice to see lah. But er story is nice to see but that's not the reason I play games. If I want a story, I can read a book, right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: er the story is...

Interviewer: It's just secondary lah.

Matt: I mean oki oki it's another challenge it is a challenge. You want to get the best ending. Right? You always want to get the optimal ending. And er what what game makers try to do nowadays try to pull the rug from under you is they give you no optimal ending. (Laughs). So when you look at when you go when you look online, you see you you see the game that you want to play right? And you try and ask yourself whether it is a whether it is a like er what happens if I make these choices. X, Y, Z. Right? Then choice X, Y, Z, what do I get? And then you see that ending right? I don't like the ending. At the end of the day, then the ending comes to the personal preference. Then you will work towards, then you will you will gear your choices to fit that ending. That's what I that's what we did in Black Ops 2. So you know exactly what you want to do which is kind of takes the joy it kinds of takes the joy out of discovering it on your own. Right? But on the other hand, why why why risk er why risk your whole time replaying that thing so you can just get that ending?

Interviewer: So mostly, you just you seldom play those story based games ah?

Matt: No lah.

Interviewer: Because they have less replay value.

Matt: Yes they because the moment you know the whole story, that's it.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Sorry, no more.

Interviewer: The different pathway is like just some minor variations ah?

Matt: Ya exactly. It's it's just it I still feel like minor variations so it doesn't feel so genuine. It doesn't feel like you are generally ah carving up your own path. Doesn't feel that way, no.

Interviewer: So nowadays, the games are still not strong enough ah?

Matt: No.

Interviewer: Like this story.

Matt: No they still trying they still trying to figure it out. Er they still trying to figure out what you can do with it.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: What I feel erm that is er I think what you might be looking for is this concept called emergent gameplay. Right? Er like *Fallout*. That's emergent gameplay. Or *Minecraft Minecraft*.

Interviewer: I think Ken Levine is looking at emergent gameplay.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: To make the story like really can...

Matt: As is told by the players themselves.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Right?

Interviewer: Really can have real possibilities, not fake possibilities.

Matt: mm oki. I played this game called *Dwarf fortress*. Right?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: You heard of *Dwarf Fortress*?

Interviewer: How to spell ah?

Matt: *Dwarf Fortress*.

Interviewer: You mean Dwarf?

Matt: Yeah Dwarf. Ya *Dwarf Fortress*.

Interviewer: I didn't. I'm not familiar with it.

Matt: Oki *Dwarf Fortress* is erm oki it is not a game that is easy to play. I will give you that much. It is er...

Interviewer: You mean it is like *Dark Souls* ah?

Matt: No no no no not that kind of not that kind of difficult. It's difficult as in the controls are very terrible to use. Oki it is very complex. You have to build a fortress using WASD.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Ya you have to use build fortress using WASD and the whole suite of keys you can use. So you have to tell your dwarfs to go and carve a hole here, make a door, put a room here, this is your cargo space, this is your kitchen. This is your...

Interviewer: There is a lot of micro management.

Matt: Yes. A lot of micro management. Very painful to do. Oki er and er let's see ah? Mm ya it's just generally painful. (Laughs). Just generally painful to do.

Interviewer: But you like it ah.

Matt: mm it was er I mean I played it lah so I can tell you that why it is emergent gameplay. It's emergent gameplay because you have to you kind of there's no objective so people just walk out and go and make their own objectives. They they say oki I want to make a nice fortress. I want to dig deep down. I want to find like like like the bottom of the world or whatever it is.

Interviewer: They can do whatever they want.

Matt: Yes exactly, they can do whatever they want. Ah and let's see what else ah what else. Er and because they can do whatever they want and they are controlling a whole

lot of dwarfs. And all these dwarfs will have their own behaviours. Er embedded into them. Right? So a lot of interesting things can happen. And one of the themes of the game is called “losing is fun”. Ya really really.

Interviewer: “Losing is fun”?

Matt: Ya that that that’s the catch phrase. “Losing is fun”. Why? Because er it’s like er what will happen is er it’s very easy to have your fortress bring down. Like you will get raided by bandits for example. Or you might get er or a titan might come knocking down at your door knocking knocking, destroying your entire fortress. Or or they have this thing called tantrum spiral where a dwarf gets unhappy. He breaks stuffs and makes more dwarfs unhappy and those dwarfs end up breaking stuff as well. Then everyone...

Interviewer: Chain cycle ah?

Matt: Ya. So it’s like it’s like one person goes into an uncontrollable tantrum right? And these tantrums usually lead to death. So he goes into a tantrum, right? Then because he goes into a tantrum, he does stuff, he makes three other dwarfs unhappy and goes into tantrums themselves so tantrum spiral.

Interviewer: So you mean there are different factions ah?

Matt: No, it’s all one fortress. Just one fortress but you know they they...

Interviewer: There are many dwarfs ah?

Matt: Ah ya there are many dwarfs inside.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: So they called it a tantrum spiral in the game.

Interviewer: So you mean the tantrum spiral is a kind of gameplay mechanic?

Matt: er...

Interviewer: Like one day...

Matt: It’s it emerged by ya I mean in a sense, it er I don’t know if it was intended but it emerged lah. It emerged from there.

Interviewer: What happens when there is a tantrum cycle?

Matt: er tantrum spiral spiral.

Interviewer: Spiral what?

Matt: It spirals out of control.

Interviewer: What does it do ah?

Matt: er...

Interviewer: It makes more chaos in the...

Matt: Ya it just it just throws your entire fortress into chaos.

Interviewer: Like *Sim City* like that? Like when there is disaster. Then...

Matt: mm kind of kind of...er think of it this way. It's a it's like an epidemic. Right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: An epidemic that er it's like it's like Ebola just set loose in your house you know? In your your your loose city and guess what happens, you know? Half your guys are dead. And more to follow soon. It's like that. And when your fortress is devastated, usually...

Interviewer: It's very fun for you?

Matt: Huh? Ya that's right. It's very fun. It leads to lots of fun.

Interviewer: So that means there's a game over? Is there a game over?

Matt: You lose all your dwarfs game over lah.

Interviewer: There's a game over?

Matt: Every fortress inevitably will die sooner or later.

Interviewer: That means when everything dies off, you cannot continue.

Matt: Ya la, you start over lah. That's why "losing is fun" cos you learn stuff over. You learn stuff as you start over. Erm that's emergent gameplay. Another form of emergent gameplay is like erm I like the way *Fallout* tells stories. Er so it's like it's it's an investigative perspective. You erm you are let's say you are a Vault Dweller or a Courier or whatever it is, and you have come out and you come out and you go exploring. And then you come across this vault. This vault door, right? You go out to the front and then you see these skeletons lying in front of the vault door. So you can guess what happens to those guys.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Right? They were trying to get into the vault before the bombs fell and it didn't work. Ya that sort of thing, that sort of thing. Or you go to a, or you go to a a a you go to like you maybe go into a lab, right? And then you see and then you see some bodies on the floor and you see a gun next to them and then you see an audio recording. And then you hear the audio recording, and then you can guess what happened to those fellows.

Interviewer: It's you also consider that emergent gameplay?

Matt: erm no that's not emergent gameplay. But I thought it was just interesting to bring out. It's er...

Interviewer: It's like *Bioshock*?

Matt: It's storytelling.

Interviewer: Like *Bioshock*?

Matt: This is not in a *Bioshock* way.

Interviewer: I mean the audio recording.

Matt: No no no no no. I'm talking about er why not why not? You know? I like how they I like how *Fallout* or *Bioshock* for that matter, they they they try and reveal these er bits of story, it's like vignettes. Vignettes you know, it adds like authenticity to the story. To the environment that the player is in. The player's environment and er whether they add to the narrative itself, or they themselves are narratives is interesting in itself. I like that I like that.

Interviewer: You like the slowly uncovering the story for yourself.

Matt: Yes.

### Transcript 3.136

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 1:19:35]

Matt: Narrative choices and gameplay choices may not necessarily be mutually exclusive. You understand that? You understand what I mean right?

Interviewer: They are sometimes...

Matt: A narrative choice can be a gameplay choice.

Interviewer: Ya sometimes together.

Matt: Ya. So like for example, er oki. A example – I played this game called *Wolfenstein: New er New World Order*. Right?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: And what happens is at the beginning of the game, after at the end of the first chapter, you have two buddies right? And you can choose to keep one alive and let the other person die. Now, from a narrative choice, right? This means that you will you, one person will live and the other person will die. And then you will have to live with the other person that he struggles to to to to understand like hey he should er you should have let the other person live. Right?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: That is a narrative choice. It affects the story. It affects how erm it affects the the the resistance you will end up meeting the resistance in the future. And this and and and if the guy survives to come into the resistance, he will he will er there will be interaction going on within there.

Interviewer: Ya so you mean it will affect both the story outcome and...

Matt: Yes. And how it affects the gameplay is when er is he will give you like going like er er he will give you like er a special ability to unlock er previously inaccessible areas of the game. So like of the map.

Interviewer: So you mean like when you support one character, he will unlock some gameplay...

Matt: Some some abilities or whatnot.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: He will unlock an ability.

Interviewer: Some gameplay choice ah?

Matt: Yes.

Interviewer: So this case is like *Witcher 2*.

Matt: I don't know *Witcher 2* but I oki I supposed you know what I am talking about lah. Ah so that is that is that lah. Erm let's see ah er mm so when I say a story a narrative choice, I am choosing erm I am making a choice which will lead to an to to a change in the narrative outcome.

Interviewer: You mean the change does it have to be minor? Or major?

Matt: er minor or major? Oki. Mm minor or major...

Interviewer: Like in *Beyond: Two Souls* so far, it's very minor.

Matt: Ya so far, it's so far it seems quite minor.

Interviewer: Do you still consider it as a narrative choice ah?

Matt: er...

Interviewer: If there's some minor variations within the chapter?

Matt: Ya sure. er well, it's it's quite it sounds quite liberal that as a definition right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: er ya it's like it's like mm er wow this game is really testing the definitions here. Because I mean like you said lah the gameplay is the narrative. Then...

Interviewer: It's very hard ah.

Matt: Ya. It's very hard to it's very hard to make a clear differentiation.

Interviewer: It's like *The Walking Dead* also.

### **Transcript 3.137**

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 1]

Interviewer: When you played the game, did you discuss with any friends about the gameplay strategies?

Nasir: mm not really. As in I guess the when I was stuck at something, or when I like wanted to find some some item or whatever then I will look it up like where do I find it. Probably the *Mass Effect* wiki. But in terms of strategies, not really ah. Strategies mostly I just did myself.

Interviewer: Ah you say you go and find Tali's side mission in the wiki ah.



Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Because you...

Nasir: Because it wasn't apparent then I was I knew I had a...

Interviewer: You don't know which planet is it ah?

Nasir: Ya. Because like er as in only later when I explored the thing then I realised it was erm you need like complete four different planets, then later trigger her her as in it's not like it's not from the start says that it was her loyalty mission ah. It's like like Garrus and Wrex it was they give it to you mah. So I was waiting for them for Tali also. Wondering how come Tali didn't.

Interviewer: Oh Tali's mission is er another side mission.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Is the Geth one is not her one.

Nasir: Ya as in it's not like it's not that she give one ah. It's the alliance give then then...

Interviewer: The Geth incursion?

Nasir: Ya. Then because erm er wait ah. Ya because she she did repeat, she did say like in her conversations what what kind of erm what kind of item she needed for her pilgrimage. So ya as in but ya so as in you somewhat infer that she will want that item or so.

Interviewer: But the Geth Incursion mission didn't explicitly tell you.

Nasir: Ya. Yes.

Interviewer: That it's related to Tali's side quest?

Nasir: Ya it didn't.

Interviewer: So you have difficulty finding how to unlock her quest?

Nasir: Ya. That's right.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 3.138**

[17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* Final Interview [Walter] 1:10:45]

Interviewer: I mean when you play as Ellie, do you see that there's some some more danger to the character?

Walter: No, not really. Well that was that one sequence where you broke free and you didn't have weapons but that was because you didn't have weapons.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: Not because you know, like oh she's a timid 14 year old girl with no which needs protection, no not nothing like that. It's sort of like ah crap got no weapons you are going to be...

Interviewer: So it's more, so it's still quite separated lah, the gameplay and the story?

Walter: I don't think it's separated. I mean they are trying to make it look like Ellie is not really this helpless girl. So ya I I'm ya I don't I don't I think they established throughout the entire game that Ellie is not helpless.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: They that's pretty much her entire thing throughout the game. Even from the start when she had nothing, she always tries to say like, "I'm not helpless, give me a gun." That kind of thing. So ya that supports the narrative. I think it's perfectly support. I don't think that making her helpless had anything to do with the narrative. I think that goes against the narrative if they had done that.

Interviewer: mm. So it's more realistic in this sense ah? More...

Walter: Well, I don't know if it's realistic lah but it fits the narrative.

### **Transcript 3.139**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 40:45]

Interviewer: Are you a gamer that plays more for the story or gameplay? Or is it both ah?

Michael: Both ah.

### **Transcript 3.140**

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 Walter 54:35]

Interviewer: And then the next question, do you find whether narrative information given to you by the characters in the game, does it influence you when you make the gameplay choice? Like there was one instance after you meet Marlene, she was talking about, she was suggesting to Joel that he can use stealth options, but she says that it is not Joel's style. Can you remember?

Walter: Yes yes. There was this part there.

Interviewer: Does it influence your gameplay choice?

Walter: Actually when that happened, it made me wonder they were taking into account all my interactions before. And that that, I don't know whether this game actually has a dynamic narrative that they adapt to your playstyle? But that was the impression I got. That you know like oh they figured out like I was actually really clumsy and shot everyone I saw that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: But er I assume that basically, they were trying to say that Joel's really violent which is alright as well. But erm it didn't really change the way I wanted to play. If

anything, it spurred me on to do it better that oh I'm not violent, I can totally kill people from the dark that kind of thing.

Interviewer: But er I mean were you able to link it to the gameplay when she talked about this? Er...

Walter: Link it to the gameplay, well when you play the game even if you play as a stealthy character, you still end up killing everybody.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: So I don't think there's a big disconnect there. I think it's fine.

Interviewer: It's in line with the gameplay?

Walter: Ya. It's vague. I mean technically speaking, if you want to be a sticker and you say that erm oki maybe not, but I think it's vague enough that it doesn't really create a disjoint between the two.

#### **Transcript 4.1**

[22 May 2014 *The Witcher 2* 10 am – 3.40 pm 05:25]

Interviewer: Okay so in this game, do you think the story or gameplay is more important?

Interviewee: I think I think er both okay lah I don't know the story lah. For starters. So it is a it is it is important for me for me to know the story. Like I will finish playing the game because of the story. But then the gameplay wise it's also very er challenging it's very dynamic like there is so much I can do. I can run around, I can er you know swing my sword or use my signs. Quick slots haven't got there yet but I think if I get there it will be quite useful though. And I feel that er ya lah like like there's so much that and there's so much interaction with the environment lah like it's not like those CS where you just run around. You shoot the the some ya lah I mean you shoot the chicken it will die but you shoot the wall and all that it's just like nothing happened. But this one it's so much more interaction with the environment. There are things to pick up, I will need to look for it and all that. And I feel that that's a that makes the gameplay itself erm important lah. But if I have to pick one I would I will pick the storyline ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It's like reading a book without having to read the book.

Interviewer: So far er the journal did you find it quite important ah? There's some storyline in the journal.

Interviewee: Ya I know. The storyline not much lah I feel like like the important so far lah so far the important things are in the in the game lor. Like I got look at it then it's like let's say like let's say like I haven't do something yet then then I did it, then the journal just record it down. Like that lor.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: So far lah.

Interviewer: So the journal will depend on your actions ah then they will write the story according to what you do?

Interviewee: mm that's what I see lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But I guess when later in the game when there are more than one quests, the journal will function as the as the you know, the mini map? Like if you select this quest, then the objective will be...

Interviewer: Ya the pointer ah.

Interviewee: Ah. So I think...

Interviewer: It will help in your gameplay.

Interviewee: Ah so like more like I feel that so far lah, my take on the journal is a very functional one lah. Like it's just there to to do the...

Interviewer: Gameplay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: In my opinion, so far lah into the game.

Interviewer: So oh so now you are focusing more on the gameplay first. Is it because you are trying to survive?

Interviewee: Some parts. Like because of of the delay and some things that need really split second execution, like the you know the fighting the guard than W come up then I have to press W.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: But if I press on time, or if I press slow a bit but it's still okay but but the computer lag one more delay then I will oh...

## **Transcript 4.2**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 1:11:45]

Interviewer: I think you find the character, the Asari character after you killed her mother.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: er is it because you you don't think that she is important character for the story ah?

Michael: I think I didn't focus on her.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: You focus more on Shepherd ah?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because you only choose this character after you know that you can have lesbian sex with her.

Interviewer: But in *Mass Effect* 1, cannot ah?

Michael: I didn't know so I didn't care.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: So you didn't want her, you didn't want to know more about her story ah?

Michael: er ya.

Interviewer: mm. And the relationship with the mother also.

Michael: mm no really.

Interviewer: mm. Do you think that the narrative will remain the same if you bring her with you to fight her mother? Do you think that it'll be the same?

Michael: I don't think so.

Interviewer: mm. In what way do you think it is different?

Michael: I don't know. I haven't read the FAQ.

Interviewer: So you think there will be some difference ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: But the overall narrative will still be the same ah?

Michael: The major plot will still be the same.

Interviewer: It's only the minor minor details.

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 4.3**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 21:50]

Interviewer: This part she's saying the Little Sisters cannot be killed....The other file...the escort mission...So this part you have to escort the Little Sisters...But how come they got health bar?

Mary: Oh ya.

Interviewer: Do you find any conflict between...

Mary: Ya. Now that you say that ya hor. She should be able to regenerate her health what. Even if there is a health bar. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: But she could die. And I didn't want to risk her dying.

Interviewer: Did you did you let her die?

Mary: Huh?

Interviewer: Did you let any die ah?

Mary: I didn't. I didn't. I asked Loke what happened.

Interviewer: But you know they can die lah?

Mary: Ya I mean as in they give me a health bar so she can die but ya now that you said that yah. They are not supposed to die what. So weird. But ya I asked Loke what happened if she die, then Loke said another one just appears.

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: So I don't get it lah like after he told me that I was like what okay. I went through so much to to prevent her from dying and then she can don't die one but yah or why? I don't know leh.

Interviewer: But when you play the game, you are not so critical?

Mary: Ya I I didn't realise this part ya.

Interviewer: But now that you realise, how do you feel about it ah?

Mary: er I'm very shocked lah hehe. Ya lor then why did they make us go through all that? Ya like there's a bit of er contradiction everything lah ya. Huh so this is where a conflict between the narrative and the gameplay comes in is it?

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: Like ya you have to ya lor the narrative tells you this but the gameplay wants you to protect.

Interviewer: But the participants are unable to see it ah?

Mary: er what?

Interviewer: The participants are unable to see this.

Mary: Ya I didn't realise that until you just told me.

Interviewer: So so I wonder...

Mary: I don't know leh I guess this is just like the whole like mood at that point like you just do it like you know you don't really ah like okay lah I am not a critical like I don't play and question all the time. Like I just play. So it's like I guess you call this type of casual gamer type of person right? So it's like I will just play lor at that moment they tell me to okay the game tells me okay, you have to protect the Little Sisters okay I have to protect the Little Sisters.

Interviewer: So when you I tell you this what is your experience now?

Mary: mm I'm just just damn shocked lor. I feel very I mean cheated in a sense like they should be able to regenerate what? Like their health should be able to slowly increase back in a sense.

Interviewer: mm.

Mary: Rather than just gone. Huh. Interesting. Ya. So strange why will they die ah? Ya it's just very strange. Huh ya I don't know what to say. Very shocked.

Interviewer: So this kind of erm long long kind of connection, do you think that participants they really cannot see it? Like the audio log is in a very er previous game.

Mary: Ya ya ya.

Interviewer: Quite some time ago and then this part there is escort mission is in the almost towards the end of the game.

Mary: I mean...

Interviewer: But then but then that audio tape is also quite close ah.

Mary: Ya. It's only...

Interviewer: It's in the Little Sister's orphanage. Is it?

Mary: Ya. No. I suppose that part because it's like Tenenbaum that there was a whole series. That area has a lot of audio tapes if I didn't remember wrongly. There was quite a few audio tapes there explaining the whole like Little Sisters orphanage I think. Right? Anyway...

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: Ya then it's like I guess at that point like people are just like listening and just like filtering out whatever they hear.

Interviewer: Is it because...

Mary: Like not very...

Interviewer: They are focusing more on the gameplay?

Mary: At that point, ya. I guess so because it's moving towards the end already.

Interviewer: So there's also some kind of conflict between story and gameplay.

Mary: mm.

Interviewer: Where they cannot focus on both at the same time. So for you is it...your...

Mary: I mean at that point, I was already like okay, I thought it's going to be the end, I am like anticipating the end already.

Interviewer: So your focus is also more on the gameplay lah?

Mary: Ya huh.

Interviewer: Because you want to rush to finish the game.

Mary: I just smack myself in the face. Ya at that point I was already like Fontaine I'm going to kill that bastard. I didn't think much already.

#### **Transcript 4.4**

[File 2 – *Beyond: Two Souls* 2014-08-02 Recording 42:46]

Michael: Now, I'm putting my training into use right? But there's not enough light. Down? Okay. There's a log. I can't see the log. I need more light. Can you like shine more light to my face? Now what? Up? [Presses the wrong control because of the dark lighting] No? Oh there's a log over there. I couldn't see it. Up? [Presses the wrong control again] Not again.

[1 Jun 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 1:48:28]

Michael: What does white dot mean?

Interviewer: White dot is to move towards.

Michael: See I have already forgotten right?

Interviewer: Blue dot is to possess ah.

Michael: Ah so now blue dot I know I need to do something to him. This is quite clear.

Interviewer: When you play that time, was it clear?

Michael: er Because it's consistent with other events ah.

Interviewer: So you can roughly do it.

Michael: Everything that you can interact with as Aiden is in blue dot. But you rarely have a chance to see a white dot appearing. So by the time the next white dot appear, you already forgotten. And it's like within what? One hour thirty nine minutes right?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: I already forgotten.

Interviewer: So you are still trying to remember it ah?



Michael: Ya. So now there's no affordance to go where also. Until you see white dot appears and I didn't notice.

Interviewer: Is it because it is too small ah?

Michael: It's too small. It's bloody small and you see this is a third party view.

Interviewer: Third person?

Michael: Third person view game. You see? It appears only then eh. See? I have to walk back again.

Interviewer: Do you think that if it's made into another colour, it will be better?

Michael: No. There must be a big bloody arrow pointing.

Interviewer: So er...

Michael: See that button that thing over there? You see the lag between me realising that I need to do something? And actually, I do something?

Interviewer: Ya.

Michael: Even this one right? I think it's the first time I see this sequence event. Sequence event is okay because it takes two or three tries to remember.

Interviewer: And they give you explicit prompts also?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: But the white dot...

Michael: White dot no.

Interviewer: It's very easy to see?

Michael: Now it's like eh there's a white dot.

Interviewer: Because it's not very very prominent ah?

Michael: No. If you turn back three minutes hor, you will notice that the whole corridor have white dots. Er.

Interviewer: But this one is okay lah?

Michael: She says the windows mah.

Interviewer: So it's a very clear prompt?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: This one is also okay lah because it also appears in front of you.

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm. This also okay.

Michael: Yes this is a direct prompt mah. I got a feeling also during alpha testing, the person forgot so many times that they have to put one big icon over there. Please press this button.

Interviewer: I think they put in after the playtesting?

Michael: Yes. If I didn't remember wrongly hor, if I remember correctly hor, this white dot doesn't appear anymore right?

Interviewer: In this part ah?

Michael: After this, it doesn't appear very soon after this.

Interviewer: mm I think in the later chapters, there's some.

Michael: Yes. They don't appear frequently right?

Interviewer: Sometimes only.

Michael: Yes. So because this is a movie, after a while there's no white dot. Then suddenly, there's one white dot there. You'll be like eh, I need to do something hor?

Interviewer: Ya.

Michael: Ya. This breaks the continuity of the game you know? Then this sequence is also thankfully I remember. I can go down the go up the log.

Interviewer: There's no prompt at all?

Michael: There's no prompt.

Interviewer: You remember to move the joystick?

Michael: Ya. This one? This one I didn't see the log.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: There, this one I don't know whether it's up or down?

Interviewer: Ah so, the darkness also affect you?

Michael: Ah of course.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Like this one obvious lor, left right, left right lor.

Interviewer: So it's mostly the white dot that is the problem lah?

Michael: So if there's no icon right? Ya ya the white dot is the problem.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So obviously, the tester they die in this stage also.

Interviewer: But when the white dot appear in front of you, no problem lah? Like this one?

Michael: No. There is a problem. I didn't do the correct things what?

Interviewer: So you cannot?

Michael: I failed the first time.

Interviewer: You cannot see it also?

Michael: I cannot. And if you turn back three seconds, you will see the white dot appear, eh are those white dots? You can't tell. Are those white dots? You can't tell. Are there white dots that are going to appear? You can't tell also.

Interviewer: mm.

#### **Transcript 4.5**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 26:55]

Interviewer: And then when you explore the gameworld, you will find some artefacts ah? Those artefacts do you find it also very realistic ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Like they are left behind by people who do not appear in the gameworld.

Nasir: Ya I guess ya because okay at least when you find notes, they they bother giving you a a like it's really handwritten or hand scrawled. But then then it's a nice feature that you can also at the same time use the like a translator so that they have overlay, what what their message is talking about so ya as in the that's a nice touch also in in in it makes the environment more alive. And like like if you were to actually find that item, ya that's what you probably that's what you would probably see. Ya so it's quite realistic in terms of the artefacts.

Interviewer: But then the artefacts is depends on the contexts. Some are narrative objects, some are gameplay objects ah?

Nasir: Yup.

Interviewer: And then sometimes it's a mixture of both.

Nasir: mm yup.

#### **Transcript 4.6**

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 1 12:22]

Interviewer: So the decryption skill didn't unlock any narrative story for you? It's only gameplay reward?

Nasir: The the the only time decryption unlock narrative is you unlock the armour that the Wrex's armour cos it was stored in the safe. But that's it I think ya. As in and I suppose if you decrypt some stuff, you unlock side side missions? So but then again, like for *Mass Effect*, the side missions are quite repetitive so...

Interviewer: Orh those optional ones not a lot of story.

Nasir: Ya. As in even if there was story, it was very simple, like go there, kill, come back. Ya.

Interviewer: The Wrex armour that that part, did you need maximum decryption ah? Or is it just minimum?

Nasir: er no. A certain level. As in the highest level lah but it's not max ah like I think if you max the entire you only reach like let's say the bar got ten squares, only think the max decryption is at seven or something. Ya around there lah so...

Interviewer: So it's seven over ten lah then can work already?

Nasir: Something like that lah.

#### **Transcript 4.7**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 35:18]

Interviewer: Ya but I'm wondering if erm do you see some kind of story emerging out of your gameplay action. Like erm when you choose to shoot the person, do you see that they are trying to characterise Joel as a more negative kind of character?

Alice: Not really because that decision to shoot the guy or not to shoot the guy is a you do decision. Er if Joel didn't shoot the guy, then would you see he's a good person? I'm not really sure about that. Like he is a smuggler. He has done a lot of illegal things so you know Joel lives in the grey area in general. But choosing to shoot the guy or choosing to kill soldiers or leave Infected erm I don't think really offers characterisation of Joel because there's definitely ways that you can just not kill anybody and try to sneak your way through it? Erm and there's also another way where you can kill everybody and just continue the game.

Interviewer: So in those gameplay actions, you don't see them characterising Joel so much?

Alice: Not really.

Interviewer: Because his characterisation is mainly in the cutscene?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: But erm during the gameplay do you see any kind of narrative coming out of your gameplay actions?

Alice: Not really. All my gameplay actions are just to get to the next main story point. It doesn't really it hasn't really been that one of my decisions really has affected the story how it goes.

Interviewer: So when you engage in the gameplay actions, you are just thinking of the gameplay? You are not you are not so much thinking of the narrative?

Alice: Not really. I'm just trying to focus on the goals of the gameplay.

Interviewer: Ya because I'm trying to ask about emergent narrative.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: If you have heard of it.

#### **Transcript 4.8**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 2:52:45]

Interviewer: Do you see any narrative in this side quest? Er I think all these people turned into husks ah.

Michael: In this particular quest, yes ah.

Interviewer: er can you talk more ah?

Michael: Then you will be wondering er I thought we are coming and there are people in there. How come all become husks?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So it's like question mark lor.

Interviewer: So in this side quest, do you see it more as a gameplay or narrative?

Michael: It becomes a...

Interviewer: They say they are trying to find what survey team?

Michael: It becomes a narrative at this point leh.

Interviewer: Ah.

Michael: mm. But it is also a side quest itself mah.

Interviewer: So it's both ah.

Michael: mm. Ya so you don't have to care about it leh. I think you can proceed with the gameplay even if you don't come here.

Interviewer: mm so it's optional lah.

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: But if you know about the narrative here or you don't know about it?

Michael: You don't know about it ah.

Interviewer: It doesn't matter ah?

Michael: It you won't know lah.

Interviewer: mm for you did you want to know about it?

Michael: er...

Interviewer: Or I mean the narrative is it very important? I think for you is more of the gameplay reward lah?

Michael: Ya probably.

Interviewer: mm because they didn't explain a lot.

Michael: They actually didn't explain a lot.

Interviewer: mm. They didn't put a lot of time into making the side quest this one.

Michael: mm.

#### **Transcript 4.9**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 1 [Nasir] 21:46]

Nasir: So ya as in at least personally for him, ya I found at least Ish, the the side character, who we read about Ish, as in ya he seems to be he seems to be more of a I don't know? Good person but Joel Joel is a good person in the sense that he takes care of those close to him and do stuff like that. But Ish Ish...

Interviewer: Ish is more like...

Nasir: He goes the extra mile to to help people because you can see that he was surviving well on his own as in he he at least he hasn't died yet lah. We don't see how how he is but he seems to be a fairly positive made Joel kind of kind.

Interviewer: It's like contrasting against Joel?

Nasir: Ya. Then as in a bit more light hearted in nature. But at the same time, he he also goes through all the same horrors or at least most of the horrors that Joel did lah but he he reached out and he wanted to he actually got people to come along with him compared to Joel who who prefers not to have other people involved in his business. So ya Ish seems to be more of a a I don't know inherentness there's more of a goodness in him compared to Joel so so I if given a choice, I rather be Ish. As in if they do make a side story about this or maybe a second game about *Last of Us*, it would be nice to find out what happened to Ish or maybe even play as Ish. Maybe like in a parallel story timeline or sometime in the future.

Interviewer: Orh so in *Last of Us 2*, you will want to play as Ish ah?

Nasir: As in I think it would it would be nice to make that switch to Ish because like we read about as in we find out bits and pieces of his character in this game. It would be nice to er actually play as him and see see what he goes through lah.

#### **Transcript 4.10**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 58:50]

Alice: Okay ya ya ya so then what was your question?

Interviewer: Do you think that Ish is contrasting against the cannibalism of the story? Like they are portraying two different sides of the humans ah like...

Alice: Ya but I don't think that it is a form of contrast though because even though I feel that cannibalism is bad, in this world, these are the people that needs to do what they needed to do in order to survive. And also Ish is doing what he thinks is the best thing to do. So they both what they have both done are both very very terrible things

but and I don't think they are different from each other. I think they are on the same level.

Interviewer: I mean do you think that Ish is a more hopeful character?

Alice: No. I don't think he's a more hopeful character because he killed everybody.

Interviewer: Oh so you mean Ish caused the death of the children in the...

Alice: Ya I mean he feels that I mean you say it that he is a more hopeful character then I feel that he would have tried to figure out a way and maybe he did er to try and save everybody but in the end what he did was that he killed all the children that he was stuck with. On the other hand, you had the cannibals that are fighting for a way to survive. I think that that is more hopeful than what Ish is doing.

### **Transcript 4.11**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 31:40]

Interviewer: Personally, do you feel that er the scene in video games do you do you think that the interactivity should contribute more to the emotional feeling of the player? Instead of the cutscene?

Alice: I think there is a danger in the fact that if you use interactivity to create emotion because then you could feel really forced. Erm so for example, if you have like in the beginning of the game when you first picked up your pack right? And you are walking with Tess and it's introducing you to how to shoot erm a gun and it's saying like shoot this man or don't shoot this man, that's an interactivity. Because it's giving you a choice. Erm that could create some sort of an emotion because if you shoot the guy, you will realise that Joel is a little bit heartless. If you don't shoot this man, it's like something else could have happened. So there is a danger in the fact that you are using interactivity to try and force an emotion with this character. I think that cutscenes work a lot better because er as a passive audience, you are not really been forced to input your potential decisions onto this character. It's like you are showing them like this is who he is like you know, this is the baseline for what who Joel is. And I'm not thinking that if I shoot this guy, is it my choice or is it Joel's choice. Erm maybe that's why I thought that the gameplay sequences were less emotional for me because I was more focused on...

Interviewer: The gameplay?

Alice: The gameplay itself. Erm there's just a lot happening in gameplay in general that you have to be aware of that might create less of an emotional bond. That you have to worry about enemies attacking you. Erm if Ellie is in the scene like well Ellie could take care of herself so I guess it doesn't really matter but like just so many there's so many things happening in the gameplay that if they try to do something like Ellie get oh like when they go find the other guy [Bill] and you are been hung up by the fridge and erm Ellie sometimes gets attacked. There is a gameplay decision to shoot her first or shoot the guy coming at you. Erm and I feel that it's rather forced. And you only pick up on it because...

Interviewer: You are more focused on the gameplay?

Alice: Ya. You are more focused on the fact that you have to complete that stage rather than pay attention to the subtleties in the scene.

Interviewer: So you mean that you want the gameplay to be less when the scene is showing the emotional...

Alice: I think that they have different purposes. I think in terms of gameplay, you are not really trying to show emotion in terms of gameplay. I think that cut sequences have a tendency to show more emotion because they have your full attention.

Interviewer: Ya but some participants say that if the cutscenes show all the emotions they might as well go and watch a movie.

Alice: This is also true so I think there has to be a balance between the cutscenes and the gameplay.

Interviewer: Ya so maybe there is you need to have some control when they are showing the emotional parts.

Alice: Ya I mean in terms of I mean in terms of gameplay you know there is certain points in time where you can go up to Ellie and say like you know are you okay or whatever which is a narrative event inside gameplay. Because you can choose to ask her that question. You can choose not to ask her that question. Erm and whether and how she responds creates that I guess emotional attachment because you are trying to you know gauge how she is feeling but on the other hand, it's also I feel like it's also very forced. Because it's like you see the thing pop up and then you have like to go over to her and ask her that question.

Interviewer: But...

Alice: On the other hand, it's like do you stand there and listen to her. Most of the times, I hate that gameplay and I try to wander and do something else while she's talking erm...

Interviewer: But video games haven't they haven't figure out how to make it more natural lah. This part.

Alice: I think it's always difficult to make it natural because...

Interviewer: It's the nature of the programming ah?

Alice: Ya it's the nature of programming but it's also on the other hand, it's like if it was just showing me walking by Ellie, I might not think that it was very important.

Interviewer: You can just focus on the gameplay?

Alice: Ya. Like for example, if you didn't have that pop up like say press triangle to listen to whatever Ellie has to say...

Interviewer: Then you are not focused on it.

Alice: I'm not focused on whatever she might be saying like there's time where she's talking in the background and I'm exploring, I'm paying less attention to what she's



doing because I'm more interested in exploring the surroundings and listening to Ellie tell a joke.

Interviewer: mm.

Alice: So when you have those specific press triangle to listen to what Ellie says, I pay more attention because it's a signal for me to pay attention. So it's unnatural but I think it's just something you need to do. Erm because maybe video games are not to the stage where the characters can say like hey pay attention to me. Er this is something important.

Interviewer: Do you mean that it's better if narrative and gameplay is more separated? More separated ah?

Alice I like it when it's more separated.

Interviewer: So you can focus.

Alice: It gives me a trigger to realise when I need to pay attention and when I don't need to pay attention.

Interviewer: Ya. So you can focus more.

Alice: Ya. Because when gameplay sometimes especially if you know *Assassin's Creed* you tend to go on auto pilot sometimes.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: erm so if there's something really important been given to me in a gameplay level, I might not be paying attention until someone says pay attention. This is very important. Like a cutscene. A very good way to say pay attention. This is very important.

Interviewer: So in *Assassin's Creed*, they also give you this kind of prompts ah?

Alice: I mean okay so in *Assassin's Creed* when you are roaming around, sometimes, in part of main storyline right cos you know the side quests. The side quests really don't give any information for the main storyline but if you are in a main storyline sequence, you can be walking around and say a house, and then all of a sudden, you will hear someone say erm don't lose the key er you know the guy on level three has the key and that's a narrative information. Because it's telling you where to go. So...

Interviewer: So this is narrative given in the gameplay?

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: It's very good ah?

Alice: It's good because it there's I think there's a signal actually, there's like erm the either he purposely walking in front of you or the purposely walk in front of you means that you can't reveal yourself because usually you are not supposed, it's in a restricted area so you usually will stop what you are doing. And then these two people walk in front of you and say like you know, go get the key from level three. Or the guy has a key on level three so you know you have to sneak to level three to get it.

## Transcript 4.12

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 1:25:10]

Alice: I agree with that statement both in terms of gameplay and in real life. Okay but the thing is that this statement [The Infected are predictable but the normal people scares him] is meant to set psych you up. So I think in terms of the computer AI, it's not so sophisticated in the sense that er the Infected and the people do different things. So like the route that the Infected would take and the route that the human would take, they usually do it in circuits. Erm I think that's more of a mental thing to psych you up cos it's kind of human nature that the humans can think for themselves whereas the Infected cannot.

Interviewer: Ya. Do you find the any difference in the AI between Infected and the humans? Like are the humans' AI more unpredictable?

Alice: I mean like I said before I think they react differently. I think that they are both pretty predictable in certain say if they spot you they will try to kill you. In terms of the Infected like I mentioned before, if you make a mistake and you make a noise, all the Infected will rush towards you and try to kill you. And that's dangerous because Joel is not equipped to deal with seven things in close proximity. Erm he can't physically kill seven things with you know weapons because he can only shoot one thing at one time. Erm in terms of humans, humans don't really rush up to you unless they are close to you. So if they spot you, what they will do is that they will hide from a distance. So it makes it easier to kill them because you can try to go to a different position whereas Infected you can't really because you are just running away. I think that's the difference in the AI.

Interviewer: So it's just the difference ah?

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: It's not predictable or unpredictable? Because you have been playing for a long time, you will know that it's quite predictable?

Alice: I've played it several times, I feel like there's places where there's unpredictability and there's places where there's predictability.

Interviewer: So it's hard to generalise.

Alice: It's hard to judge because I've played it multiple times, I've noticed that even if I'm trying to do the same thing, like the same result doesn't happen. For some reason, I guess this is a you know a good thing about this game is that if I'm sneaking up behind a Clicker, sometimes I go left, sometimes I go right. So that's just part of I guess what makes the AI good is that you can't like you are not doing the same things over and over again.

Interviewer: So there's some link to the gameplay? This statement?

Alice: A little bit. There's something that says that they operate differently? But Bill is saying that the humans are more calculating? Which I'm not sure in the game that really comes true because it is so computer AI, I don't think it's sophisticated enough to really have people plot and plan.

Interviewer: It's only in the narrative?

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: Do you find it also foreshadowing David's character?

Alice: Yes. I think it does a really good job in setting up the fact that David was a very very difficult person that cannot...

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 4.13**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 1:11:51]

Alice: erm on extreme, I've noticed that after playing on the normal difficulty, on extreme, you realise that everything is very sensitive. So if you make a noise, they will hear you. Any type of noise they will hear you. Erm it's usually a one shot kill. So if you don't kill them the first time, that's game over. That the game is going drag you dead. Erm whereas on normal you can you have more freedom to make mistakes.

Interviewer: Because when they discover you, you will die straightaway, is it?

Alice: It's an almost straightaway. So if they discover you, in like the really difficult level, for the Infected you die. There's not if you stumble upon it or the Clickers and you don't kill them right away like if you don't press a button right away, you die. Erm if it's a human being if you don't shoot them, you don't kill them within two shots, you are dead. So and everything is just more sensitive to...like killing erm David on the highest difficulty level which is very very difficult.

Interviewer: Because he can he is very sensitive to your movements?

Alice: Ya he is very sensitive like he I think the computer actually can track where you are so when you are looking at that third stage where he like disappears off your like kilometre or whatever, erm if you don't lock him, you oh if you actually focus on it, you realise that he actually is following you erm and that might be a computer decision that he is actually aiming for you the entire time, so it's in normal, I can stay in one position, and slowly move around. But in the highest difficult level, if you stay in one position, Robert will find you.

Interviewer: He will come and track you.

Alice: Ya he will come for you. Whereas in normal one, he kind of like just hang around. And you can go find him. In the highest difficulty level, he will come for you like in a real world situation.

Interviewer: So it makes the gameplay more tense ah?

Alice: Ya. It does make the gameplay more stressful.

Interviewer: But there's no difference in the story at the higher difficulty ah?

Alice: There's no difference in the story. I think it's all just gameplay.

Interviewer: Does the AI change in the higher difficulty or is it the same? The AI.

Alice: I think it does. No it does it does it does. Because erm the characters don't the characters don't do it. Okay your characters do the same thing but all the enemies don't do the same thing. Erm if they are walking in a path, in one in a normal one, in a higher difficulty level, they might not take the same path, when you restart it. And also they are more sensitive to whatever's happening. So if you splashed some water, let's say on a normal difficulty level, the Infected might not care. If you do that on a higher difficulty level, they will pick up on it. So the AI is definitely different.

Interviewer: So you mean there's more variables in the AI at the highest difficulty?

Alice: mm hmm more variables it just makes it more sensitive to whatever you do.

Interviewer: So when you play on the higher difficulty, are you more you are more focused on the gameplay ah?

Alice: Ya until it's the cutscene and I then more focused on the narrative. But usually, at the higher difficulty level then you have to pay more attention to finishing the level.

#### **Transcript 4.14**

[18 Jan 2015 *The Last of Us* Session 3 Interview 11 am – 4.30 pm [Alice] 48:16]

Interviewer: So that part when you play as Joel to rescue Ellie, you feel very...

Alice: I actually felt a lot better playing Joel only because I noticed had more weapons.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: Had more weapons and also had a high level of skill with each weapons.

Interviewer: So...

Alice: It made it a lot easier to deal with somebody so for example, if you are sneaking up on somebody as Joel and you needed to stab them, he would do it once and be done with it, because physically you are stronger. But when you are with Ellie and you had that one knife, you would notice that she would take have to stab them like three or four times. Which takes a longer amount of time to kill somebody.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: And also she only had like two weapons.

Interviewer: So do you mean that when you play as Joel, you are more reckless ah?

Alice: More reckless and also feel better.

Interviewer: And then...

Alice: When you play as Ellie, I feel like you're more ya you are more you are more...

Interviewer: Very insecure ah?

Alice: Concerned with what I do because Ellie Ellie...

Interviewer: Is like a little girl?

Alice: Is like a little girl and it's very hard to move from map to map.

Interviewer: It's very...

Alice: In terms of a huge map, Joel can take more hits so you can just go in guns blazing and I feel like Joel you know, sixty percent of the time will survive. But if you do that with Ellie, she will only survive like twenty percent of the time.

Interviewer: Ya so Ellie is like favouring a certain playstyle only. Like the stealth approach ah?

Alice: Ya I think that Ellie is definitely...

Interviewer: Joel can have more options in the gameplay. He can use brute force.

Alice: Ya also throughout the game, as it turned out because when Ellie is running away in that winter storm, she only has one health pack, and one dagger to begin with.

Interviewer: Ya.

Alice: And when Joel starts off in the winter storm, he has all the weapons instead. He can go pass in it.

Interviewer: So in this way, the gameplay mechanic is er is er what? Producing the story ah?

Alice: Ya it's kind of forcing you in into feeling a certain way because since Ellie doesn't have a lot of weapons, she's ill equipped. Like you are been forced to play more stealthily and more conservatively and sneak around. Rather than Joel who can just go and you know, shoot people because he already has ammunition, he has weapons. So...

#### **Transcript 4.15**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 51:14]

Interviewer: I think the first time is Tess passing you the health kit after the explosion.

Nasir: Ah huh.

Interviewer: That part do you find the gameplay is integrated into the narrative or separated? When she passed you the health kit, do you think that there's any narrative? Like she's taking care of you or or do you find that there is only gameplay? Like teaching you how to use the health kit?

Nasir: Maybe maybe at that point in time, it makes sense for her to pass you the health kit because the explosion occurred, you probably got injured, etc etc. So only because of that context, of that particular context that it becomes more related to the narrative.

Interviewer: The previous explosion ah?

Nasir: Ya. So other than that, it would I would see it as a more of a gameplay opportunity.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Ya. So only because of that context it becomes related to narrative. But not the action itself.

Interviewer: Do you think the gameplay action is integrated into the narrative ah? Or is it separated?

Nasir: Gameplay action as in?

Interviewer: Tess passing you the health kit.

Nasir: Okay.

Interviewer: Is it separated? Or integrated into the narrative?

Nasir: mm I guess like I said, it's because of the context. Under what context did she passed you the health kit. Only because you just got injured through the through the explosion which explained why you had to move outside.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Only because of that it's related to narrative.

Interviewer: So you think that it's integrated into the narrative?

Nasir: Ya. Only at that point in time.

Interviewer: Okay.

#### **Transcript 4.16**

[10 Mar 2015 10.40 am – 1.40 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 7 Interview [Matt] 2:40:20]

Interviewer: Ya this one when you play the game were you just trolling?

Matt: Ya just trolling.

Interviewer: But er how I interpret interpret it is that how I interpret it is that Aiden is reflecting her emotions.

Matt: mm ya.

Interviewer: His gameplay actions.

Matt: So it's like erm does the question is does Aiden...

Interviewer: Like paralleling er Jodie's emotional state in the narrative.

Matt: mm...

Interviewer: When you use all these gameplay ah actions using Aiden.

Matt: okay because sometimes you can see these these er situations where Jodie actually controls Aiden to do things.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: But this one is Aiden acting of his own free will. So maybe it is like Aiden trying to sympathise with her. Right? By doing all these things. So it's like yes reflective. Reflective of Jodie's emotions.

Interviewer: So in a sense it is also paralleling her emotions.

Matt: mm. But at the end of the day ah, at the end of the day, Jodie is is your version of Jodie. Aiden is your version of Aiden so your projection of both. Your projection. If you want to separate it, you can. Right? But how can you be how can you think how can you feel for two people at the same time? It's basically, it's at the end of the day, still your projection of them. So erm so your feeling is er so it is what you feel. It's not about what Jodie feels or what Aiden feels. It's what you feel. Right? If you feel that she should she should be er she should be frustrated, then eventually, it will it will naturally peel over to what you do with Aiden. So it is at the end of the day, it's your projection.

Interviewer: But when you play the game, you are not, you are not projecting it ah?

Matt: Ya you project, you project your you project what you feel into Aiden's perspective.

Interviewer: mm. Okay.

Matt: Ya. So that is why you make Aiden do all these things.

Interviewer: So you are finding that he's he's sympathetic.

Matt: mm. That's right.

#### **Transcript 4.17**

[File 3 – *Beyond: Two Souls* – 2014-08-02 [Michael] 02:05]

Michael: Yay nice game. I can do anything I like except I can't do everything I like. I can sit down on chairs. Look at outside.

Interviewer: Later can you talk about the relationship between narrative and gameplay?

Michael: Right now, you see ah, this game has confused me so much that I don't know what to say, you know? Relationship between narrative and gameplay. Until now, I think every choices I make will affect the gameplay and the narrative. So for this particular game, it's all about the narrative. It's a game that er you are playing the narrative. Ya there's no distinction from what I see. You are playing the narrative. So much so that I'm not in control. It's like reading a story book. I must read from left to right from page one to page two. Although I have a choice of er maybe at some junction to maybe like skip to the other pages like in a adventure story book. But that's about it. So I'm actually the gameplay. [Game asking player to get the oil from the garage]. See the gameplay is the narrative. It will advance without it will not wait for me lah. It will do what he wants to do.

Interviewer: It's very scripted ah?

Michael: hmm? It's very scripted. Like I'm very sure that if I don't do anything right? Something will happen later.

Interviewer: So it will, whatever you do, it will also proceed?

Michael: Whatever I do, yes whatever I do, it will also proceed.

Interviewer: It's very linear?

Michael: It's very linear. Yes.

Interviewer: But the gameplay I think there's some non-linear.

Michael: There's some non-linear, you get a lot of choices.

Interviewer: When you choose different things then it will affect the gameplay?

Michael: Yes so there is a limited time you can er influence the game. Because things will still happen whether you like it or not. So it's like life ah. I think he's trying to emulate life until I'm quite confused what I'm going to do. But I'm supposed to get the something from the garage but I very sure if I don't do anything, it will still proceed on.

Interviewer: When you don't do anything, she will stay there.

Michael: er I'm very sure that the mother will scold me later lah.

Interviewer: If you don't do anything for ten hours, she will still stay there?

Michael: To me, I think it will stop me and proceed to the next scene. [Game calls to player "Jodie"] See? [Can you get me the oil?] [Coming]

Interviewer: But she will just keep telling you lah. You can still don't do anything.

Michael: This scene ah? The let's not waste any time lah. See? It's not consistent you know?

Interviewer: Why not?

Michael: Because now I can stand down there for ten hours and do nothing.

Interviewer: So?

Michael: Earlier scene if I don't do anything, he make the choice for me.

Interviewer: So that means the gameplay now you need to do something in the gameplay?

Michael: Yes, so what does the gameplay wants me to do and where's the garage? I'm very sure the garage is not in the room.

Interviewer: So far in this game, you cannot die ah?

Michael: So far in this game. I don't think you can die in this game. You can die lah and the story ends. So...that's what I think lah. Wait, isn't the garage outside? Or are you trying to tell me the garage is upstairs? [Player controls Jodie to move up the



stairs to explore the house] Do we use the same terminology about garage? Is the garage a bathroom now? [Player explores bathroom]. [Player speaks to Aiden on the phone]. So that is actually Aiden, Aiden. [Explores father's room]. So this is supposed to be my father? [Player controls Jodie to walk downstairs]. Ya so I'm playing a story book of my life where I'm trying to find a garage when I lived in this house for the whole of my life. [Opens garage door]. This door? [Switch on light]. Orh I think it is this door.

Interviewer: So is the garage here?

Michael: Is this the basement? Not the garage? You ask me to go to the garage. The garage house the car right? So where's the oil? The music tells me that something terrible is going to happen. This is scary mannequin or something. Where's the oil? Where's the oil? Orh [Picks up oil]. Eh there's something going to jump out. The door is going to slam shut. [Closes door and exits garage].

#### **Transcript 4.18**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* last interview 4:22:33]

Interviewer: Does it tell you the location ah? This flashback.

Michael: Does no. The second scene actually.

Interviewer: Which scene?

Michael: Just now that. It's not the flashback.

Interviewer: Which one?

Michael: That one after the flashback.

Interviewer: Oh. So that means the darkness makes it less clear ah?

Michael: Ya. So it's not obvious that I need to go to some place with tower. It show it again.

Interviewer: So the narrative is helping you ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: The second one.

Michael: It's telling me you must really go to the place with the tower.

Interviewer: This one [The flashback image] not much [use] ah?

Michael: Not much.

#### **Transcript 4.19**

[23 May 2014 *Mass Effect* 10.30 am – 1.30 pm 16:59]

Interviewer: So far er the cutscenes er do you think they are interrupting your gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Sorry? The what?

Interviewer: The cutscenes. Do you think?

Interviewee: The the cutscenes?

Interviewer: Ya. The scripted cutscenes ah. Those...

Interviewee: Those what?

Interviewer: Those you cannot cannot interact.

Interviewee: Orh.

Interviewer: Like...

Interviewee: The characters?

Interviewer: The cutscenes.

Interviewee: Oh the cutscenes. Oh I the cutscenes.

Interviewer: Do you think they are interrupting your gameplay?

Interviewee: mm ya pretty much. Ya but ya like like I told you earlier right? Like I said previously like you expected this kind of this is a very early stage of the game. Ya but in general, it's like it's very distracting. Like because like normally in like like today this kind of game is not very popular like this kind of cutscene is not very popular anymore.

Interviewer: Now ah?

Interviewee: Now is not very popular anymore. Like you know Call of Duty right?

Interviewer: Now is you play and then you hear the story is it?

Interviewee: It's it's not even so like you know like for now, it's like you listen to like after a oki after the first mission right? You go out, you shoot and then you win and then you achieve, you accomplish the mission and then when the loading for the next mission is being loaded right? Ya then comes the story. So there's nothing between you and the gameplay. It just like two different different sessions like gameplay, story and you know a bit more of like story at the first very first like oki ah commander told us to go this do this and then he because he wanted to have so it's very short few lines of the very beginning of the gameplay. But nothing in the middle and the end. It's just that you have a a like you know comprehensive experience in the gameplay. And then the story comes between a large like give a large chunk of gameplay right?

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: And then in between that is the narrative. Yeah so it doesn't interfere with that. Now it's just like you know like...

Interviewer: So now is they have a dialogue in the middle of gameplay.

Interviewee: Ya it's very annoying.

Interviewer: So you maybe don't really like play it so much.

Interviewee: It is like oki.

Interviewer: A little bit not so much.

Interviewee: It's ya oki because it is more like you try to like oki oki listen to that oki oki oki. So you are like more like trying to get to the gameplay part. Like ok ok. Mm good oki. Gameplay. Ya for the other it's just like wow because it's just the other it's just like it's really one big chunk of gameplay right? And then you say oh shit I'm tired. And then you sit back oki that's the storyline oki and then it's like I feel better then you you go to the the next ya.

Interviewer: Do you prefer that part where they give you more gameplay and then later some little bit story. Is it better for you? Or is it too tiring? To keep playing?

Interviewee: I think it's depend on like different people like people who actually wanted to you know like play. People who really interested in gameplay than they they really prefer that kind of thing.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But people who are who are because this is like this actually is like reading a fiction. Just that it's more interactive.

Interviewer: This one is more story ah?

Interviewee: Ya. It's more of you are reading a fiction. Which is that you are like reading it with imagery and you know you still can have some interaction, you shooting stuff and you know that kind of thing. Ya because I think this is like the kind of older game. Ya because when I was small right? I used to play this kind of game but and then I find it when I was small I find it interesting. I found it interesting and then when you grow up right? It was like oki this shit sucks.

Interviewer: But now now still got this kind of game or not?

Interviewee: Ah now...

Interviewer: Witcher 2 ah?

Interviewee: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Dragon Age Origin is it?

Interviewee: Ya but as in like...

Interviewer: Still got what ah?

Interviewee: Ya because it's like I'm I am not very sure why but like you know like because it's if this game still exists right? And then if it's popular, you should have heard of it but you never heard of it.

Interviewer: *Star Wars: The Old Republic* ah?

Interviewee: *Star Wars*...

Interviewer: Also by Bioware.

Interviewee: *Star Wars* nah not not really. Like I didn't like even like because I just watch the movie and then you know like ah...

Interviewer: I think it's quite popular game.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: *Star Wars: Old Republic*.

Interviewee: mm oki. Because...

Interviewer: But you don't like it.

Interviewee: Ha- but even for *Halo* right? Halo is very action packed.

Interviewer: Ya those games you like are more action packed ah?

Interviewee: Ya because because I I have feel like the the the game trend right is more shifted now they shifting toward action packed. And then you are like you have er erm you know intermittent of er storytelling in between. It is not like a lot of storytelling. A lot together like all over the game like you know you just walk and listen to the person it's very distracting. Ya.

Interviewer: So do you think this is better ah if it focus more on gameplay?

Interviewee: I think so. Ya because normally it's ya just just that or maybe just that if if you ask this question like ten years ago, oh this is good. But now is like you know after you are more exposed to you know like very fast paced and action packed like games right? Like if you like oh this thing is really bad.

Interviewer: Ya I think there needs to be some kind of balance ah.

Interviewee: No because it's it's like they give you a punch like even like for for like even like because it's a oki because I think for the *Battlefield* right? And the *Call of Duty* right? Especially the *Battlefield* right? The *Battlefield 4* right just came out and then the the *Call of Duty Ghost* right? They came out and then you know the the very first scene right? The very first erm like mission right? It's actually this have like cutscene like it it only have one one mission right? We don't have cutscene like erm it's very little action but it's like it's more like story storytelling for that just that just the first mission and then the rest...

Interviewer: So the rest all gameplay lah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: All no no story ah?

Interviewee: mm. No it's not no story. But is less story compared to this.

Interviewer: So you think like that is better for you?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Your gaming preference ah?

Interviewee: Ya I think for young people yes because I know a lot of my friends who she what the hell is this.

Interviewer: So you think now the young young people they more more like this kind of game ah?

Interviewee: Ya. Because

Interviewer: More focus on gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Ya because it's just action packed. Ya you looking for something to like er oki lah as in it's just oh when you go there and then you just expect some good time out of it right and then just oki go there you know have fun with people.

Interviewer: So is it er those kind of story game is it catering more towards the more older audience ah?

Interviewee: Like this kind of game?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: er probably I don't know because er I doubt people who are like older play games. Ya. But your older people play games I don't know.

#### **Transcript 4.20**

[PS3 20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 17:45]

Interviewer: So far in *The Last of Us*, er do you like the cutscenes or are they interrupting the gameplay? Or do you find that the cutscenes are quite integrated into the gameplay?

Alice: I think they are quite integrated. I mean normally I don't like cutscenes because it is a break in the action but I do understand that cutscenes are necessary in order to progress the story a lot more from before. Erm and it also is a device to get your attention because if details of the narrative would be told and I had control of the character, I would be wandering around instead of actually paying attention to what is being said so the cutscenes as much as I don't like to sit there and watch them are pretty important for the game.

Interviewer: Do you mean that er you prefer the narrative to be given in the cutscenes opposed to when you explore the environment? Because sometimes they also give the story when you explore the environment.

Alice: Ya. I think that if you need if you need to tell a really important point of the story, it is better to do it in a cutscene. Because if it's in an environment, there's a tendency that...

Interviewer: You get distracted by the gameplay.

Alice: You get distracted by the gameplay or you just so wrap up in the gameplay. For example, if you I noticed you collect a lot of like documents in game. So if you are telling people the story of what you know the narrative through those documents you collect, there is a chance that as collectibles, people might collect them and not spend

the time to read all the details. Erm and thus be caught up in the gameplay so it's very important if you are telling narrative to force I guess the player to watch whatever's happening and that you can only do that through cutscene.

Interviewer: So you mean do you mean that not giving you an option is better for the players? Like the narrative.

Alice: I think not giving an option is definitely better. I think it is just the way of telling the story. And telling the story to the player. In this case, we are sitting them down and saying take care, you have to focus on what is being said in front of you.

Interviewer: So that means in *The Last of Us*, the more important story information is given in the cutscenes but the less important story information is given in the notes, do you feel it that way?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: So in this way, er *The Last of Us* is quite is working quite well?

Alice: So far yeah so far I think it's pretty balanced.

#### **Transcript 4.21**

[31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 4:40:40]

Interviewer: The dialogue option to persuade Wrex er what's the question? Do you see the option as a narrative or gameplay choice ah? To persuade Wrex. Er...

Michael: mm...

Interviewer: Is it both ah?

Michael: I think it becomes both ah.

Interviewer: Both because you are trying to portray a good Shepherd and also...

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: er try to prevent Wrex from getting killed.

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: When you play the game, do you know that this option open up because you finished the side quest ah? The Wrex armour.

Michael: I wouldn't know right?

Interviewer: You don't know ah?

Michael: I don't think I will know.

Interviewer: mm but you finished the quest ah.

Michael: mm.

#### **Transcript 4.22**

[7 May 2015 *The Last of Us* Last Session Interview Part 2 [Walter] 1:04:45]

Interviewer: This part I want to ask you when Bill helps you in the gameplay...

Walter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Are you able to form any kind of emotional bond to him?

Walter: No.

Interviewer: Do you feel that he is more of a gameplay tool for you?

Walter: Yes. I mean I like his character because his character can defend himself. His character has a proper gun.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: Up and then, all characters that you sort of allied with were kind of, I mean Tess was not bad but Tess only had a bloody pistol. Everybody else before that only had a pistol like Marlene had a pistol. She had a pistol and it kind of kind of crappy.

Interviewer: mm so it's more useful.

Walter: So Bill now has a shotgun so Bill is obviously a good companion but I mean yes there was emotion going back yes a good decent amount of companion that can defend themselves but other than that, no.

#### **Transcript 4.23**

[3 June 2015 *Bioshock* Last Interview 3.40 pm – 6.40 pm [Loke] 1:08:19]

Interviewer: So for that part when the Big Daddy was fighting the splicer (Figure 26), were you able to see any narrative from the gameplay?

Loke: er I think it's similar to the front part where you see the the splicer trying to kill the Little Sister to get the Big Daddy ADAM.

Interviewer: mm.

Loke: So it just reiterates whatever they I learnt at the start.

Interviewer: mm so for you is it can I say that it's more gameplay for you ah? And then you did not think too much about the narrative? Or did you also think about what is happening?

Loke: It's more gameplay lah.

Interviewer: mm. More gameplay?

Loke: Ya.

#### **Transcript 4.24**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Interview 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim] 11:00]

Interviewer: er do you find the game is it the narrative and gameplay is more separated in the earlier episodes but in the later episodes, they become more integrated or you don't find anything?

Jim: I don't find anything. Or rather I don't care. Because I'm so immersed.

Interviewer: Ya.

### Transcript 5.1

[PS3 17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* [Walter] 1:44:00]

Walter: I mean that could have been an element that some games tried to do like er which is where I thought *Bioshock* actually kind of screwed up. You know like you know like oh do you choose to be greedy and harvest the Little Sisters so you get more ADAM or do you choose to er save them to get less ADAM. But the thing is if you saved all the Little Sisters, yes you get less ADAM but every if you save every time you saved them, after every three or four Little Sisters, all the orphanage or some shit will give some reward by giving you more ADAM.

Interviewer: So the the good side gives you more reward?

Walter: Ya. You actually end up with... I mean the short term benefits are less...

Interviewer: But the long term...

Walter: But the long term one you get more. So it's kind of like so like when you want to put morality inside your agency, the morality should actually be they wanted to combine it, the the morality with gameplay as in the agency but they totally dropped the ball on it because they made it so that if you were good, you ultimately will get will benefit more.

Interviewer: They are pushing you towards the good side?

Walter: I don't think they wanted to push you towards the good side but you know usually when they say when you act altruistic, you actually sacrifice more which means you get less returns? But this one you get more returns, so it's actually, it's countering its own message. There's no reason to be evil in *Bioshock* because the the reason behind been evil is that you get more rewards. But in the long run, you get less rewards, so what's the point? So that was I mean that was one of *Bioshock's* biggest issues lah which is what they tried to fix in *Bioshock Infinite*. But ya that's what...

Interviewer: Ya but when the player starts to play the game, they they won't know about this mechanic ah?

Walter: No, they know very fast. If you rescue three Little Sisters, they give you a reward immediately. And then you tell oh this is actually more worth it than if I have gone the evil route.

Interviewer: So most of the players will go the good route?

Walter: Well when but people play *Bioshock*, they tend to always try both anyway so it doesn't really matter.



Interviewer: But most of them will will choose the good pathway when they first...

Walter: er That one I don't know whether the most I don't know lah that one. That one I really...

Interviewer: There's some research done. Ya.

Walter: But in general for *Bioshock*, ya they erm they basically suck their own message.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: mm.

## Transcript 5.2

[PS3 17 Apr 2015 9.30 – 12.30 pm *The Last of Us* [Walter] 1:29:24]

Interviewer: Do you think that it is a little bit similar to *The Walking Dead* also?

Walter: *Walking Dead* ah?

Interviewer: I think you played only a few...

Walter: I played the first two episodes. Er *Walking Dead* as far as I can tell, I don't know, because in *Walking Dead*, I only when I played *Walking Dead*, I do not backtrack and try out different options. And I don't know to what extent that there is a differentiation whether like you know I know it it unlocks a lot of things like it definitely changes the narrative but in terms of gameplay, I don't know. Actually, no er...

Interviewer: *Walking Dead* its gameplay is also...

Walter: Because the entire gameplay of *Walking Dead* is literally the choices. There is no nothing beyond making er binary will it be binary choices? I don't know. If there is nothing, the entire gameplay is literally about making choices.

Interviewer: The point and click actions.

Walter: er ya not even that because you don't have to think about it. It's sort of like okay you progress this far, you have reached this point, you have to make a choice and your choice will determine where everything goes beyond this.

Interviewer: You mean the choice is the dialogue choice?

Walter: Not just the dialogue choice, it's the actions that you choose to save this person, save that person. Do you choose to steal this or do you choose to er not steal this that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Ya but some of these choices are also provided in the dialogue?

Walter: Yes.

Interviewer: So in this sense, both gameplay and narrative choices are merged together?

Walter: Well no both are I mean whether the choice is narrative or whether the choice is an action, it's still a choice, the way I look at it. I don't think they are necessarily different.

Interviewer: So you think the choice how is it narrative or gameplay ah? I mean how do I phrase it? Do you mean that in *The Walking Dead*, you see the choice you don't see the choice as gameplay or narrative?

Walter: er when I looked at *The Walking Dead*, I see them as one and the same. As in the entire conceit of *Walking Dead* is that the gameplay is choice. That is the way the entire game is structured around. It's by choice. So ah...

Interviewer: It's very hard to separate them ah?

Walter: I don't think you can separate them because literally the choices that you make changes the narrative. But the whole game is built around making choices.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: So ya in that pretty game, they are one and the same.

Interviewer: Can I say that the narrative and the gameplay choice are the same in *The Walking Dead*?

Walter: Yes. That was what I just said, yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Walter: Okay.

### Transcript 5.3

[Session 1 1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm [Mary] 26:49]

Interviewer: The time restriction how does it influence you?

Mary: What do you mean the time restriction?

Interviewer: This one. How does it influence you when you make the choice?

Mary: Oh ya. It's a it's very like it really depends on your instinct already at this point because it's it's ya it's so fast. Like you you don't know whether you are making the right or bad choice. Like they don't give you time to think so it's good in a sense because it's like at that instant like whatever that has influenced you before that you already know what choice you want so you just make the choice. The player might regret it lah but then like at that particular point that's how you feel about it lah. Which is what they want you to do what, split second decision.

Interviewer: So do you find it more realistic ah?

Mary: Yes. In real life we do not have much time to think about this sort of thing one what. For a lot of the conversations as well. Actually honestly, we don't have so much time to think. So yes. I I quite like this feature like they make you, they pressure the player to think. But then they don't do it all the time lah which is very stressful for the player lah. Which is good lah like they spaced it out.

## Transcript 5.4

[25 June 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Audio Interview 12.30 – 1.45 pm [Nasir] 49:05]

Nasir: I was thinking I also also I also thought that er like once you finished the main storyline, you have like a free free to roam kind of mode where they just let you finish your side quests. But apparently not lah so I did want to I did want to finish the side quests but only later on. I I thought it was possible to clear it after the main mission.

Interviewer: Why did you thought it was possible? Was it because you play other games?

Nasir: Ya because as in I guess I'm used to MMOs so...

Interviewer: Is it like *World of Warcraft* that influenced you?

Nasir: Ya I guess as in the main like ya the main story is more important. You can do all the side stuffs later on. Like even for *World of Warcraft*, I guess if for that example, like like let's say example would be let's say you are level okay you are level 20, let's say er they give you the option of you want to go to this zone or that zone and both both of these zones are for that level. It's just give you a option ah. Ya so it's like if you choose to go this zone then the the the stories would be different. Each as in each zone would have its kind of its own story if you if you bother to read. And follow the quests. Ya then once once you are done with let's say you have option with this zone A and zone B. Once you are done with zone A er you could go back to zone B. But you are of a high enough level such that the experience points you get from you are from A right so B the experience points you get from B isn't that much. You rather just go on to the next er let's say you are level 30 by then go on to the next level 30 zones that they offer you. Then later on, once you as in you could like go back to A just just because you are kind of low level, you still get some experience but not not profitable experience. Ya it will be more like slowing your game down so so what I did was I just continue with the level appropriate areas then at the end of the game, once I maxed level, then I just go back to that place and do the complete the quests in that zone just to find out about the story in that zone.

Interviewer: Okay.

Nasir Ya so ya I guess you could say I was influenced by how *WOW*...

Interviewer: *World of Warcraft*?

Nasir: mm.

## Transcript 5.5

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 30:45]

Interviewer: Then Sander Cohen why?

Mary: Orh.

Interviewer: You did not fight him? At the end of Fort Frolic.

Mary: Orh initially, I actually didn't realise I could fight him at at that area. Then after that, I was thinking I probably shouldn't because he's so scary and he's like probably going to be really tough so I I didn't. I went to wiki it after after I left Fort Frolic. The whole creepy, the whole plastered splicer thing, I went to wiki that that whole Fort Frolic area and they told me I could have fought him but it was going to be very tough. Then I was like okay good, I made a good decision.

Interviewer: But later, in Olympus Heights, you fight him and then you find it quite easy to kill him.

Mary: Ya it was so easy but I had to fight him at that moment.

Interviewer: Were you playing on easy mode?

Mary: No I was playing normal.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mary: It was really easy. I don't know why leh. I was like that's freaking easy.

Interviewer: I think it was because you already upgraded all your weapons ah?

Mary: Probably ya but ya he was aggroed on me then I had to kill him like otherwise, I wouldn't fought him.

Interviewer: Is the last Power to the People upgrade in his house ah? Sander Cohen?

Mary: I don't think it was the last one but it was one of them but ya lah. As in if I missed that one, if I killed him, I don't think I can access it right? If I'm not wrong.

Interviewer: Ya if you don't kill him, you cannot access it. I think.

Mary: Oh is it? Mm.

Interviewer: If you don't...

Mary: Let's say if I killed him at Fort Frolic, then I would have access to the area.

Interviewer: But then why do you why do you kill him in his house ah?

Mary: Because he he killed me, he would have tried to kill me what. (Laughs).

Interviewer: But then why why did you er...

Mary: As in he attacked me in his apartment.

Interviewer: I mean you can choose not to go into his house ah.

Mary: I'm an explorer. (Laughs). I have to explore everything.

Interviewer: I think I think his splicer attacked you first is it?

Mary: Ya ya ya.

Interviewer: Then you fought back.

Mary: Ya. He he his spider I think his spider splicer something like that one ah attacked me then I killed then he he came and attacked me then I just killed him. Then he just die lor then I was like...

Interviewer: Because because the wiki says that you can choose not to kill him.

Mary: Ya I know I read that part. Then I was like but he attacked me then I just killed him lor like as in if he didn't attack me, then I had a choice, you know what I mean? But he was like killing me so I had to kill him. So I was a bit confused by the wiki that lah. But I supposed if I don't go into his house, then I won't but I won't get the Power to the People machine if I don't go.

Interviewer: So the er reason you want to kill him is because of what?

Mary: I mean he killed me lah (laughs). As in he fought me so I fought him lah but after that I get rewards lah so why not right? Just fight lor.

Interviewer: mm.

Mary: I mean he's he's nuts lah. (Laughs). It doesn't hurt me in a sense to kill crazy guy.

## Transcript 5.6

[Session 3 25 July 2014 *Bioshock* 12.30 pm – 3.30 pm Part 1 [Peter] 2:06:42]

Interviewer: This part asked you to do perverted things ah?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: Then you say he's a sick guy ah?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: Then why do you still want to help him?

Peter: Because I have no choice what.

Interviewer: So you have no choice ah.

Peter: If I have the choice I will like just go to his office and steal the key or something like that.

Interviewer: mm.

Peter: But I have no choice in this case. Eventually I found that he's quite a mad person so I forgive him for that. That's why I didn't kill him in the end.

Interviewer: mm. So it's more of the story influence ah?

Peter: He's actually quite a crazy artist before he go mad.

Interviewer: mm. So you got some sympathy for him ah?

Peter: But at least he is good at heart since he helped me. Ya even though he halfway through he doubted me.

Interviewer: So you have some sympathy for him ah?

Peter: Ya.

### **Transcript 5.7**

[Session 3 28 July 2014 *Bioshock* 1 – 2.30 pm Part 3 [Peter] 25:26]

Interviewer: Then the second Sander Cohen ah. This one this one you just go into his house and then go out. Sander Cohen.

Peter: I was looking for the code.

Interviewer: At the first time ah?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: So the first time you, you are not you didn't really want to fight Sander Cohen because you are looking for the code ah?

Peter: mm hmm. And then eventually, I was forced into a fight with him because I didn't know what I did. Because I disturbed the dancers is it?

Interviewer: Because you...ya. Because you...and then you come here. So this part you still trying to find the code?

Peter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Then you accidentally provoked them.

Peter: Ya I have no idea what happened. It wasn't intentional.

Interviewer: So you killed Sander Cohen because you also forced into it?

Peter: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Then the he got drop one muse key. You never never bother about it also?

Peter: I have no idea what it unlocks.

Interviewer: He got one key ah. This one ah the muse key.

Peter: What does it unlock? I think I went upstairs to unlock the chest. Is it?

Interviewer: Ya. But this muse key you don't know what is the use?

Peter: No.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.8**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Third Session [Mary] 28:17]

Mary: No I mean before that. Initially lah, I did say I was going to try harvesting, I can't remember where lah but somewhere. I did say right I was like maybe I should try harvesting because I can get more but then like after getting the first two the

amount of ADAM that I get right? I am like since I mean I'm not going to buy much at that...because for me I don't do a lot of upgrades if you realised. I don't really do a lot of upgrades and what not. So it's like to me, ADAM is not very critical to my progression. So I was just like okay lor just save them. Then once I saved the third one, I suddenly get like the rewards from Tenenbaum. Then I was like okay, I am going to save all of them. And get all the rewards. Like you know, why not right? Since and then they repay you with some ADAM anyway. I I think it's not it's not equivalent lah then if you harvest them but then I don't need that much anyway, and they give me plasmids. So it's already paid off already.

Interviewer: So the reason you are going to save them is because you don't need so much ADAM ah?

Mary: Ya and I can get plasmid rewards anyway so...

### **Transcript 5.9**

[Session 3 25 Jul 2014 *Bioshock* 12.30 pm – 3.30 pm [Peter] 1:31:18]

Peter: There's one example where you actually mm what do you call the process of of sending the person into the furnace to burn them?

Interviewer: Incineration ah?

Peter: No it's not.

Interviewer: Cremation?

Peter: Ya. When they when they cremate someone. Actually there's this dead body already then you cremate her, then it rewards you with this...

Interviewer: Plasmid.

Peter: Is it a plasmid?

Interviewer: Tonic? Plasmids or tonics?

Peter: Think it was a tonic.

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: Ya it was a tonic.

Interviewer: Combat tonic.

Peter: Ya so it rewards you with a tonic.

Interviewer: So you do a good deed then they reward you.

Peter: Ya you do a good deed of cremating, completing the whole process of of er closing this case. They bringing the closure to this person.

Interviewer: mm.

Peter: Complete the whole cremation process. Because all you have to do is just to press the button and you and and the person will go in and then cremated and then

come out give you the tonic. So I guess ya it's like a reward there. How it actually er happened it's still quite illogical. How can the tonic actually appear out of a corpse.

Interviewer: Ya and there's another part at Arcadia also. You got see three person hitting a corpse ah?

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: Then you go and kill them, then you get some reward also.

Peter: You just loot the corpse right?

Interviewer: Ya. The three three three person like cultists ah who are hitting the corpse.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: That part also.

Peter: You get the reward basically from the loot from their loot right?

Interviewer: Ya. You can remember in Arcadia?

Peter: Ya. So you get rewarded for fending off big bullies.

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: But the person is already dead right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: You can totally just ignore that that scene right?

Interviewer: You take picture first.

Peter: Probably. Ya.

Interviewer: Is there also er the other one ah er can you think of any example where they also make you feel good when you do bad things ah?

Peter: Bad things ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: When you hacked the machine lor.

Interviewer: Orh.

Peter: Then you get benefits. Cheaper prices. Something to protect you. Some er additional ally. Some robot to protect you. Because you are actually er illegally manipulating a piece of device which some even belonging to actually it's not yours. When you hacked it, you are er bringing it under your control which actually which actually er belongs to someone else. So it's like stealing. Programming it to your advantage. Yet you are rewarded with an ally. Or sometimes you you will be granted access to a safe, because the safe inside the safe, the items are not yours right? But you are...



Interviewer: But it doesn't matter in the game ah?

Peter: Ya you hack it then the item is yours.

Interviewer: mm then you feel good ah.

Peter: Ya.

Interviewer: For you do you think the gameplay push towards the good or bad direction greater for you? When they reward you?

Peter: More of the good direction ah because you get rewarded most of the time when you hack things which are most of which I encounter quite often in the game. Hack vending machines, hack robots, hack safes ya and then you get rewarded with lots of goodies. Cheaper prices, hidden stuff in in the safes. Some money.

Interviewer: eh wait, I think the question is asking you this one is asking you about the morality ah. It's not...

Peter: It's immoral to to hack some someone's item right.

Interviewer: Ya.

Peter: Because it doesn't belong to you.

Interviewer: Ya I'm asking you is the gameplay push towards a morally good or bad direction greater? For you.

Peter: Morally bad I guess because hacking is actually because hacking is not a good deed. You are stealing someone's items. You are ahem you are...

Interviewer: Stealing from the safe?

Peter: Ya stealing from the safe. When you are taking you are changing the possession of someone's robots as well. Yet it is a key element in the game so you can see that the gameplay is pushing me towards a morally bad perspective.

Interviewer: But then you are doing it because you like it ah?

Peter: I'm doing it because it brings me advantages as well.

Interviewer: In the gameplay ah?

Peter: And I like the mini game also.

Interviewer: It's both the gameplay and it's quite fun also?

Peter: Ya. So I think it's more sort of more the gameplay that I do it.

Interviewer: So when you do this, it's the gameplay that is more dominant?

Peter: mm hmm mm hmm.

## **Transcript 5.10**

[Session 2 *WalkingDead*101 Ep 1 Part 3 2014-08-27 [Henry] 06:50]

Henry: So it's pretty obvious that the weapon to use is the screwdriver so I have to find some way to get it quietly. Oh no no. Back down. Let's see. I've to first I've to kill this. I've to kill this guy probably with the screwdriver before making use of the car to kill something else. So let's head back to brick wall and find see if can find anything. There's a pillow here. Oh have to use the pillow to stuff stuff the probably make lessen the noise I guess. So let's just take it.

### **Transcript 5.11**

[*The Last of Us* Session 2 2014-06-25 Part 1 [Nasir] 29:40]

Nasir: I'm guessing they use the yellow thing to actually indicate where to go next.

[*The Last of Us* Session 2 2014-06-25 Part 1 [Nasir] 1:10:36]

Nasir: Ya see very nice level transitions. They use this kind of things to show that you are moving on. Because I've been saying those in key areas. So yup. Prominent but not like so jarring well done well done, subtle. See the yellow tape.

[*The Last of Us* Session 2 2014-06-25 Part 1 [Nasir] 1:55:00]

Nasir: Yup yellow thing again to mark where to go.

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 2 [Nasir] 05:40]

Interviewer: Then all the environmental hints like you talked about the yellow tape ah.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: All those are also gameplay ah?

Nasir: Ya. Those those are gameplay. You are talking about the outline right? The yellow outline.

Interviewer: I mean you you were talking last time about some yellow coloured ribbons that you think is helping...

Nasir: Oh oh oh as in ya as in it's ya it's just gameplay lah that one. Because as in there's a reason for that thing to be there because it suits the environment but it doesn't contribute to the story lah. Ya (Coughs).

Interviewer: But when it's part of the environment, you also doesn't consider it as part of the story also?

Nasir: No.

Interviewer: It's just an environmental object?

Nasir: Ya. Because like it's not just that one piece that contributes to the story mah. It's if you want to I think if environment is to be taken into the story, it's as a whole lah not not not small details of it. Ya as as a general. Unless that unless that detail is stands out to be unusual lah or something like that. Like the yellow ribbon is just part of a construction scene mah. It's not weird for it to be there. Ya.

Interviewer: So all those gameplay objects are helping to just progress the narrative ah?

Nasir: mm. As in progress the gameplay. As in because as in it depends you see. As in because I'm talking as in when you are talking about the Capitol Building right? That's an endpoint so I can agree that's towards narrative. But when you talked about the the ribbon indicating the end of that zone right? That that isn't telling you much. As in it's not they didn't say go find the yellow ribbon. Or something like that so I don't consider that as part of narrative ah. It's only when it coincides with the general direction that the story is going.

Interviewer: And then there were also some sign posts ah.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Those are those gameplay or narrative ah?

Nasir: Gameplay.

Interviewer: Gameplay?

Nasir: Ya. As in the only thing I consider narrative is the general idea about getting to that place. But the it's like like when you tell a story like even let's say for let's say for *Wizard of Oz*, they are going to they are going to the city right? To find Oz. So as in if that was made into a game, the them going to Oz to to find Oz is the narrative lah. It's also the gameplay because in the end, if you do everything correctly, you will reach there eventually.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Ya so but all the little pieces along the way, I consider that as part of gameplay ah because ya as in it's not it doesn't really contribute to the story that much unless something important happens that changes their the direction where the characters are going. Ya like like at the point where like back to this at the point where Tess they they found out that Tess got bitten and their whole objective change because Joel initially just wanted to go back mah.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: And just finish this. But then once once once Tess asked him to follow through with this, then that impacts the narrative ah because like from that Capitol Building down there they need to find the next Fireflies. So so then it becomes a it becomes more of a narrative point. But all the small little signposts like pointing to this direction, I think that's purely gameplay. Ya.

Interviewer: But if it's the wait ah, it's you think is it integrated into the narrative or separated ah?

Nasir: It's integrated ah. But...

Interviewer: Integrated but it's just gameplay lah?

Nasir: mm ya.

Interviewer: mm. And then those characters talking is also integrated into the narrative ah?

Nasir: The dialogue?

Interviewer: Like telling you to take the ladder all those. It's a gameplay, is it gameplay integrated into the narrative ah? Like...

Nasir: Ya kind of but...

Interviewer: Tess asking you to take the ladder.

Nasir: As in I think you need to draw the line somewhere because like if if everything that's related to the journey becomes narrative right? Then what isn't narrative? Then as in becomes like anything anything along anything that you do in the gameplay can be considered narrative. If if it contributes to the end goal lah. Then otherwise, there's no purpose of having a distinction mah. Ya so as in to to me even even Tess asking you to get the ladder is not really narrative lah it's just gameplay. It's just directing you on how to do it lah.

Interviewer: But do you think that it's integrated into the narrative ah? Because it's spoken by the characters.

Nasir: Not really because as in (coughs) not really because even even if they didn't ask you even if it wasn't communicated to by the character right? I I don't think I don't think there's a difference to where like let's say Tess say something like hmm like how do we cross to this bridge. Then some some objective marker by the south of your screen says okay find find find a ladder. I don't think that would make much difference that happening and Tess actually telling you to find the ladder. Ya so I I wouldn't consider it as narrative because it's just bits and pieces of you it's just your character telling you how to overcome the gameplay problem. I don't think it's related to the narrative.

Interviewer: So you don't find it integrated into the narrative?

Nasir: As in ya as in not really. It's just it's just a side point. Because it's as in it doesn't it doesn't matter whether they took the ladder or not mah, it wouldn't change the story. (Coughs).

Interviewer: And then for those parts where at the end of the game, Ellie was also telling you that you are nearing the hospital, is that part of the narrative also? Or is it only gameplay?

Nasir: I think still gameplay lah. Because they these are just reminders about where you are in your journey. I I don't think it contributes to any narrative points because because if if you are if you are converting if let's say someone writes a novel about *The Last of Us* right? As in in novel form, I think all these parts won't be in the story because it's not essential. Ya it's it's it will be more about talking about I don't know your feelings and they will be talking about how they overcome problems ah but these minute minute er mechanical stuff, mechanistic stuff doesn't really contribute to the narrative so I would think that even though it's it's in line it doesn't clash with your it doesn't clash with your with your narrative, as in it's in line with the narrative, but at the same time, it's not part of the narrative, it's just a sign post. I think.

Interviewer: So you find it separated from the narrative?

Nasir: Ya as in...

Interviewer: Separated from the narrative?

Nasir: Ya. As in because it doesn't change the story anyway. It's not like this item so change the narrative or will produce the narrative because you are it's just a reminder for you like okay the hospital is there. It's time to go there but it's it's it also I think it has more gameplay value because it's reminding you like how how far you have left. But it doesn't contribute to the story. It's not like you reach there faster and something different will happen.

Interviewer: And then in the environment, there are some Firefly logos also.

Nasir: Okay.

Interviewer: Do you think that it is part of the narrative or gameplay?

Nasir: That that will be narrative I think because er it has no gameplay option like the the Firefly logo being there.

Interviewer: Does it also tell you that your goal is over there?

Nasir: No not really.

Interviewer: Because at the last stage, there's a Firefly logo outside the operating...

Nasir: But but that's a Firefly base so I would expect there to be a logo.

Interviewer: Does it also does it also help you in the...do you see it also as part of the gameplay hint like you need to go there.

Nasir: Okay wait wait wait wait. Okay okay okay. Oh you are talking about the the one in the hospital when they used outside the operating theatre is it?

Interviewer: Ya there's a Firefly logo.

Nasir: Okay okay. Ya those can be gameplay options. But then I'll I was under the impression where like in the earlier stages where you see random Firefly logos around. Er I don't think those are gameplay lah. Those are just there for the sake of...

Interviewer: The narrative is it?

Nasir: Ya as in to make to make an environment that's congruent with the narrative.

Interviewer: So it's part of the narrative also? All those Firefly logos?

Nasir: In when when they are randomly placed about lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: But in the last stage, they used it to indicate...

Interviewer: Tell you where to go.

Nasir: Kind of. As in no but it's only at the end you see so it's not like it's not like everywhere along the line there is a Firefly logo. At least when when I played it I don't really...

Interviewer: So it depends on the context ah?

Nasir: For for me, I was looking more for the doors usually the door to the staircase, the last part is the part where tells you okay you are transitioning from one stage to another. So I wasn't really looking at logos lah. Ya.

Interviewer: But for the last part, the that logo do you think it's both narrative and gameplay?

Nasir: I don't think so. I don't think it's narrative because even without the even without the thing, you will know that it's an operating theatre based on how the level was designed. It's just an additional point. As in to emphasise, emphasis it. So I would I would see it as a gameplay tool not a narrative tool because whether the as in I would think that it's something that's related to narrative if it's there then it will make a difference but in this case even if the Firefly logo wasn't there right? That that is still your end goal. It doesn't change the character of the the the nature of the thing. The nature of the event. Ya.

Interviewer: So you think it's just helping you in the gameplay ah?

Nasir: Yes.

Interviewer: To tell you where to go.

Nasir: Ya because if it's not there it doesn't change anything. You see. It doesn't change the story. If it's there, it doesn't change the story. If it's not there, it doesn't change the story. So I don't see how it can be a narrative.

Interviewer: You don't think like it's characterizing the place ah?

Nasir: Not really because the entire place is a Firefly base why would having a Firefly logo there specifically be unreal. As in I guess it's convenient. In the sense that they they chose to use that as a subtle indication that hey that's an important room. But but overall as in it's very subtle, I wouldn't consider that as part of narrative. It's just a convenient tool that they they could have used lah in that parti- that fits in that particular level. Ya (Coughs).

Interviewer: When the game gives you all those subtle subtle hints ah to tell you where to go...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Does it increase your immersion when you play the game?

Nasir: No not really. It's just a okay I should go there. It doesn't really doesn't affect emotionally.

Interviewer: I mean immersion.

Nasir: Oh immersion sorry. No not really. As in it's just a subtle nod okay that's where you need to go without having because after a while you if you let's say you ignore as in you don't figure out where it is the game will just give you the hint then you press the L3. It will tell you where to go anyway.

Interviewer: You don't see it like setting the atmosphere for the game also?

Nasir: No not really as in if you are talking about the the yellow ribbons, these er the yellow ribbons, the Firefly logos, no I don't think so.

Interviewer: But if the characters talked to you, do you do you find any immersion?

Nasir: Talk to me as in?

Interviewer: Like given to you when they talk to you ah.

Nasir: As in depends on what they talk about. What are they talking about specifically.

Interviewer: Like sometimes Ellie will give warning about Infected in the sewers ah.

Nasir: Ya those are gameplay.

Interviewer: Those will those immerse you in the in the game ah?

Nasir: Ya as in...

Interviewer: In the gameplay ah?

Nasir: Ya it immerses you in the gameplay lah. As in it's just reminders to yah it's just reminders to to tell you that you should lookout in whatever direction, prepare to deal with it. So it's more about dealing with the gameplay challenges. I don't see it as part of the story. The the overall idea of them going through that place is part of the story. But this specific details I I think it's just gameplay. (Coughs).

Interviewer: Do you find the game is quite guided and you can find your way easily through the game?

Nasir: Ya I think so as in they used all these subtle hints where somehow it just works as in it it's hard not to it's hard not to miss it but at the same time, it's not in your face as in it doesn't say this way or something like that. It's just a subtle to I guess it's just part of level design, you design something to capture your attention. Something that's slightly, slightly a bit significant like having a yellow ribbon, random ribbon there. Or some can with the fire. Ya it's just I I think it's a better way to guide people. So that ah ya I think it's a better way to guide people lah. Rather than just telling them like this go there. As in having some pop up that says okay go there.

Interviewer: So it makes the game more more the flow is easier er the flow is more...

Nasir: Natural?

Interviewer: Natural.

Nasir: Very...more intuitive lah.

Interviewer: Compared to older games.

Nasir: Hold on ah (coughs). More intuitive ya.

Interviewer: Ya compared to older games, it's more natural ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Because other games they will give you another window ah.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: To tell you the objective.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Is it only *The Last of Us* that does not give you another separate window to tell you the game objective ah? Nowadays, the games is it?

Nasir: I honestly, I don't know. Mm like I was playing I was just playing for a short time I think er *Metro Metro 2033*.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Like they have this compass thing. It's a bit like *Bioshock Infinite* I guess. Ya but *Bioshock Infinite* is more in your face because there's a arrow going ya.

Interviewer: It's less natural?

Nasir: Ya because as in in real life, as in if you are the character, there wouldn't be a magical arrow guiding you.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Ya but then I was playing the the *Metro* as in he has this compass thing that will count upon you in the direction so of your objective. So at least that fits with the that's more congruent with the storyline lah as in it it makes sense that he has the compass. Er so that he has guide his way through. And they conveniently use that point as a gameplay mechanic lah. So it it doesn't clash with the narrative but I would still see it as part of the gameplay. Ya so as in the just because gameplay options doesn't clash with the narrative, doesn't make doesn't automatically make them part of the narrative. Ya I think it's still separate just that it doesn't clash mm (coughs).

## Transcript 5.12

[3 Mar 2014 *Bioshock* first session first part [00:38]]

Interviewer: er what do you think the gameplay consists of?

Interviewee: er gameplay I think it's about killing the zombies in that area. I suppose. Gameplay other than that let's say mm what exactly is gameplay? I mean what are you expecting is?

Interviewer: Like the actions that you take the shooting.

Interviewee: Okay. Okay. So I think ya shooting of zombies and and that's the gameplay I guess. And gameplay what else does it consist of? Er sometimes the



actions are there and sometimes I need to find some items or just kill a specific er zombie to progress mm I think it's okay.

### **Transcript 5.13**

[10 Apr 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 4 – 6.30 pm [Loke]]

Interviewer: mm so far you have found anything interesting or not?

Loke: mm you mean about the game?

Interviewer: Ya. Your experience ah?

Loke: er ya because mm I played the first chapter then I realised then I realised there are a lot of rooms that er I missed. Like for example, er they reveal on the map but as I play through the game, then they didn't really like prompt me like oh you can actually go to this room this room this room. Then only for example, when I had the Incinerate er plasmid right? Then I went to get the Telekinesis one right away because when I played the game, only when I reached the part where I need Telekinesis right? Then I realised I didn't, I need to go and find it and realised to find it I also need Incinerate. And then by the time I got Telekinesis, then I realised I cannot use Incinerate for some of the rooms. Cos some of the rooms is blocked by the freezing pipes then I need to melt the ice what. Then I cannot melt the ice. So er...

Interviewer: So you have to find the Incinerate first.

Loke: Ya. So that's why I wanted to like try and replay cos the the game never really say like oh er...

Interviewer: But the audio log never give you any hint? The audio log.

Loke: mm ya sometimes like when I play I will just like focusing attention on the visual part.

Interviewer: mm.

Loke: Then I just listen to the audio as in just for backstory lah like what's going on. Ya but there's one there's one audio log specifically about the pipes one. So that's the one that help you get the Telekinesis right?

Interviewer: But if I never tell you, do you know?

Loke: er...

Interviewer: Because I...

Loke: Ya. Ya. Ya. That's also true lah but when cos the what audio was near the freezing pipes.

Interviewer: It's frozen in the...

Loke: Ya so if you didn't tell me, then I'll probably take longer. Like figure out eh what I supposed to do with it. Then I can probably draw the link that the ice will can be melted by the fire but I didn't draw the link that there are other rooms that I saw

previously that are covered by the ice can also be melted so ya. So I think the interesting thing is er er.

Interviewer: So you think the game like never give you any explicit hints ah?

Loke: Ya in a way in a way.

Interviewer: You have to find out by yourself.

Loke: Then it's like when you fight cos after you play then you go and search online about the things right? Then there's a lot of other things you can do. So er...

Interviewer: So do you find that you search online is it better or you find out yourself is better?

Loke: mm actually search online gives you the clues like especially when you are fresh to the game and you don't know but then from then on right? You will just play as you go then you finished you will like look out for certain things ah then still try look online and try if you have managed to cover everything. Ya.

Interviewer: So you play first then you go and check online.

Loke: Ya. I play first then I check.

Interviewer: Okay.

Loke: There are certain things I missed. Ya.

#### **Transcript 5.14**

[14 May 2014 *Bioshock* first session 1 – 4 pm [Peter] 1:28]

Interviewer: So the gameplay, how do you find it so far?

Peter: er I think it's very fun very er interactive. It can be a bit er difficult to grasp at first because the controls you want to switch between your plasmids and your weapons and you want to select them it's not so convenient. But it just takes a little bit of practice before you can er effectively eliminate your enemies.

Interviewer: Okay. Erm so far the customization not much ah?

Peter: Customization?

Interviewer: Of the...

Peter: Of the what?

Interviewer: That's called what? The weapons' upgrade and skills.

Peter: Ya. Er the only customization you have is the kind of ammo you have. You have your anti-personnel one or normal one. Or I think I saw the electric buck. Electric shot gun shell. And then ya you have melee weapon and three plasmids – fire, ice eh fire, telekinesis, and the jolt jolt. The shock.

Interviewer: Okay. Then the Big Daddy how you find it so far?

Peter: Orh it's a ferocious looking er creature er very er at first if you don't disturb him, he also won't disturb you. But if you want to do anything with the Little Sisters, you must first defeat him which is to either I think kill him ya and he is very strong. You need a lot of er ammo. You need a lot of er you need to deal a lot of damage in order to bring him down. So it is a difficult enemy. But also er not a very nice looking enemy. Someone that you find a challenge and and you feel er a sense of accomplishment when you defeat him.

Interviewer: But just now you never face any problem ah when you fight him?

Peter: Problem?

Interviewer: No no he didn't kill you ah?

Peter: Ya you you need to use erm you need to have at least two or three first aid kits ah in order to survive the damage that he deals. He deals a lot of damage to you. Usually can kill you in two three hits ah. But you need to plan the your how you want to destroy him. Maybe you hack some turrets and use the turrets to help you distract him to so that the Big Daddy will hit the turret instead of hitting you.

Interviewer: mm.

Peter: Ya that's one strategy.

Interviewer: So just now you got use that strategy ah?

Peter: Ya. Ya. I hack the turret first then I distract him so that he will run in the direction where the turret can hit him ah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Peter: So you hide and then the turret will hit him then the Big Daddy will hit the turret instead. And then you can pop out from your hiding place and and er shoot shoot him ah at a safe distance also. But once the turret goes down, it's just between you and him already. He running around.

Interviewer: And then the mini game you find that is it optional or is it compulsory part of the game?

Peter: It's optional. Er...

Interviewer: It only affects the turret and the health thing?

Peter: Not just that because there's some bonuses ya the health.

Interviewer: Heal thing ah?

Peter: It gives you some additional bonuses like maybe you can control the turret. You can but additional stuff from the vending machine they have cheaper prices also. Er ya it's optional if you don't want, if you have the cash, you don't mind, you just want it conveniently, you don't need to play the optional game.

Interviewer: But you still think you will complete them.

Peter: Ya. Ya. Because it's fun. Hehe.

Interviewer: Okay so you think it will help in your gameplay?

Peter: Ya I think it's er it it helps other than just shooting at enemies it's like a mini puzzle.

Interviewer: mm.

Peter: And it trains your your your skill. This skill to solve the puzzle as fast as possible. Some are hard some are easy. Ya and the harder it is, the better the reward.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.15**

[17 Mar 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 1.20 - 3.20 pm]

Interviewer: So for this *Bioshock* game you just played, the gameplay how does it compare with the other games ah?

Interviewee: The two *Bioshock* games?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: erm gameplay wise my favourite *Bioshock* is *Bioshock 2* because erm they kind of perfected the formula. If you really want to talk about the gameplay. One of the main things about this game that I don't like is the fact that erm you have to switch between weapons and plasmids cos in the second one you have one on each hand. So it's a lot easier to control in that sense. Erm also the the guns in erm the weapons in the first game are quite standard ah there's nothing really much different but then in in *Bioshock 2*, the weapons they are they are the same guns like you have your pistol, you have your machine gun, your shot gun all that. But they look very very different and like the upgrade system I couldn't remember how different it is but I know for the fact that the upgrade system in *Bioshock 2* like erm they really change the way the guns look and it's a very unique aesthetic ah. Because like for example, the the machine gun in *Bioshock 1* is just a regular Tommy Gun you know like you have those real life but in in *Bioshock 2*, your your er machine guns like er 50 cal 50 cal mini gun that's like welded to your hand so that's quite interesting.

Interviewer: So you mean when you upgrade it, it will change its appearance ah?

Interviewee: Ya so it it it's a bit more interesting ah. Because like in this game, it's like you just have your standard gun and then like the bullets can change but you can't see the difference sometimes. Ya personally, I like I like *Bioshock 2* the most. Infinite was erm they changed the quite a bit lah like for example, you can only hook two weapons so I thought that was quite limiting lah the gameplay so I didn't really like that. Erm the plasmids is also not really much changes like most of them were just similar to er the previous ones. Just they will be different lah like for *Bioshock 1*, it was er bees while in *Bioshock* Infinite it was crows so same concept but ya.

Interviewer: Okay but in *Bioshock* Infinite, they have secondary attack lah for the...special power.

Interviewee: Ya for the plasmids they have secondary attacks.

Interviewer: So that is that is the only improvement.

Interviewee: Ya that I supposed that is an improvement. Ah but like erm personally when I played through I didn't really make use of them very much because they weren't really very interesting. They just seem to like er alternative versions of the regular power so...

Interviewer: Ya just like a little bit like copying of them.

Interviewer: Ya.

### **Transcript 5.16**

[21 Mar 2014 *Bioshock* 12 – 4 pm Session 1 Carribean 1:43]

Interviewer: So the gameplay what do you think it consists of?

Interviewee: er what is it consists of ah?

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: erm actually this question I'm not so sure what it means.

Interviewer: The gameplay is like the actions you can choose.

Interviewee: Oh oki. Er basically, you have to fight off the splicers. Erm who are like the crazy people. Like just the crazy drones lah in the game. Erm then there's some bosses who are extra crazy er and of course you have to decide whether to harvest the Little Sisters or whether to release them. Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: And there's also like there's a whole bunch of power-ups like plasmids and the er those physical tonics that sort of serve ya. So ya.

Interviewer: Do you find anything special about the plasmids ah?

Interviewee: Anything special?

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: erm I find it very disturbing that you have to like inject the Eve hypo into your wrists. I don't know it's just really like ya but er ya but I find the plasmids are pretty cool you know? Like you can evolve the super powers you want.

Interviewer: Okay. How about the first person shooting ah?

Interviewee: The the first person shooting it's okay cos I'm playing on easy and I'm very bad at first person shooters.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya. erm but I find it hard to like switch between the weapons lah. It will be easier if they like press 1, 2, 3 4, instead of scroll up, scroll down like in *Borderlands* or something.

Interviewer: And then the hacking, how do you find it? Does it integrate into the game?

Interviewee: Not really. The hacking is a bit extra. It's like just to provide more puzzle content to the game and make it more of a brain game than just a purely action in a way. But I find that it's a bit annoying and tedious.

Interviewer: Okay. But then the did you hear any of the audio logs talking about the hacking?

Interviewee: Ya erm one of them Andrew Ryan said er parasites will be punished. So I'm expecting perhaps if you hacked enough machines, er I don't know security bots may come and find you or one of the machines will er do something to you lah basically. There will be some sort of punishment to be expected in a way.

Interviewer: So in this audio log, do you find the story or gameplay information for the hacking one.

Interviewee: This one like...

Interviewer: Is it?

Interviewer: I don't feel...

Interviewer: Does it have any story?

Interviewee: erm not really or at least I didn't catch any parts of story for that one because like er hacking to me erm I'll just do it. I don't care if there is a punishment or not.

Interviewer: I mean the audio log do you find any story in the audio log?

Interviewee: Oh in the audio logs. Ya definitely like...

Interviewer: Like hacking will send the sentry bots.

Interviewee: Sentry bots. No I didn't hear about the sentry bots but he said parasites will be punished. That's all.

Interviewer: So that one is like story ah?

Interviewee: Oh okay.

Interviewer: Is it?

Interviewee: I don't know if it's part of the story or not. It's like pretty extra to me. It's like Andrew Ryan, you know, he's just controlling the entire Rapture. Okay. Whatever. I don't see any sentry bots so I'm just going to continue hacking.

Interviewer: Okay.

## **Transcript 5.17**

[26 Mar 2014 2 – 6 pm *Bioshock & Mass Effect* Session 1 06:26]

Interviewer: So erm how do you find the gameplay so far? For the games you played just now.

Interviewee 1: Gameplay oh right erm oki I can okay let's discount the fact that *Bioshock* is an old game. Like really long time ago and erm even though the game crashed a few times, I I actually find the gameplay the the whole erm you get to collect powers and then you have to choose to keep some, you can't keep all of them. Like it's quite realistic weapons ah. Ammo isn't found all over the place. Like most shooters like *Call of Duty* and er *Battlefield* and all that you find ammo here and there. You will find ammo. The game will try to give you ammo. But in *Bioshock* erm for every enemy you kill, you probably need like 5 bullets if you are like a bad shooter like me. But you can only find 3 of the bodies. At one point, you will find yourself scarce like in terms of ammo and you have to resort to meleeing. So it forces the player out of his comfort zone. He doesn't stick to...like most of this kind of game, we have our style. If it's stealth, we try to work our way slowly through. We have to kill just kill and move on.

Interviewee 2: Or you Rambo.

Interviewee 1: Ya or you Rambo and I'm all the Rambo person but then I find that I I take so many bullets to kill one enemy. And then I forced to ration my bullets in terms of other enemies. Cos there are bigger and badder ones worse ones. So I think the whole the game itself when it in a way, its resources are not given, are not freed up to the player. How you have to work actually quite hard to to to try and win the game. I think that's interesting. Also, the erm the mechanics of the ah the fact that you can turn enemy machines over to your side, you can have friends. It's actually I found that so important. I I don't want to destroy a single drone cos I wanted to have all of them on my side. Cos I felt so alone in that game. Honestly, when I was sitting there, and I was playing the game, I felt so lonely, I just I was every corner every dark corner was scaring me and okay I know *Bioshock* is a good game because I felt many many people talked about it but er being alone and then getting the piece of health, it's really nice. Like so I think they have done a good job of isolating the character. Forcing him to find help you know? Not just giving it to him. Not like oh here's a friend to help you and then the character will follow you. Not yet so I find that the best part of the gameplay.

## Transcript 5.18

[26 Mar 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 10 – 12 pm 1:22]

Interviewer: So erm what do you think the gameplay consists of?

Interviewee: er gameplay in terms of, it's a first person shooter. So the gameplay I think it consists of problem solving, the the puzzle solving where you trying to hack the machines. And then also er first person shooter where you encounter the encounter the different kinds of erm enemies lah. Then the gameplay is also like pretty unique in the sense that you just cannot shoot your way through. You need to...because you got different kind of skill, you have like the...

Interviewer: Plasmids?

Interviewee: Ah the plasmids and then you have your normal weapons so you must use them in conjunction. Like if you only use your weapons, it's quite difficult. Then if you only use the plasmids, you will never kill the person lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: So the gameplay is quite quite unique I think.

Interviewer: Okay is there anything else about the gameplay you noticed ah?

Interviewee: er anything else about the gameplay. In what sense? Like what what else?

Interviewer: Besides the plasmids ah and the weapons.

Interviewee: Oh you get to draw a different kind of skills. And then like you must choose which plasmid you want to use. They give you a limited option of cos so far we can counted I think three plasmids but I think we can only use two of them. So you must like choose which one is suitable for the game at the moment lah. Oh and then there's the map. Which is helpful. Which helps you like in case you are lost. They will like give you hints on where to go and what to do that sort of thing.

Interviewer: Then the Big Daddy how you find him so far?

Interviewee: Oh at first, I didn't know how to kill him lah because he kept charging me then I just kept dying. But after a while, I realised that you must use the plasmids and the weapon. So if he charges you, you stun him then you shoot him. You stun him again then you shoot him again. That sort of thing lah. If you just keep using your weapon, you will die lah because you can't stop him from driving you.

Interviewer: Ya I think at the start, it's quite hard lah for to fight the Big Daddy.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: But later on, I think...

Interviewee: It gets better lah.

Interviewer: You will get more...

Interviewee: Get used to it.

Interviewer: Weapons more powers.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

### **Transcript 5.19**

[27 May 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 9 am – 12 pm 06:20]

Interviewer: And then the gameplay so far, is it quite fun ah?

Interviewee: er so far it's okay. It's like a normal shooter except I think the controls is a bit funny ah. Like er the cross hair isn't normal kind of cross hair you usually see and erm the splicers move very fast so it's a bit difficult also. Ya. The NPC movement is a bit strange ah. It doesn't really er...

Interviewer: Is it the AI is not very good ah?

Interviewee: er as in the the characters don't move er realistically. They move really too fast. Ya.



Interviewer: Ya there's also some participants say they say *Bioshock* is like not very natural so they don't like to play.

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: But I think the storyline so far is quite interesting.

Interviewer: Then are there any part where you find the gameplay challenging?

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: Like the Big Daddy is it?

Interviewee: Oh ya erm actually one of the most challenging thing about the game is the lack of resources. Like most of other er games like that you find a lot of ammos and health packs around. But this one you actually have to conserve and think of what you want to do before you actually do it. Ya.

Interviewer: So before you fight the Big Daddy, did you like prepare for it or you just engage them?

Interviewee: Oh I did er because they said the Big Daddy was coming around. I swapped to the pistol with the armour piercing rounds first. So I did what I could to damage him as much as I could before er before I realised that er I thought the best tactic was to take him head on because it was a very confined area anyway ya.

Interviewer: So you just used the pistol?

Interviewee: Ya and subsequently, I swapped to the shotgun and ya.

Interviewer: Did you use any plasmids powers ah?

Interviewee: er I didn't because I thought if it will be a waste of time since er all I had was the electric shock. And...

Interviewer: So you used the passive electric jolt? Electric electric power is it?

Interviewee: er ya.

Interviewer: The passive one.

Interviewee: Ya the passive one where he hit me and then I do damage with the thing. Ya.

Interviewer: Then are there any part of the game where you erm cannot find the way out ah?

Interviewee: Oh there was er er I keep going in circles at the at the hospital place that infirmary. I kept going around in circles not knowing what to do until I I reach the point in time where I just had to use the hint. I hit escape and I used the hint to know where to go and what to do.

Interviewer: Ya. Is there any reason why you were lost ah? Is it because the map was not very good?

Interviewee: I I think it wasn't erm I guess it it wasn't intuitive firstly. Er because I had to look in some er I think an office to oh no I had to go to the Eternal Flame place to get the Incinerate plasmid and er and that er that was I mean I wouldn't know I would have to do that. I thought the plasmid would be just lying around somewhere where you could just find it. Er but I reached the place where I was supposed to the the guy was throwing grenades at me and I had to get the telekinesis plasmid and er I think from that point onwards, where I first had to get the Incinerate plasmid it it got a bit confusing on where to go cos it looked like a dead end. I couldn't move anywhere. Erm and that's why I had to use the hint.

Interviewer: Oh so you mean you were stuck at the blocked door there lah. Is it?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay. Then later, you looked at the hint, is it? Or the quest log?

Interviewee: er I think it was the hints, I clicked the show hint button.

Interviewer: Oki.

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 5.20**

[28 Feb 2014 *Bioshock* and *The Witcher 2* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 01:08]

Interviewer: Can you tell me what does the gameplay consist of in this game?

Interviewee: er gameplay is a first person shooter er traditional one except that they got some er er you got some power, er EVE that give energy that allow you to do ah basically just that it just like er another gun ah which basically can shoot at people. So it's other thing is ah I think it's simple. It's pretty much same er person as the first person shooter style.

Interviewer: The first person shooter?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: er oki. So er do you have anything more to talk about the gameplay or is this going to talk?

Interviewee: mm I think that's it.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.21**

[29 May 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 5.20 – 6.20 pm [John] 3:40]

Interviewer: erm so the gameplay of *Bioshock* er what do you think it consists of ah?

John: mm it's quite complicated.

Interviewer: mm.

John: I play er quite a few like first person shooting games.

Interviewer: mm.

John: Like L4D, Counterstrike. This is a bit more complicated. A lot more skills to use. For example, the the switching between the special powers and you use the combo, the lightning and to hit, you need to stun the enemy then to hit the thing.

Interviewer: mm.

John: And then there are also you need to make some choices. Then for example, you gain the new power, then after that, there are not enough slots.

Interviewer: Ya so you have to...

John: You have to choose which one is the best.

Interviewer: Make the choice. Gameplay choice.

John: Ya you know, which one is the best.

Interviewer: So far, what do you use just now? What skill? Is it?

John: mm. I prefer the...

Interviewer: Eletro bolt?

John: Lightning eletro bolt and the telekinesis.

Interviewer: mm so you use these two just now.

John: Ya. I use the fire one also lah. When I don't have the telekinesis.

Interviewer: But is it later you switched out the Incinerate? Is it?

John: Ya I take out the Incinerate.

Interviewer: And then you put in telekinesis ah?

John: Yes.

Interviewer: So which one you find it more useful?

John: I find that both ya these two more useful. For example, you have lighting you can stun the robot and then after that you hack it. Hack it it's very powerful, the then many robot.

Interviewer: Ya. Erm so far...

John: And then the gameplay is also got another one is the the healing one.

Interviewer: Oh the healing station.

John: Ya. Then I didn't realise then after that I fight the boss. Then after that he suddenly healed to full life again.

Interviewer: Orh is it the Big Daddy?

John: Not the Big Daddy.

Interviewer: The doctor Steinman?

John: Ya. Then after that he went to the healing there and see his life full again. Then after that, I realised I have to hack it. Because I read it beforehand but I didn't realise that he can heal.

Interviewer: So there's a healing station underneath doctor Steinman's area is it?

John: Ya it's near the area then he go and I hit him until red life then he go and heal.

Interviewer: mm then you have to fight him again.

John: Ya then I have to fight him again.

Interviewer: Ya.

John: So it's quite complicated.

Interviewer: So now you know?

John: Ya. I know.

Interviewer: Okay so erm there's another question is the Big Daddy fight how do you find it ah? Is it very challenging?

John: It's quite challenging. I died a few times.

Interviewer: mm.

John: Then after that er I walked around and ya I found a robot. I hacked a few robot. Then make them shoot the Big Daddy.

Interviewer: So your strategy is to hack the robots to fight Big Daddy?

John: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

John: Because like for example, you don't have enough money to buy all the health potions as well.

Interviewer: Ya.

John: Then you don't have enough money to buy the bullets. So ya run out of strategy can just walk around.

Interviewer: Ya I think this game the gameplay is wants you to use more strategy because the resources quite limited ah?

John: Yes.

Interviewer: mm. And then erm any other parts of the gameplay that you find interesting? That you want to talk about?

John: mm.

Interviewer: Is there any other parts?

John: Give us the choice to choose whether you want to save or harvest the little girl?

Interviewer: Ya that one I'll ask later.

John: Okay. Can. For example, the bullet also there are different types of bullets for different types of enemy. Makes it more complicated as well.

Interviewer: mm.

John: For example, ya actually the only armoured guy is I think only the Big Daddy.

Interviewer: So far lah.

John: But I didn't realise I have to fight it. So I used up.

Interviewer: But er the Big Daddy you know that you can prepare for his fight ah?

John: Oh I didn't know I need to fight him.

Interviewer: I mean you can prepare before you fight him ah.

John: Oh I don't know.

Interviewer: He will not attack you.

John: He will not attack you?

Interviewer: Ya.

John: But all the damage done by the character is so little.

Interviewer: Because it is the beginning of the game ah?

John: er ya so prepare I walk I walk near the Big Daddy then he he's not damaging you. I thought I can don't fight him and just save the girl.

Interviewer: You must kill him first then...

John: That was not an option. Hahaha.

Interviewer: But I mean before you fight him, you can prepare lah.

John: Ah.

Interviewer: He won't fight you if you don't fight him. Mm.

## **Transcript 5.22**

[29 May 2014 *Bioshock* Session 1 11.20 am – 1.20 pm 01:50]

Interviewee: But gameplay wise it's too like linear, as in there's not much free play. You must go here then go there then go here then go there.

Interviewer: So so do you find the gameplay do you like it so far? So far, if it's linear.

Interviewee: As in don't really like the gameplay ah but it is the same for Infinite, the same case for Infinite cos I don't really like the gameplay for Infinite also.

Interviewer: So you mean you like the story more?

Interviewee: Ah story better. It's a very interesting story.

Interviewer: But then when you play *Bioshock*, do you like go and explore thoroughly or do you just want to rush through?

Interviewee: Ah...

Interviewer: Because some of my participants they explore everything ah.

Interviewee: Don't really.

Interviewer: They go and open the map and see all the grey area haven't discover and then they go inside the grey area and then go and see everything.

Interviewee: Ah for me I just roam around lah. See what I can find. As in I don't don't really actively go and explore but just search the area like for loot ah. Cos ammo in this game very important. Run out of ammo, they cannot survive, especially cos at the beginning already. But er I feel that the the Big Daddy is er harder to kill compared to Atlas. So I a bit the final boss is easier to kill than the small boss.

Interviewer: So so do you find a conflict there between the gameplay in the final boss and the part where you meet Andrew Ryan because Andrew Ryan that part you lost control so you cannot do anything ah. And the last part is the gameplay where you had to fight Fontaine. Do you find is there a conflict between the loss of control in Andrew Ryan and you got full control when you fought Fontaine? Is there some kind of conflict or do you find it's just normal?

Interviewee: Normal lah.

Interviewer: But when you met er like Andrew Ryan, do you want to have some more control? Because I think you lost total control when you Andrew Ryan.

Interviewee: Ya. It's okay lah I guess. It's okay lah. As in it brings something new to the gameplay ah. Bring something new to the table instead of playing the normal scenario and so on.

Interviewer: So far for the gameplay, do you find like try to find like any hidden hidden secrets in the game?

Interviewee: Ya I tried to ah try...

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But not so much. Try try. As in because cos a bit weird if I cos the thing is if I alternate tab to check the walkthrough, I think the recording will stop. So it's a bit weird to record and start again. That's why for me, I just just read through before playing the game. So you know roughly where to go but then when it comes to the actual game, may not remember everything ah.

Interviewer: Ya. But you think reading through will help you ah?

Interviewee: Help you collect all the secrets ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewer: So in *Bioshock* you also think the story is more important ah?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Than the gameplay.

Interviewee: Ya as it's both playing because of the story not for the gameplay.

Interviewer: er...

Interviewee: Gameplay is a bit boring after a while.

Interviewer: More boring lah?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Because you find it quite repetitive.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: So in general do you try to play games that are more story based or gameplay ah?

Interviewee: er as in as in both ah. Because story is also good ah. But I I think what's more important is the gameplay. Cos cos like games like you know *Far Cry*? *Far Cry* got one of the lousiest stories but then the gameplay is one of the best. One of the most interesting.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: So that one I enjoyed the most but when it comes to *Bioshock*, it's only good for one play through only because you know the story, you don't want to play the game again, it got no replay value.

Interviewer: So you don't think you will go and play again to see the different endings ah.

Interviewee: No ah.

Interviewer: It's because the gameplay is quite restricted.

Interviewee: But I got I got the good ending in the end. I got the good ending.

Interviewer: So so you mean you will go for the good ending again lah?

Interviewee: As in during the play through, I got the good ending.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: The one with the...

Interviewer: Ya I know.

Interviewee: Oki sorry.

Interviewer: erm...

Interviewee: But I don't see there's a point to repeat everything again just to get different for that. I'll just go YouTube and see different endings ah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: But games like like *Far Cry* er the *Arkham series* right? It's it's the gameplay is very interesting then the thing is these games have like have a lot of different different style. The ending is the same but then there's a lot of different stuff to do in the game. So after you have complete the game, you can go around and doing. So there's replay value also.

Interviewer: In terms of the gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Ya there's replay value.

Interviewer: So you mean in general you try to play games because of the gameplay lah.

Interviewee: No lah as in both but then I'm just saying story like those games story good but gameplay no good, just play one time only. Just get to the story that's it.

Interviewer: Ah so depends on the game lah.

Interviewee: Ya. Stuff like *Call of Duty* the story you know *Call of Duty: Black Ops* right? The story is nice but then the gameplay is a bit too linear. A bit too boring. So you can play once, see the story finished already.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: So so you think *Call of Duty* is it more is it multiplayer?

Interviewee: *Call of Duty*?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: I'm talking about the story.

Interviewer: Orh you are only talking about the campaign.

Interviewee: Ah single player, multiplayer is different.

Interviewer: mm so you only play for the gameplay lah?

Interviewee: *Call of Duty*?

Interviewer: *Call of Duty* also? Is it?

Interviewee: er no no *Call of Duty* is more of the cos after *Black Ops*, I stopped. Okay after *Modern Warfare 3*, then I stopped playing *Call of Duty* already. Because it's the same thing over and over again. A bit too boring.

Interviewer: So you only play one time lah? One time?



Interviewee: What do you mean one time?

Interviewer: er I mean you you do you mean that it's quite boring?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: To replay it?

Interviewee: Ya. Same for *Bioshock* also. It's a bit too boring to replay.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Probably the last fight I will replay again lah. Because it's fun.

Interviewer: The gameplay is fun lah.

Interviewee: As in for the last fight only. Last fight.

Interviewer: Only the gameplay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay. But when you were playing it, you were playing on medium difficulty?

Interviewee: Ah medium.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.23**

[1 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 03:00]

Interviewer: What do you think the gameplay consists of? In this game.

Interviewee: er what do you mean exactly?

Interviewer: Like the gameplay is not the story but the actions you take.

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: Like the exploration.

Interviewee: Ya I think that is what do I think about it right?

Interviewer: Ya. How do you define it ah?

Interviewee: Ah okay. The question is a bit tricky. Yes ah I find that it's interesting. Because you know it's something like you know, *GTA*, *Grand Theft Auto* that kind of thing where you get to explore a bit of the world. But it's restricted to certain areas and stuff like that. And you know not not all things are interactive and stuff. And er just for until the point where I kill it so far, er the items that are explorable or interactable, erm it's limited to how much of the story you have gone. Like for example, if you haven't talk to this certain character, this much right? Then er these items or these things are uninteractable until then for example. But ya I will say that it's interesting lah then erm especially at the point where I'm stuck at the pharmacy

right? You have to find a way to get out of it or at least to progress the storyline and there's there's only a certain way where you can do it and it's up to the player to go and to go around because it's like they don't tell you what you need, how to get out and stuff. They just give you like little hints and clues so it's up to the player to go around and search every damn thing that is searchable, and then like think for himself lah like so if after a while, searched whole place and then you went back, goes back to the point where the storyline is supposed to continue right? But it doesn't allow you to continue. It just means that you missing out something. So the player oh crap I missed something so he goes back and find what type of stuff he missing so ya lah it makes the player think a bit lah. So it's like on the feet. It's not something mundane like you need to do it's the same thing over again and it's the stuff like that ya.

Interviewer: So you don't find the gameplay too simple lah?

Interviewee: Ah it's not simple at all. And for example, erm there was that quite a few of the interactions are time limited. So you know, it puts the player even more on their feet so in the end, they had like...and it's like represented by white bar. Like counting down, some sometimes it's rather slow, sometimes it's faster. The faster ones are the ones that really you know gives you something like adrenaline high. Like you need to oh shit what do you need to do? Which choices do I have to make. Stuff like that lah. Er so I don't know lah it's different lah it's what makes me interested in the gameplay lah. It's what's different.

Interviewer: Okay. So the do you think the quick-time event ah is it, do you like the quick-time event? Have you heard of this?

Interviewee: Yes. The quick-time event?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: That means like the...

Interviewer: Pressing button ah. When they asking you to press Q.

Interviewee: Ah then they giving me a time limit is it? That one also I know. Yes. I like it because like er for other games like most games right? They give you a choice. The player is like I mean it's really weird to me lah er like doing a conversation with two characters right? Then the player is given an infinite amount of time to choose what he wants to choose so he can have you know, takes his time and then read through and what not. This one doesn't give you that that option. You know, it's what what happens to you in real life lah. I mean like in real life you get if our conversations our conversations between two persons right? Two people. You don't give then like er like for example, I ask you how's your day, you don't take like half an hour to say okay that's good.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Or something like right it's like this so I mean...

Interviewer: So it's more like real life ah?

Interviewee: Correct. It's more real.

Interviewer: Okay.

## Transcript 5.24

[12 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 2.30 pm – 4 pm 02:42]

Interviewer: So erm what do you think the gameplay consists of?

Interviewee: mm it's just a lot of point and clicking actually.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And and the gameplay is almost non-existent. It's not it's not very challenging. But it but then sometimes, you have like the problem with the gameplay I have is that you can only do certain things that is scripted. So sometimes you can't find the exact spot where you are supposed to click, you you can't proceed so you so your character is just going to stand there and stare at blank space while you are trying to find in the game to click that ya.

Interviewer: But this is because you are first time playing it ah so maybe after you have played a longer time, you will be better.

Interviewee: Oh ya definitely.

[12 Mar 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 2.30 pm – 4 pm 18:26]

Interviewer: So question 10 is asking if you are able to find a division between the story and gameplay. Or do you find that they cannot be separated?

Interviewee: mm narrative and gameplay. Well narrative is I guess I guess is a very blur distinction will be that narrative event is something that has to happen like it is a passive event lah. Like you just sit and then you just see what happens. It's very passive. But er the gameplay event is something that is more active like you have to perform the action in order to allow the story to progress. Even though both has the same beginning and end, but a gameplay event would be more active I guess. Ya. But it is a very blur division.

Interviewer: Do you find the conversation dialogue is it narrative or gameplay?

Interviewee: Conversation dialogue? I think it's very narrative actually.

Interviewer: So it's not gameplay?

Interviewee: Ya. I mean it does change a bit, you know, like you know when I said the "some guy" thing like I'm just some guy, I don't think it affects the story much at all lah. I mean it gives you the illusion that what what you like what you chosen matters. But I don't think in the end it does.

Interviewer: So you think it's story because it's like more linear?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. When you see a division between the story and gameplay, can you do you feel that they are complementing each other or they do not help each other?

Interviewee: I think well in this game, I think that er because it's so very story driven, it's very it's very linear. But er so I think that all narrative events can actually become

gameplay events and all gameplay events can become narrative events. But the so I mean it does complement each other that it takes up the more the the monotonous ah the monotonous erm...

Interviewer: The pacing?

Interviewee: Ya. Pacing ah. It it it makes the player it keeps the player instead of you know just sitting back like watching a movie? Or the player will just constantly clicking and trying to figure out what what he is supposed to do when everything is just he is like being spoonfed.

Interviewer: So like giving some kind of a narrative?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.25**

[25 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 3.30 – 5pm]

Interviewee: Ya so anyway, ahem ya gameplay event would be like parts of the game where you actually look for items to help you with that particular event. And transit, transition to the next one.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: And then but then in this particular game, majority of gameplay also involves selecting responses and you know, picking choices on the spot.

Interviewer: So you think that the gameplay is integrated with the narrative event?

Interviewee: You can say that. So that's why when you say an example of a gameplay event so which one do I exactly? Do I give, are you looking, what are you looking out for? Are you looking out for the narration part? Which is actually covered under narrative event? Or are you looking specifically for since all the parts where we have to look for like scavenge items to help you.

Interviewer: I'm er asking you ah what what do you think ah? How do you?

Interviewee: How do I define things?

Interviewer: How do you...what do you think is a gameplay event and what do you think is a narrative event?

Interviewee: Oh. Okay. Because to me gameplay event also it it encompasses this part as well.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: So you think these two are somewhat...

Interviewee: Well in this game they are...

Interviewer: Integrated.

Interviewee: Interlinked. They are together. As in narration forms a big part of the gameplay.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya. So ya that's what I said, that's what I mean like this part. You feel that narrative and gameplay cannot be separated. So like what I said, not sure if gameplay involves deciding making choices. Erm in response to comments or questions or things said by the other in-game characters.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya. So that's why I said it's it's together.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Then when there's a clear divide between narrative and gameplay, this is the part where I don't really understand. Because I feel that this one is more through this one so I find it hard to answer like there's a clear divide between narrative and gameplay because to me clearly, these two are is together.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: So you don't have any example where there is a clear divide between narrative and gameplay? From this session.

Interviewee: No ah pretty much most of the time is spent deciding on the response to er what the other characters so...

Interviewer: But what about the parts where you you can explore the environment, do you think there's any separation? Like in the shop you can take item ah?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Is it narrative or gameplay?

Interviewee: That that that leans more towards gameplay. But still to me the narration is forms a larger part.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya I mean I can pretty much talk to people and just get it over and done with but...

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Looking for, scavenging for things, hoarding for the things, it's just...

Interviewer: It's like not very significant.

Interviewee: Ya it's mm definitely not as important as talking to people because that's pretty much how the entire story is played out.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay that is good.

Interviewee: Ya. Or at least for this game lah. Ya.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So this part this is the part as in I don't really understand like what do you mean exactly by because it's I pretty much answered this part already.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya and then they don't really I mean in certain parts, they do exist independently but as in gameplay is separated from narrative but again like I said, this just, that is just a small part as compared to you know, the narrative part.

Interviewer: Okay so you think they are cannot be separated ah?

Interviewee: I mean if you take choices out it will be it's not worth playing the game I think. Ya. The whole game the whole...

Interviewer: So so you think if you take the narrative out, then this game cannot work ah.

Interviewee: I mean it can still work but I mean it's just going around clicking on things I mean.

Interviewer: Less meaningful lah?

Interviewee: Ya it's less meaningful. The whole point of this game is making choices.

Interviewer: Okay. The conversations?

Interviewee: Ya the conversations.

## **Transcript 5.26**

[26 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 2 – 7 pm [Jim] 05:48]

Interviewer: Okay so the second question ah, what do you think the gameplay consists of in this game?

Jim: The gameplay? Well it's a point and click and a little bit of WASD walking and because this is just episode one so some of the gameplay did not show up. But in episode 4, there's a little bit of first person shooting.

Interviewer: Ya but in episode 1, there's also some at the beginning.

Jim: You mean shooting?

Interviewer: First person shooting ah?

Jim: No, there's not.

Interviewer: er is it the you shoot the Walkers?

Jim: Okay that one has a crosshair and the cursor but that's not really FPS. If you look at episode 4, you see your own pistol directly in front of you and you can actually use its erm eyesight, you know? That thing you use to aim on pistol. Yes you can reload with it and you can shoot with it.

Interviewer: Okay so the episode 1 is just a fake one lah?

Jim: It's just a point and click.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim: That's it. You don't have to care about your accuracy.

Interviewer: Okay.

Jim: Cos I'm a shooter junkie of course I know this. That's my main genre. Ya.

Interviewer: How do you feel about the gameplay ah?

Jim: I think it's creative. Because there are two mainstream shooters out there like *Call of Duty*, *Battlefield*. Well we I mean today's shooters is they try to woo simulation with RTS so it's a bit pseudo simulation which doesn't really make their game look like simulation but it doesn't make their game look too arcadish. That's what happens to shooters today. And erm for those who know *Call of Duty*, its regenerative health has become so such a big influence on a lot of shooter games. Lots of people, lots of developers they will change their health system into regenerative one so you don't have to worry about your hp, your health and you have to hold that amount of health, hang on until you find a medikit. No you just have to hide behind cover that's it. You are done. So well back to the gameplay in this game, it's er point and click, WASD and some conversation. Ya and yes, sometimes conversations will affect how this erm judge you and they may actually have different reactions against you according to how you respond to them. Yes.

Interviewer: Okay so erm those parts with the quick-time event ah.

Jim: Oh quick-time event.

Interviewer: Do you have any comments ah?

Jim: Quick-time event. To be honest, quick-time event is quite old mechanism in video games.

Interviewer: Do you think it works in this game?

Jim: It does. Okay. I think it doesn't work in any games today. Because we have more and more technology. If we have more and more mechanism that can, we have more and more innovation they can put into this game just a matter of erm effort.

Mainstream games they I don't think they really have much innovation as the independent ones. We call the Indie games. And quick-time events are quite common if I'm not mistaken. When I was young, they are quite common in much older games in the 1990s that's what I can remember and today a lot of lazy games you see if you look at the review of those some of the games like those games that ripped off from the movie titles like the recent Rambo video games right? Today I think quick-time event if you implement into video game right? It can be seen as a kind of lazy. Check out Angry Joe on YouTube and you see how much he was angry about the game. He gave it a very bad review. Too hardcore. I'm not a hardcore gamer.

Interviewer: Okay.

### **Transcript 5.27**

[25 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 6 – 7.30 pm [Henry] 02:12]

Interviewer: So the gameplay what do you think what do you think it consists of? In *Walking Dead* ah what is the gameplay?

Henry: Gameplay is just er choice it's based on your choice lor. It's like for example, if you choose like there's one case where you choose to save the Duck the kid or the the other guy, the Shawn at the farm there...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: And it's based on it's based on whatever you choose lah. Then then the story will unfold into what you what you choose lah. And then and then from there the characters will, the relationship between you and the other characters will kind of will say like develop like that but it's ah ya lah it's like developed lor. Ah. If you choose another choice then it would develop differently or something like that lah.

Interviewer: mm. Are there any other types of gameplay that you find in *Walking Dead* ah? Besides the choice.

Henry: Oh erm besides that then there is also the I can't remember what is that the what's that thing called? What is like the the action eh quick quick action.

Interviewer: er what's that? Quick-time action.

Henry: Ah quick-time action. There's quick-time action. Then there is like er ya there is just quick-time action. There's no FPS ya no FPS ya it's quick-time action lor. There's more like platform. Not only platform lah but it's more on the er narrative than the gameplay cos it's more of like telling a story what. Ah.

Interviewer: So far, the quick-time action er do you find it quite repetitive ah or is it?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Do you like it so far?

Henry: So far it's episode 1 lah as in the first episode. So I still find it okay but er I don't know for for the next few episodes I don't know how I will react to it lah but so far it seems ok lah. It's not that not that repetitive.



Interviewer: So other than the quick-time gameplay are there other gameplay you encounter so far?

Henry: As in in *The Walking Dead*?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: er oh the interaction, I forgot what's it called. What is for example, you can go and er er eh is it interaction with object? Ya you just for example, those those those objects that you can take up you will take them or whatever er choice that you can choose you choose like for example, you take you take the brick to throw at the store.

Interviewer: mm mm.

Henry: Window that kind.

Interviewer: That kind of basic action lah.

Henry: Ya. Ya. Basic action ya.

Interviewer: So so do you think the actions so far is quite restricted ah?

Henry: Restricted ah er it's ya lah as in there's only er a few there's only a few things that you can er you can differ from the actual path itself ah like for example, the I I assume the you can only use the brick to throw at the the window. And nothing else. Then like for example, the the er keys there like the keys from the brother I have to...

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: You have to kill the brother then you cannot don't kill him that kind ah.

Interviewer: So it's like quite linear so far lah.

Henry: It's it's quite it's some it's restricted to a sense lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ah you have to in the end, you will still follow a certain a certain path. Ah.

Interviewer: So you mean the certain path is the main story ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: What do you mean by the main path?

Henry: No as in like er there's only a few things that you can you can choose to do what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah and then er like for the basic action like for example, ah you can just you can er you only can do one thing to the item. Or you can you only for like for example, there is erm a certain sequence that you have to follow first. Like you have to go you have to go save er the you have to save the other guy at the motel first, before you can go and take the pills that kind.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah like this. You cannot go and go out and then take the keys first before you save the...

Interviewer: So it's a kind of fixed fixed.

Henry: It's sort of fixed lah.

Interviewer: Not much variation ah?

Henry: erm no.

Interviewer: The pathway?

Henry: Ya not not much variation ah. Unless you make those bigger choice lah I guess ah.

Interviewer: So far the choices you make in episode 1 is quite quite linear lah? Not much variation?

Henry: Ah.

### **Transcript 5.28**

[28 Feb 2014 *The Walking Dead* Session 1 4.30 – 6.16 pm 00:22]

Interviewer: What do you think the gameplay consists of?

Interviewee: What do you mean by gameplay?

Interviewer: er like the actions that you choose to take the objects from the environment ah want to overcome the different challenges.

Interviewee: erm...

Interviewer: Like you want to there's a place outside the shop where you have to find ways to get to Lee's brother.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Ya did you play that part?

Interviewee: Huh?

Interviewer: Or you try to there's another part where you are trying to get to the radio.

Interviewee: mm ya. Erm I think er the gameplay in this game er I use an axe to kill *The Walking Dead*. And try to save the girl and er using a gun to shoot *The Walking Dead*. And mm try to get the keys from the dead people. And mm try to attract those er *Walking Dead*. And to get the keys. Mm and to save the people who is threatened by *The Walking Dead*.

Interviewer: Okay.

.....

Interviewer: So the next question is asking you about the event. Er if event is defined as the change of one state to another, for example, you have a change in the setting ah, so can you think of any example of a narrative event or gameplay event?

Interviewee: mm narrative event is that means the conversations between the people in the group. Mm and the gameplay event er I think is make choice to save the woman or the man in there.

Interviewer: So you think choosing to save the woman or the man is a gameplay choice ah?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: Okay. Mm for the next question, are you able to clearly see a divide between the narrative and gameplay ah?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Or when you see that they are together?

Interviewee: mm I think narrative is narrative is er just conversations.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: For gameplay, is to make some choices. Make decisions to affect the final progress of the game.

Interviewer: So you don't see any division between the story and gameplay?

Interviewee: mm not so clear division.

Interviewer: Okay. So you feel they cannot be separated?

Interviewee: mm.

## **Transcript 5.29**

[15 Mar 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 01:15]

Interviewer: What do you think the gameplay consist of in this game?

Interviewee: What do I think erm pertaining to which part?

Interviewer: The just now you played those parts.

Interviewee: mm mostly is shooting, picking up items, exploration, erm and seeing how the story develop lor. And learning how to use the character in the game. Cos there are a lot of functions the character can use. Like change weapon ah, sniper la erm all all the kind of different functions ah.

Interviewer: Do you find the gameplay quite hard to understand?

Interviewee: Hard to understand?

Interviewer: Like the weapon you still need to learn how to use ah.

Interviewee: I think it's oki. I think the gameplay wise it was okay. Just that gameplay it was still okay because I have played a lot of this kinds of game before. Except each game has different weapons so it will take like maybe ten fifteen minutes to accustom to it. Ya but it's not not really very difficult.

Interviewer: Ya because some people say that the gameplay of *Mass Effect* is like er not as good as *Mass Effect 2* ah.

Interviewee: Oh this one is the first *Mass Effect*?

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Oh it's not *Mass Effect 2* ah?

Interviewer: Ya *Mass Effect 1*.

Interviewee: Oh oki oki oki. So there was a second.

Interviewer: Ya some gamers they like the *Mass Effect 2* gameplay better.

Interviewee: Okay I never tried *Mass Effect 2* before.

Interviewer: Okay so you find it so far quite oki. The gameplay.

Interviewee: Quite oki. It's not too bad.

Interviewer: Oki.

.....

[15 Mar 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 07:07]

Interviewer: So just now you played er those parts, do you think your actions make the story progress? Or does it only progress in the cutscenes ah? Or is it mixture of both?

Interviewee: Does it only progress in the what?

Interviewer: The cutscenes.

Interviewee: Orh no er it progresses actually more in the first one than on the cutscene.

Interviewer: The your actions ah?

Interviewee: Ya the actions because you can actually choose erm what you want to find out from the other characters and at the same time, they will actually give you more information pertaining to whatever is happening. Ya so er they make it quite interactive ah quite interactive. As you can choose you know, erm what you want to find out about this about A about B about C. And then after that, er other characters will give you their information pertaining to that. You know?

Interviewer: Oki. So the next question is about events ah.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: er in narrative theory, if event is defined as transition of one state to another, like a change of a setting, then can you give any example of story event and gameplay event? Like event is a transition from one state to another.

Interviewee: er I don't really understand.

Interviewer: Like how your your actions make different kind of story story event ah.

Interviewee: Oh I think for this game *Mass Effect* they already have a fixed storyline already. Just that they allow you to choose different options right to elicit different kinds of response from other parties to your character. So ya so so is like that. But I think generally, the story is quite fixed. They they didn't allow too much variation.

Interviewer: Ya. But do you think like your your story in the ship is er one event, story event and then when you go outside is another story event?

Interviewee: No it's quite linear.

Interviewer: So you think it's quite connected ah?

Interviewee: Ya for this one quite quite connected. Because because their plot is you come out from the ship, you are supposed to rescue a beacon. But then it's under attack. So after that, you are just fighting enemies trying to find out more about this beacon. So it's still quite linear. Like it didn't guide me to other story.

Interviewer: Okay so far you find it quite linear.

Interviewee: mm it's quite linear.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Or quite in sync with the storyline.

Interviewer: And then can you think of any example of gameplay event?

Interviewee: Gameplay event.

Interviewer: Gameplay event as in er what kind of event?

Interviewee: Any kind.

Interviewer: I want to see how you define.

Interviewee: Orh gameplay event. Mm I would say gameplay event like when there's a specific mission that you need to accomplish. Rather than the more normal events that happen like I already know that this game I am going to shoot I'm going to kill people. So that one is like a baseline I don't consider that as a gameplay event. But let's say if I need to accomplish this objective or this mission to maybe get a new gun or I have to go and rescue this person, erm to get a new team mate or partner, then all these side quests I consider it as a gameplay event to me ah.

Interviewer: Okay so you you think of those side quests as gameplay event ah?

Interviewee: Yes I will think of those like, it might not even be side quests, it might be along the main quest, but I consider those as like ah more significant gameplay event.

Interviewer: Okay like just now when you were shooting all those.

Interviewee: Ya just now when I was shooting all those, I think you know quite er like I mean that that one is not a gameplay event to me but then like there was one whereby you are supposed to erm like you are supposed to help these ah lady soldier and rescue her, that one I consider it as a gameplay event. Then got one is I break into I try to access a code to get into a house to take some guns or rescue some people, that one I consider it as a gameplay event. Something out of the norm. Like the norm to me is I know I'm going to shoot and kill people. So that one is not a gameplay event to me. Ya.

Interviewer: So the norm you are referring that to a story event ah? Or how do you categorise it?

Interviewee: Story event.

Interviewer: Like the norm ah.

Interviewee: I mean gameplay event and story event to me don't make any difference.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Ya. I I mean to me to me like gameplay event and story event I think is the to me is the same thing.

Interviewer: So so we go to the next question is like just now you say, story and gameplay cannot be separated.

Interviewee: Cannot be separated.

Interviewer: Because you say that the story and gameplay is like the same thing.

Interviewee: er...

Interviewer: Or or you feel that sometimes they can be separated ah?

Interviewee: The story and the gameplay? I think the like I mean I think the story is like the whole game. Then the gameplay is the process whereby we get to understand the story. Ya. That's the difference to me.

Interviewer: Oh so you mean the process how you interpret the story is the gameplay?

Interviewee: Ya or how I find out more about the story. Is is like for *Mass Effect* right? Erm as I play through the game, as I play the game right? Then I get to understand more and more about what is happening. Erm in the story. Ya so the story is like the the big picture lah. Then you know the gameplay is like all the smaller events that are happening that need me to discover more and more and more about the story which probably the people who develops the game want us to see.

Interviewer: So you mean the gameplay is more the choices that you make?

Interviewee: Gameplay more like the choices that I what what do you mean?

Interviewer: Like you choose which dialogue option or what kind of shooting action to take.

Interviewee: Ya I think can encompass.

Interviewer: Okay. But then the story you are referring to the entire game?

Interviewee: Ya. Story I would refer to the entire game.

Interviewer: Okay. So just now you say you sometimes can see a division between story and gameplay? Or is it you find that they are hard to separate?

Interviewee: Story and if it's a story event and a gameplay event, I don't know what's the difference.

Interviewer: But if story and game gameplay then I think there's a difference cos the story is the full story ah.

Interviewee: Then the gameplay is how you are going to understand the story. So there is a difference.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: mm.

.....

Interviewer: Then just now er do you find any instance where you can make a gameplay choice ah?

Interviewee: Gameplay choice. Ya got got a lot ah I mean you choose I won't say I won't say gameplay choice as in you choose what you want to find out. Or rather you can choose not to find out anything and just go about and killing people also can. Means there's a option at the side ah you know it's like thank you what is the next step.

Interviewer: Oh so that one you refer to it as the gameplay choice ah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Okay. So far do you understand the Paragon and Renegade system?

Interviewee: Sorry?

Interviewer: Paragon and Renegade.

Interviewee: Paragon and Renegade.

Interviewer: The that one like you finished the dialogue they will say plus what Paragon, plus how many Renegade.

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: At the right hand side ah, you don't know about it?

Interviewee: No that one I'm not very sure. Ya.

Interviewer: Okay that one is also part of the gameplay.

Interviewee: Okay but I know can level up and something like that. Like you can add like skill points here and there but I don't know the Paragon and Renegade thing.

Interviewer: Ya the Paragon and Renegade is the Intimidate and Charm.

Interviewee: Oh.

Interviewer: I think you never add.

Interviewee: Okay. Ya maybe I haven't add.

Interviewer: Ya I think when you explore that one, it will help you to open up more story choice.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Later on ah.

### **Transcript 5.30**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 3:50]

Interviewer: So your character biography at the start you choose it to be more good guy and then he's a Spacer.

Interviewee: Ya he's a war hero.

Interviewer: War hero.

Interviewee: A Spacer so...

Interviewer: So he is completely good one?

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Totally a good person.

Interviewer: Is there any reason you want to choose that kind of character?

Interviewee: erm usually I play a good character because because it does quite align with your real self.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: As in you find it very hard to do bad things like you know let's say like in *Star Wars: The Knights of the Old Republic*, if you choose to play a bad guy, you end up killing your own characters. So obviously, it's quite hard decision as a player to kill somebody that you have like you know nurtured throughout the game and then you kill him because you are a bad person. So it's easier to be a good person and you sort of save everyone you know in an ideal world. So it's easier lah. It fits more in terms with my real self.



Interviewer: So you are trying to impose your real life personality.

Interviewee: Ya because it will be really hard to play somebody that's totally different. I mean obviously I'm not Spacer or whatever but at least there's some similarities so you can connect with the character. Ya.

Interviewer: er but if you play a bad guy, do you think you will also have some other kinds of benefits ah?

Interviewee: Ya I assume there's usually some kinds of incentives that you choose a bad guy maybe you are it's more for gameplay? You will probably be more powerful than the good guy. You will have more choices to...it will probably make the game easier for you and I'll probably play a bad guy in the second play through but not as a first playthrough. Ya.

Interviewer: Ya. I think this is what most people will think.

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 5.31**

[17 June 2014 *Mass Effect* Session 1 1 – 4 pm 5:40]

Interviewer: So so far the gameplay er do you enjoy it ah?

Interviewee: erm well it's not a straightup shooter so well there's a bit of a strategic factor. You got to get out your AI partners are not very smart which is a bit weird because they are soldiers so you expect them to take like cover and do things like this automatically. But you got to like point them towards the cover.

Interviewer: I think there's some kind of I think we can have some kind of automatic command ah? But I'm not sure how to do it.

Interviewee: Oki.

Interviewer: I think you can explore later.

Interviewee: Alright. So so far it's quite straightforward I guess. It's because maybe it's just the beginning of the game. So you don't have like much access to whatever powers down there. Ya so far because I chose a character that doesn't need much power, just take a gun and shoot at people, so yeah.

Interviewer: Your character is it er what's the class?

Interviewee: er soldier.

Interviewer: So it's more typical lah.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. The typical ones. Ya maybe because I don't usually play like this kind of games where you micro manage a lot so the other choices you have to use powers and stuff like that. So a lot of micro management.

Interviewer: Oh so you choose the more generic ones.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: And then so far the gameplay challenge are there any difficulties you face?

Interviewee: er difficulties mostly...

Interviewer: Not so much?

Interviewee: Ya. It's mostly with telling your team mates to go somewhere. As in because the AI do not really use cover, they just stand out in the open and shoot at you. So...

Interviewer: So not much difficulty.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. So far it's not much difficulty.

Interviewer: I think the difficulty is the map so far, you find it hard to move around is it?

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Probably the controls and stuff like that. The UI is a bit confusing. Ya.

Interviewer: And then the UI is separated. Do you find it any er you don't like it or you find it comfortable so far?

Interviewee: Oh as in...

Interviewer: Because you use the space bar to open up a separated...

Interviewee: Okay so...

Interviewer: Gameplay control.

Interviewee: I mean it is ok because when you press the space bar, everything stops. I mean if things still continue and move, then obviously, it's going to be frantic but in a sort of way it is not very realistic. You can't...

Interviewer: But it also gives you more time to strategise.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Ya. You get to swing the thing around. You can take your own sweet time. So in a way, it's more like a gameplay decision. But I mean it's not very realistic lah. Things don't pause ya.

Interviewer: But but so far is you think is useful for your gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Ya it's definitely useful. Because there's a lot of things they can do. Ya because your team mates don't do it automatically. So ya it's very useful.

Interviewer: So far the all those er alternate powers...

Interviewee: mm hmm.

Interviewer: Do you find it easy to understand?

Interviewee: erm...

Interviewer: Do you face any difficulty when you...

Interviewee: Ya. As in the descriptions are quite clear I mean throw is quite obvious that throw someone. But like while you play through the game, because you are like soldier and probably using your weapons so most of the time, you don't really think of the powers. You just think of ok how can I shoot this guy in the quickest way possible. So in some ways, you usually forget about the powers until the game prompts you ok use the powers.

Interviewer: Ya there's one part where they prompt you to use the throw.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. Totally.

Interviewer: But that part you find it easy to master ah?

Interviewee: erm well because you have the space bar thing so you can pause and slowly move your aiming and thing.

Interviewer: Because some of the participants they don't know how to use ah.

Interviewee: Oh okay.

Interviewer: You you find it ok?

Interviewee: Ya I think it's quite I mean it's quite logical in a way. It's just there. I mean you got all the time to...

Interviewer: Because there's there's no story support ah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer :No story support for this one.

Interviewee: Ya it's purely gameplay. I mean there's not even any mention about powers until that moment oh got something called powers. Okay. Ya.

Interviewer: And then there's another part about the mini games ah. That one the decrypt the...

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. The hacking game ya. I thought that was weird because that's not how you making a hack. Or looks like what is that game. Frog or something? You have to cross the road. Then avoid getting hit by a car. Ya it's something like that at first. It's kind of weird but you can understand it from a gameplay point of view because they probably want to make it simple. Don't look like hacking, code or stuff like that.

Interviewer: So you find it not really integrated.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. It's definitely not realistic. Ya.

Interviewer: I think *Bioshock* also have.

Interviewee: Ya *Bioshock* have something right? You have to connect like some pipes.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Similar kind ah?

Interviewee: Ya I imagine they have to make it simple. So it's no that bad but it's just not realistic. Ya.

Interviewer: mm. So is there any part of the gameplay where you like or dislike so far?

Interviewee: The gameplay so far well it's simplistic enough so far but the the main bug there is really your team mates being like totally reliant on you. And they will expect some kind of like independence they can do basic things on their own. Only like because like in certain games, let's say Dragon Age, made by the same company, you can get your team mates. You can program your team mates to do certain things when faced with certain situations. So not so much micro management like this one you really got to...

Interviewer: Need to micro a lot.

Interviewee: Ya and when like one of the characters like was shot I didn't know until I wonder where did that guy go. I found he was dead.

Interviewer: So they don't know how to find cover.

Interviewee: Ya they don't know how to find cover. It's like a very big problem.

Interviewer: Is Dragon Age a newer game?

Interviewee: er actually it's quite er I think I'm not which one came first.

Interviewer: *Mass Effect* 2007?

Interviewee: Ya. Origins.

Interviewer: I think *Mass Effect* quite old.

Interviewee: Ya as in Origins is also quite old but I'm not sure what...

Interviewer: I think maybe it's newer.

Interviewee: Maybe it's newer ya.

Interviewer: So it's better so the gameplay is improved.

Interviewee: Ya. Could be feedback again.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Ya.

### **Transcript 5.32**

[Session 3 31 May 2015 *Mass Effect* Last Interview [Michael] 53:58]

Interviewer: Do you think there's any characters you like in *Mass Effect*?

Michael: mm.

Interviewer: And then is it more for the narrative than the gameplay?

Michael: er I think it's more for the gameplay lah.

Interviewer: Because Wrex is very strong.

Michael: So it allows me to hammer through the game.

Interviewer: mm. So there's not much memorable characters in the story?

Michael: The who's the commando ah? The one eye guy.

Interviewer: One eye guy, which?

Michael: er the one who worked for the security that one. The sniper ah?

Interviewer: Got one eye guy ah? I cannot remember.

Michael: The sniper lor, the native sniper. Oh no the alien sniper. He's the most memorable because every time I bring him out he dies.

Interviewer: er Garrus ah?

Michael: Ah ya. Garrus is the weakest character who I have no use for him because his sniping sucks. That's why I prefer Wrex because Wrex will go in front and kill everything for me.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah ya.

Interviewer: Did you like do anything about Garrus to make him stronger ah?

Michael: Yes. I tried. After that I left him in the cupboard.

Interviewer: So you mean the he cannot be...

Michael: I cannot use him ah.

Interviewer: I mean the customization also cannot help ah?

Michael: I tried ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because if you think about it, it's no use to make a sniper wear very high armour and soak up damage because it is not what he is ah. He's supposed to stand behind but every time he stand behind he also die.

Interviewer: mm so that means even if you manually controls him, it is also very hard ah?

Michael: I manually controls him he also dies.

Interviewer: He he always gets shot by the enemies ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm. So it's mostly the AI problem?

Michael: I think it's a yes AI problem. I very sure if I am Garrus I think I will do a very good job.

Interviewer: Just like how you play Shepherd ah?

Michael: Yes.

### Transcript 5.33

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 2 53:10]

Interviewer: There's some parts of the game where the health bar turns...

Nasir: mm which part ah?

Interviewer: Green colour.

Nasir: Oh.

Interviewer: Did you know? Does the game explain to you ah? Or do you find out later by yourself?

Nasir: I think I found out later. I think she was healing right?

Interviewer: How did you find out ah?

Nasir: er I made a deduction. Because I did equip her with some healing stuff. So so I knew her amour had some heal some capacity to regenerate. So I just assume that it was healing. Ya. So ya I don't think the game told me that it was healing, I was just like ya it's green so that it's not going down, so I'm guessing you are healing.

Interviewer: So but you are just guessing lah.

Nasir: Sorry?

Interviewer: You are just guessing? Is it?

Nasir: Ya I was just guessing ah.

Interviewer: er because I'm wondering is it healing or is it negative effect on your character is it?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Is it is it a negative effect?

Nasir: I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Or is it a positive effect ah?

Nasir: I think it's positive but I'm just guessing.

Interviewer: Because some of the enemies they can...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: They can do what ah? They can...

Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Inject something onto your character.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Like the insects ah.

Nasir: mm. Ya so I forgot how they look like. But at least in this case, because I am assuming that things happening to her so...

Interviewer: Wait ah er this one you are attacking is what? This one is what? Er...

Nasir: The...

Interviewer: Stalker ah?

Nasir: Feros.

Interviewer: The Geth stalker.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: But in *Mass Effect 2* and 3, they don't have this also ah? This kind of effect?

Nasir: Ya they do.

Interviewer: They they have this effect also?

Nasir: They changed the layout. So it's a bit more obvious.

Interviewer: So do you know what is the effect ah? In the later *Mass Effect*.

Nasir: Meaning?

Interviewer: What do they do?

Nasir: As in it's a different layout. It's it's not using that kind of graph. It's just a semi circle thing.

Interviewer: Ya but do they also have this green colour?

Nasir: No no no. No they don't.

Interviewer: But when they when the character is has some positive effect or negative effect does it display on the?

Nasir: Not really. As in...

Interviewer: Is it colour coded ah?

Nasir: No it's not it's more it's a bit more vague in *Mass Effect 2* I guess.

Interviewer: So when your character is damaged or healing, how do you know?

Nasir: In *Mass Effect 2*?

Interviewer: Do they give any indicator?

Nasir: Ya but but it's not in this form. It's more like I think they are if they are dead, they are their portrait will I think you have red either red or greyed out. If they don't have the shields then the the health bar will be in grey colour I think or the there's a semi circle, I think that means for shields. Ya but ya so it is less obvious than this ah. This one is quite clear that oki those are shields those that's health.

Interviewer: So you mean *Mass Effect* is better? The user interface.

Nasir: Just for the health ya.

Interviewer: But you still don't know what is this ah? The green colour coding.

Nasir: Ya. I'm assuming it's healing. Because in in *Mass Effect 2* they didn't they don't really play around with er as in it's not so obvious about poison and stuff lah. I don't think there's any poison in *Mass Effect 2*. It's only because *Mass Effect 1* got poison so...it's a bit vague.

Interviewer: Do you want to? I want to search.

Nasir: mm?

Interviewer: Search to see if it gives me any info or not.

Nasir: Oh search lor. Oh poison lah?

Interviewer: Oh is it? Is it is this reliable reliable information?

Nasir: mm I'm not sure. I guess so. There. Ah oki. Okay lor. Then I was wrong.

Interviewer: I don't know.

Nasir: Ok lah if...

Interviewer: Is there anymore reliable one? Toxic gas ah?

Nasir: mm oki.

Interviewer: I don't know.

Nasir: I guess so.

Interviewer: It's either negative effect or positive effect ah.

Nasir: As in since you come across so many, I'm guessing I'm probably wrong. As in since her health was still high, it didn't really concern me.

Interviewer: mm.

### **Transcript 5.34**

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* Session 1 [Nasir] 1:00]

Interviewer: What do you think the gameplay consist of?



Nasir: mm gameplay wise is about knowing how to play your character and I supposed er you assign the points and like upgrade your weapons and stuff like that. So basically just making your character better lah. So that you can er fight the challenges in the game. Ya.

Interviewer: erm is there any interesting thing you find about the gameplay?

Nasir: mm gameplay ah?

Interviewer: Is there anything that you like?

Nasir: Oki lah as in I think the ahem as in I think the taking cover behind the the whatever wall or crate or what was nice as in the sense that like you don't need to like you don't need to initially I thought you had to manually do it right? Just hide behind and sneak out the side to shoot then I didn't realise that if you go close enough to the wall or something, you will automatically face your back then you can automatically er shoot from the side based on the ya so I think that part of the gameplay wise was useful. Erm ya just that I think initially at the start was quite a lot of things to take not. So it's like initially it was like how cannot jump then ah how do you do everything all that. So ya it it took took a while to get use to ah. That's why at first I was like like how to play. Then then after a while, like ok lah I think I got it somewhat. Ya.

Interviewer: Then the unlimited ammo how you find it ah? Is it different from other first person shooters?

Nasir: mm oki lah as in because I don't know because I guess the most most recent shooter I played was L4D lah so that generally ya as in the the pistol has unlimited ammo. Since I was using a pistol, I didn't really er ya as in it was nice ah as you don't have to really care about the how much ammo you have you can just based you can just like play based on strategy ah you don't really need to consider about the ammunition. Ya so I think I think it was still alright. Ya.

Interviewer: So you think is it better in this game ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Because you have unlimited ammo or?

Nasir: Ya. Because in the sense that at least like maybe maybe for games like like CS when you fight against other people right? Then maybe the the ammo will be important lah because it's part of the strategy. But this one is the ammo is just the means for you to get through and defeat your enemies mah. So I think I would to to me at least, ammo ammo wise ya it's it might be better in this case because you are fighting through a campaign and fighting ya it might be good that the ammo doesn't really matter lah. Ya compared to ya but if you were playing competitively against people let's say that ammo ammo would probably be a good idea to limit ya.

Interviewer: Then the other powers of the character.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: How you find find it erm is it able to integrate with the story?

Nasir: mm I guess initially I was like I didn't know what they were trying to do because like when the destroyer they say use the throw I was like huh what throw then like then I accidentally realised since then I realised that oh the the the you can ask your allies your your allies to use the throw then I was oki then I understand like what's the point ah. Because at first I was like how do you kill this guy. Then so in that sense oki lah but I don't know maybe I guess in a sense that the the game starts off a bit complicated in the sense that you really have access to all these different stuff at the start. So like like new players like me who first time play *Mass Effect* maybe still getting used to it lah. But after dying and after I learnt then oki. Oki then I think after a while it fits with the the context ah. Because I think I choose some like more more lighter hero. Ya so in that sense, ya I it fits lah. It was nice the the ability.

Interviewer: Do you think the story beginning give you time to learn the gameplay?

Nasir: mm a bit. In a sense that like initially there was fewer enemies right? So in a sense that they they slowly that's good lah in a sense that they they let you slowly play through the game and fight against smaller enemies but I think at least maybe like er because they tried to use a class system right? In the sense that there's soldier, there's different types of classes so then like even though they give you a brief description, you don't really know what you are getting into. I guess somehow will guess lah but ya so it's like initially I was like barrier for what the other ability for what all that. So in that sense, it for those specific classes abilities, er ya I don't think it was very er it wasn't really structured well in the gameplay ya. Because ya then again they they assume you are just one character mah so they I think is a bit hard to incorporate it into the gameplay as well for each for having one option for as in one light tutorial for each class. Might be a bit complicated lah but ya in the sense the the the class system or at least the class abilities is just had to trial and error lah then after a while ok you realise you can use this and this and all that. Ya so in terms of class wise, the gameplay might not have been well integrated. But other other that like your normal standard shooting, crouching all that, that one was oki lah. Ya initially I thought I could jump so I keep pressing space bar. Then I realised cannot jump. Then ya like map buttons then later on then I realised press M to see the bigger map. Ya so those parts could have been done better but ya oki lah after a while you just get it. Mm.

Interviewer: Then the beginning parts you can choose your character's origin.

Nasir: mm hmm ya.

Interviewer: Then do you think by choosing the different origins does it affect the gameplay or is it doesn't?

Nasir: mm I guess it's more like to give the player the option to er give the player the option to decide how to frame their character ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: But again I'm not sure how how this will actually affect the the overall plot or story of the thing because as in even though they make mention of it right? Ya as in whether it really changes gameplay er it would be nice if they did change gameplay ah but if it didn't then I think it's like an irrelevant point lah. As in I don't mind at least personally, I don't mind playing a character called John Shepherd with his own

standard backstory. Instead of getting me to choose ah but but if me choosing certain backstories will lead to certain differences in plot or some something in the game, some some significant thing in the game, in terms of narrative wise, then oki lah, I see a point in choosing a backstory. Otherwise, if it is just going to be like say this in the background and doesn't really change the story, then ya a bit of an irrelevant choice lah I feel. Ya for now I don't know lah so oki just choose lor.

Interviewer: Do you think you will choose the story option based on your background or is it?

Nasir: mm. Based on my what?

Interviewer: Just now the starting you choose the background.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Do you think the story option when you speak to the other characters, will it be affected by your the starting point where you select?

Nasir: Oki ah I think they make some reference to Akusa right? Er what then again I forgot whether Akusa was part of the backstory. I just know that it was the colonist's backstory. And stuff like that but I ya I wasn't aware whether Akusa was part of that or it was just a random a standard path that he has across all backstories. So in that sense I didn't really feel as though the the the choice mattered that much. Because like initially even though they say even though they have that initial part where they they mentioned about this about your backstory right? But ya I don't really see that translating to the gameplay, the general gameplay.

Interviewer: Because some of the story source they will say you are like some hero ah? Like sole survivor or?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Just now you choose which one ah?

Nasir: er colonist, the sole survivor ya.

Interviewer: Do you think you will select the story option like you will are more harsher to your subordinates?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Or it doesn't matter?

Nasir: In the sense that...

Interviewer: I mean later when you play play continue ah.

Nasir: Ah as in ya when I try myself I will probably choose the same story ah because ya because I just prefer that kind of character. Er ya as in so far, ya I supposed they they talked about your backstory. But what I mean is that whether at least in terms of interactions ya if if the interactions differ based on the backstory that you choose, then that will be interesting ah. But but if they just make mention of it but it doesn't change the narrative, or doesn't change the overall story, then I I don't think it

matters ah. So I think at this point, ya ya so far, they seem to have talked about your backstory but I'm not sure what kind of differences in response they will give based on your backstory. So ya. That's why I'm not very clear on that part yet because it's just the start.

[22 Apr 2014 3 – 6 pm *Mass Effect* Session 1 [Nasir] 46:35]

Interviewer: So far have you find any gameplay choice ah?

Nasir: Gameplay choices?

Interviewer: Like you can choose. Er.

Nasir: The weapons I supposed. But as in I assume initially you can train the untrained weapons but oki it seems not. If cannot then you just use the weapons.

Interviewer: I think you need to add the points ah?

Nasir: Need to add the points ah? Orh.

Interviewer: er is it ah?

Nasir: Oki. I'll explore that later lah. As in when I play it again. But ya as in er ya you choose what weapons you want. Ya so far that's the only gameplay choice I think? Ya.

Interviewer: And the weapon upgrades ah?

Nasir: Ah ya ya ya. Weapon upgrades. But because as in because at this point.

Interviewer: Is it not very intuitive also?

Nasir: Ya as in it's a bit deep. But I don't know lah as in it will be nice if they could have guided it a bit. But I suppose it just depends on how easy you want the game to be lor as in it will be nice if they guide through everything lah as in initially like give you a tutorial. Like oki do this do this do this but some people like that. Some people just like exploring as they come along lah. Like oki I I I have a problem now then I am forced to explore like the game's settings then you learn. Some people prefer I think it's just a matter of choice ah which some people prefer.

Interviewer: Do you mean erm the tutorial do you mean you like it to be some kind of purely gameplay or a mixture of story and gameplay?

Nasir: mm. Wait ah personally, I prefer a mix between a story and gameplay. As in I am not a fan of like pure tutorial. But I agree that pure tutorials can be helpful lah. I think it really depends on the game. But ideally it will be nice if they can fit in the tutorial within the gameplay within the narrative aspect also ah.

Interviewer: So you mean as you play the game, you will learn while you play?

Nasir: I prefer that rather than learning everything because as as you if you can if you can learn as you go along, you don't have to learn that much at one time mah. It's like progressing.

Interviewer: Ya because I play *Bioshock Infinite*, it's you progress the story than they teach you the gameplay.

Nasir: mm. Ya.

Interviewer: I found that is very good ah.

Nasir: Ya. I found that ya I'm I'm quite ya I found at least because I will just watch *Bioshock Infinite* right? I haven't played it but...

Interviewer: The beginning is the...

Nasir: The possession.

Interviewer: Introduction.

Nasir: Ah.

Interviewer: And then you go the what? Training that one that one is like what? Called what? The different station ah?

Nasir: mm. Ya. Ya. Ya. The the during the fair right? Ya. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: They introduce the character at the same time you learn how to fire.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Shoot ah.

Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya. I think ya *Bioshock Bioshock Infinite* was very good in terms of game design ah.

Interviewer: The integration?

Nasir: Ya. Ya. It was as in oki lah. It's Ken Levine. I think after I read some things about him I think he's he's quite picky about these kinds of things.

Interviewer: Ya. And then he recently also got another Gamespot video.

Nasir: Is it?

Interviewer: He talked about his new idea.

Nasir: Orh the the Infinitely playable something about...

Interviewer: I think I put in the Facebook ah.

Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya. I think I read it. Ya. Oki lah as in...

Interviewer: Like how erm what that one I can't remember what it's called. Like you do some bad thing,

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Some character will like you more but some will hate you more.

Nasir: Ya. As in as in I think it's a good idea. As in the ya as in it's a very nice idea that true lah it will make the game er it will it will differ. I have given it a bit of thought lah actually. I've been discussing it with some friends. Ya but in general it's a good idea lah. The the the challenge is that how are you going to? The the technical

aspects of the game as in how how are you going to solve it as in you having an idea is one thing ah but how you execute it is another lah which apparently it pissed a lot of people off trying to get how *Bioshock Infinite* was as in.

Interviewer: But *Bioshock Infinite* is quite successful.

Nasir: Ya but I I think the downside was they they didn't sell as much. As in even though it was a good game but sales wise I don't know how how well they did on sales.

Interviewer: So *Bioshock* is better lah?

Nasir: *Bioshock*?

Interviewer: *Bioshock* is even more popular than *Bioshock Infinite*.

Nasir: mm. I think it's because...

Interviewer: It's it's quite pioneering but *Bioshock Infinite* is not so pioneering.

Nasir: Ya. Because because *Bioshock* was first mah as in the first games are always more pioneering.

Interviewer: Ya.

### Transcript 5.35

[23 May 2014 *Mass Effect* 10.30 am – 1.30 pm 07:35]

Interviewer: So far the gameplay is it erm oki for you ah? Just now you choose easy mode or normal?

Interviewee: Ah I choose ah normal mode. But ya and I think is oki just that er it's a bit different er from the normal like it's it's a bit different from the normal ah first person shooter you know like you have the WASD right to move forward?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewee: And then you have the R for ah reload and stuff.

Interviewer: But this one not so much reload. It's just...overheating.

Interviewee: Ya because it's like I keep pressing because I have a habit of like after like a every like battle or after a few seconds, I just keep pressing to reload.

Interviewer: So your previous game experience influence your...

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Playing in *Mass Effect*.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: eh but then R is it?

Interviewee: R is grenade.

Interviewer: Another function? Oh.

Interviewee: Ya. As in I had an option. I feel that it is just that one choice. Ya.

Interviewer: It interfere your gameplay.

Interviewee: Yes. But ya I think as in later I think I I had to change the the the grenade to G which is normally used for grenade.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya. Later should be fine.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay is not so intuitive ah?

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: The other skills you have to press spacebar to access.

Interviewee: Ya it's er because they didn't give you a tutorial so it's very hard. It is like you have to like learn like you have to learn on the spot. Like you know, how you really like learn erm how to control your gaming.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Like you know how do you have to control your squad. And then you have to like oh suddenly you turn around oh shit he's dead. This kind of thing that's why I find it's quite funny. So it's oh shit he's dead. So ya.

Interviewer: So the it's not it's not the multitasking that is so er too much ah?

Interviewee: I don't think it's too much. It's just that it's I...

Interviewer: You have to learn new things?

Interviewee: Ya like you have to need time to actually get like you know like how to actually manage your squad and then you know like do the get the mission done and stuff at the same time and then it's like wow what the hell.

Interviewer: Ya but so far still oki for you?

Interviewee: Ya. I think so far it's still oki.

Interviewer: And then so far the gameplay is just the mini game only ah? That one to open the that one is what? Overwrite those switch.

Interviewee: Ya overwrite switch.

Interviewer: Ya. Only that one?

Interviewee: Ya. I think it took me a while to figure that out. Like...

Interviewer: You have to go through the game ah?

Interviewee: Ya because normally is that er I think er in the other games right? Play is somebody like you know because if there's moving like stuff inside circle right? You

need to like you need a a stick right? You have to stick it out and then you make a you make a stick with all that to the and then it is to avoid touch the moving things. So ya it is this.

Interviewer: So you mean it's different lah.

Interviewee: It's different it's different.

Interviewer: Because I never play so I'm not so sure.

Interviewee: Ya. Ah so ya it is different from like normally what is...

Interviewer: Different from *Mass Effect*.

Interviewee: Yes so ya. So that you have to like get used to it ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: mm.

### **Transcript 5.36**

[24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 1:53]

Interviewer: So far, the gameplay of *Mass Effect*, do you think er how do you think about the gameplay ah?

Interviewee: I think it's quite realistic ah. Quite realistic for once for once. And also like it's you have to constantly use your brain ah, cannot just point and click orh. Then usually cos like you go you go rogue you go crazy you shoot.

Interviewer: Ya. You have to think first.

Interviewee: I must think and how I want to strategise how you want to shift your squad mates and everything in order to achieve the best outcome lah.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay er is there any part you like about the gameplay and then is there any part you don't like ah?

Interviewee: I like the part er being able to customise the weapons and everything.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: And also mm basically the storyline you having you being able to impact the storyline lah. Through the questions and everything. Then what I don't like is the basically the it gets too much a lot of information to handle. A lot of questions to read and everything. Then the cutscenes also like because for me I feel like I need to know everything so I keep asking question then the gameplay can get really draggy.

Interviewer: So you mean the story is...

Interviewee: The story is...

Interviewer: Pushing back the gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Ya. Sort of ya ya.



Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Ya the gameplay is quite heavily strategical ah I prefer point and click ah. Ya.

Interviewer: Like those more...

Interviewee: More...

Interviewer: No think to think one ah?

Interviewee: No need to think ya more more ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But I don't mind playing ah. It's oki ah.

Interviewer: mm so in this game you think the story or gameplay is more important or is it both equally important?

Interviewee: I'll say story lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Because the the consequence your choices that I read affects your gameplay. Ya.

Interviewer: So just now we talked already, you say you prefer to play games for the gameplay lah.

Interviewee: Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Definitely and also like been able to do whatever I want lah basically ya.

Interviewer: Whatever you want you mean is the gameplay only ah? Is it?

Interviewee: Gameplay. Story both lah both lah I don't mind ya. This one if you can play like *GTA* is good. Fun that one fun.

Interviewer: *GTA* the story is it more open ended ah?

Interviewee: Story is purely optional. The gameplay is fully immersed. You played before right? Is it?

Interviewer: I never played but I...

Interviewee: It's like a sandbox game but is you are in a world playing this character you can do whatever you want.

Interviewer: Ya. Like you can go and hijack the car.

Interviewee: Ya. Everything ah ya. Ya so it's really about a lot of gameplay but also up to you to do whatever you want lah but of course as you do the story more and more you unlock a lot of the gameplay potential ah. Ya.

Interviewer: So in *GTA* the gameplay is more dominant lah you mean?

Interviewee: er...

Interviewer: The story is like context only.

Interviewee: Ya. But of course you without the storyline, your gameplay is limited lah of course.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya.

Interviewer: So just now you already say the cutscene is it interrupting your gameplay ah?

Interviewee: Interrupting lah it is a bit lah. Ya. Ya. Cos like and also I don't know like the the map also not very clear like not, you keep getting lost. You know the map it just shows you the point where you should go but it doesn't how you should what kind of route you should take to get there.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Like ya lah.

Interviewer Like there is no marker.

Interviewee: There's no there's no marker for the walls in the movements so you are not sure how to get there also. That's how I got lost in the game also for the disarming the bombs part. Ya and overall overall it's oki lah can be quite challenging ah cos like for my parts a bit for my vanguard right? It's ya it's restricted to short range. Very close combat then like one part there was across the bridge right? Then...

Interviewer: Got a lot of enemies very far.

Interviewee: Ya then very far already I after a while, I don't know what to do.

Interviewer: Then you chiong there then...

Interviewee: Chiong there then die ya. I mean throw grenade also like oki lah effects a bit but then very limited lah compared to I choose lah like a sniper or choose a something with longer range capability weapon ah. Then I am forced to use my allies more lah to rely on them lah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Ya cos cannot chiong. Chiong also die ya lah.

Interviewer: Are you the type that like to chiong?

Interviewee: Ya either I like to chiong like go up very close and then...

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: Disarm them or else being stealthy ah. Stealthy taking minimal damage. Ya or those or ya otherwise camping also. Ya if you can chiong also can lah. If you are like brute force just chiong. I don't mind that lah ya.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 5.37**

[24 May 2014 *Mass Effect 3* – 6 pm 11:11]

Interviewer: So far do you find your actions, the gameplay actions is it scripted ah?

Interviewee: Sorry?

Interviewer: Do you find your gameplay actions is it scripted? Like er you like you like to have more control?

Interviewee: er.

Interviewer: Or is it does it feel scripted ah?

Interviewee: I feel ya it's a bit it's a bit contrived leh. Like the point...it's good that it is giving you a lot of control but then like it's so much control that you you after a while I I lost on what to do because it is so many things you I feel that you need to do to enable to get over...

Interviewer: Ya.

Interviewee: Get through the scenario lah like one thing you need to rally your soldiers. It is as if they are like they are not trained at all that means you are ordering them around. I prefer them to be able to do their own stuff. And I do my own stuff.

Interviewer: That means their AI is not so good ah.

Interviewee: It's I don't know maybe it's maybe this gameplay is supposed to give you more autonomy ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Interviewee: But then I prefer like you do your own stuff so then I don't need to worry about my team mates.

Interviewer: So that means...

Interviewee: Go through then my team mates die also quite sian.

Interviewer: That means you want some kind of er what?

Interviewee: I prefer independence ah.

Interviewer: er you want them to do their own things.

Interviewee: Ya. I prefer some of them to do their own things like I prefer a mission like where you are preferably on your own lah. Then you are up based on yourself ah. Then ya lah.

Interviewer: So do you mean that you don't like so much multitasking?

Interviewee: Ya I prefer not to multitask too much.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 5.38**

[26 Mar 2014 2 – 6 pm *Bioshock* and *Mass Effect* 09:02]

Interviewee: er for *Mass Effect*, I would say like er regarding the way you played the game, yes you can play the Rambo style and the like stealth style also. Because erm they allow you to hide behind a cover and stuff like rocks or anything. And then for me I choose to just from a distance snipe my enemies instead of going like full on and hit them erm up against them because erm preserving health and stuff like that because I keep restarting such a feeling there. Er so ya then erm but one thing like I didn't really like about the game was that erm oki from what I experienced so far is the weapons seem to be erm infinite ammo because they don't run out of ammo but they do overheat. So after a while, you have to like stop shooting and just wait for it to cool down. Though so but like I haven't familiarise myself with the whole equipping of special ammo and stuff so I don't really know if it will run out. But ya just from what I experienced so far is that the weapons are quite limitless lah in that sense and also the erm type of combat is also once again limited to just firing weapons ah. Like I would prefer it if maybe like you can use like handheld er maybe like swords or something to for other types of combat lah ya.

### **Transcript 5.39**

[27 Feb 2014 *Mass Effect* 8 – 10.30 pm 1:36]

Interviewer: Oki so what do you think the gameplay consists of?

Interviewee: The gameplay consists of two distinct parts. So that means er first part where you are on the ship. You interact with a lot of people. You get a lot of information about the world the game is. Sometimes you get extra items just by talking to people. You can unlock more weapons. Then er after that, you transit into the FPS ah during the deployment. During the deployment still have a little bit of narrative ah with gameplay. Gameplay with storyline there. You find that when you can rescue people or you can just don't rescue people and run over. Then even after you rescue people, you can decide whether you want to talk to them. And er check out information from them. So if I didn't drag out information from that guy just now, I wouldn't have get more grenades. So it actually helps in the gameplay.

### **Transcript 5.40**

[25 June 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Audio Interview 12.30 – 1.45 pm [Nasir] 13:35]

Interviewer: So far the gameplay quite repetitive?

Nasir: Ya. But so far...

Interviewer: Information from the first session.

Nasir: Ya but so far, I haven't found it sian (Hokkien term meaning boring) yet ah because like I'm still mastering the I have difficulty er aiming with with the gun so ya I need ya so still oki for me because it gives me opportunity to practise that but I haven't found it er ya it is at the moment it seems at though it is the usual kind of way and the AI is kind of predictable. But considering that I always fail the stealth then they always be alerted and that adds to the challenge of the game. Ya.

Interviewer: Is it because you are not so good with the controller yet ah?

Nasir: Ya as in so far...

Interviewer: Your first time?

Nasir: Ya so far, movement is fine. But er ya the aiming because need to need to coordinate the this side and this side. So ya I still need to practise on that part for the aiming.

Interviewer: But the gameplay restriction is less than *Mass Effect* ah? Is it? Because in *Mass Effect* er like you were trying to find like shortcut.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: And then you got bugged out ah?

Nasir: Orh ya ya ya.

Interviewer: In this game, there's no restrict, less restriction also.

Nasir: I guess.

Interviewer: For the gameplay.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Because it's a newer game ah.

Nasir: Ya as in I still I still er I still sometimes forget the function. I was figuring out like for a while, for a while I was figuring out how to on the flashlight. They said R3 then I was like I was looking at the controller where's the R3. I see R1, R2 then I was wondering what's R3. Then after that, I realised is press the joystick you can is press down one. So I oki that's R3. So I think ya I was also figuring out the control so maybe I think about the same ah. Because ya that that was one main issue I was fumbling with. How to on the flashlight. Because they they kind of tell you R3 but they assume you know where's R3. Then a bit after they give you that message like press R3 to on the flashlight, then there's a very dark area. So I was like ya like kind of like forces me. I can't just ignore. I kind of forces me to figure out where's R3.

Interviewer: They never show the visual of the controller also? They only say press R3?

Nasir: No lah. Ya I guess because it's a PS3 they they will assume that you are familiar with the controller.

Interviewer: Because in *Beyond: Two Souls*, they will show the visuals of the controller.

Nasir: Orh. Oki oki ya. If they did if they did show the controller, I didn't notice lah. I just maybe I accidentally like press something and the thing er to the thing went away. So ya so controls wise ya in in that sense, certain shortcut I was still fumbling like like how to use the items in the inventory or figure out how to open the inventory. Ya so ya I think will be about the sane as *Mass Effect*.

Interviewer: But only press one button can open already?

Nasir: Hmm?

Interviewer: Is it only press one button can open already?

Nasir: Ya but I was figuring out like which button.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: And then the gameplay only is the weapon is it only the weapons ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: No special powers?

Nasir: Not yet I guess. Because there's one hearing I think you can upgrade Joel's like powers. Er later on once you get the pills. Think at the moment there's no pills yet but ya I think there's certain powers is like your gun waver less I think more more stability. Then er he can hear he can do the listening thing better which is useful, very useful. Ya. So...

Interviewer: So it's less er supernatural powers. Er... It's more more human like powers ah?

Nasir: Oki ah considering *Mass Effect* I was playing as soldier. They they were quite still normal. Normal powers but ya I guess because because the it's just the nature of the genre I guess. So it's more less less science fiction. So your powers are probably more down to earth.

Interviewer: So the AI of the characters you find it better than *Mass Effect* ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Like your companions they they have smarter AI?

Nasir: I guess ya in a sense. I guess *Mass Effect* the difference you can actually control the position of your AI. Like you can position them there and tell them to go somewhere but this one is like they more of...

Interviewer: More automatic ah?

Nasir: Ya more automatic ah. But at the same time they are useful lah as in like because I was still figuring out how to shoot and I couldn't really shoot right? Then Tess was like killing all of them so like ok lor so ya I guess the the AI is more...

Interviewer: Is it like more helpful to you?

Nasir: er...

Interviewer: Like they can help you clear the enemies?

Nasir: I guess...

Interviewer: Better than those in *Mass Effect* ah.

Nasir: Oki lah *Mass Effect* is...

Interviewer: And then they won't die so easily ah?

Nasir: Oki lah for *Mass Effect* if if they have the I guess because like *Mass Effect* also have that element of gearing up your companions right? So ya their power kind of relies what what you give them. But this one there's no as in you only customise or you can only change what Joel use in the sense stuff like that. You don't really change what your companions do. So in that sense, I guess *Mass Effect* will depend on you gearing up your companions. So that they don't die so easily and they can kill stuff. Because like at the end game of near the end game of *Mass Effect*, I can just select my companions go ahead and they can do a decent amount of job. Ya this one because you don't gear your companions so I guess naturally they are more effective at the early game. And and...

Interviewer: But later on, don't know what?

Nasir: mm I'm guessing it will scale lah. Because if this kind of thing they don't let you er like er what you call that? Er gear up your companion, they will just do what they can lor. I'm guessing the designers would scale it such that it will still primarily rely on you lah especially for boss fights and that kind of thing ya.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay er er do you find it quite oki so far ah?

Nasir: mm other than controls.

Interviewer: er was it quite boring?

Nasir: So far it's good lah yes. As in ya I haven't found it too repetitive yet.

[25 June 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Audio Interview 12.30 – 1.45 pm [Nasir] 24:25]

Nasir: Oki so then for gameplay event er ya it's just er just going through the level as in just fighting through the they give you they give you enemies there and the environment for you to play around with and then just kill the enemies and move on or sneak by them if you can and move on. Ya.

Interviewer: So there's some change in the setting?

Nasir: Change in the setting as in?

Interviewer: er like you move from one place to another.

Nasir: Ya. There is ya.

Interviewer: So far there is, is there any character level up ah?

Nasir: I think not yet. Ya I think there will be later on. Not not level up in the sense that level one, level two but more like improving different aspects of your character. Ya I think later on there will be once you get the pills or some other stuff. Ya.

Interviewer: What what are the aspects you can improve so far?

Nasir: So far er nothing much. Ya nothing much so far. But I think later on like the hearing ability and some other stuff. Ya can't really remember at the moment. But ta at the moment not much.

Interviewer: So er you cannot like *Mass Effect* like add the points ah?

**Nasir: Ya as in I guess you as in it does work that way in the sense that but *Mass Effect* is like the currency is based on the points you earn when you level up. But over here is more like er finding I think you find the pills or drugs or something like that. Ya you that's that's why I was like looking through the environment to see whether can find extra stuff. Because as in it seems though when I watched the gameplay like on YouTube and stuff, like er finding finding items in your environment is quite important in this game. Otherwise, you no weapons then you die. So ya that's why I think in this case, it's less dependent on you levelling up. It's more on you then forcing you to er explore the environment for all these small small hidden items. Not hidden ah but ya.**

Interviewer: Ah so it's mostly the finding the hidden items to level up ah?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: I mean to improve your character.

Nasir: To improve your character. Mm.

Interviewer: There's no there's no what ah? Er like different character levels.

Nasir: mm no.

Interviewer: It's only improving your character.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: It's more integrated into the gameplay.

Nasir: Ya. Ya. Ya. As in ya because it forces you to explore the environment so ya it's more a bit more integrated into the gameplay I guess. But it's just I guess it's just the different way that you improve your character. Because like levelling also you use quite knew that it based on gameplay because you need to kill stuff and complete quests so on to get the experience for you to level at which allows you to improve your character. This one is less more about...the objective here is more about exploring your environment rather than to just going through and killing your enemies. Ya.

Interviewer: So you mean that in *The Last of Us*, when you kill the enemies, they don't give you experience points ah?

Nasir: I don't think so. I'm not sure but I don't think so at the moment.



Interviewer: So the experience points is only from taking the stuff?

Nasir: Ya as in I guess I I think they do drop stuff when they die like so far I've been picking up like bullets from from the soldiers that I have been killing. Er ya but they haven't dropped any like useful useful side stuff yet. More most of them are based on combat stuff. So ya no no drugs or no pills or whatever.

Interviewer: So far the incentive for killing the enemies is only getting the ammunition?

Nasir: Yes.

Interviewer: And to they serve only to obstruct you in the gameplay?

Nasir: mm yes as in because in this game you you can you can do it in a stealth way and like that it's a more tidy er instead of me like going up and the enemies all alerted and it makes the whole thing harder than it has to but ya you could stealth all the way through and ya as in if you are stealth, you probably don't need that much bullets to begin with. Ya so I guess in that sense you have that option on about how you want to clear the level. But other than that, ya not not that much incentive to kill stuff. But I guess killing stuff just makes it a whole lot straightforward. Ya.

Interviewer: So so far only two two main options.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Using stealth and killing them directly.

Nasir: Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Oki.

[25 June 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Audio Interview 12.30 – 1.45 pm [Nasir] 29:25]

Interviewer: But then gameplay choice just now we already mentioned.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Are there any other gameplay choice ah? Can you choose between different weapons? Or?

Nasir: Ya. But I think because ah it's still early in the game. There's not much options yet. I think ya I believe ya this game has more guns but later on you need to like discover the guns and also like think one guy was using like some bat some stick to wack people as in melee weapon so er ya that's when when you kill them you get his weapon and ya so that has er that's another gameplay choice I guess if you want a melee weapon, you go kill him or find a melee weapon. Think you can upgrade those melee weapons as well. And you can upgrade your guns as well.

Interviewer: Is there like a limit to the amount of stuff you can carry?

Nasir: er I think so like you can like a brick, a brick and a bottle you can only carry one of those. They are more like expendable items but then again you usually find them around anyways. So it's not that bad if you don't have one you probably can

find somewhere. Some er find it around somewhere. Erm as for weapons as in for like guns and stuff so far there's only the pistol. So I think there's a limit. But I think you can like upgrade skills or as in upgrade your character such that he can carry more weapons or ya something like that. I think ya. So I guess later on in the game. But at the moment ya it's only it's only pistol. Ah it's only pistol.

Interviewer: So far is it very restricted in the amount of things you can carry?

Nasir: Ya I think I think they design the game to be that way.

Interviewer: Always got no room to carry more stuff?

Nasir: Ya as in I guess they they want at the start because because it's like they want you to I guess this is where the the narrative comes in. Because they they want because it's like twenty years into the infection right? So they want you to feel like the shortage of stuff ah. Shortage of stuff to use. Such that you need to like either do things smartly and to conserve stuff or ya if if then conserve your shots or and then so on. So in that sense, they kind of I think they purposely design it in such a way as to limit the stuff you have now. That's why that's why exploration and all that stuff is important so that you can build up your stock. But ya it's the I think it's it was an intentional thing that they made things more scarce in this game. Ya.

Interviewer: er so are there other gameplay choice ah?

Nasir: mm and and how you clear the level I guess. Like stealth or straightforward.

Interviewer: So far can you take any shortcut? In the game.

Nasir: er if there is I haven't found it.

Interviewer: Any hidden areas ah?

Nasir: er hidden areas not really. I was just looking around. Not not really hidden just more like it's there but it's not it's kind of like like let's say you need to go here the side area is here. Ya it's not really hidden. Ya not really hidden in that sense. It's there but a bit out of the way but...

Interviewer: There's no like hidden areas that can be activated using levers ah?

Nasir: mm not that I discovered yet. Ya.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay you are not facing any difficulties ah?

Nasir: I haven't the...

Interviewer: Besides the controller. er are the enemies are they so far okay?

Nasir: Ya they are quite challenging because because I'm bad at aiming right? So they usually have time to shoot me. Er ya before I can react so and maybe I'm I'm not I guess for *Mass Effect* it was useful that you can like hide behind cover and shoot at the same time. This one you can't, have to do it manually I guess. At least that's how it seems at the moment when I'm playing it. So ya movement is oki. Movement is fine because it's quite straightforward. I'm still figuring out as in the some buttons like like to run, I find it a bit in the awkward place but I guess have to get used to it. Er

also like accessing the items, I was I was fumbling like how do I access the items like er in my inventory. Er ya so ya I guess the the ya movement is fine but the rest I'm still working on it ah. Being the worst being the aiming. Ya.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay is quite intuitive ah?

Nasir: mm er intuitive I guess it seems less intuitive for me cos I'm not used to the PSP er PS3 controller. Ya so but ya they I guess they are trying to make it as intuitive as possible. Like you interact with your environment by pressing triangle. If you want to like jump over stuff, or jump up, you you use X I think X or triangle. Ya the crouch ya I guess the crouch is like using one button so it's oki. As in I need to get used if you run then you have to auto uncrouch yourself. Ya as in when you stop running you won't go back to crouching even though you were previously crouching so that's one minor issue but ya can can get used to it. Erm ya.

Interviewer: Do you find crouching helping you to aim better?

Nasir: er...

Interviewer: I think *Mass Effect* because it helps.

Nasir: Ya as in not that I noticed yet. Because I'm still working on the aiming issue. Er but it does help give you cover so in that sense it's similar to *Mass Effect*. You are more likely to be er under cover if you if you crouch. Ya.

#### **Transcript 5.41**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 08:42]

Interviewer: What do you think the gameplay consist of?

Alice: erm currently the gameplay consists of a lot. Well, one is scavenging. I think like that. That's the mechanic. Erm you have to scavenge a lot to find ammunitions. And to find other materials that you can compile together to make something else like health packs or Molotov cocktails or shivs. Erm so that's one of the scavenging is one of them. Erm another one is well scavenging exploring then. And then another one is I guess it's also fighting. Cos you have to kind of fight your way to different checkpoints. Erm and what part of the gameplay? I think that's about it. Exploring, scavenging, fighting.

Interviewer: The weapon customisation.

Alice: Weapon customisation is I guess see would you argue that it's part of scavenging, exploring though? Gameplay. Cos I think is that that the weapon customisation haven't really come into play yet. I guess you fire faster. But that's not really apart from having what ammunition had had being able to hold more ammunition and firing at a faster rate, erm weapon customisation hasn't really come into play yet. Other customisation, I guess ya the gameplay, a part of the gameplay I guess is then you can customise whatever you want in terms of like supplements or...

Interviewer: But so far not much upgrade yet lah?

Alice: Ya I don't think that upgrades have really come into play yet. I mean there's only very few of these. There's only two weapons. There's a revolver, a pistol. And at times that's but...

Interviewer: The pills also not much ah?

Alice: I haven't been able to use wait I used the pills once. So but not much ya.

Interviewer: And then the quick-time events. Do you see it as a gameplay?

Alice: Say that again.

Interviewer: The quick-time events.

Alice: Like cutscenes?

Interviewer: Ya those that prompt you to press the buttons.

Alice: Oh so the tutorials. Erm...

Interviewer: I mean sometimes they asked you to press some buttons.

Alice: Oh I see. Erm ya I mean...

Interviewer: Do you think that is that is also narrative?

Alice: That is part of the narrative ya because they are...no I don't think they are part of the narrative because it is just prompting you to do an action.

Interviewer: So it's gameplay ah?

Alice: Ya I think it's gameplay too. Ya so those things are gameplay. It's just a reminder that you could do certain things.

Interviewer: Do you find that part is it er not very effective in conveying the interactiveness of the game? Like you are doing it because they are telling you to do.

Alice: You mean oki but the thing is that if you have those prompts right? Especially when you are sneaking up behind somebody and you have those prompts that after you put them in a chokehole erm it says something like to strangle press square, erm I mean that's just a reminder. I don't think that it's like affecting any sort of interactivity. It's just a reminder that you have to do that thing. Because if you don't have it there, then sometimes people forget what they need to press so I thought it was just a very helpful tool.

Interviewer: So you mean that part is not...

Alice: I don't think it's forcing you to...

Interviewer: It's not interactive element.

Alice: Well I mean you are asking about whether it's like forcing a narrative right? Those little cutscenes? And I don't think so. It's just I feel like it's just kind of like a tooltip. It's kind of there to remind you that these are the actions that you need to do in order to complete whatever you are doing. Because you are the one that initiated for example, the chokehold. So in order to finish this action, and not die, erm this is

the following sequence of buttons that you have to press in order to finish it but user has initiated the action so I don't think that those like things really force the narrative into I guess starting or continuing.

Interviewer: So you think that one is more gameplay is it? The quick-time events.

Alice: The quick-time events are more gameplay yes. I think they are just very helpful tooltips for you should continue doing. If you don't want to die.

Interviewer: So you don't see a lot of narrative in those events. It's more it's more of a gameplay event?

Alice: I don't see. The only that I really seen as forcing the narrative was in the beginning when they first discovered the spores in the tunnel and Joel has picked up the gun and there's a guy that's crushed under the metal cabinet and he says press L1 and then R1 to shoot. That is the only time when I see the tooltip actually force an action. I guess you could have technically walked away without shooting the guy that was stuck under the metal cabinet. But by putting you know press L1 and R1 to shoot, you are kind of potentially forcing that decision. The other decision being that you could simply walked away without shooting anybody. But the rest of them like being put people on chokeholds, I think more gameplay than narrative.

Interviewer: Oki.

Alice: Ya.

Interviewer: So erm this is the gameplay so far?

Alice: mm hmm.

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 37:43]

Interviewer: And then the gameplay choice so far it's only the weapon customisation?

Alice: Gameplay choices are weapon customisation, the supplements and also crafting. What you choose to use your materials to craft. Whether you want to choose it to craft a med kit or whether you want to craft like a Molotov cocktail. Whether you want to you can craft one all. That's gameplay choices. Choosing to kill an Infected, choosing not to kill an Infected, that's also a gameplay choice.

Interviewer: erm when you make the choice is it depending on the context, then you you will know which choice to choose?

Alice: Ya it definitely depends on the context so I mean in terms of if you talking about Infected, if I can leave them, I will leave them but if I know that they will come back to haunt you later on, I will more likely kill them. But like you know when they were running away after curfew started, er and they were running away from the military, it's like easier to just hide and continue and not kill everybody. Even though there's definitely a choice to kill everybody. Erm and then proceed. So ya so I think that...

Interviewer: But so far erm I think you are, are you using more stealth based choices ah?

Alice: I definitely am using more stealth based choices. If I can help it I rather use more stealth based choices rather than have a full all out brawl. Erm...

Interviewer: Because stealth is more difficult ah?

Alice: That's more difficult so yes that's why I am definitely going with the easier route which is the stealth route. But sometimes it doesn't really work out so well so er then it turns out into all out brawl.

Interviewer: You mean the stealth route, stealth route is it bypassing the enemies or is it stealth kills ah?

Alice: Stealth kills.

Interviewer: Oki.

### Transcript 5.42

[PS3 25 June 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Audio Interview 12.30 – 1.45 pm [Nasir] 56:15]

Interviewer: So you mean the *Mass Effect* narrative is a bigger part for you, than the gameplay.

Nasir: I guess for most games I played I usually like I'm usually more interested in narrative kinds of games than compared to gameplay kinds of games. I I don't play I don't play *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield*. As in it's a fun game to play at LAN shops and that kind of thing. But I wouldn't kind of like buy that kind of game. Because I'm more interested in story generally speaking.

Interviewer: So that's why you find *Mass Effect* the gameplay is restricting your narrative ah? Is it?

Nasir: er ya.

Interviewer: Because you want the narrative to be more giving more freedom.

Nasir: As in as in I played games for the narrative as in more for the narrative than the gameplay.

Interviewer: And then and then the gameplay is asking you to level up first.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Before you can select the option to build up a consistent character ah.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: So in some sense, the gameplay is restricting your narrative.

Nasir: Ya it is it is. As in at the start lah. But once I figured as in once I realised that oki I need my charm to be er this much to be able to do the options I want to do for this character, so once...it wasn't a...it's restrictive ah but it wasn't a hard restriction to overcome. But but ya it was restrictive.

Interviewer: But the narrative is not restricting the gameplay in *Mass Effect*?

Nasir: er I think some points it does. Like I think there's one side mission where you think there might be the last side mission I did in the gameplay. The one about the base about the **Father Kyle** and his biotic followers thing. Ya I guess if if if I didn't invest in the the blue thing, I think as in I wouldn't know because I didn't go down that path. But I'm guessing that you would somehow like be forced or eventually kill him. Which would cause his followers to attack you. So forcing you to like clear that level. But because I either because I invest in Charm or I had the option to at least talk to talk to the person, so it trigger the option where I can just walk in and find Kyle instead of having to fight through the place. So in that sense, narrative does affect gameplay as well. At least, but that's a side mission, er if you are talking about main storyline, I guess the last part where Saren where you are confronting Saren just before the final final boss battle, the the part where he's still Saren, he's still er what you called him? Er Tauren ya. Where he was still a Tauren er before he became the cyborg thing. Ya so because I had the Charm option so I didn't have as in he decided to commit suicide instead of me having to fight him. I'm guessing if I didn't invest in Charm, I would have to fight him. So in that sense, narrative does influence gameplay.

Interviewer: But in that sense, narrative is helping the gameplay.

Nasir: Ya as in make it easier I guess. As in if you enjoy fighting, then don't choose that option you can fight him lor but...

Interviewer: So do you mean that narrative is helping the gameplay but gameplay is restricting the narrative? In *Mass Effect*.

Nasir: er I guess it's only because I chose the I chose the Charm option. As in playing the good Shepherd. The the Paragon Shepherd. I'm not sure if I'm not sure if Renegade would have caused me to ya I'm not sure exactly how Renegade works at the moment. It seems as though it ya I haven't explored Renegade. I'm guessing...

Interviewer: Actually there's some questions I want to ask you for the *Mass Effect* interview.

Nasir: Orh oki oki oki. Ya but oki lah at least for for now, I'm not sure whether Renegade changes the outcome. But or forces you to fight Saren. But at least from from the way I play in Paragon, it it makes your game easier ah definitely. You don't have to you don't you can avoid fights most of the time.

[18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm [Nasir] 18:42]

Interviewer: In the last interview, you say that playing as a good Shepherd got some benefits ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: You er say that the benefits are helping the narrative and you get to choose options where...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: The characters don't die ah.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Do you mean that the characters are your own squad mates or the other enemies?

Nasir: I think both the squad mates and other people? Because as in like like for example, the one on **Feros** is it? The Exogeni researcher when he was panicking. I think my playthrough I couldn't access so he died right? I'm not sure as in I was under the impression that only Paragon would save him. I was thinking that Renegade would also kill him but I don't does Renegade save him also?

Interviewer: The Exogeni is which you are referring?

Nasir: The one in the secret base. The one where the one where they were hiding out from like they were halfway between the colony and the Exogeni building.

Interviewer: Can you talk more? I cannot remember.

Nasir: The one where because inside the Exogeni building you will find the daughter right? Then later you will travel, when you were travelling back to the colony then the daughter will realise that that's the mum in the secret base then you go there then the basically they were the Exogeni researchers who escaped from the building. Then there was one guy who wanted to report because the what? The Thorian was released or something? Or something about the Thorian or the Geth he wanted to so that they destroyed the whole planet that sort of thing so that they ya so they wanted to do that then I think Shepherd if the Paragon one was to convince him to as in make it a situation where he would see a benefit to it. Either that or you kill lah. Ya so in that sense I think being able to be the good Shepherd will save the guy I'm not sure because I didn't try what a Renegade Shepherd would er what what the response would be like.

Interviewer: Your second play through also not playing Renegade?

Nasir: No ya Paragon also.

Interviewer: erm I still cannot remember which is the guy. Er I think can we see the video?

Nasir: Ya. Can.

Interviewer: Around which?

Nasir: Try 50. 50 ya. Oki some more it's probably 60. K 65. Wait wait 67. Er ya ya here. Mm somewhere. Mm ya this part.

Interviewer: Ah the wait ah. This one? Ethan Jeong.

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: So that means wait ah.

Nasir: Cos if if on my second play through, I managed to hit the Paragon option right? So erm I managed to save him.

Interviewer: So you are saying these two options ah?



Nasir: Ya as in I was able to hit the one about the big picture. Because all the other three will kill him ah.

Interviewer: So only this option will save?

Nasir: I'm not sure whether I think Renegade will kill him also?

Interviewer: er.

Nasir: As in it seems as though it will kill him. Based on the response there.

Interviewer: I need to go and play to know.

Nasir: Ah ya. But I'm assuming here that only Paragon will save him ah. As in based on just literal interpretation of the answer.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya so I try not to want people to die ah. So ya.

Interviewer: er when you don't want people to die is it because you want to know their story better or is it to help you in the gameplay better?

Nasir: Story better because as in I was thinking that if I if I somehow need him in the future, as in might find out more about him in that sort of thing. So it was more I guess and ya I guess is to maybe find out more about the story and also it just feels better not not for the characters to die I guess because in this case, there's no gameplay benefit for him to die.

### Transcript 5.43

[Last Interview 18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 2 43:06]

Interviewer: This one is it did you talk about this?

Nasir: Oh erm...

Interviewer: There's another part got 2 options greyed out ah? I think what is it ah? I think that one is the **C-Sec** officer.

Nasir: Oh oki.

Interviewer: Ya this one. This part you also your character level still haven't enough.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: This one ah?

Nasir: Oh ya.

Interviewer: So this part you when you see that the option is greyed out...

Nasir: Ya as in...

Interviewer: Do you do you feel that it's very restrictive ah?

Nasir: Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: Because you haven't played a lot then they restrict you so fast.

Nasir: Ya. So I did feel it a bit restrictive. At this point in time.

Interviewer: Is it er can you do anything to make it open up ah at that time?

Nasir: I am not sure what was my character level at this point in time. So as in the the...

Interviewer: But at that time, you already added all the Intimidate?

Nasir: I added already is it?

Interviewer: The Charm points is it?

Nasir: Ya as in I guess I guess there was nothing I could do unless I could level up somehow. But I don't think I could level up at this point in time.

Interviewer: I don't know is it because of your character level or your charm points not enough.

Nasir: Ya this one also I'm not sure. I might have forgotten to invest in Charm as in more Charm because I thought three was enough. Or maybe Charm wasn't the the bar hasn't expand fully because my level was too low maybe.

Interviewer: Actually the how does this system work ah? Is it the character level is the the main the main thing that is restricting the Charm level ah is it?

Nasir: Ya because because character as you level you gain the points.

Interviewer: So if your character level not enough, high enough, you cannot add points ah?

Nasir: You don't have enough points. Ya. And also like your character high level, your character level not high enough, the box, the bar won't expand.

Interviewer: So the main thing is the character level.

Nasir: Ya. I would think so.

Interviewer: So in the beginning they restrict you is not really fair lah.

Nasir: As in ya it feels a bit irritating lah.

Interviewer: mm.

#### **Transcript 5.44**

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 1:19:47]

Interviewer: And then after that er you can choose to save Shawn or Duck. And then you see no difference in the story?

Henry: Ah huh?

Interviewer: And then do you find that your choice is meaningful ah? Because you cannot choose. You cannot save any of them.

Henry: erm.

Interviewer: You can only...

Henry: Huh you mean I cannot save.

Interviewer: You can only save one of them.

Henry: Ya I can only save er Duck.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: er as in after that, I realised oh ya I only can save Duck then er the only thing that matters at that point was as in the only difference that made was the relationship with Kenny what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Cos you choose whether to save Duck instead of er Shawn. Or Shawn instead of Duck. Then but other than that, doesn't really make a difference. As in you can feel that as in when I originally saved Duck right, then Hershel chased as in he chased everybody out but you can tell that he's directing his anger at everybody including me.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: But when I saved Shawn, then he was directing his anger...

Interviewer: At Kenny ah?

Henry: At Kenny.

Interviewer: So there's some change in the story.

Henry: There's some change lah ah but as in gameplay no change right? Cos in the end you cannot.

Interviewer: Ya in the end, will get chased out of the farm.

Henry: Ya. Will get chased out of the farm. Just that the anger directed at you will not only.

Interviewer: Oki. So the meaningful part is that the story will change a little bit ah?

Henry: Ya. Will change a little bit.

Interviewer: Oki.

### **Transcript 5.45**

[18 Mar 2015 *Beyond: Two Souls* Final Interview [Matt] 39:33]

Interviewer: This one is what?

Matt: mm mean you can possess the Chinese general?

Interviewer: Ya this this is the other story pathway.

Matt: I didn't know you could do that.

Interviewer: Because my friend he choose this other option.

Matt: Oh I didn't know you could possess the Chinese general. Okay.

Interviewer: erm.

Matt: I didn't know you could be caught in different ways for example.

Interviewer: Can I take a look ah?

Matt: hmm?

Interviewer: Can I take a look at this part?

Matt: Sure sure sure.

Interviewer: I cannot remember.

Matt: This is one of those things where you replay just to see the difference. See what happens differently. I didn't know you could possess the Chinese general.

Interviewer: So erm what's the question?

Matt: hmm?

Interviewer: er the narra- so the narrative from Ryan do you see the dialogue from Ryan is a narrative ah?

Matt: Ya.

Interviewer: So for you is not motivating you in the gameplay?

Matt: eh...

Interviewer: I mean...

Matt: It's like it's like noise it's like noise you know? It doesn't really. It's like you are not sure what to do anyway. The hint...

Interviewer: The hint is too subtle.

Matt: Ya.

Interviewer: So it doesn't tell you that there's different gameplay?

Matt: It doesn't tell you that you could possess the general.

Interviewer: There's different gameplay action?

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: But using Aiden that part is it a gameplay ah? For the possession of...

Matt: er that was actually quite interesting er...

Interviewer: Do you want to take a look? Or?

Matt: I remember I remember the second one.

Interviewer: I mean the second pathway. You got watch it?

Matt: No I didn't watch the second pathway. Did your friend play it?

Interviewer: Do you want to watch it?

Matt: Oki oki nice I want to see what happens.

Interviewer: I think you are not going to replay the game?

Matt: No lah. Won't play. No time lah nowadays. Work work work.

Interviewer: er which is it?

Matt: Check enough.

Interviewer: er mm which file is it?

Matt: Try 16 ah 15 15.

Interviewer: I think 16 is it?

Matt: Oki we try lah. Is that the same? Ya there we go. Go a bit further.

Interviewer: er...

Matt: Further like...

Interviewer: Do you want to go back again? Do you want to go back?

Matt: No it's oki oki oki.

Interviewer: So this door is some kind of marker.

Matt: mm. Then piao.

Interviewer: Is the way you are caught lah.

Matt: Ya. You get caught in the front or you get caught in the back haha.

Interviewer: Later on only.

Matt: Exactly, it's like you know, I cleared.

Interviewer: Is it not meaningful for you?

Matt: It's just a means lah. The the means to an end. The same ending you know? Ya lah not very meaningful lah. At the end of it, we still reaching the same end. Ya.

#### **Transcript 5.46**

[Session 1 1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm [Mary] 54:15]

Interviewer: So far do you find the narrative and gameplay influence each other?

Mary: Very...

Interviewer: Like does the narrative choice you make change the gameplay?

Mary: Nah not really. Hehe honestly, no. Not really.

Interviewer: So this part if you choose to go out in the dark, you also think the gameplay will be the same ah?

Mary: I actually never choose it so I mean I never seen anyone choose it so I have no idea what the outcome would be. Do you know?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mary: They will travel at night.

Interviewer: Yes.

Mary: Will they meet Shawn? Another guy?

Interviewer: If I tell you, it will be a spoiler.

Mary: Is it? Then I better not ask you then hehe. But oh because I never knew whether this part has a you know er?

Interviewer: Something will happen to Chet.

Mary: Oh damn. I don't want but nothing happened to him when he travelled in the day so...

Interviewer: So you think the story choice will not influence the gameplay ah?

Mary: erm maybe a bit because like if your characters some of the characters die then they won't appear in the future parts where the gameplay require them in that sense. But er it doesn't feel that impactful when you are playing it lah to be honest unless you played it multiple times lah then you realised there's a difference lah. But at the first run, don't really feel much difference I suppose.

### **Transcript 5.47**

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 22:51]

Interviewer: So far how do you find the gameplay?

Walter: er the gameplay is a bit how do you say? Like I said, it's a bit frustrating. Because it has a very peculiar control scheme. Er it's very I think at this point, I might argue that it's a little unforgiving especially the the like I said I think because your field of vision is so small, it's difficult to, like whenever I play any stealth based games, I often like to keep track of all the enemies. And usually like I usually on pc if you move your mouse around, you can kind of keep track of everything but in this one, it's just very difficult because the field of vision is so small and er it's very it's easy to school things up. That kind of thing but so so I don't know, I think I might be better the next round but I if I think the story is interesting enough that I would probably push on regardless of whether I get better at the game or I might devote to playing this game like combat I mean very combat heavy.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: So far the gameplay is quite common like other games ah?

Walter: It's got a lot of tools given to you at your disposal. And I can see the way they sort of laid out the areana like things as you went into an area and like there's a bunch of enemies around and you either stealth or shoot them or whatever. And then even if you are shooting them you can do flanking manoeuvres and also things to get around things which is I mean the AI holds up quite well but it's a bit difficult I guess like you know a few of the of the of the scenes where they are going like oki you go into stealth, oki you get this guy, you get this guy. It wasn't very very clear what you were supposed to do. What? And the I think it was supposed to be very guided but at the same time, I think I messed up a few of them. So they were going like distract them but then it's like...

Interviewer: It just up to yourself ah?

Walter: It's I think the problem here is that it's supposed to be very you know it's supposed to be very like erm emergent, it's supposed to be a lot of...

Interviewer: Emergent gameplay.

Walter: Emerging gameplay. But the problem is that they wanted to guide you a little by giving you things but the guides are kind of vague and it will still very easy...like I think in that one that last scene where I was escaping from the corpse. The reason why the corpse saw was because I think there was a bug where I moved into a cover and Tess moved out and then that was it. That kind of thing. So er the AI is also a bit I mean it's great but I think...

Interviewer: Sometimes a bit buggy ah.

Walter: I think in this respect, I think because maybe the game as the game when you go into the game proper, you only play with Ellie. So it's designed for you to work with that dynamic and therefore Tess is kind of like the they are not very sure what to do with her so that's why that happened.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: So we'll see.

Interviewer: Anything you like about the gameplay so far?

Walter: er...

Interviewer: I think you just like the different choices given to you. The stealth based choices and then the brute force is it?

Walter: It's alright. It's very...but I think in a game like this, it's the kind of game where like er it's trying to make you think of the gameplay as very like erm a means to an end. It's not really, you don't become this like unstoppable killing machine at the end of the day. You are just like barely surviving each one that we just okay.

Interviewer: And then the gameplay is also do you find it quite realistic in line with the story?

Walter: er...

Interviewer: So far...

Walter: For one thing, I took like six shots then die so...

Interviewer: So it's more realistic than other games?

Walter: No it's not realistic.

Interviewer: Not realistic?

Walter: I mean er it's not I mean you can you still take six shots and you die. Ya it's still kind of a lot er...

Interviewer: And then I was talking with the other participants about the narrative theme of the game is you have very scarce resources in the game.

Walter: Ya.

Interviewer: This also reflected in the gameplay mechanics. Do you find that anything to talk about this?

Walter: er...

Interviewer: Like the gameplay, the weapons.

Walter: Yes, I would I would say yes you have scarce resources, but your enemies don't seem to have that. They seem to have unlimited ammunition.

Interviewer: So there's some kind of disjunction you see.

Walter: Yes. Yes. That's one aspect and the in terms of ammunition, I don't know whether because I am playing on normal. But I mean I played Resident Evil. Resident Evil games are famous for just giving you barely enough ammunition. And like you know, in Resident Evil, if you miss a shot, it's such a big deal. Here it's like oki you missed a shot but you still have like ten rounds ya so it's not nearly as bad but I think it's oki but I just think oki there were also other scenes like you know, you went into this area, you supposed to er kill all the guys or get past them and whatnot. And then you moved to the next area but if a gunfight happens there, you moved to the next area which is literally one door away and nobody acts as though they heard anything which is like...

Interviewer: It's very immersion breaking also?

Walter: Ya that one the whole areana aspect oki but a lot of games suffer this. But I mean a lot of games tend to have a large space between spaces so you can kind of hide it. But here it's kind of like you literally like open and shut the door then poop, you are in the next area.

Interviewer: It's very separated ah? The different areas.



Walter: mm ya. Like even there was one scene that earlier on when we were going to Robert's compound, I was shooting a bunch of these guys outside the warehouse, I go in, literally go up the stairs and people go like where did you come from? Like I was shooting right out there, like not like what? Fifty metres from where you were, you couldn't hear me? Ya and people were yelling at the top of lungs and everything.

Interviewer: Ya the AI is really very separated.

Walter: Ya and another thing for a game which has stealth, when you stealthed kill people, you can't move which is a bit annoying.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: And then people find that oh then everybody's on alert already and then you have to kind of faster finish so ya that was slightly annoying. So I feel like the stealth aspect is a bit maybe half baked? Like it's not quite there. But I don't know. Because I mean like oki it's supposed to be realistic but if it's realistic why you move bodies that kind of thing.

Interviewer: mm. But when the enemies they see the dead people, they will know ah?

Walter: Ya. Ya. Ya. Like there was one scene I shived that guy then went to go and stop the other guy then one guy saw then all of them were alerted after that.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: It's realistic but the problem is that er because I shived that guy, I couldn't move his body which is kind of very difficult if you are doing a stealth a stealth run. That means you I supposed that means that when you do a stealth run you need to be very quick so you don't let enemies see each other but it's just a bit annoying I guess.

Interviewer: Ya. So you mean that if you can move the body, it will be better?

Walter: Ya. Oh ya another thing is the way your movement works especially when you are er you are moving between cover. It's kind of er I don't know it's a bit clunky, the way you navigate. It is very easy to bump into things or kind of not go the way you are going cos I think er I mean the camera view is very similar to *Gears of War* which controls like a first person shooter not like a like third person shooters control slightly differently.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: In the sense that you know erm you can I think in a third person shooter you you sort of move relative to the camera whereas er with...

Interviewer: First person is moving together with the camera?

Walter: Yes the camera moves with you that kind of thing. So like there's a bit of a looseness and this one kind of goes around the middle which makes it a bit difficult to adjust the movement for a little bit. So I was bumping if you see I was bumping into things, I wasn't really moving. Sometimes I would out of the cover that kind of stuff. And also another annoying part. That last scene when we were running away from the cops, everybody was able to do the crouch. They were crouching but they were run but they were kind of running along and I wasn't able to do that. It was either I would

crouch and walk really slowly or I had to run at full height. That was a very annoying kind of feature. It was going like I mean I tried to run and hold down the crouch button but it didn't end up running.

Interviewer: They means you cannot crouch and run?

Walter: Ya you either run or you slowly crawl across ya.

Interviewer: er just now you talked about *Resident Evil*.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: Do you think that this game is like *Resident Evil* in the sense that the survival theme is very strong ah?

Walter: er not really. I think *Resident Evil* is clunky but manageable. It's not the clunky that is a kind of clunky that you can manage if given enough time. You know you are actually proficient but they just give you very slightly cumbersome controls like I'm using *Resident Evil 4* as an example, you know. The game, *Resident Evil 4* is to me is essentially the original game just with the camera behind your back. It has the exact same controls. It's not even different which is fine. I actually appreciate that it's actually a very purist game if you look at it. But at the same time, erm it does make up the until a bit in the sense that you can only see like what? Forty degrees to an angle so if someone's coming right behind you, you can't even see where he's going. So it's actually quite er interesting but that's sort of like that's because *Resident Evil* is very combat heavy. Like you stand up, you open, you just have to be aware of your surroundings but this one is slightly different. This one is sort of like erm you just er you just sort of like clutch your way through combat. Like and like and I think that's why they add that whole quick turn around button.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: Which is very unusual not to say unusual for a console game but it was interesting that they thought you had to teach you how to use that because like there was a one scene where I was there was a cop shooting from behind for me to turn was like I was like turning really slow motion that kind of thing?

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: Ah so that was that so compared to *Resident Evil*, I would say *Resident Evil* is more combat oriented. I think if you look at the later games, the horror aspect is very very minimal. The survival aspect also almost non-existent if you get good enough with the game. But with this one I think like even there were few times where I were my crosshair was on the guy and I shot and I still miss that kind of thing so it was supposed to be like more realistic. Mm.

Interviewer: So you find this game more realistic ah?

Walter: Than *Resident Evil* oh definitely. I mean *Resident Evil* the story itself is all kinds of bizarre.

Interviewer: It's very science fiction.

Walter: Ya. Very science fiction. So er it's like different things but er ya I would say this is more realistic. Not that that's a disservice to *Resident Evil*. It's just different or they insist on different approaches.

Interviewer: Any other reason why you find it more realistic ah?

Walter: Well *Resident Evil* also has everything from really bad voice acting to really over the top bad guys and acting even. And the scripts are and the stories are really bizarre and make no sense really. So erm ya there's so many I mean I look at *Resident Evil* as a very like er kish B movie horror kind of thing. It's not meant to be realistic but it's supposed to do certain things and it does that well and this is this is something else so...I don't I mean I don't really compare the two I won't compare the two, I mean they just the only thing they have is they only have zombies.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: And then the gameplay like you can carry limited weapons do you also find it also quite realistic?

Walter: erm.

Interviewer: I think so far not much of this ah?

Walter: Actually, I find that a bit unrealistic because you have the backpack you could only carry one bottle like...you have a bottle you cannot cannot put more than one into your backpack. That one is kind of odd.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: Ya so that was a bit peculiar but I can see why that would be realistic gameplay wise. They didn't even try to state that you know oh you were cos you were holding it in one hand. Cos you can switch weapons after that. So it's kind of ya.

Interviewer: And then the quick-time events do you find it oki so far?

Walter: er it's not too difficult I guess. But er ya it's alright. Not too bad. It's er not the worst kind of quick-time. I mean recently, I've been playing er *Middle Earth: Shadow of Mordor* and the quick-time events that are horrendous. So this is a lot better than that.

Interviewer: And then so far, not much upgrading of the character?

Walter: er no. I've picked up equipment, stuff that I can use to upgrade but so far none so but haven't encounter it yet so no comments on that yet.

Interviewer: er...

Walter: I'm quite surprised I haven't died though.

Interviewer: I think you are quite good ah. You have played a lot of games already.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: Other games.

Walter: Pretty much.

Interviewer: I saw in your profile. So nothing much nothing else about the gameplay?

Walter: erm so far, I don't...

Interviewer: And then the rest is just some puzzle solving.

Walter: Because I still feel like I am still in the tutorial phase of the game. I haven't actually hit the meat of the game yet but er I don't know. I hope it is not one of those games where like by the time you finished the tutorial, there's only like like you are three quarters through the game and then you are done with it already and you play normally which is frustrating as well but so far I think it's kind of oki. I'm still looking at it like a slow burn kind of thing so er not too bad so a lot of these minor grabs are still minor grabs. Cos I think it's probably going to get better later on.

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 48:00]

Interviewer: When the characters are giving you story information, when you are moving from one point to another. Do you see that they are separated? The gameplay and narrative.

Walter: Ya because you are not, to me the gameplay is basically when you engage with enemies. So if you are just walking down a hallway and not doing anything, you are just walking down the hallway and not doing anything. You are just like I said, you are just a guy pushing a cart forward where the story is taking place. You are not actively participating in it.

Interviewer: Oki.

Walter: mm. That's the way I look at it.

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 52:50]

Interviewer: So mostly is the gameplay choice.

Walter: Yes the gameplay choice.

Interviewer: Can you give any examples of gameplay choices?

Walter: Well erm the decision to either er fight your enemies or use stealth to get past them, erm ya ya they in-game in terms of gameplay the way you can approach each situation is actually quite varied. You can either go stealth, you can choose the order in which you take out your enemies. You can even in combat, the way you approach the combat is a lot of different ways you can do it. You can flank, you can hide and just try to shoot them and stuff like that. So ya I would say there's a lot of choices in terms of gameplay which it was something I didn't quite expect but it's there.

Interviewer: mm. When you make a gameplay choice, was it easy for you?

Walter: er ya for me basically whenever...

Interviewer: You just feel like you want to do this then you go and do it.

Walter: Ya pretty much.

Interviewer: It is very intuitive.

Walter: Ya like I wouldn't say it's intuitive. This is just my own preference like like I mentioned before. Like er when I play erm any game that usually gives me an option to either be combat heavy or stealth, I always will always try to do stealth. But whenever I am on my first playthrough, I tend to be like I'll do stealth until something bad happens then I'll just go with whatever is going on. So it's like like playing with *Deus Ex* or *Human Revolution*. Playing like er *Dishonoured*. *Playing Shadow of Mordor*. I usually start with stealth and then see how far that can take me.

Interviewer: Ya if you fail, then you use brute force.

Walter: Ya. But if I'm doing like a, if I restart the game and I want to do a stealth run that kind of thing, then I'll be very particular. I'll be like if I do stealth and then if I get spotted and mainly reload and things like that.

Interviewer: Ya. Ya. Ya.

[29 Jan 2015 1 – 4 pm *The Last of Us* Session 1 [Walter] 1:05:58]

Walter: And gameplay choice basically is that when you are presented with a certain situation, where you interact and you ah can choose to interact with it in different ways like you know adventure games have very often very little limited er gameplay choice. You basically try to find to best the puzzle, you try to click through to see.

Interviewer: Point and click?

Walter: Ya just point and click adventure games. But a lot of games like even like FPS games have a lot of gameplay choice. What guns do you use? Which direction do you run? What cover to use that kind of thing. So gameplay choice, is but I think for some people, gameplay choice is like you know, being able to choose whether you want to use this gun only or whether you want to go stealth. It's more of like the overall strategy that you choose. But to me, I think like as long as you can make decisions that impact the way it plays, I think that can be considered gameplay choice.

Interviewer: Do you sometimes sees that the gameplay choice is also part of the narrative choice ah?

Walter: er ya.

Interviewer: Sometimes they are together.

Walter: Ya. Ya. I think I can believe that that is together like I think er *Dishonoured* is a very good example of that.

Interviewer: mm.

Walter: er because it ties in with the amount of people that you kill. To and the way you kill certain people will effect the erm world in fact, the world like you kill too many people, you leave too many bodies around, the wreck plane becomes stronger and therefore the whole world becomes a bit more messed up.

Interviewer: That means the gameplay action changes the story.

Walter: Yes. That one ya so the end result is going to be very different depending on how you play the game.

Interviewer: But do you think that this also applies to *The Walking Dead*? Like...

Walter: Oh ya. It definitely...

Interviewer: The gameplay actions...

Walter: Ya. Ya. Ya. *Walking Dead* is I think *The Walking Dead* is a textbook example of literally your narrative your gameplay choices are only narrative choices. There is literally no nothing else that you can do.

Interviewer: So you mean that your...

Walter: Every gameplay choice you make is a narrative choice.

Interviewer: So most of them are together.

Walter: Ya. I supposed you could say that the walking around and solving the puzzle bits they are very static puzzle bits are quite gameplay but I mean in terms of the narrative choices, they are literally gameplay choices. Cos it I mean you choose and and it affects a lot of different things. Because I think when you approach a game like *The Walking Dead*, the story, the gameplay is the story. Because that's what you are doing. You are crafting the story for yourself. So that's an entire game in itself. So that's the way I look at it basically.

Interviewer: Ya.

Walter: mm.

Interviewer: But then there's one participant who says that he can only see gameplay choices in *The Walking Dead* like there's no narrative choice.

Walter: I guess.

Interviewer: I don't know...

Walter: I think that's a very cynical view of what *The Walking Dead* is. As in...

Interviewer: I think it's because he sees that the story is quite linear.

Walter: I think it's because he sees that the narrative choices are very very obviously tied to gameplay choices. And that's why he doesn't want to believe that it's a narrative choice.

Interviewer: Ya because he says that as long as he can change something, it's a gameplay choice already.

Walter: Ya I agree with that.

Interviewer: That's why...

Walter: But I don't know why he would say it's not a narrative choice. Mm.

Interviewer: mm. So in *Walking Dead*, the it's very together?

Walter: Ya.

### Transcript 5.48

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 28:22]

Interviewer: So far how you find the gameplay?

Matt: Gameplay. Er gameplay gameplay gameplay. I feel like I feel gameplay wise is very it's the same thing over and over again. Er it's not very it's not very er there's no challenge. Right? So obvious. So whoever is playing this is clearly not is will not clear will clearly be dissatisfied if he is looking for a challenge. Er if that's the case, one other thing the game was trying to do was make it er present itself as being derivative right? Derivative having variety interesting you can like like like Aiden can possess people like for example. Right? Oki. Your Aiden's interesting enough. You know but er er then it is like it only happens once. Er then what else you got what else you got? You have er like you can you can many things are out of your control. So gameplay wise is not great it's not great at all. It's not er you don't feel like you are agent. You don't feel like you are you are capable agent of of your own actions. You don't feel like you are really in control of your actions. You feel like you are...

Interviewer: You are just driving the story forward.

Matt: Ya you are just driving story forward.

Interviewer: er wait ah. So in this game, the gameplay is just some interaction with the environment.

Matt: The environment and then and there's not much after that. It's you just er you just fiddle with this, fiddle with that and then you just drive story forward and that's all.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Ya really that's all. You are still trying to...it's only interesting from a drama perspective. From a story, it's from a pure story perspective, it's interesting because there are many things you don't you don't understand about er about the whole about all the characters in general. Like what are their what are their angles on this. You if you are that kind of person, you like that kind of thinking, then this game will interest you. Otherwise, it will be it will be like you know, you you got the general gist of the story, that's good enough. Ya.

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 45:04]

Interviewer: er in *Beyond: Two Souls*, do you consider it as a like a prolonged cutscene or?

Matt: Prolonged cutscene.

Interviewer: erm how do you see it ah? Er do you see like the cutscene is there like a cutscene and then gameplay or is it you see everything is a cutscene?

Matt: Hahaha er it feels like a whole list of interactive cutscenes. It's er oki lah. You can tell that there are some sections where you are definitely in control of your character. You see you see.

Interviewer: But it's still like a cutscene lah.

Matt: It still feels like a cutscene. So er oki oki oki give you an example. Oki you control you control little Jodie eh Jodie right? Jodie and and you walk around right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: But er...

Interviewer: You still cannot really interact with the other characters.

Matt: Ya there's one one thing that I feel differentiates er er er like gameplay mode versus er story mode, you know? Cutscene er is that er gameplay mode you tend to be able er oki just imagine like er *Zelda*, you know? You walk around you go in front of someone, you press X. And then you see texts come out from the fellow right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: You see you see him talking to you.

Interviewer: But *Beyond: Two Souls* don't have ah?

Matt: No no.

Interviewer: It doesn't give you.

Matt: They don't have at all I mean you have those little white dots where you can interact with.

Interviewer: It doesn't give you the options.

Matt: I mean you have those little white dots that give you that that that you can interact with but it feels quite minimal. Like the the amount of things that you can do feels quite minimal.

Interviewer: The gameplay feels quite minimal.

Matt: It feels er I don't know what you mean by the gameplay is minimal er it's too simple. It is too er...

Interviewer: Like just point and click ah?

Matt: Ya it's a point and click experience. Or you go in front of something, you hold X and you can see what's on it. Or you keep tapping squares so you can like try and bash open the door or whatever it is.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Ah it feels like a er ya lah it feels like a point and click experience. It feels like an evolution of the point and click. Haha.

Interviewer: If I want to ask you about...



Matt: mm hmm.

Interviewer: How you define gameplay in this game ah, how do you define it ah?

Matt: er define gameplay.

Interviewer: I'm asking for the gamer's definition.

Matt: The gamer's definition. How do I define the gameplay ah?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: I look at it as an evolved version of point and click lor I can't think of anything else right now.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Ah ya lah I can't think of much. Mm. It's ya.

Interviewer: So far, there's no quick-time events?

Matt: Quick-time?

Interviewer: Quick-time events, have you heard of it ah?

Matt: er they have lah but not in the as in they have but it's not it's not like you know in *Resident Evil 5* there must be or *Resident Evil 4* you have these buttons, you have to press all these buttons quickly, if not you die or something like that.

Interviewer: You have to press the correct buttons in the right time.

Matt: Ya. If you don't if you press the wrong one, you die. Er...

Interviewer: But so far, not much ah.

Matt: Not yet. They do lah, they have but it's like you don't feel like it's affecting anything. You don't feel.

Interviewer: It's just driving the story forward.

Matt: Ya. It's just it just either driving story forward or it's just there for fun, you know? Say can play along with it. It doesn't seem to have any effect.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: On the gameplay.

Interviewer: So...

Matt: It doesn't have any effect on the game in general.

Interviewer: So you don't like the gameplay ah?

Matt: I feel like I'm wasting my time. Sometimes I feel like I'm wasting my time.

Interviewer: So that means you want a more more action oriented gameplay that...

Matt: Yes.

Interviewer: Lets you have more control.

Matt: er...

Interviewer: Something to do to progress the story. Something more impactful.

Matt: I guess that is something I like yes.

Interviewer: So far you don't find any conflict between story and gameplay?

Matt: The gameplay is the story. (Both laughs).

Interviewer: Ya that's what the other participants say ah. Do you feel that your actions make the story progress ah? Or does it only progress in the scripted cutscenes?

Matt: er oki just answer this one er sorry can you run that again? I...

Interviewer: Do you feel that your gameplay actions make the story progress or does it only progress in the cutscenes?

Matt: If you are asking whether there's like they try and in- oki cutscene will be like er will be like the control like like you can put down your controller, sit down and watch the cutscene. Is that right? That is what you mean by cutscene.

Interviewer: You don't need to do anything ah.

Matt: Oki let me think let me think let me think. Because there are some cutscenes in the game where you have absolutely no control over your character. But I feel like what they are doing here is they are trying to allow the game to progress erm they are trying to allow the gameplay to drive forward the story.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: erm so what happens is er they do it in a very controlled manner, right? A very tightly controlled. They tried to do it in a tightly controlled manner. So at the beginning of the game, you have to select the cards. It still feels like even into chapter two or chapter three, it's an extended tutorial which is quite frustrating.

Interviewer: haha.

Matt: It is it is isn't it? It is right? Still feels like an extended tutorial. You don't have much control over your character at all. So if you are asking me whether er I think I think *Beyond: Two Souls* is trying to er push towards both. Right? Both have a both have quite a...

Interviewer: But they haven't really succeeded in the gameplay aspect lah?

Matt: No nope.

Interviewer: It's very focused on the narrative.

Matt: Yes er maybe I like to believe that er I really really like to believe that because I've only played what chapter two until three, four or what. I I it's just starting hopefully.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: er but in the meantime, I haven't seen it at all. No.

Interviewer: So so far, you feel that you are only progressing in the cutscene ah?

Matt: Story. Yes er no. I feel that it progresses in both.

Interviewer: In both?

Matt: But there is not much gameplay to talk about.

Interviewer: Ya the gameplay is the story.

Matt: er yes. (Both laughs). I think there's not much of a I feel that there's not much of a gameplay to begin with. And whatever gameplay you have here pushes the story anyway. So...

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 55:26]

Matt: You see Jodie must be a character of her own. Is that correct?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Ya she is the protagonist but the problem is you are trying to impose your choices upon her. Right? So er er er so it's like there is this question, who's character are you going to er who's character are you going to present? You're the player's character or Jodie's character?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Right? And if you choose to push the player's character, then Jodie is just an avatar. Right? Which er it is like a there is no there is no depth of character. You she doesn't make she doesn't make choices which the player would think about and then eh and then and then the idea develops in their minds? You know? So so they like they will like er er it's like reading *Harry Potter*.

Interviewer: They become very detached from it?

Matt: mm lah they become very detached from the whole experience. So it's like for example, can you imagine if you could decide what Harry Potter did in every book? Right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: That kind of thing. So er er, it's like er erm if you could decide that Harry Potter should kill Voldemort at at at in Book 4 or Book 5 or whatever? Right?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Then er then it's like er then you become then in a sense er ya lah, it's just your projection of what he should be doing which is you don't learn anything about him. You are, he is you. Right? And what and what fun is there in that? But if you get to sit down, you get to watch it, you get to watch things unfold, then you learn about this

person and then it it becomes more authentic. It becomes more er appealing, interesting. Right? Ya.

Interviewer: So far, do you get this kind of experience ah? Er...

Matt: What they oki what I feel they ended up doing is they try to do a mix of both. They give you a few options, but how, they give you a few options like what you would do right? So er like the the the like someone will ask Jodie a question. What will Jodie respond? Yes. No. Maybe. Er I don't know. Can you repeat the question?

Interviewer: No much variation yet lah?

Matt: er not yet. Erm wait wait I'm trying to get something erm like so like someone ask Jodie a question right? And she can choose to and and they give you a few choices. You can choose to say yes you can choose to say no. Be sociable or reserved.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Right? So you as the player will see these two words – sociable and reserved. Right? And they will try and quickly imagine like what would they do in that position. And then when er they click their choice, after that, the game makers what they will do is they will er they will er er er they will have Jodie enact her version of the events. Her her version of what what er as in...

Interviewer: Like if she is feeling shy then she will feel shy.

Matt: Yes. Ya. Ya. Ya. Ya. So you so it is so it gives a freedom on both ends. It gives freedom on both ends. Right? Some it's a compromise. It's a it's a decent compromise lah.

Interviewer: So far do you think it's still working oki?

Matt: Do I find that this balance is good?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: er...

Matt: Let me think. Let me think. I think it is a I think it's fair lah.

Interviewer: Still oki lah?

Matt: Still can. Still can.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: I think it's alright. In terms of...

Interviewer: You still feel some kind of personalisation?

Matt: They try and give you a balance of both.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: er ya I think they still give a balance of both which is alright.

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 1:02:00]

Matt: Gameplay event gameplay event would be like let's see you have er...

Interviewer: The tutorial? Do you see it as a gameplay event?

Matt: What gameplay as gameplay gets. Oki. A more interesting one would be er mm let's see ah oki not that I played. I saw that on the video.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Ah what the guy did was he er he went to burn down the house right?

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Ya that's a gameplay event. It's like because you did that. Right. You decided that you wanted to burn that house down. So that is a gameplay event.

Interviewer: But for your case you just leave the house ah.

Matt: Ya just left the house. That is a choice also. And that is a gameplay choice as much as any other.

Interviewer: So you mean leaving the house is a gameplay choice?

Matt: It's a...

Interviewer: For you?

Matt: Choice and in a sense it's it's er you can choose to leave the house or you can choose to burn it down. Er er and then leave the house. Er so there's a so in a sense, that is ludonarrative ah that is ludonarrative. You are playing, you made the choice during the game. That's gameplay. So it's a good mix of so they have they have both.

Interviewer: They have both gameplay and story.

Matt: Ya.

Interviewer: So you mean they are together?

Matt: mm hmm mm hmm.

Interviewer: Oki.

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 1:05:08]

Matt: I think when you are making all these little choices here and there, right? They give you, you can you can choose to press triangle or circle, or whatnot, in a sense that is gameplay, just not in a very er just not in a very not in a very gameplay, not in a sort of gameplay that I would have expected.

[30 Jan 2015 10 – 1 pm *Beyond: Two Souls* Session 1 [Matt] 1:27:39]

Interviewer: Maybe you can define gameplay choice as the type of strategy that you used to overcome the gameplay challenges? That is one definition.

Matt: Let me think. (Laughs). Unfortunately, in *Beyond: Two Souls*, I haven't seen any challenges. Hahaha.

Interviewer: There's very little of this example.

Matt: Ya.

Interviewer: But there is one or two lah later on.

Matt: Oki lah later on hopefully lah. Hopefully.

Interviewer: Because so far, it is very narrative.

Matt: Ya it is so if you are asking me, not very much gameplay choices going on in *Beyond: Two Souls* at the moment.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: As far as I played lah. It's quite frustrating really.

Interviewer: Ya.

Matt: Oki so a gameplay choice would be like a er ya lah strategies lah. A choice of strategies that you adopt to tackle er...

Interviewer: Challenges.

Matt: Challenges posed during the game.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: Ya oki that sounds like a fair definition as far as I can see.

Interviewer: Then the next question.

Matt: mm.

Interviewer: er when you make the gameplay choice just now.

Matt: mm hmm ya.

Interviewer: Do you see any story information given to you by the characters helping you to make the gameplay choice? Like guiding you how to proceed the game.

Matt: er well like you said, not much gameplay going on lah. It's a lot of er it's a lot of guides, hints, you know, you have to shake the controller, you have to press, hold this button.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: So right now, there's not much challenge going on. There's no er there's no er no puzzle, no eureka moment, no no challenges where you have to run and hide and stuff.

Interviewer: There's one part where you are trying to find the that part is called what ah?

Matt: You are trying to find the documents in the safe is it?

Interviewer: Ya that part.

Matt: That even that...

Interviewer: Do you find the story info from Jodie is helping you how to overcome the gameplay? To find the documents.

Matt: Yes yes yes yes. That was that one part. That was that one part. Correct. So it's like I mean maybe coming from someone who plays all these kinds of games, you have a sense of you know what you are supposed to do.

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: You already know what you are supposed to do in general you know?

Interviewer: mm.

Matt: er...

Interviewer: So you already know what to do ah?

Matt: In a sense lah.

Interviewer: Do you still rely on the information ah?

Matt: Of course of course. I you need to know that it's upstairs for example. It's in the main office what. Ya lah.

### **Transcript 5.49**

[1 June 2015 [Michael] *Beyond: Two Souls* Last Interview 27:55]

Interviewer: After you finished the game, do you find that the entire game is like a series of quick-time events where you have only a little bit control ah?

Michael: Very much so. Mm.

Interviewer: So in this sense, is the narrative much more than the gameplay ah?

Michael: There's no gameplay lor.

Interviewer: Do you consider the quick-time events and controlling the characters' movement as gameplay ah?

Michael: If you consider that as gameplay right?

Interviewer: And the interactions with the other objects and humans in the narrative?

Michael: The other parts are fine lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's just the quick-time events they are overdoing it lah.

Interviewer: So you think there's too much quick-time events?

Michael: There is too much quick-time events. Er yes.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because if you don't put the quick-time events over there which we already experienced, the story will continue to flow also.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: If you asked me it is oki to make a game that is a movie. All I need to do is to press triangle once in a while.

Interviewer: Do you consider those interactions as gameplay?

Michael: Interactions are gameplay, yes. It's very much so of a RPG element lor.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: mm. Except that there's nothing to build on in this case ah. So it will be it...

Interviewer: It's just a skeletal model in this game?

Michael: No, it is more of a point and click adventure in this case. A 3D point and click adventure.

Interviewer: So there's a minimal gameplay?

Michael: There is a minimal gameplay, yes.

Interviewer: But it still can be classified as gameplay? The point and click.

Michael: It is gameplay lah.

Interviewer: mm it still can be classified as gameplay lah.

Michael: Because you need to click on something to proceed with the...

Interviewer: Story?

Michael: Story yes. They used to do it last time mah, point and click adventures.

Interviewer: mm. Do you want the gameplay to be more in this game? Like do you want more interactivity?

Michael: Actually no leh. I think I will enjoy it more if it's a movie. I don't care whether it's 3D or not.

Interviewer: So do you mean that if it is shown as a film, you will be able to understand it better?

Michael: I will think so.

Interviewer: Because the gameplay will not distract your understanding.



Michael: I will think so.

Interviewer: mm. So you cannot separate the gameplay from the narrative also? In this game.

Michael: I cannot separate er...

Interviewer: Like do you find that the interaction is part of the narrative?

Michael: The interaction is never part of the narrative. It's just a senseless annoyance that I have to deal with.

Interviewer: So you are able to separate the narrative from the gameplay?

Michael: er in that sense yes.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's like you are playing *Street Fighter*. In order to for the fireball to appear on your hand and fly to the right, you need to press triangle.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: If you don't press, the fireball will be suspended in midair. Mm.

Interviewer: But *Street Fighter* is only gameplay?

Michael: hmm?

Interviewer: The game you mentioned.

Michael: hmm sorry?

Interviewer: Is it only gameplay?

Michael: *Street Fighter*, *Street Fighter* leh.

Interviewer: eh just now you mentioned which game?

Michael: *Street Fighter*.

Interviewer: *Street Fighter*?

Michael: Ya.

Interviewer: Is it only gameplay?

Michael: It's only gameplay yes. Everybody knows that there's not much story in this kind of fighting games. Nobody really cares.

Interviewer: Do you think that Jodie is providing most of the narrative and then Aiden is more of the gameplay?

Michael: If you ya.

Interviewer: Or do you think it's...

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah.

Interviewer: In this sense, do you think that Aiden is an important part of this game in the sense that he is used to overcome the gameplay obstacles?

Michael: er yes. He's the only gameplay that can be say as game.

Interviewer: Do you think that Aiden also helps to show a different perspective of the narrative ah? Like when you switch to Aiden, are you able to uncover different sides of the narrative? Or see different points of view?

Michael: mm no. Whenever you switch to Aiden, you must it's almost a time that you must act and quickly or else the game fails.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: So you have no time to see the other perspective. And anyway, throughout the gameplay, you are looking at the third person Jodie anyway. So when you switch to Aiden, you are still looking at the third person Jodie. So it's the same perspective ah.

Interviewer: In some of the chapters, do you think that playing as Aiden is able to highlight that he's trying to protect Jodie ah?

Michael: er the I think all the chapters show it ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Ah.

Interviewer: So do you see this as a different perspective of the story? Or is it still showing the same perspective?

Michel: It's the story lor.

Interviewer: Whose story?

Michael: Both of their stories.

Interviewer: So do you think that it's still the same perspective?

Michael: eh I would say it's still the same perspective.

Interviewer: Whose perspective?

Michael: The gamer's perspective.

Interviewer: So do you mean that the gamer's perspective is in your case detached from the characters?

Michael: I would think so.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because I'm really watching a movie.

Interviewer: Ya.

Michael: Even if I switch to Aiden, I will I'm still watching a movie.

Interviewer: mm. After you finished the game, can I ask you to define narrative and gameplay in *Beyond: Two Souls* ah?

Michael: Narrative ah?

Interviewer: Ya.

Michael: Everything that doesn't involve pressing buttons. Which is about eighty percent of the game ah. Of course there are some little small choices that you can make lah. But the major arc doesn't change. And there is only one path. Even though there is multiple endings ah.

Interviewer: mm. How do you define gameplay?

Michael: Gameplay ah? When you start pressing the buttons. Or when there's a need to ah.

Interviewer: mm do you think you can give a more different definition for narrative and gameplay? Instead of using the same terms ah?

Michael: eh nope. Maybe gameplay is like the CIA missions. That's as much gameplay as you can get. And that's the it's not the training mission ah. It's the *Call of Duty* mission.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: I think that's all lor.

Interviewer: Can you also give your own definition of narrative choice and gameplay choice in this game?

Michael: Narrative choices ah?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: During Jodie's high school. When she's at the birthday lor. You can make some small narrative choices.

Interviewer: Can you give any example?

Michael: er example ah? I more or less forgot about it. I think there's a choice which involve whether you want to kiss the guy or not right?

Interviewer: So that's a narrative choice ah?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Gameplay ah?

Michael: Gameplay choices, I think there's no gameplay choices. You don't need to level up.

Interviewer: It's only to press the buttons ah?

Michael: Yes. You either continue the story or you don't.

Interviewer: It's either you successfully press the buttons or not.

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: mm. It's only binary choice?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that the dialogue choices are they gameplay choice or narrative choice?

Michael: They are narrative choice ah.

Interviewer: Narrative choice only?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: It's not gameplay choice?

Michael: Unless you start to define narrative choice as game choices ah. Gameplay choices ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Which is what the quick-time event is trying to be. And there's a reason why they are called quick-time events and not gameplay. Although they are classified under gameplay mechanics. It is like when I speak about platforming game.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: You will know that there is a platform that you jump on it.

Interviewer: So do you mean that it's based on time restriction to perform some gameplay actions?

Michael: Ah yes.

Interviewer: So that's why it is classified under gameplay? For the quick-time events ah?

Michael: Ah ya.

Interviewer: mm. So er you don't see any gameplay choices in *Beyond: Two Souls* ah?

Michael: No.

Interviewer: It's mostly the narrative choice?

Michael: There's no choice.

Interviewer: No choice?

Michael: You either do it or you don't. If you don't the story stops there.

Interviewer: mm. Do you think you can also define narrative event and gameplay event?

Michael: Narrative event ah?

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: An event which affects the whole storytelling of the game in question. Maybe someone dies, maybe someone don't.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Which also means that the person is permanently added into the party or permanently removed from the party as a result of the action ah for example.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Then gameplay choices will be...

Interviewer: Gameplay event ah.

Michael: Gameplay event will be erm who's that? Gameplay event would be for example, *Call of Duty* lah. A good example. You play a game, then you maybe you play the game faster, you get more points. And because of that you get more power-ups for the next level.

Interviewer: Ya but in *Beyond: Two Souls*, there's no not much gameplay event?

Michael: There's no levelling concept.

Interviewer: mm. Do you consider the chapter where you assassinate the democratic leader as a gameplay event?

Michael: er not really leh.

Interviewer: So it's still a narrative event lah?

Michael: The CIA mission in Afghan is a more gameplayish thing than the ambassador one ah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: That's what I feel.

Interviewer: But do you think that it's a gameplay event ah?

Michael: It's trying very hard ah.

Interviewer: You still think that it can be considered?

Michael: Because you either succeed or you don't.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: When you don't, you don't continue with the game. So it becomes a narrative lor.

Interviewer: So you think it's still more narrative ah?

Michael: mm. Yes because the gameplay will not define whether the game proceeds or not.

Interviewer: mm. It's either you fail or?

Michael: Yes.

Interviewer: Cannot ah?

Michael: mm.

### **Transcript 6.1**

[1 July 2014 *The Walking Dead* 3 – 4.30 pm [Mary] 42:30]

Interviewer: So you find the choosing narrative choice is quite hard in the game ah? Because they are all negative ah.

Mary: Sorry?

Interviewer: Because their choices are all negative.

Mary: What do you mean it's all negative?

Interviewer: Do you find it very hard to choose?

Mary: They are not all negative right?

Interviewer: Most of them ah?

Mary: erm honestly how can it be positive in a apocalypse situation right? I wouldn't I didn't think that it was a an issue or anything ah because it just felt, you know logical, consistent with the scenario that was given. So no, I don't think it's negative. It's just like that.

Interviewer: Like that means what?

Mary: Consistent with the scenario lah. Like it's an apocalypse like how positive can you get right?

Interviewer: But it's still negative ah?

Mary: I don't I don't feel that it's negative.

Interviewer: But do you find the making of the choices hard in the game?

Mary: No, it's not.

Interviewer: It's not hard?

Mary: It's not. It's quite obvious like what the game wants you to choose. It's quite obvious what people would choose as well lah logically.

Interviewer: So there are no points where you find it hard to choose?

Mary: If no. I don't think so. I explained it myself right for most of the times so if I was able to explain means that I don't think I had an issue. Yeah like this part I also explained right? I paused somewhere then I explained the whole bunch? You caught those right? Did you did you like it that way if I just paused the game and explained it?

Interviewer: Ya. But you said you don't know. So...

Mary: But after that I did explain it right? That I wanted to kill that it was right to kill her. Like at that point, maybe I would have exclaimed that I don't know but if I am able to make sense then I don't think it's hard decision. You know what I mean? Like yeah it makes sense. It isn't a obviously wrong situation.

Interviewer: Then they say you make a difficult choice.

Mary: I hate it when they do such a thing to me!

Interviewer: So it's not difficult to you?

Mary: It's not lah. I mean it's only difficult because I'm taking someone's life away but then it is the right decision. To me lah.

Interviewer: So you think the time restriction make it easier for you to make the choice ah?

Mary: Ya. Because if they give me too much time, I will think too much and then you know, and then there will be dilemmas and whatnot. And if they they restrict the timing, it will be okay to do it, don't don't think so much. So ya, I think the time restriction is actually better for me, in such situations ah.

Interviewer: Okay then earlier you say you saved Carley because you have time to bond with her.

Mary: Ya unlike Doug.

Interviewer: Then this one this one also not hard decision ah?

Mary: Oh yeah now that you mentioned it. This was this was difficult. Ya ya damn, this was difficult decision. But it did it have consequence? I don't remember about this part honestly. I said you murdered Larry right I think?

Interviewer: Ya.

Mary: Which is pointing out a fact lah. Ya they are all bad.

Interviewer: So is it hard to make a choice?

Mary: Okay at that point yeah like I supposed. It isn't logical for Lee to shut up at that point lah so...

Interviewer: Is it because you played the game already so you find it easy to make the choice now?

Mary: No. It's not because I played the game already. It's like this sort of dialogue it's I don't actually remember them when I saw the walkthrough. But when I played it by myself then ya it was tough ah. But erm as in like they limit, the choices are limited in a sense for such dialogues but it doesn't happen very very frequently lah so it's not that bad honestly.

Interviewer: But they are asking you to make a lot of...

Mary: Not every decision is tough.

Interviewer: Negative choices.

Mary: No not every decision is tough ah. Some are expected. But this one...

Interviewer: Expected because you watched the walkthrough already is it?

Mary: No no no don't don't blame at everything to that. I don't remember anything from that one. Only the story is like the gist of what is going to happen. But no no it's like it's not difficult because it's like logically you would say something like that. Like for me lah at least, I would say something like that. So I don't find it negative or anything because in that situation, that is what I would say lah but oh ya maybe for such situations, I'm not so confrontational. So it was quite difficult because Lee was been confrontational but then er for most of the other times, it's not that bad. It's like just logical that you would talk like that.

Interviewer: But the your previous experience would have some help help help to you in making the choice ah?

Mary: erm...

Interviewer: So it will be...

Mary: So called good outcome lah but then again for such like dialogues, I wouldn't remember every single dialogue right? My memory is not that good. Like this sort of dialogues, I wouldn't remember them so I would say that the walkthroughs have no impact on these decisions ah. Maybe the bigger decisions lah like whether I should kill Jolene or not, whether I should hand Irene the gun or not, such things I can remember but for this tiny dialogues, I wouldn't remember them. As in the walkthroughs wouldn't impact at all.

Interviewer: So for all those choice with negative ones, you will find it harder to make the choice?

Mary: Like this situation?

Interviewer Ya.

Mary: Yes. Like especially if it clashes with my own character. Like my my personality lah to yah.

## Transcript 6.2

[2 Feb 2015 Session 3 Interview 2 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Henry] 56:05]



Interviewer: Ah then the third question, the third part of the question is do you find the game is trying to push you to side with specific characters ah? Like you cannot become neutral when you are neutral, they will push you to side with certain characters ah?

Henry: erm...

Interviewer: Like you cannot stay neutral always ah? Is it ah?

Henry: Ya. I don't think you can stay neutral always.

Interviewer: Or if you side with certain characters, they will also become angry with you. Some of the characters.

Henry: Ya lah.

Interviewer: So...

Henry: It does lah.

Interviewer: It's like very hard choice?

Henry: er sometimes it's a bit hard like...

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Like as in especially when the timer is running when the timer is very short, then you like er who do you want to side, who do you want to side, but er but you you will like for example, the in this case, the episode one lah, I support Kenny instead of Larry because Kenny was more reasonable.

Interviewer: I think episode one was easier lah.

Henry: Ya. It was ya that one easier. Er but say like...

Interviewer: Episode 2 I don't know. Kenny or Lily, I think...

Henry: It's er...

Interviewer: I think you didn't try to be biased towards any of the characters ah.

Henry: Episode 2 ah. I cannot remember whether I I I said I wanted to move or stay at hotel...motel.

Interviewer: I think you support Kenny ah?

Henry: Orh I did ah? Orh.

Interviewer: Because why ah? I think you explained is it?

Henry: I think I explained it. I can't remember.

Interviewer: I don't know leh. I I think some people say that, another participant say that it's better to support Kenny because the game cannot stay in one place forever. Something like that ah.

Henry: Oh erm I support Kenny ah? Because cos ya because we were running low on food what.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then if say food not going to not going to magically come out of the door what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: So have to go and find lah. As in there's the risk of running of of dying outside the motel lah.

Interviewer: Ya ya so the game is trying to push you to side with certain characters ah?

Henry: Ah...

Interviewer: Those that are more er can survive ah.

Henry: er ya lah in this case. For example, I I all along I wanted to side with Kenny as in like er since the first episode. As in I sided with him what because then I actually realised he's actually quite reliable. But only in like somewhere in the later episode when er my relationship with him not very good ah as in because of er one of the choice. But I still think he's a good he's a good like partner to rely on.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya so the game is pushing me to like for example, like Kenny more that kind. Ah.

Interviewer: It's also er making it harder for you to support Kenny every time ah?

Henry: Say again?

Interviewer: I mean it also gives you some situation where you cannot always support Kenny lah.

Henry: er ya it does. Because like...

Interviewer: It's trying to make your decision harder ah?

Henry: Ya it makes my decision harder lah. But er in in those case, have lah but not not say a lot.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: It's just it's just er er...

Interviewer: Trying to trying to simulate real life ah?

Henry: Ya probably yah. Like your your your one of your best friends the ask you then you have to say something ah.

Interviewer: So yah so you mean you cannot be consistent lah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: In supporting one character lah so it just...

Henry: Ya lah. I cannot be that consistent lah but I think I was quite consistent in this game.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Ya. Like you will you will be biased more towards a certain side but you know you cannot always side that side.

Interviewer: So you mean you are more biased towards Kenny?

Henry: erm not...

Interviewer: Is it? When you saying that you are biased.

Henry: No lah, I don't think I was biased to Kenny or anything, it's just that er er...

Interviewer: Were you like consistent in supporting some characters?

Henry: er I think I was consistent with supporting Clementine.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Because that was like to me at that point it was like my main goal.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ya. One of the choices, some of the choices that I made is er because of Clementine's influence.

Interviewer: mm. So the other characters are not so consistent?

Henry: erm Kenny is 50 50 lah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Ah I'm just saying he's a he's a good person you want to keep lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Then er other characters erm like Omid and Christaa also 50 50 lah. But as in initially is 50 50 then after that, like once you go, once you enter the gameplay more, then like you will start to trust them more then he will be quite quite comfortable with them then he will probably side with them.

Interviewer: mm.

Henry: Like like at the end of the er somewhere near the end of episode 5 lah. I say can they can er er I want them to look after Clementine what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Cos I trust them after after the the two episodes, like...

Interviewer: So so your dialogue choices will be very consistent lah by then?

Henry: Ya. By by then it will be consistent but at the start not so because at the start I didn't...

Interviewer :Ya. You are still trying to learn about them.

Henry: Ya. Like try to figure out like who are they. Because I don't like them. Then I said I I I didn't really like Christaa at the start because she was like...er...

Interviewer: Like Hershah a bit ah? Is it a bit like Hershah?

Henry: No no no not Hershah, er just er cos got got one time, she come in and question question me what.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Like why why what's the girl got to do with you that kind. Then she very...

Interviewer: Like telling you what to do ah?

Henry: Ya telling me what to do then as in Clementine not my girlfriend what but I just saying er er means like she go and tell me what to do so at the start I didn't like her. After that, she like it's just ya I I trust her more so at the end of it, it's more er consistent lah.

Interviewer: Ya. And then Saint John brothers at the start, you already know that they are not very good ah? Is it ah?

Henry: er can tell.

Interviewer: The first time you see them.

Henry: Ah first time I see them. Er first time I see them when they are at the farm. Eh no at the when they when they like attacking us. Right. That one that one the situation very tense so it's a bit against them but when reach when just reach the farm right? Er it seems quite good. So as I think I think trust them after the Jolene especially the the other brother I think. The one I went with to the camp. Then we suddenly saw Jolene. Then she started talking about about that then then he went to shoot her. Then I was like huh what? It's like he's trying to hide something.

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: Then I after that, then I don't really don't really trust.

Interviewer: Then your dialogue choices will be affected lah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: mm. And then sometimes the dialogue choices they are mostly negative in tone. Sometimes ah? Er...

Henry: Negative in tone? Meaning like?

Interviewer: I can show you.

Henry: Okay.

Interviewer: er this one how come I never annotate it? I never annotate the file.

Henry: It's when? As in roughly when?

Interviewer: It's after Saint John brothers. When you had a fight with Kenny. Arguing with him. Before you take the provisions from the car.

Henry: Ah. Oh whether to save whether to save the person like shoot her?

Interviewer: No no no. Just general talking to him.

Henry: Orh okay.

Interviewer: There's some choice here. Ah this one.

Henry: This one.

Interviewer: Like this choice do you think it's hard for you?

Henry: er as in...

Interviewer: I think we watch finish.

Henry: Ya. I say I say you murder Larry right? That choice ah?

Interviewer: That choice do you find it quite hard ah? Or is it okay for you?

Henry: I find that time quite okay.

Interviewer: Quite instinctive ah?

Henry: Quite instinct as in the first the first choice was er the first choice was er what you destroyed his group right?

Interviewer: Something like that lah.

Henry: Then second choice is you are no hero. Third choice is...

Interviewer: Something like that.

Henry: Like...

Interviewer: You murdered Larry. That one is the most direct. Is it? I think the most honest one?

Henry: Ya I think this is the most honest one. I chose the most honest one because third part is what then you okay you say you say you destroyed this group er not...

Interviewer: It's not really like...

Henry: Not really what it's not really true what. Because it's only just Larry died then...

Interviewer: So it's quite instinctive choice ah?

Henry: For for me it's quite instinctive then you are no hero is...er...

Interviewer: Very general ah?

Henry: I think this one more ah I don't know lah I feel this one more more condescending cos you are no hero like very condescending. I think this one more condescending than you murdered. This one is just like honest so I chose I chose er just tell him the facts which is true what.

Interviewer: Because you think that what he did was wrong lah.

Henry: Ya I think what he did was wrong lah.

Interviewer: mm. Do you find any? Do you feel that the outcome is different ah? If you chose the different?

Henry: For this one ah?

Interviewer: Ya. Personally do you think there is any difference?

Henry: Personally I think...

Interviewer: Or no difference?

Henry: I think no difference eh.

Interviewer: No difference ah?

Henry: Ya.

Interviewer: So...

Henry: Cos is I think the difference will be whether I helped him kill Larry what.

Interviewer :Ya.

Henry: Which was the difference what.

Interviewer: But here all the difference, there will be no difference ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Choosing any of the choice will make him...

Henry: More angry or?

Interviewer: Make make him don't like you so much ah?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Because it's all negative ah.

Henry: Ya then dot dot dot is just...

Interviewer: I don't know what is dot dot dot?

Henry: No dot dot dot is just remain silent.

Interviewer: Ya. I don't know what happened.

Henry: Ah then...

Interviewer: mm maybe it'll be better.

### **Transcript 6.3**

[23 Jan 2015 Session 3 Interview 11 – 4 pm *The Walking Dead* [Jim] 11:35]

Interviewer: er wait ah, this part can I show you ah?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: I want to ask if this choice is hard for you.

Jim: Okay. Is it about er Kenny and Larry quarrelling?

Interviewer: Kenny and Lee quarrelling quarrelling.

Jim: Kenny and Lee?

Interviewer: After they kill the Saint John brothers.

Jim: Kill the what? Larry?

Interviewer: After they after the Saint John brothers that part.

Jim: Oh.

Interviewer: er...

Jim: Saint John brothers is easy to be honest.

Interviewer: I mean after that part ah. This one.

Jim: Oh this.

Interviewer: Because this one is all negative. Is it ah? Er the choices.

Jim: I see. No it's still not that hard for me.

Interviewer: I think this one, this option is choosing to be direct with him ah?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: But erm any reason why you choose this option?

Jim: You destroy this group. First of all, I cannot answer in my own term. There's no answer that I can answer with which I decided. Secondly, in real life, I'm also quite entire person. Er sometimes oblivious, indirect to be honest. Ya so my I think I choose that kind of choice.

Interviewer: So it is because of your real life personality ah?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: er wait ah.

Jim: But I think you are no hero is even more...

Interviewer: More more harsh ah?

Jim: Ya harsher.

Interviewer: So you didn't want to choose too harsh options.

Jim: I usually choose the kind of sentence that...

Interviewer: In the middle ah?

Jim: Try to become frank ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Jim: Although usually people don't think about their mistakes.

Interviewer: So you want him to reflect on his mistakes ah?

Jim: Exactly.

Interviewer: Do you think that if you select the other options, there will be any change?

Jim: It doesn't matter.

Interviewer: It doesn't matter?

Jim: Ya.

Interviewer: It will also still be the same relationship with Kenny?

Jim: Ya.

#### **Transcript 6.4**

[20 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Session 1 Interview 12 pm – 4 pm [Alice] 35:06]

Interviewer: erm so so far there's no no story option?

Alice: No story is pretty is being pretty linear so far. There's not really a choice that you could have made that would alter the story.

Interviewer: Ya but I'm wondering if erm do you see some kind of story emerging out of your gameplay action? Like erm when you choose to shoot the person do you see that they are trying to characterise Joel as a more negative kind of character?

Alice: Not really because that decision to shoot the guy or not to shoot the guy is a you do decision. Er if Joel didn't shoot the guy, then would you say he's a good person? I'm not really sure about that like he is a smuggle. He's done a lot of illegal things. So you know Joel lives in the grey area in general. But choosing to shoot the guy or choosing to kill soldiers or leave Infected, erm I don't think really offers a characterisation of Joel because there's definitely ways that you can just not kill anybody and try to sneak your way through it. Erm and there is also another way where you could kill everybody and just er continue the game.

Interviewer: So in those gameplay actions you don't see them characterising Joel so much?



Alice: Not really no.

Interviewer: Because his characterisation is mainly in the cutscene?

Alice: Yes.

Interviewer: But erm during the gameplay do you see any kind of narrative coming out from your gameplay actions?

Alice: Not really all my gameplay actions are just to get to the next main story point. It doesn't really it hasn't really been that one of my decisions really has effected our story when we go.

Interviewer: So when you engaged actions, you are just thinking of the gameplay. You are not you are not so much thinking of the narrative?

Alice: Not really. I'm just trying to focus on the goals of the gameplay.

Interviewer: Ya because I'm trying to ask about emergent narrative.

Alice: mm hmm.

Interviewer: If you have heard of it.

### **Transcript 6.5**

[Session 3 18 Jul 2014 2.10 pm – 5.35 pm *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 1 2:00]

Interviewer: Is there any other missions where you go and read the wiki ah?

Nasir: mm ya I think for who's that? Finding Liara. Ya I was wondering where she was. Think think I read the wiki.

Interviewer: But the the quest log didn't give you enough information ah?

Nasir: Ya they just said search that cluster then that cluster got like 4 different systems.

Interviewer: Ah so you need more information to find which planet?

Nasir: Ya. And also because initially I thought because I didn't really explore the the erm that how you explore different planets right? I thought you need to like land on every single one. I thought everyone had a Mako level. Then I found that very daunting. Like ya as in only later did I found out that when you scan, as in when you orbit around certain planets, it just gives you a description and ya that's it. Then down that oki lah if if I knew that from the start ya, I would have been more motivated to find Liara first. Cos I was thinking that if every planet I need to find Liara using that Mako, it's going to be very tiring so that's why I left her until last. So ya.

Interviewer: So in the end, you went to search the wiki.

Nasir: er ya in the end I was like which planet was she on. Then I found her lor eventually.

Interviewer: At first, you thought is er is you thought the game didn't give you enough information which planet she's on is it?

Nasir: Ya because the game just said that find her in that er in that cluster. Ya then initially, I thought it was a very big place ah but now I'm more familiar with *Mass Effect*, I realised it wasn't that hard to find her.

Interviewer: But when you clicked on the different planets...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Is it only one planet can land?

Nasir: er ya that's as in most of them. Ya as in I thought every planet can land. I didn't know that it was like one system only a few planets to land on.

Interviewer: So later then you realised then...

Nasir: Ya. When I was think I was exploring or during the game itself.

Interviewer: So at first you thought it's quite daunting ah.

Nasir: Ya I thought.

Interviewer: That's why you go and search the wiki.

Nasir: Ya as in cos it's going to be like how come got so many planets then ya.

## Transcript 6.6

[Session 3 18 Jul 2014 2.10 p.m. – 5.35 p.m. *Mass Effect* [Nasir] Part 1 37:55]

Nasir: I guess ya gathering the materials was really irritating. The as in finding like the the Matriarch writings ah and the all that the Matriarch writings, the Salarian something, that Taurian something, the the items you are supposed to collect from the planets like I just got tired. As in as much I try on my second playthrough to gather everything, I still couldn't gather it in. I believe I was quite thorough so and plus there was not like even when you complete it they don't give, maybe there's something in the Codex, but I don't really read the Codex. I'm more interested in story wise rather than just information. So...

Interviewer: er I don't understand what the collecting thing, what are you collecting? That part?

Nasir: There's a side mission where you are supposed to collect Taurian something, Matriarch writings.

Interviewer: Oh the all the planets ah?

Nasir: Ya as in the the...

Interviewer: All those Insignias is it?

Nasir: Ya. As in the stuff you can find in the planets where you land. So ya ya and like finding Polonium and all the metals, the heavy metals also like, at least in *Mass Effect 2*, there's a reason why you are looking for them because you use them to upgrade stuff so I get it. But in *Mass Effect 1*, it was like oh why gathering all these, like okay lah, for money. But I can get money some other way mah. I don't need to

resort to this. So I found the the side quest a bit meaningless there ah. At least, if they wanted to put it there, I don't know, unlock some, let's say you complete then I don't know, you unlock some quests.

Interviewer: Passive skill ah or?

Nasir: No, no. As in more like you unlock one storyline for the Asari where I don't know. Some something about the Matriarch's writings. Maybe you found out more backstory about Asari. But and so on. But there wasn't anything ah so in that sense, in that part I was disappointed ah and I see, I was not very motivated to complete that part.

Interviewer: So you mean you need some narrative motivation?

Nasir: Ya. Ya. I'm more motivated by narrative rewards than gameplay rewards.

Interviewer: So er did you just do a few then you give up already?

Nasir: For the first one?

Interviewer: Ya. The that one collecting the Insignia.

Nasir: Ya. As in my first play through I never really care lah, for the second playthrough, it's like er ya as in I tried my best to gather as much stuff as I could while while let's say they ask me to go certain planets to do some side quests, then I try to as in if I come across anything in between the objective, then I would go there, but after a while, it just felt meaningless. So I just didn't bother after a while. I think my second play through, I managed to like finish getting the Matriarch writings and some the Taurian thing maybe? But the other two I still didn't finish and I didn't get all the different heavy metals so ya.

Interviewer: Because still don't have narrative support ah?

Nasir: Ya so it felt quite pointless to me.

### **Transcript 6.7**

[9 Dec 2014 3 – 5 pm *Bioshock* Third Session Interview [John] 1:20:50]

Interviewer: Ah this one is turning into the Big Daddy.

John: Ah.

Interviewer: Can you remember it ah? Or do you want to watch again?

John: Okay lor. Can remember lah but...

Interviewer: Can you describe your experience ah?

John: It's boring. Really it's really very boring that part.

Interviewer: When you becoming the Big Daddy.

John: It's very boring.

Interviewer: Very boring?

John: Too many parts to find ah. Then you keep walking around back and forth the place. I got lost over there for quite long.

Interviewer: Ya.

John: I got stuck there.

Interviewer: And then that part also quite empty is it? Only got the enemies?

John: Ya only keep fighting the enemies and then find the parts.

Interviewer: They didn't like populate it with the non-enemies ah? Like...

John: Like...

Interviewer: Like er they only put the enemies there ah.

John: Ya lor.

Interviewer: No no friendly enemies.

John: (Laughs).

Interviewer: It's like, is it very isolated ah?

John: I don't know. I think it's just like dragging the game.

Interviewer: That's why it's like. Because you have already gone through the first two parts, tell you to find the bomb and the other part is the what?

John: Ya.

Interviewer: The Julie Langford that part ah. It's like dragging the game ah?

John: Still have to find the Big Daddy as in become the Big Daddy to get the Little Sisters to open the door.

Interviewer: So it's not interesting?

John: No. Why can't you just have a potion that transforms me into a Little Sister? Then I just crawl through. Ya. It's no.

Interviewer: So that part never tell you about the Big Daddy, never let you experience how you become a Big Daddy?

John: Let let ah.

Interviewer: I think their intention is to...

John: You became the Big Daddy ah but ya lah but oki lor. Just like that lor.

Interviewer: You find it very boring ah?

John: But you you are not so powerful leh after that ya.

Interviewer: You are not not very powerful ah?

John: You are not very powerful.

Interviewer: You don't feel?

John: Ya I don't feel that powerful. That's all.

Interviewer: mm. The gameplay that part, how you find it ah?

John: Becoming the Big Daddy was hard.

Interviewer: Hard ah?

John: But after becoming after you became the Big Daddy then it doesn't make much difference. Ya really.

Interviewer: You you mean the gameplay is also very challenging ah?

John: I mean it's normal lor. I wouldn't say it's challenging.

Interviewer: Normal ah?

John: Just normal.

Interviewer: Like the other parts ah?

John: Hmm?

Interviewer: Like the other parts ah?

John: Like the other parts lor.

Interviewer: mm.

John: Because you use, I think the Big Daddy used the same weapons also. Used the launcher, grenade launcher. Then you also have the grenade launcher.

Interviewer: So the same lah?

John: Ya it's the same lah.

## **Transcript 6.8**

[29 Dec 2014 *The Last of Us* Last Session Part 3 [Nasir] 2:22:45]

Interviewer: Then the next chapter Joel was trying to ask Ellie to boost her up, but she doesn't respond.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Do you see that one is a gameplay that reflects the narrative?

Nasir: Ya. I guess so. Ya. Ya.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: Because at that point it tries to reflect that Ellie is a bit distracted at that point in time. As in she knows that she's at the end of her journey. It's like she's getting emotional.

Interviewer: So in that part, it's both narrative and gameplay is coming together?

Nasir: Slightly lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Nasir: As in I think it's just trying to, because by that point in time you already played the game so long.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: So it's like it's a nice change to suddenly you want to boost and Ellie is not there. So it's a refreshing change ah. Ya.

### **Transcript 6.9**

[3 Jun 2015 *Bioshock* Last Interview 3.40 pm – 6.40 pm [Loke] 47:12]

Interviewer: Freezing pipes.

Loke: That one is the ya I was unable to link.

Interviewer: You cannot link also?

Loke: Ya.

Interviewer: So you had to explore by yourself?

Loke: Ya.

Interviewer: Trial and error in the gameplay?

Loke: Ya.

### **Transcript 6.10**

Bill McDonagh: Steinman, I know Medical Pavillon is your manor, but you might want to cogitate on this: ocean water is colder than a witch's tit. You don't heat the pipes, the pipes freeze. Pipes freeze, pipes burst. Then Rapture leaks. Now, I realise you're a posh sort of geezer, and, frankly, I don't give a toss if you piss or go fishing. But once Rapture starts leaking, the old girl's never gonna stop. And then I'll be sure to tell Ryan he's got you to thank.

### **Transcript 6.11**

[*The Last of Us* Session 3 Part 1 Recording 2015-02-16 [Walter] 10:50]

Walter: Ya see this is basically what I was talking about. Basically, you can you can share cover with Ellie.

Interviewer: Ya she's integrated into you.

Walter: Ya. It's a very nice touch.

### **Transcript 6.12**

[Session 2 Game Study – *Bioshock* [Mary] File 17 12:10]

Mary: This room can be entered. But it's not unlocked yet. Dude, you got to wait. Just give me a second. I am a genius. I am a genius. I supposed there will be a text message telling me but the game the game, the map showed me that this area can be entered and it'll be weird if I can't right...Ya I supposed there might be some text messages that could let me that tells me that I'm able to do to unlock that tomb, but I don't really need that. It's quite obvious like one side is lit up, one side isn't so...

### **Transcript 6.13**

[*Mass Effect 2* [Michael] 1:32:45]

Michael: In this kind of situation, both will die if I don't do anything. But this is *Mass Effect*. All of them will die. You see as Shepherd now as a Commander, Ashley is a lost cause now. If she activate the bomb, mission will accomplish. If I go to Kaidan, yes if I go to Kaidan, mission will accomplish. If I go to Ashley, I will accomplish the mission, but Kaidan will die in vain. So I am forced to make a choice here. This choice is made in regarding Ashley, not in regarding whether Kaidan is my boyfriend or not. You see, if I go to Kaidan, and Ashley will activate the Nuke. Mission will accomplish. It's the most logical way to do things right? But if Kaidan is the one arming the nuke, he dies. That's how it is in the war you know? Commanders have to make the toughest decision.

### **Transcript 6.14**

[29 Dec 2014 The Last of Us Last Session Part 3 [Nasir] 2:19:05]

Interviewer: And then in the Winter Chapter.

Nasir: Oki.

Interviewer: You you were able to shift between Ellie and Joel ah?

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: When you played as Ellie, did you find that it was quite it was quite it was quite er vulnerable?

Nasir: Slightly lah because at that point in time, you were stripped off your weapons right? You only had your knife.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: Ya. So ya it did feel a bit vulnerable. But you know that you know that you...because I tried meeleing people, and that that just failed. So it was very important to use stealth ah. Because like Joel you can just melee what. Melee your

way through if you can't handle them but in this case, because they had guns and you had no guns so ya. It emphasise the stealth, at least hit and run tactics ah at least.

Interviewer: So later on when you shift to Joel to control him to save Ellie ah.

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Did you feel an even more urgent need to save her?

Nasir: Ya.

Interviewer: Because you discovered Ellie's backpack.

Nasir: As in as in because you played what Ellie's going through right? So you know that she needs help lah.

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: So in that sense, ya you you feel you are in more you can empathise more with what Joel is feeling ah

Interviewer: Ya.

Nasir: As in Joel doesn't know what is happening to Ellie but you know the emergency ah. So...

Interviewer: When you discover all her objects ah.

Nasir: mm hmm.

Interviewer: And then the slaughterhouse.

Nasir: mm hmm. So he knows that she's not in a good place ah.



## Appendix B Questionnaires

### Questionnaire (Peter Bioshock)

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_8\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_8\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_5\_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				✓		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.			✓			
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.			✓			
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.				✓		
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.		✓				
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.			✓			
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.			✓			
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.				✓		
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.			✓			
13. I feel more in control <sup>12</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>13</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is				✓		

<sup>12</sup> Control refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>13</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.						
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.				✓		
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gamplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				✓		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.					✓	
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.			✓			
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				✓		
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.				✓		
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.				✓		
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				✓		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				✓		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				✓		
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.				✓		
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				✓		

34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.			✓			
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.			✓			
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.			✓			
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.			✓			
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.				✓		
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.				✓		
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					✓	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.			✓			
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.				✓		

**Questionnaire (John Bioshock)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_6\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_7\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_5\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				✓		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.				✓		
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.			✓			
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.		✓				

8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.			✓			
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.		✓				
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.		✓				
13. I feel more in control <sup>14</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.		✓				
14. I feel more agency <sup>15</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.		✓				
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.				✓		
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.					✓	
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.			✓			
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				✓		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.				✓		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.			✓			

<sup>14</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>15</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				✓		
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.			✓			
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.					✓	
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				✓		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				✓		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.			✓			
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					✓	
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.					✓	
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				✓		
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.					✓	
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.					✓	
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.					✓	
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.			✓			
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.			✓			
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.		✓				
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.		✓				

41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.				✓		
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.			✓			
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.			✓			

### Questionnaire (Mary – *Bioshock*)

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_ 8 \_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				✓		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.				✓		
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.				✓		
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.				✓		
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.		✓				
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.		✓				
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.		✓				
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.					✓	
13. I feel more in control <sup>16</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.					✓	
14. I feel more agency <sup>17</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is				✓		

<sup>16</sup> Control refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.						
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.					✓	
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gamplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.					✓	
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.				✓		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.			✓			
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.	✓					
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.		✓				
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.				✓		
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.					✓	
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.			✓			
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.		✓				

<sup>17</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.			✓			
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.			✓			
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				✓		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.					✓	
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.					✓	
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					✓	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.					✓	
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.					✓	
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.			✓			
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.				✓		
	The participant mentioned in the interview that she felt a little empathy for the Little Sisters and Tenenbaum was encouraging her to choose the good pathway by constantly rewarding her.					
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.		✓				
	The participant indicated that she will just watch the YouTube videos as the game is quite linear.					



### Questionnaire (Loke *Bioshock*)

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_7\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_7\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_4\_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				√		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.			√			
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.				√		
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.				√		
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.		√				
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				√		
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				√		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.				√		
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				√		
13. I feel more in control <sup>18</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.					√	
14. I feel more agency <sup>19</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.			√			
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps				√		

<sup>18</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>19</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.						
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				√		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				√		
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				√		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.			√			
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				√		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.			√			
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.		√				
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				√		
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				√		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.			√			
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.				√		
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				√		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				√		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				√		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				√		
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					√	
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.					√	
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.		√				
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				√		

35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				√		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				√		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.					√	
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					√	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.					√	
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.			√			
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					√	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.					√	
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.		√				

**Questionnaire (Nasir – Mass Effect)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) 8
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) 10
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) 7

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				√		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.					√	
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.		√				
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.					√	
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I	√					

can play the game more quickly.						
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.		✓				
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.		✓				
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.					✓	
13. I feel more in control <sup>20</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>21</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.				✓		
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.					✓	
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				✓		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.					✓	
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.				✓		
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				✓		

<sup>20</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>21</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.				✓		
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.					✓	
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				✓		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.					✓	
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				✓		
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					✓	
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				✓		
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.					✓	
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.					✓	
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.					✓	
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.		✓				
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.				✓		
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.				✓		
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.				✓		
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					✓	

42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.	✓					
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.				✓		

### Questionnaire (Michael *Mass Effect*)

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_7\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_8\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_2\_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				✓		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.			✓			
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.		✓				
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.			✓			
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.		✓				
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.		✓				
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.				✓		
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.					✓	
13. I feel more in control <sup>22</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.					✓	
14. I feel more agency <sup>23</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is	✓					

<sup>22</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>23</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.						
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.			√			
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.			√			
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.			√			
18. The gamplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.		√				
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.	√					
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.			√			
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.					√	
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.		√				
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.		√				
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.		√				
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.		√				
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.			√			
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.			√			
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				√		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				√		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				√		
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					√	

certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.					√	
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.					√	
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.					√	
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				√		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.					√	
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.					√	
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					√	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.	√					
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.	√					
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					√	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.		√				
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.					√	



**Questionnaire (Henry *The Walking Dead*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_2\_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>NA</b>
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				√		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.				√		
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.			√			
	Quite hard to distinguish.					
6. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.					√	
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.	√					
	They cannot be skipped and are important.					
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				√		
	The narrative decisions are instinctive.					
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				√		
	The gameplay decision can be made through exploration.					
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.					√	
	It is hard to decide when both are together.					
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				√		
13. I feel more in control <sup>24</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				√		
14. I feel more agency <sup>25</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is				√		

<sup>24</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.					
	There is personalisation of gameplay choices.				
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.			√		
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.			√		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				√	
	The gameplay consists of quicktime events and point and click exploration and is mostly intuitive except for a quicktime event in Season 1 Episode 2 which is counterintuitive.				
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				√	
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				√	
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.			√		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.			√		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.			√		
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				√	
	The narrative is more dominant.				
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.			√		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.			√		
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.		√			
	The player just wants to progress the game but has no motivation.				

<sup>25</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				√		
The player wants to find out more about the story.						
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.					√	
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.					√	
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.		√				
In most situations, it is clear to the player which gameplay objects are important because the narrative information provided to the player helps him to understand the gameplay choices.						
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.				√		
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.					√	
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				√		
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.			√			
Both provide story info so not always distinguishable.						
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				√		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				√		
Scripted gameplay events are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions.						
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.				√		
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.				√		
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest					√	

but only complete the main storyline of the game.						
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.			√			
	Achievements are not important.					
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a “good” or “evil” pathway in the game.				√		
	The player is trying to be good.					
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a “good” or “evil” direction.			√			
	Some occasions are pushing but more of the player’s own choices.					
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.			√			
	The player watches other people play on YouTube and also has no time to replay.					

**Questionnaire (Jim *The Walking Dead*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_8\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_0\_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>NA</b>
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.				√		
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.		√				
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.		√				
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.				√		
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.						√
	Because of quick-time event of course unskippable. In fact, sometimes you must watch them.					
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do				√		

not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.						
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.		✓				
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				✓		
13. I feel more in control <sup>26</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>27</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.					✓	
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.			✓			
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				✓		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.				✓		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.				✓		
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				✓		
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.			✓			
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.			✓			

<sup>26</sup> Control refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>27</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.				✓		
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				✓		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				✓		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.		✓				
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.				✓		
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				✓		
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				✓		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.					✓	
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					✓	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.					✓	
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.					✓	
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					✓	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.			✓			
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the			✓			

possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.						
	This game is still a bit linear to me. Only life/death of characters affect next season!					

**Questionnaire (Michael *Beyond: Two Souls*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_0\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_3\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_0\_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>NA</b>
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.	✓					
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.		✓				
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.	✓					
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.	✓					
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.			✓			
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.						✓
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.						✓
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.						✓

12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.	✓					
13. I feel more in control <sup>28</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>29</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.				✓		
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.	✓					
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.	✓					
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.	✓					
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.	✓					
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.	✓					

<sup>28</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>29</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.



22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.	✓					
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.	✓					
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.	✓					
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.	✓					
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.	✓					
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.	✓					
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.	✓					
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.		✓				
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.				✓		
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.	X					
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				X		

34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				✓		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.						✓
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.						✓
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.	✓					
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.	✓					
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					✓	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.					✓	
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.	✓					

**Questionnaire (Matt *Beyond: Two Souls*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_10\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_3\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.						✓
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.		✓				
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.			✓			
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.					✓	
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.	✓					
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.			✓			
	Mostly narrative					
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				✓		
13. I feel more in control <sup>30</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>31</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.				✓		

<sup>30</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>31</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.			✓			
	Can't go both ways.					
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.					✓	
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.					✓	
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.					✓	
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.					✓	
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.				✓		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.		✓				
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.			✓			
	Not clear.					
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.			✓			
	Not clear.					
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.				✓		
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.				✓		
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.				✓		
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.					✓	
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.			✓			
	Not clear.					
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				✓		

31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					✓	
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.					✓	
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				✓		
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.				✓		
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.				✓		
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.					✓	
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.				✓		
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.					✓	
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.	✓					
	Own choice.					
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.				✓		

**Questionnaire (Nasir *The Last of Us*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) 9
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) 10
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) 7

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.					✓	
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.					✓	
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.				✓		
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.					✓	
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.	✓					
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.						✓
	No narrative choice because the narrative is linear.					
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.					✓	
	The gameplay does not restrict the choices.					
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.						✓
	No narrative choice because the narrative is linear.					
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				✓		
13. I feel more in control <sup>32</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.						✓
	Narrative and gameplay are separated.					
14. I feel more agency <sup>33</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is						✓

<sup>32</sup> Control refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.						
	Narrative and gameplay are separated.					
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.					✓	
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.					✓	
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.					✓	
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.					✓	
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
	Quicktime events.					
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.					✓	
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.					✓	
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.					✓	
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.				✓		
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.				✓		
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.				✓		
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.						✓
	Gameplay does not affect narrative.					
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.						✓
	No narrative choices as narrative is linear.					
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				✓		

<sup>33</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.					✓	
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.		✓				
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.					✓	
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.					✓	
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.					✓	
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.					✓	
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.						✓
	No side quests.					
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					✓	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.						✓
	No side quests.					
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.			✓			
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.				✓		
	"Good" is more stealth, "evil" is power through.					
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.			✓			
	Game lets you choose most of the time.					
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.						✓



	No consequence.
--	-----------------

**Questionnaire (Walter *The Last of Us*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) \_\_\_\_\_8\_\_\_\_\_
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) \_\_\_\_\_7\_\_\_\_\_
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) \_\_\_\_\_7\_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.					✓	
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.		✓				
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.		✓				
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.			✓			
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.	✓					
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.					✓	
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.		✓				
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				✓		
13. I feel more in control <sup>34</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.				✓		
14. I feel more agency <sup>35</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is		✓				

<sup>34</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>35</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases,

provided to me when making a gameplay choice.						
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.				✓		
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.			✓			
18. The gamplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.		✓				
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.		✓				
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.			✓			
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.					✓	
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.				✓		
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.		✓				
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.			✓			
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.	✓					
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.			✓			
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.						✓
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.		✓				
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				✓		
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.			✓			

instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.					✓	
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.					✓	
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.					✓	
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.					✓	
37. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have completed all the side quests in the game before moving on.					✓	
38. I avoid triggering key scripted events in the game until I have explored all areas in the game before moving on.					✓	
39. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every side quest but only complete the main storyline of the game.		✓				
40. I feel that I am not finishing the entire game if I do not complete every achievement but only complete the main storyline of the game.	✓					
41. I make a conscious decision to follow a "good" or "evil" pathway in the game.						✓
42. I feel that the narrative is pushing me in a "good" or "evil" direction.						✓
43. I am interested in replaying the game to make different choices and see all the possibilities for how the storyline might turn out.						✓

**Questionnaire (Alice *The Last of Us*)**

1. On a scale from 0-10, how would you rate the game overall? (0 - terrible, 10 - Awesome) 8
2. On a scale from 0-10, rate how interesting you find the story of the game. (0 - Very boring, 10 - Very interesting) 9
3. On a scale from 0-10, rate the difficulty of the gameplay, and specifically, the combat. (0 - Very easy, 10 - Very difficult) 7

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	NA
4. I feel that the combat style of the game is appropriate for the storyline.					✓	
5. Narrative is distinguishable from gameplay.			✓			
	No pure narrative or gameplay. For example, when Joel is picking up the rifle, there is control but the camera pans to the rifle which incorporates the weapon into the storyline.					
6. Narrative and gameplay are distinguishable when they appear simultaneously.			✓			
	No pure narrative or gameplay. For example, when Joel is picking up the rifle, there is control but the camera pans to the rifle which incorporates the weapon into the storyline.					
7. The scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes motivate me to play the game.				✓		
8. I generally skip the scripted narrative events, e.g. cutscenes if I can skip it so that I can play the game more quickly.		✓				
9. It is possible to make a narrative decision when the language/audio and visuals do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.						✓
10. It is possible to make a gameplay decision when the language/audio and visuals from the game do not provide me with all the information I need to make a choice.				✓		
	Previous experience of other games and exploration.					
11. Prioritising between narrative and gameplay choices is difficult when these two choices are equally important.						✓
12. Narrative information conveyed to me by the characters help me to make the gameplay choices.				✓		

13. I feel more in control <sup>36</sup> of the game when sufficient narrative information from the gameworld helps me to make a gameplay choice.					✓	
	More confidence and spending less time					
14. I feel more agency <sup>37</sup> in the game when insufficient narrative information is provided to me when making a gameplay choice.			✓			
	More freedom to search out different things when it doesn't give you enough info but also harder to find things.					
15. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand what the various interactable objects in the gameworld stand for.				✓		
16. The visual representations and audio/language of the characters in the game helps me understand how to use the various interactable objects in the gameworld.				✓		
17. The visual representations and the language used by the characters help me to understand how the gameplay mechanics work, e.g. functions of interactable objects, how to overcome the challenges, and solve puzzles.				✓		
18. The gameplay mechanics is connected to the narrative progression.				✓		
19. Gameplay information provided to me assists me in progressing the narrative.				✓		
20. Narrative information provided to me assists me in understanding the gameplay.				✓		
21. I am satisfied with the overall balance between narrative and gameplay.				✓		
22. The transition between narrative and gameplay events is clear.		✓				
	It is harder to separate them when they are together.					
23. The gameplay supports the narrative by highlighting important narrative elements.						✓
	Free play when the player can choose what to do.					
24. The narrative supports the gameplay by highlighting important gameplay elements.						✓
	Free play when the player can choose what to do.					
25. Logical inconsistencies between the gameplay and narrative are resolvable.						✓

<sup>36</sup> *Control* refers to the game situation where the game provides the player with explicit information about what outcomes choosing a certain choice of action will lead to. Example, obtaining certain rewards, etc.

<sup>37</sup> The definition of *agency* here refers to "agency as freedom" (Tanenbaum and Tanenbaum, 2009) which refers the game situation which places the player at the center of experience as its principle creator, necessarily engaged in an imaginative act. The player's central interest is in uncovering new responses from the system and is not guided by a game system which explicitly tells the player what response s/he will get when a certain action is taken or give explicit instructions to the player when playing the game. In other words, the game system lets the player finds out information on his/her own regarding the game system. This is compared to games such as *Diablo III* (Blizzard, 2012) which provides explicit instructions to the player to guide him/her on what to do when fighting a boss monster, such as *Diablo in the* different boss phases, instead of letting them find out on their own. Another instance of "agency as freedom" is in *Bioshock (Irrational Games, 2007)* where Tanenbaum does not tell the player what specific reward s/he will get after saving The Little Sisters.

	They are in sync.					
26. I feel motivated to progress the gameplay when the game withholds information from me about the effects of my gameplay actions on the narrative.						✓
	Linear narrative. Gameplay actions don't change narrative.					
27. I feel motivated to progress the narrative when the game withholds information about the effects of my narrative choices on the gameplay.						✓
	Linear narrative so no narrative choices.					
28. The character's goals, motivations and conflicts in the narrative are similar to my gameplay goals, motivation and conflict as a player.				✓		
29. The importance of a gameplay object or narrative event can be understood based on the language/audio and visuals in the game.				✓		
30. The presence of both dynamic and static objects in a gameplay event complicates my gameplay choices.				✓		
	Doesn't know what will happen if weapon is not picked up.					
31. The different types of units/characters in the gameworld can be distinguished.				✓		
32. The different roles and functions of units/characters in the game can be distinguished based on their actions and movements.				✓		
33. Different narrative events can be distinguished.				✓		
	In the scripted cutscenes.					
34. Narrative events in scripted narrative sequences are more easily distinguished compared to narrative events that occur through gameplay.				✓		
35. Different gameplay events can be distinguished.				✓		
	Only during pure gameplay fights when there is control.					
36. Gameplay events in scripted gameplay sequences are more easily distinguished compared to gameplay events that arise from the player's gameplay actions such as attacking an enemy.				✓		
	Scripted gameplay event - when Joel is given a prompt to push the infected away.					



## Appendix C Session 1's Open-ended Interview Questions

1. Can you briefly tell me the story of the game you just played?
2. What does the gameplay consist of in this game?
3. What do you think is more important in this game: narrative or gameplay?
4. In general, do you play games for the story or for the gameplay?
5. Do you like the scripted game sequences, e.g. cutscenes or are they an annoying interruption of gameplay?
6. Do you like the gameplay or would you prefer a story that unfolds without giving you something to do to progress in the plot?
7. Are there moments when you think there is a conflict between gameplay and narrative? If so explain?
8. Do your actions make the story progress, or does it progress only in the scripted game sequences, e.g. cutscenes?
9. In narrative theory, event has been defined by Bal as a transition of one state to another, and by Rimmon-Kenan (1983:15) as a 'change from one state of affairs to another'. I have provided the formal definitions of event but these are not the only definitions. I would like you to:
  - a. Give me an example of a narrative event.
  - b. Give me an example of a gameplay event.
10. Discuss whether you are clearly able to see a divide between narrative and gameplay in the game. Please provide examples when
  - a. You feel there is a clear divide between narrative and gameplay.
  - b. You feel that narrative and gameplay cannot be separated.
11. If you are able to see a clear divide between the narrative and gameplay, do you find the narrative and gameplay complementing each other? OR do you feel that the narrative and gameplay are present in the game but exists independently?
12. When you are asked to make a narrative and/or gameplay choice, how do decide which option to choose? Narrative choice refers to the dialogue options in Mass Effect, or the narrative action that you choose to save or harvest The Little Sisters in Bioshock that has consequences on the storyline (ending). Gameplay choice refers to the action that you can choose in the gameworld such as harvesting The Little Sisters in Bioshock that has consequences on the gameplay, e.g. direct rewards when you harvest them instead of saving them. Discuss this in relation to the information provided to you from the game in terms of the language/audio and visuals.
13. Discuss whether narrative information provided to you in the game by the different characters influences you when making a gameplay choice. For instance, in Bioshock, when Tenenbaum asks you to save The Little Sisters, do you follow her advice and save them, or do you follow Atlas' advice and simply harvest them to get more direct gameplay reward?
14. Discuss whether gameplay information provided to you in the game influences you when making a narrative choice. For instance, in Bioshock, when the gameplay informs you that you will receive twice the amount of reward directly for harvesting a Little Sister, do you choose to harvest her instead of saving her?
15. Discuss how you feel about the making of narrative/gameplay choices in the gameworld when you feel that the narrative and gameplay are related to each other. Compare this to your experience of making narrative/gameplay choices when you feel that narrative and gameplay are unrelated to each other.



## Appendix D Coding

Transcript Number	Interview Transcription	Ludonarrative category/Player's experience/Analytical frame
3.1	So ya as in the that was one that was another situation where I felt a gameplay, a conflict between narrative and gameplay even though there are benefits for me like doing that quest but I don't think that the good Shepherd that I was trying to play er would have actually done such a er what do you call that? Erm er action. Er quest. Oki.	Dissonance - information
3.2	So I think the good Shepherd would turn the guy in because of all these er rules or the the things that he wasn't supposed to do. So sticky situation so I thought Shepherd would just ya er would get the person arrested. And and I did. I did played that even though personally, I wanted to find out more about the story but because I wanted to play a good Shepherd, I don't think he would do this thing that he will go on he will keep this quiet from the police.	Dissonance - information
3.3	In this case I was playing a the the good Shepherd, the paragon Shepherd. So I didn't think these are quests should be take up by Shepherd and continued and ya. As in even though I I I'm not sure whether I in the long run I suffered in terms of experience points but at least at that point in time, I I didn't feel like I don't think that Shepherd should have completed those quests.	Dissonance - information
3.4	Ya. Something like that but I didn't realise that there was a good option to do those quests also as in like for example, the let's say on the example, on the Citadel the the gambling, you supposed to help the person er tap tap the tap the gambling machine or something like that right? Ya then I realised that you you can actually accept that quest then you go to the instead of doing what the person says you go to the club owner as in ya club owner then you passed them the machine. So like you are turning you are you are turning the bad person in lah. So I didn't realise that there were good options of as in good ways paragon ways to also complete this bad quest. Initially, I thought the quests were quite linear like because he can actually tell you to do something, you didn't do that thing. So only on my second play through did I realise that you could approach it as in there was an option for you to still be good.	Dissonance - information
3.5	So once I realised that once I did get Wrex killed by choosing the calm down option, the white option even though it's called calm down, white option so in the end he gets killed, so I was like mm didn't really feel so I had so I replayed just that part so that and choose the blue option which I could	Dissonance - information

	erm in order to save Wrex so ya that's that's one part about the gameplay er conflict that I have.	
3.6	Oh playing the game I definitely thought about it a lot. I was thinking like oh this guy has a shotgun, he should be dropping shotgun ammo. He's no, he's dropping pistol ammo. And sometimes, he drops arrow. It's like it's kind of very weird and doesn't quite gel with everything else. But I see what they are trying to do. They are trying to control resources but it's just kind of annoying.	Dissonance – logical inconsistencies
3.7	So it was it's definitely a game that wants to that is trying to show that yes you have limited resources but at the same time, it is also saying that yes that's why you should play stealth and that's why you should do melee attacks you should conserve ammunition. But at the same time, erm they give you so much resources anyway that if you were to waste them all the way you are going to be full of everything. So I supposed maybe they are trying to force you that oh you have all these ammo, why not use it and shoot people? So I guess it sort of like trying to give you more variety but er in terms of showing the limited scarcity of the thing, at the start yes, it felt very little but later on it was kind of like no lah, they give you quite a lot of everything.	Dissonance – logical inconsistencies
3.8	It's more about it affects the atmosphere, not necessarily the narrative. It didn't really affect the narrative at all.	(Ir)relevance Consequence
3.9	I mean I guess they cannot really give me the control right? Since I wasn't fighting Andrew Ryan at that point. No ah at least at that point, I wasn't really like wanting the control. It was alright with what they give me. Ya...Because you see ah, it's like how I saw it was like Andrew Ryan was not the big bad guy already at that point lah. He wasn't the the biggest villain already. This whole thing it was Fontaine after the whole operation. So I didn't need to have that feeling of killing him. Like I didn't need it lah like because he wasn't the guy that I want to kill already.	Resonance
3.10	Ya like should I continue first or should I like listen to this first this sort of thing? Ya? If I continue, will it spoil whatever I was about to listen. If I listen would it spoil what I was about to do later, this sort of thing. I don't know. Something like that lah. Ya that part was so annoying. I was like I was squatting peacefully in a corner listening to my tape then some guy came up whoa.	Dissonance contrast
3.11	Yes, it is to simulate our actual conversation. If they, sometimes, in real life, when you are talking, sometimes they will expect people to answer fast. Sometimes, you have this pressure like if you don't, if you do not act natural, they will see something in you. It's sometimes, it's trying to simulate what happens in real life. That's what I am thinking. Especially for those especially for those pressing issues they will expect you to think fast, having street smart, that's what we call and...	Dissonance contrast – Incomplete information problems
3.12	Oh if I have known, if I have known, then it will make me hate that Andrew Ryan even much more right.	Dissonance contrast – Anagnorisis

3.13	I mean the Andrew Ryan is the character's father. Then he must come from somewhere what. Then this is the only where they come from what. So that is the only link I can make lah.	Dissonance contrast – Anagnorisis
3.14	It should be out of character lah.	Dissonance contrast – Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance
3.15	Ya but ya. But it will be very hard to make that Shepherd know and you don't know and try to solve the disjunction. Because there is already a disjunction. You can't exactly avoid it.	Dissonance contrast – Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance
3.16	I don't have either. Already cannot relate. Where's the garage. To us, where do you usually park your car?	Dissonance contrast – Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance
3.17	Interviewer: So do you mean that his motivation makes you curious about him? I mean when they don't tell you. When they don't reveal his full character?  Michael: er yes orh.  It motivates me to kill him at the earliest possible time.	Dissonance contrast – Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance  Resonance motivation
3.18	Ya. Eh no I did as in ya as in eventually, I realise that these are Ashley's weapons. So ya and because you you control as in the whole squad's items you carry right? So to me it's like this should be Ashley's weapons I think.	Dissonance negotiation
3.19	Interviewer: So when you interact with him that time, you know you get more emotional ah? Henry: Yes you... Interviewer: Because you also... Henry: You will feel more because you are more immersed into the the... Interviewer: The Lee's dialogue? Henry: Ya. Ya the Lee's dialogue. There is like it's like you imagine you you if that is you then you kill your own brother to get the keys very...	Resonance

	<p>Interviewer: It's very sad ah?</p> <p>Henry: It's very sad lah. It's very very sad lah so that is another case.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the gameplay makes you even more sad lah?</p> <p>Henry: er yeah.</p>	
3.20	<p>Okay. Ya so to comment on the relationship between gameplay and narrative I guess one of the things I noticed was that erm the the narrative part about this been a post-apocalyptic environment. And er you twenty years after the I don't know organised ah having a structured a proper civilisation. So basically like all your stuff you have no stuff. You have to scavenge for your stuff. So that incorporates into the gameplay about having to find all these items and crafting on this crafting and especially when you find you don't find stuff like one complete blade or one full binding and so on. But you actually find like pieces like half a blade, one quarter of a blade and and so on explosives, sugar all these. So this this kind of plays into the narrative about there's a lack of proper equipment so people need to like craft things out of using er what they can scavenge. That ya so that's one. The the pills I guess is like not your normal level up stuff. And also another part about gameplay is that ah.</p>	Resonance
3.21	<p>Oh ya, and one one realistic thing is you can't like like bring I don't know like you can't find and store ninety nine blades. You can only have three full blades and then if you find anymore anything else you can er you you can't carry them. So you need to like craft and use your stuff. So craft it er encourages you to er actually use the stuff and explore around so you have an easier time so like if you really don't want to spend all that time slowly clearing a group, you can just molotov them or something and so on.</p>	Resonance
3.22	<p>Ya. So another part is about about the ammo. Because like for example, ya like my my shotgun only has eight bullets so I need to be careful with my shots. I can't just go in and shoot and keep shooting and keep missing. So willing to make sure the the ammunition er counts. Okay ya like this one I only got twenty one bullets given given for pistol. Ya. So as in I guess these elements are the gameplay the the narrative elements about there it been a scarce world and all that. That that plays into the gameplay. I guess.</p>	Resonance
3.23	<p>Ya so guess another one is that erm the as you can see from me fighting the humans just now, they were a lot smarter. They won't come straight at you. They will try to flank you. Come from the side or take cover and all that so you kind of need to outsmart them. Compared to the zombies where if they see you, they just go in a straight path. It's very easy to like er bait them to go somewhere by breaking a bottle then most of them will just go straight to the sound. So those are some er narrative</p>	Resonance

	elements that play into the gameplay as well.	
3.24	<p>Nasir: Ya. Ya I guess that that part of the gameplay complements the as in it's it's integrated well with the narrative because you are carrying her so that so as in...</p> <p>Interviewer: It's building up the narrative.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya it really build as in ya correct. Builds up the narrative.</p>	Resonance
3.25	<p>As far as I am concerned, the entire prologue has no gameplay. You just go from point A to point B. You don't have any choice. I mean you can see where to look but you don't do anything besides that. Like I said, it's a interactive cutscene.</p>	Resonance
3.26	<p>Interviewer: Can I say that the narrative in this part is telling you the gameplay objective that you have to complete in this chapter?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then is it also giving you some hints that there's some enemies here to face? Like the entities.</p> <p>Michael: Ya. This is the first time the entities from the rift came out.</p>	Resonance motivation
3.27	<p>Loke: Ya ya ya ya ya. In a way. In a way lah. Because like from the storyline, you know roughly how the Big Daddy will react. So like erm before you actually engage in the gameplay, before you actually engage the Big Daddy then you will for me, all I did was I hid behind the bar counter. Then I jump up er across then I hid under the that er before I even attacked the before I attacked him, he's going to be neutral what. Only when I attack him then he will react. So...</p>	Resonance guidance
3.28	<p>Michael: Progression should be se- it's more sequential it should be ah. It's for casual gamer.</p> <p>Interviewer: So that means does it mean that it's more guided?</p> <p>Michael: It is more guided yes it was supposed to be ah.</p>	Resonance guidance
3.29	<p>Ya. Cos I thought it was quite hard to use. And it covers half of my screen so I'm very annoyed lah like it's very hard to see what's happening but ya eventually, I realised how good it was lah then I just used them.</p>	Resonance metaphor

3.30	Yes. Because because you saw the Clicker erm you had to interact with it by moving it off the wall. Erm and then Tess also gave me information after Ellie asked her what that was. Erm and it told you that what it was and how it functions. Because they were talking about runners been able to see erm and hear but Clickers can't see and can't hear and then use echolocation and that was revealed in that sequence. Or that gameplay action.	Resonance metaphor
3.31	<p>Michael: For <i>Beyond: Two Souls</i> hor if you forgot about a control hor...</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: That's it leh.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because they are not consistent?</p> <p>Michael: They will not they have no affordance to tell you what to do.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because they only give it at at the beginning?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p>	Resonance metaphor
3.32	And also the way the you know the the the the the crafting system works where you have to collect different items. I really hated that part because you er at first I thought it was like you know you have the three you have like the three items. If you picked up an item, it represents one piece but later on I figured out that when you picked up something, it only fills up a part of that particular circle or whatever it is that we are using that pie chart thing it will segment so you will have to pick like three scissors to count as one scissors. Something like that which I thought was a really silly system. Because it was difficult to read, it was difficult to ascertain it. And it was just generally erm ya it was difficult to account for the amount of stuff you use and you found so found so much stuff in the world anyway. Ya so it was how it is.	Resonance metaphor
3.33	<p>Interviewer: Do you find that that part has any connection to the story in the sense that she was taking care of Joel when he was injured? Or do you see...</p> <p>Alice: I don't know if it is a narrative in that. I would probably suggest more of a gameplay event because it is teaching you how to use the health kit.</p>	Resonance metaphor

3.34	Maybe at that point in time it makes sense for her to pass you the health kit. Because the explosion just occurred. You probably got injured, etc, etc. So only because of the context of that particular context that it becomes more related to the narrative.	Resonance metaphor
3.35	er ya maybe it shouldn't be a narrative event. Ya but okay maybe I should change that. It's not a narrative event. It's just a tutorial to how to use med kits. So ya I wouldn't okay then it's not a narrative event. So ya that's that.	Resonance metaphor
3.36	Ya it's kind of forcing you in into feeling a certain way. Because Ellie since she doesn't have a lot of weapons, she's ill equipped like you are being forced to play more stealthily and more conservatively and sneak around. Rather than Joel you can just go and you know, shoot people because he already has ammunition. He has weapons. So...	Resonance metaphor
3.37	Ya it's like they are trying to intersect ya the story and the gameplay lah like trying to show how ya lah you need the freaking Lot 192 or something like that lah. It was so annoying. I was so angry with that part but ya lah ya lah, that part was really tough in my opinion. Mm. Because every time they changed, you would automatically switch to a plasmid thing which it might not be a a fighting plasmid at that moment. So I keep attacking the Big Daddy with the stupid plasmid which doesn't help. So it was very annoying at that part. But er tension okay lah. I guess they are just trying to link lah the gameplay and the narrative at that part. Make the link even clearer. But tension not so much ah.	Resonance Metaphor      Semiotic
3.38	<p>Alice: erm ya because you see him run off so you know you have to chase him because your whole point was to find Robert. Erm but I did not know that you could lose Robert. I thought that sometimes because you know sometimes games they wait for you to trigger something? So the first time round, I hesitated, I went back and then the game ended. Because it said that Robert got away. So that's when I knew for sure that you have to go after Robert.</p> <p>Interviewer: It doesn't tell you there's a timed gameplay event?</p> <p>Alice: It did not tell you there is a timed gameplay event. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So that part it's only telling you the gameplay goal? Is to go after Robert?</p> <p>Alice: Yes. But it didn't tell you that it was timed ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: The timed event is another separated gameplay event?</p>	Resonance Metaphor      Semiotic

	Alice: Ya I mean you learnt that quickly in the game. Kind of ends and then it tells you.	
3.39	I it's quite balanced. The story is went pretty quickly. It doesn't really take time to slow down or stop or pause. Er it's pretty much go go go. Erm and so the gameplay is definitely helps in terms of moving the narrative forward.	Resonance Balance
3.40	<p>Interviewer: Do you think there is some long term consequence like some of the choices you make in <i>Mass Effect 1</i> carry on to <i>Mass Effect 2</i> ah?</p> <p>Michael: I think so. But it's about stats only what.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm do you think there's also some story consequence ah?</p> <p>Michael: I don't think so. I don't remember lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. Because I read that some choices you make in <i>Mass Effect 1</i> like you don't kill the Asari commando on on Ferros ah, she will continue to appear on <i>Mass Effect 2</i>.</p> <p>Michael: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Something like that lah.</p> <p>Michael: Okay. I would not have known that unless I read the game FAQ.</p> <p>Interviewer: FAQ. Mm. So you are more clear on the gameplay consequence?</p> <p>Michael: I think so. Because I wouldn't have known that.</p>	Resonance Consequence
3.41	<p>Interviewer: Do you think that if she is not allowed to go out, there will be a different outcome in the narrative ah? I mean if she's not if she doesn't meet the person in the bar that wants to do something to her, then in the next Chapter, she will be able to have a better date with Ryan?</p> <p>Michael: I don't think it will have any effect ah.</p>	Resonance Consequence



	<p>Interviewer: For you, you don't think ah?</p> <p>Michael: Don't think. There's clearly, there is clear quite clear that at this point right? Whatever choices you make will not affect other Chapters ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: But this is the only choice that will affect the other Chapters ah.</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because if she doesn't go out, then she can have sex with Ryan in the next Chapter.</p> <p>Michael: That one I won't know right?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. Unless you read the FAQ.</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p>	
3.42	<p>Interviewer: Ya. Did you think that this part there will have an outcome in the narrative or do you think that...</p> <p>Loke: Ya I think there will have an outcome in the narrative.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you you will you think that you will make it the bad ending ah?</p> <p>Loke: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: But in actual fact, there's no outcome.</p> <p>Loke: Ya. I didn't know. Just keep reloading.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm oki.</p>	(Ir)relevance Consequence
3.43	<p>Okay the actually, in <i>Mass Effect</i>, the more you get engaged in the narrative, the more advantage you will have over in the game eh. Ya so like just now, I saved the person, during the deployment,</p>	Resonance Causality

	the outing, during the FPS time, I actually get more grenades. So it's actually encouraging me to do a lot of things outside the FPS at the normal storyline. To get all those like extra grenades, extra clothes, extra equipments.	
3.44	<p>Michael: Okay. The right one is a gameplay. The left one is a narrative. I think...because if you continue playing right, if you choose the right hand side, some options will disappear. If you choose the left hand side, it will always be there. So the left hand side ones are information. The right hand side be has a direct impact ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the right hand side is more optional?</p> <p>Michael: Yes, more of gameplay. Usually lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the left hand is the major arc lah.</p> <p>Michael: The left hand the middle is information.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: The top and the left hand top and the bottom usually are paragon or renegade choices.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the left hand is more narrative ah?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p>	Resonance Causality (explicit)
3.45	<p>Interviewer: Do you find that when he dies, the gameplay was harder? Or?</p> <p>Nasir: Not really. Ya not really. As in if it did get harder, I didn't notice. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because you didn't play the other pathway?</p> <p>Nasir: er ya I wasn't aware there were multiple pathways so for whether he lives or dies so ya.</p>	Resonance causality (implicit)
3.46	Henry: It's like you imagine you if that is you then you you kill your own brother to get the keys very it's very sad lah. It's very very sad what. So that is another case.	Resonance Integration Parallelism

	<p>Interviewer: So the gameplay makes you even more sad lah?</p> <p>Henry: er yeah.</p>	
3.47	<p>Ya. I need to focus on the gameplay I get distracted. Then she cry I was like it was a very touching scene but I don't feel like crying because I was all too frustrated after pressing all the buttons. It's a distraction lah. The narrative lah. Can't concentrate on the narrative.</p>	(Ir)relevance    Gameplay Focus
3.48	<p>Interviewer: Do you find the story pushing you in a good or evil direction?</p> <p>Mary: I don't know leh maybe it's just me lah but I feel like you know you see how like the way Tenenbaum is like pleading you at that point. Give them a second life and everything like that and her her own motherly change and everything like that. It just shows you have to save the Little Sisters. I mean I don't know if people would still harvest after listening to what she say or not. I mean ya. Probably in that sense, it's pushing you towards the so called good side lah. But ya lor. I mean if they wanted to push you to the evil side, maybe like they can have some maybe Atlas can keep telling you like oh maybe you should kill them to get more stuff.</p> <p>Interviewer: But...</p> <p>Mary: Because he only said that at the beginning lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: But you don't you don't follow Atlas' advice ah.</p> <p>Mary: Ya he only said it one time lah he didn't constantly tell me to do that which means... I mean it shows that actually because Tenenbaum is continuously but not Atlas.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think it's pushing you more in the good direction?</p> <p>Mary: In a sense ya I feel.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you are thinking this also helps your gameplay ah?</p> <p>Mary: mm. Ya lah it guides me in that sense. But okay lah personally I would have save them anyway lah so...</p>	Resonance Prominence

3.49	No, I didn't take notice. I didn't take notice. That's why because you see ah I was focused on the gameplay what so I didn't take note that the code was actually playing in the background.	(Ir)relevance – Gameplay Focus
3.50	<p>Interviewer: But this part how come you fail to protect Jodie ah?</p> <p>Michael: Because the camera angle went ki siao [Hokkien term which means crazy].</p> <p>Interviewer: So you don't know what to do lah?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so you cannot see the blue colour thing?</p> <p>Michael: Ya. That's what happened mah.</p> <p>Interviewer: On the crazy people, there's blue colour orbs.</p> <p>Michael: No, I can see but after I fought the first person, I looked up at the sky. And that's it lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: er...</p> <p>Michael: Ah you go back. It's a key framing ah. You go back some more. Ah oki. So you see ah. So I fought the first one ah. The second one I missed him mah. Then that's it lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: Is it because you accidentally look at the sky?</p> <p>Michael: Ya. Yes. You tell me what do I press to trigger the two things? Which button?</p> <p>Interviewer: So that means the reaction is not fast enough ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ya you must stare at the thing right?</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p>	(Ir)relevance – Gameplay Focus

	<p>Michael: It's not so clear also you know? The you need to stare at the thing. For the two orbs to come up. Because usually the two orbs will come up automatically mah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So can I say that the narrative is clear er clearly linked to the gameplay but...</p> <p>Michael: The narrative is clearly linked to the part that I need to take action.</p> <p>Interviewer: But...</p> <p>Michael: It doesn't tell me take what action.</p>	
3.51	<p>Interviewer: You said there's a box on top of the cupboard there. When Jodie was very young that time.</p> <p>Matt: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: But then you press the X thing and then...</p> <p>Matt: Like eh never mind.</p> <p>Interviewer: You cannot you cannot open the box.</p> <p>Matt: Huh?</p> <p>Interviewer: But actually, you can use Aiden to...</p> <p>Matt: Knock open the box ah?</p> <p>Interviewer: Interact with the box and then use Aiden to have a flashback.</p> <p>Matt: Oh you can?</p>	(Ir)relevance: Incomplete Information Problems

	<p>Interviewer: For Jodie. And then you can get more backstory.</p> <p>Matt: Oh I didn't know that.</p>	
3.52	<p>Interviewer: This part you mentioned that Shepherd was a fugitive running away from the law but the story still like progress like Shepherd hasn't done anything wrong ah.</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you find the conflict between the gameplay given by the side quests?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: So there's a conflict ah.</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p>	Ludonarrative Dissonance Balance
3.53	<p>Interviewer: When these people don't want to tell you. When they asked you to go and speak with another person, er how is your experience ah? When they don't want to tell you everything. About the place. Erm does it motivate you to go to that person?</p> <p>Michael: It doesn't motivate me to. It forces me to.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it's er restricting your gameplay action ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: But do you feel curious?</p> <p>Michael: No. I feel pissed off. I don't feel curious.</p>	Dissonance Demotivation
3.54	<p>Interviewer: So you find the cutscene too long in <i>The Last of Us</i>, is it ah?</p> <p>Walter: No, I don't think they are too long. They are too long if you are playing it again and you can't skip them of course lah that'll be too long. Because you have already seen it.</p>	Resonance Balance

	<p>Interviewer: So the first time the balance is quite good lah?</p> <p>Walter: It's alright. It's not too bad.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p>	
3.55	<p>Interviewer: Do you know why you get +9 renegade points and +8 paragon after you killed the husked Saren?</p> <p>Michael: I have no idea.</p> <p>Interviewer: Why is it that you get both?</p> <p>Michael: I have no idea.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm</p> <p>Michael: I didn't read it up ah so...</p> <p>Interviewer: So the outcome is not clear?</p> <p>Michael: No.</p>	Resonance (unexplained) causality
3.56	<p>Interviewer: But in this sense, er the question I'm asking is that were they trying to put the story together also with the gameplay?</p> <p>Jim: No, I don't feel a tint of a story at all. In fact, it's so dissociate this part. Everyone just stand there. It's just a fight. That's it. No more. Nothing more. Nothing less.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya I mean the part when Lily shoots that part is also not story ah? To you ah?</p> <p>Jim: er...</p>	(Ir)relevance    gameplay focus

	<p>Interviewer: It's also gameplay?</p> <p>Jim: Ways to means to an end I guess.</p>	
3.57	<p>Interviewer: So this part of the gameplay do you find it quite interesting ah?</p> <p>Mary: Ya. I was quite...it's counter-intuitive like you know usually, you have to "Q" [refers to quicktime gameplay action] like mad but then for this part, you shouldn't "Q" like mad.</p> <p>Interviewer: So does it give you like a kind of emotional engagement ah?</p> <p>Mary: Em- I won't say emotional engagement. It was just more refreshing lah like a change in the game, the way the game works. But then...</p> <p>Interviewer: It's trying to...integrate the gameplay into the story?</p> <p>Mary: Ya. Like ya what you said.</p>	<p>Resonance    Parallelism Integration</p>
3.58	<p>Henry: Ah the because you already know that got something wrong with the farm. You already know what what what the Saint John brothers doing already. Then this farm is fucked up then...it's just erm gameplay to...the narration is they got narration but it's not not as strong as before. Like cos you already know all of that all all of things before already what. Then is now is just er...</p> <p>Interviewer: The boss fight ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ah like the boss fight ah. Getting the the getting past them lah. Ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you see any narrative in this part ah?</p> <p>Henry: Narrative?</p> <p>Interviewer: Or is it entirely gameplay?</p> <p>Henry: I narrative ah? Very little.</p>	<p>Dissonance imbalance</p>



	<p>Interviewer: Like when Lily saves you, is it a gameplay or narrative?</p> <p>Henry: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: When you let go.</p> <p>Henry: Orh that is...</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you see it still as a gameplay or narrative?</p> <p>Henry: It's it's narrative lah. But compared to the entire thing, it's the narrative is very small.</p>	
3.59	<p>Jim: It's smoky. So mm gameplay supporting narrative. Ya this part you ya you need to click to get over it to get more story because for this particular background right? They don't give you much. So in for the entire game right? It's not always narrative support gameplay or gameplay support narrative. It depends on how much they willing to tell you. That's what I am thinking. I felt I don't know much until I clicked on Lee's brother. And he just simply said, "I'm sorry" blah blah blah. "I know you take care of parent." Even so, these few sentences don't talk much. He just there to, you know try to forget them. Honestly, I don't know what's wrong with these four people. What makes them so cynical, I guess.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it's not really gameplay supporting story or story supporting gameplay?</p> <p>Jim: Gameplay more towards supporting narrative for this part.</p> <p>Interviewer: For this part ah?</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's still together with the story ah?</p> <p>Jim: It's relevant but it feels like the gameplay dominates because the narrative wasn't that clear to</p>	Resonance Motivation

	<p>be able it doesn't doesn't I don't choose that because I know about happened. I choose that because I want to know what happened.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm so in a sense, it's also motivating you to find out more about the story?</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p>	
3.60	<p>Interviewer: Do you think the characterization of the characters is very realistic in this game?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because the characters are not one dimensional?</p> <p>Nasir: mm hmm. As in like I can see some character development like like how Joel changes as the game goes along. How how like you see different sides of Tess. Ya you see different sides of David. Er you see different sides of Henry and Sam. So ya. Because they they do spend some time developing the characters. So that's why it's less one dimensional.</p> <p>Interviewer: Is it because they also have some kind of flaw? That's why they look more realistic ah? In the narrative.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya I guess so. Ya as in you know all of them have flaws so ya. As in I guess you can relate to them better. As in it gives you a better a a more whole picture of the character. Rather than just a one-dimensional individual.</p>	Resonance Motivation – emotional proximity
3.61	<p>Walter: mm. Basically, okay I will say that the characters have motivations. The characters have characterisations. They have emotions.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Walter: That I find believable.</p> <p>Interviewer: In their world lah.</p> <p>Walter: Yes. I can buy into it.</p>	Resonance Motivation – emotional proximity

	<p>Interviewer: Because the story is quite well done for you lah.</p> <p>Walter: Yes. It's crafted quite well. Written quite well.</p> <p>Interviewer: They giving a lot of motivations for the characters main characters.</p> <p>Walter: Yes.</p>	
3.62	<p>Interviewer: And then one of the parts er before you reached the place where Tess was killed. Ellie was telling you that she cannot swim.</p> <p>Alice: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: The part you find that it's a story info ah?</p> <p>Alice: There's definitely narrative info. Because we don't have I don't have to carry her across any sort of water but it kind of set up everything that happened afterwards.</p> <p>Interviewer: It tells about the future gameplay mechanic?</p> <p>Alice: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay. So in this way, the story and gameplay is together?</p> <p>Alice: mm. In the scene where she's giving that information where she can't swim, I think it's a purely narrative thing.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya but it's only connected to the later gameplay events.</p> <p>Alice: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Where Joel has to ferry her across the water.</p>	Resonance Prominence

	Alice: Ya.	
3.63	<p>Interviewer: Do you think another good feature about <i>The Last of Us</i> is that it is very realistic in terms of the character portrayal?</p> <p>Alice: I thought it was quite realistic ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Like all the characters are very morally ambiguous. Like the...</p> <p>Alice: Ya. I thought that it was very accurate in terms of depicting humans because it didn't really depict humans as...</p> <p>Interviewer: One dimensional?</p> <p>Alice: One dimensional. Even with the cannibals right? Which you know is a very bad thing in rural society. You can see kind of why they went in that direction because...</p> <p>Interviewer: They are driven to that...</p> <p>Alice: Ya because they were forced to in order to survive, they needed to eat something.</p>	Resonance Motivation – emotional proximity
3.64	<p>Interviewer: Were you feeling quite sad when you killed Lee's brother?</p> <p>Jim: I just find it, honestly, a bit annoyed. Annoyed. What's wrong with your family? Ya er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Because there were some participants saying that they feel quite sad ah.</p> <p>Jim: I feel annoyed. I don't know what makes Lee want to screw his life so badly and they don't talk much about it. So I'm more annoyed than sad.</p> <p>Interviewer: But you still feel some kind of feeling lah.</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p>	Resonance Motivation

	<p>Interviewer: Just different emotions ah? Jim: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: But the gameplay and story is still together in this part? Jim: Ya although not as close as some other parts.</p>	
3.65	<p>Interviewer: Okay so the narrative is quite separated from the gameplay? Loke: As in I I did make the effort to remember but I think at that point in time, I was deciding is it worth trying to remember? Interviewer: I think you have to write down. Loke: I wrote down somewhere and then after that, it was like never mind, I should just hack it lah. Interviewer: mm. Loke: It's more fun to hack then to remember this. Interviewer: Ya remembering is more tedious ah like studying.</p>	(Ir)relevance – Gameplay Focus
3.66	<p>Interviewer: This part when Jenkins die... Michael: mm. Interviewer: In the cutscene ah. Michael: mm. Interviewer: Do you find a conflict between the gameplay where squad mates can be revived but Jenkins cannot be revived?</p>	Dissonance Negotiation

	<p>Michael: er there's no conflict.</p> <p>Interviewer: No conflict ah?</p> <p>Michael: Obviously he dies specially.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: They created a cutscene for him to die.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you don't think he can be revived ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ya.</p>	
3.67	<p>Interviewer: There's a part at the beginning of the game where Jenkins died ah...</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: In the cutscene but in the gameplay, when your other squad mates die, they can be revived. Do you find a conflict between the story and the gameplay?</p> <p>Nasir: A bit like yah as in now that you mentioned it yah as in like how come you can't revive Jenkins and you can revive everybody else. So yah I guess so. Yah but as in er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Is it because Mass Effect the game is about personalisation lah...</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: So when it takes control away from your character, you find that there's some kind of conflict?</p> <p>Nasir: A bit I guess yah. But as in I guess deep down when I was playing that, it didn't occur to me initially because I knew they were just making room for another character. As in but I didn't realise</p>	Dissonance Negotiation

	<p>that Jenkins and also I didn't realise that Jenkins like it didn't occur to me that yah you can revive everybody else but you can't revive Jenkins. Yah and also I guess because the only experience you had with Jenkins is like one dialogue as in as in three lah as in you talked to him like three different dialogues. But other than that, you don't interact with him anymore so his loss doesn't feel as er his loss doesn't feel as heavy as let's say losing Kaidan or Ashley as in having to make that choice. So yah.</p>	
3.68	<p>In the last interview, you mentioned that Tess' sacrifice does not cause you to fight harder in the gameplay. I would like to ask though whether her sacrifice in the cutscene motivates you in the gameplay to continue escorting Ellie to Tommy.</p> <p>Nasir's email reply: As for whether Tess' sacrifice motivates me to continue escorting Ellie to Tommy's, her sacrifice doesn't really motivate me even though she was an interesting character and I was sad that she died quite early in the game. I was motivated to find out how the story continued, which motivated me to keep playing.</p>	Resonance Motivation
3.69	<p>Interviewer: Ya. So when he used this Code Yellow to lower your health ah? Does it influence your gameplay?</p> <p>Peter: Yes, it makes you it makes me more anxious to find the antidote so that I will er so that my life will not be lowered anymore.</p>	Resonance Motivation
3.70	<p>Okay, my number one criteria would be time, my actual real time and how much time I have for this game. And it also depends on that game itself. If that game doesn't offer me much. Typically only see myself continue the story. There are some games that are quite, okay funny like Grand Theft Auto V, Grand Theft Auto in general. Well you can choose to play story or you can just, you know, run around shooting people, blow up stuff, that would be gameplay choice. If they put steam achievement that says blow up one hundred police cars for example, yes. Outside the story mission, I will just do it. It depends. It depends how they design the game. And how much time I have. Er and whether or not I am attracted to their gameplay choice their mechanism. If it is not GTA V, mm if it is not GTA, maybe I will do less of the gameplay choice. Er and as for <i>Walking Dead</i>, I don't see any opportunity for that. So it's just continue the story, continue the story. Reading like a book.</p> <p>Jim: Mainly of what I would do as with my own personality in real life. And at times, once in a</p>	Player's experience – player's skill level; game guides and walkthroughs

	<p>while, actually I have this urge to look at walkthroughs on google. Because of gameplay, because of what I will get maybe a particular weapon I will get later if I choose this conversation. This and that and maybe make friends with one particular yeah <b>I actually have this urge of looking at walkthrough. But I'll try not to. If you look at walkthrough too much, you have a lot of spoilers</b> so a little bit of instinct, mainly of what I will probably do in real life. Er some yeah yeah there are actually some experience in other games that I will use here and a little bit of walkthrough but I will try to minimise the walkthrough. Yes. Then in terms of age, children are always a priority. Then er friends and family are priority. Top two priority. Then the third type of priority would be how much of erm but you cannot really say that these priorities are isolated from each other. I'll have to consider them all. There will be some priorities that overwrites other priorities but there will be some scenarios those priorities actually depend on each other. Overwrite each other sometimes.</p>	
3.71	<p>Interviewer: So erm you will still want to replay the game to see your other choices?</p> <p>Jim: If I have time but by default, I will choose according to my what I think. Unless unless I know a big deal about the character, how he behaves maybe I'll just follow his.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so you mean that...</p> <p>Jim: Ya I always put creator's priority before my desire, priority so meant for us to play like them, we play like them. That is just me.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay. So you mean...</p> <p>Jim: If Lee Everett behaves this way, I'll follow his psychology. But if Lee is designed to take up our gamer's personality, he doesn't have his own, he has that's when I'll play like my own.</p>	Player's experience – personality factors
3.72	<p>Interviewer: So do you think when you interact with the characters, do you want to try to make the story like the same as the tv series or what?</p> <p>Aloy: Well, no because okay honestly, when I know the tv series right then I see certain characters say or do certain things right, I personally feel that I will have done it differently. So these games like like The Walking Dead, the game itself allows me to do that different way ah.</p>	Player's experience – personality factors



	<p>Interviewer: Okay so you like the different choices ah.</p> <p>Aloy: Ya.</p>	
3.73	<p>Interviewer: This part you talked about er if you let the squad members die, then your relationship point with them in the narrative will decrease ah?</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm do you do you mean that it also occurs in Mass Effect ah? Or is it only Mass Effect 2? This...</p> <p>Michael: The...</p> <p>Interviewer: er is it also in Mass Effect ah?</p> <p>Michael: I can't remember.</p> <p>Interviewer: I'm not very sure.</p> <p>Michael: Ya I also not very sure but I think it will be ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because it's not very explicit ah.</p> <p>Michael: Ya so it doesn't affect a lot lah but it will affect it. That's all I remember.</p>	<p>Player's experience – prior experience of gaming</p>
3.74	<p>Interviewer: But then after you have played one time ah, after you know everything already, then then you which what what information do you use to decide? Or is it based on your prior gameplay experience ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: er as in personally, okay, I've I've read up on Bioshock so I know like what happens, whichever way you go. So like erm firstly, I I know what it looks like to kill a little girl, kill a Little Sister. I I watched it online, I didn't play through the game. And I read up so I know that for the fact that saving in the end, gives more. So like knowing that, once you play through the game, it's like it</p>	<p>Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs</p>

	<p>makes more sense to harvest lah because you are doing the morally wrong thing and in the long run you are getting less so ya based on that, that's my decision lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya so you used both the story information and gameplay information to make the choice?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya.</p>	
3.75	<p>Interviewer: So in general, er do you play games for story or gameplay? I think you play for gameplay.</p> <p>John: Ya gameplay.</p> <p>Interviewer: er is there any specific reason why why you prefer gameplay? Is it you like the fast paced action?</p> <p>John: mm I prefer to like see more of the effects, the skills and the things rather than to read a story. Generally, I don't really like to er read story when I play game. (Laughs).</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>John: Usually I if I want to go for the story, I will go for a movie or something. Rather than play game.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p>	(Ir)relevance gameplay focus
3.76	<p>Interviewer: So in general, do you play games for the story or gameplay?</p> <p>Nasir: erm more for the story. Like like at least at least cos when I played <i>World of Warcraft</i>, I do read the quest texts ah. Unless I happened to have already played that that particular quest before then maybe I would go faster and but usually I will I will actually read the quest texts one. And find out what's ya what was the story behind it so for for me when I play games, in general, ya I like the story that's why I like to like just now I was exploring backstory more so ya. I like to do that kind of thing in games.</p>	(Ir)relevance narrative focus
3.77	<p>Interviewer: So generally, do you play games for the story or gameplay? Or is it do you like both?</p>	Player's experience –

	<p>Alice: I think it has to be both because I think that if it is just one or the other, I will get really bored. Erm it's the same way that I don't play like Mario every day. Because that's purely just gameplay er there's another question why I don't play like <i>Beyond: Two Souls</i> every day. Because that's more story than anything else. Er so I think that all the games that I really enjoy playing have a good balance of both. So it gives me a choice of whether I want to focus more on gameplay er by doing certain things. Or focus on narrative by itself.</p>	Play style preferences
3.78	<p>Jim: Besides the time limit, something else to help me make choices. Actually, there's this one thing in options where they can open, it's called game hint. So sometimes, if you choose one particular conversation, choose one sentence, choose what to answer like sometimes, the game will just tell you okay, Carley will remember that which means you need to think carefully of all these choices, what would they think of you, in the future. And what happens if something happened they which means what you say may possibly be used against you or to help you.</p> <p>Interviewer: So do you mean that you will switch on the AI helper or you can choose standard or?</p> <p>Jim: Oh oh oh I chose to switch it off. The very first time I play.</p> <p>Interviewer: So how does it affect your making decision? Is it easier or?</p> <p>Jim: Ya you have to think even more like Lee Everett. You have to be even more immersed. Too many hints and you feel like that's easy, I don't feel like okay I'm in the story, I just click whatever I like. Or that's not me actually but I assume there will be some gamers that will do that. They will need hints to help to immerse but after one gameplay, I don't make auto reloads. Now you make auto links. Everything is turned off. I am that gamer type.</p>	Player's experience – Player's skill level
3.79	<p>Henry: mm, choose a display style. Well, that time I tried minimal which was totally it turned off all the hints. And you know quite hard to find so let's just go for standard where they will give me all the all the erm hints and choices.</p>	Player's experience – Player's skill level; game guides and walkthroughs
3.80	<p>Interviewer: er this prompt do you see it...do you see these choices as prompts in the narrative that is hinting to you that you still have to do something in the gameplay using Aiden? I mean is this when they give you this narrative choice, is it helping guiding you in the narr er in the gameplay?</p>	Resonance Guidance

	<p>Michael: Yes. But before that, the narrative already say to disable the camera mah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm so the narrative is helping in this part.</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p>	
3.81	<p>Mary: Ya ya ya it's quite interesting because the fact that I know what would happen if I supported Kenny lah. <b>It's like because I I saw before gameplay and they chose Kenny ah certain people chose to support Kenny ah which means Lee will actually smash Larry's head lah. But then at the back, Lily refused to move but it was Kenny that saved him. So like I said again, the story won't have any major changes lah but it just depends on the which character does it lor like who you would be closer to in the end lah.</b> But I felt that at that point, it was more correct in the sense to help Larry lah because although Larry is a dick and everything but then like as Lily explains it like I feel like I could sympathise lah although Larry is quite mean to Lee lah but then ya I feel like I could understand what. So it's like it's not logical to just kill him like that lah. Oh wow.</p>	<p>Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs</p>
3.82	<p>Interviewer: Where he tries to kill you by reducing your health, at timed intervals throughout the game ah.</p> <p>John: Ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Does it increase the tension in the gameplay ah?</p> <p>John: Oh...</p> <p>Interviewer: When you try to find the cure for your condition ah?</p> <p>John: A bit lah a bit.</p> <p>Interviewer: Like do you were you afraid that you were going to die already?</p> <p>John: Ya but...</p> <p>Interviewer: Or it doesn't matter to you?</p>	<p>Resonance Motivation</p>

	<p>John: But maybe if they put a timed limit down there, you know then maybe you scared more.  Interviewer: But if put the time limit there, will be not be very realistic ah?</p> <p>John: (Laughs) Then you die then you have to go back to the save lah like...</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>John: Like you know the Fontaine boss, they are also don't allow you to save what. Same thing what, they can do that.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So er does it create more tension for you in this part?</p> <p>John: A bit lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Does it create more tension in the gameplay?</p> <p>John: A bit, they would need to, if you want to really create more tension, maybe they will have to make the background like look a bit blur something. Not enough ah. Only a bit.</p>	
3.83	<p>Interviewer: So in Walking Dead, you find the narrative more important than the story er than the gameplay ah?</p> <p>Henry: erm because if there is no er narrative ah or if you don't understand the narrative right? Then it will you won't really you won't really know what to look out for in the entire game.</p>	(Ir)relevance – narrative focus
3.84	<p>Henry: er I would prefer that lah. Er If I have to make a choice, then I say yes lah those with story. Is probably better lah. But I can play both lah. I can play I can play.</p> <p>Interviewer: But more but generally, you you like those with story more?</p> <p>Henry: Ya lah. Ya ya.</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences
3.85	<p>Henry: I I thought that it was going to rain. Because got the got the thunder.</p> <p>Interviewer: You thought it was going to rain?</p>	Resonance Prominence

	<p>Henry: I thought it was going to rain.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so you were quite scared that the walkers will discover you ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya when it rained, then it washed off the blood what then they...</p> <p>Interviewer: So you you you feel that you have to quickly progress the game.</p> <p>Henry: Ya. This one I feel that I have to quickly progress the game.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the narrative is motivating the gameplay?</p> <p>Henry: Ya okay.</p>	
3.86	<p>Henry: Ya like okay like for example, erm erm I think er as in I think the fifth episode ah when Kenny died, as in after that I went to I went to to see see another ending. As in after I finished the thing I went to see another ending.</p>	<p>Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs</p>
3.87	<p>Henry: Is ya is it's probably more of er I I use experience from like life because some events you you see or some you see tv or you watch drama.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: Or you see some other video game, then you will know that er like he looks evil then maybe shouldn't trust him that kind. Ah something like that lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's your general...</p> <p>Henry: It's just a general...</p> <p>Interviewer: Life experience?</p> <p>Henry: Ya probably just general thing so...</p>	<p>Player's experience – prior experience of gaming</p>

3.88	<p>Interviewer: Do you find that the narrative and gameplay they influenced each other? Or is it so far it's quite separated? After you finished the game?</p> <p>Henry: I thought after I finished the game ah?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya I mean when you choose the choices, does it change the gameplay? Or is it er still the same ah?</p> <p>Henry: er it got it does affect lah. Confirm affect one lah. As in like er the...</p> <p>Interviewer: It affects is in terms of the character's reaction to you ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. In terms of the characters' reactions. Like the relationship lah like whether you choose one then after that you side with one, the other one will not not very nice. Then both will affect lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: They will affect each other is more in terms of the the story sense ah because this game is very story focused.</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Just in terms of story lor cos as in the story is like for example how how the thing turns out to be what so ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's mostly the relationship.</p> <p>Henry: Ya more of the relationship.</p>	Resonance Consequence/Contingency
3.89	<p>Interviewer: And then Lee also keeps talking to himself when you clicked on the environmental objects ah.</p> <p>Henry: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: er do you find that he's providing you with the gameplay hints?</p> <p>Henry: Ya ya ya definitely.</p>	Dissonance Negotiation

	<p>Interviewer: To progress the story.</p> <p>Henry: It does it does.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then when Lee talks to himself, do you find that it is hard to immerse?</p> <p>Henry: When he talks to himself?</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you find that it is hard for you to immerse in his role ah?</p> <p>Henry: er I think he's...</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you find him something crazy or what?</p> <p>Henry: No lah as in er I I I know the the the game creator is they they when he talked to himself means he's providing information for for you lah.</p>	
3.90	<p>Interviewer: And then giving the food to Lee's group, do you find it quite hard ah?</p> <p>Henry: Huh?</p> <p>Interviewer: er because you have only 4 pieces of food to give.</p> <p>Henry: I only have 4 pieces.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's quite hard ah?</p> <p>Henry: er ah it's definitely a hard choice but er okay there were I think nine nine people right? Around there? Then I chose I definitely chose to give to the kids.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya I think you explained it already.</p>	Player's experience – karma/relationship with npcs



	<p>Henry: Ya. It's not not that hard lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then Kenny and Lily is because they are the most important people.</p> <p>Henry: Ya they are the most important people.</p>	
3.91	<p>Interviewer: I think going to the Dairy is the only way the story can progress ah?</p> <p>Henry: mm hmm. Going to the Dairy. Erm I think is the only way it can progress. As in as in if you, the probably the only thing, actually I don't know. Er as in if I choose to when I choose to stay, I think they will ask me to go also.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: Because I think got a lot of people say want to go right?</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes.</p> <p>Henry: Ya then either way, it has to go. Just that I whether I stated whether to go to the Dairy Farm or I remain at the the erm motel.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Henry: And that one will affect my not say reputation lah but more like the my erm relationship in that sense? Ya. Probably lah they will see like oh he don't want to...</p> <p>Interviewer: Then they will go against you.</p> <p>Henry: Ah something like that.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence
3.92	<p>Nasir: Oh oki oki can. Ya. So okay lah. As in I don't know. Like after a while, like like I used to I used to like this kind of like multiple endings. But nowadays, I I'm leaning more towards one I prefer one solid ending. Regardless of...in a way, not not regardless of your choice ah but ya I prefer like to have one ending so that people can discuss about that ending. And find out more about it.</p>	Player's experience – personality factors

3.93	<p>Nasir: No but I did watch it ah on YouTube. So ya in that sense, after a while I will just like okay doesn't really matter but as in okay lah you can save this guy but in a way, in your mind you know that he's just going to die again. As in he's just going to die later on so in that sense ya as in I don't really like it that much if the story just converges like it makes your choice very superficial.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence/Player's experience – personality factors
3.94	<p>Henry: er er okay the dot dot dot is out of the question. Er Clementine, I was thinking of getting Clementine or Kenny get the gun cos Lili grab a knife is er like knife is just the set the set the normal eating knife. I think the gun more useful.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Henry: So I asked Kenny to grab the gun.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so it's not that you are trying to side with any of the characters.</p> <p>Henry: No no no. It's not not trying to side any characters. And it's the first option. Maybe if the Lily get knife option was in front, maybe I would have chosen that but...</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so it is also very instinctive ah?</p> <p>Henry: It's er it's it's instinct like oh I see I see I see Kenny get the gun oh then the the gun that very obvious.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm it's the most useful.</p> <p>Henry: Ya. It's probably the most useful what.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then do you see this as a gameplay dialogue choice? Or is it a narrative or is it together?</p> <p>Henry: It's more of...</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p>	Player's experience – personality factors

	<p>Henry: It's more of this one ah? I think it's more of a gameplay choice ah. But it's a gameplay right? That doesn't really matter what. Like the event will still be the same.</p> <p>Interviewer: Gameplay in the sense that you have a choice ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: But the narrative cannot be changed.</p>	
3.95	<p>Interviewer: Ya and then you see Lily helping you later, the consequence of this choice.</p> <p>Henry: As in did I see the...</p> <p>Interviewer: I mean after you saved, choose to save the Larry.</p> <p>Henry: Ah...</p> <p>Interviewer: Were you able to see that the story changes is Lily helping you later?</p> <p>Henry: Can can...</p> <p>Interviewer: When you fight the Saint John brothers. Instead of Kenny ah.</p> <p>Henry: er that one I don't know. As in I I cannot as in I don't know. I only know that Kenny was very angry with me. And maybe we will fall out. In the end, we fell out after that because because of the the this thing then then because I think when we were escaping right? Er Kenny can tell Kenny didn't want to er er help me with escaping Lily.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: Then I was like then can tell that he against me already. But I didn't I didn't see the consequence of like Lily helping me when I was like fighting the Saint John brothers.</p>	Resonance Consequence/Contingency

	<p>Interviewer: It's only later on then you...</p> <p>Henry: Ya later on then I realised oh that action caused me caused me to be better with Lily and worse with Kenny.</p>	
3.96	<p>Jim: mm. Say there's this one part where I didn't choose to say anything because I just let the narrative won. Oh another thing is erm how much of how much of er thing is narrative or er gameplay right? They are two major factors, how does the gamer want, what do how do they tackle the thing and how the developer develop the portion. So yes, I can tell you is complex even if you hand it over to me and try to write for you, I also need some time. Yes. I know it's difficult task for you Weimin. So ya. Hope you can find out conclusion, you can tidy out some conclusion and I don't know if they actually accept er inconclusion ah?</p>	Ludonarrative relationships
3.97	<p>Henry: Oh okay. Hehe hmm er that one ah er whether I consider is narrative choice or gameplay choice. Erm I think it still falls under gameplay choice because because I before before the episode 4 er as in when I side with Lily, then I already choose er I think the the act of me choosing one dialogue or the other is a gameplay choice but when they give me the option of like the option is probably narrative ya and before and the information before that or the entire situation like when they were getting angry then it's like oh all the information that says them that's narrative lor. Then other that is gameplay choice. I think. What what what what is your definition of as in what is the correct definition of the gameplay choice?</p> <p>Henry: Gameplay choice is ya is when I make like usually I make any decision that kind orh. As in like for example, er er whether to cut off my arm or don't cut off my arm that kind.</p> <p>Interviewer: So let me think how you define narrative event. So narrative event is happenings in the story that you cannot change it ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then gameplay event is happenings in the story that you can have a choice.</p>	Ludonarrative relationships definitions –
3.98	<p>Alice: I think that it can it's firstly a narrative choice because you are making the decision to let's say if you are talking about <i>Beyond: Two Souls</i> right? You kill somebody, you don't kill somebody. Firstly, it's a narrative choice because er you are deciding whether to take the so and so called good path or the so and so called bad path. And then after you make that choice, there is some sort of</p>	Ludonarrative relationships definitions –

gameplay that would be affected based on that. If you choose not to kill a person, maybe the level is easier. Because you don't have to deal with it. But if you kill somebody, it's like maybe you have to fight your way through the following level so it does affect both. But I think that it may have a larger effect on the narrative than it has on the gameplay.

Interviewer: But it depends on the specific context ah.

Alice: Ya it depends the degree in which the choice is I guess.

Alice: In *The Walking Dead*, it seems that the dialogue choices based on the example you gave me where it says like you know, how are you feeling, like who are you? All these things, it seems more of the gameplay because you can choose. You can choose to listen to an answer. Or you can choose not to listen to an answer. And this narrative if it's just the backstory doesn't really affect how it is going to turn out. But in terms of *Beyond: Two Souls*, if it's a dialogue to kill somebody or not to kill somebody because it's telling her you know, her brother or whatever to kill somebody or not to kill somebody. In that case, it's more of a narrative decision because whatever she chooses to do which is a dialogue choice will ripple throughout the rest of the game.

Alice: I think backstory gives you a representation of how the characters are and how the characters may act. But in terms of how it will affect the game, if you are talking about *The Last of Us*, it gives, backstory gives you an idea who the character is and you project how the game is going to go but on the other hand, nothing you do really affects how the characters are going to turn out. In *The Walking Dead*, I guess if you give backstory, you can predict how characters are going to act. And I guess later on in the game, you can choose to make a decision based on how you see that character or not.

Interviewer: So if it affects your perception of the character, do you also see it as a narrative choice?

Alice: I think it's a mixture of both. I know this is messed a lot but if it is giving you information, it's clearly painting a character in a certain way. So that's changing the narrative and how you treat that character and how you perceive that character but also could be a gameplay decision where you choose not to trust that character, you choose to trust that character by giving them certain things.

3.99	<p>Interviewer: And then when Clementine calls her and then saved you from, saved Molly...</p> <p>Henry: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: From killing you.</p> <p>Henry: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you see this as a narrative event?</p> <p>Henry: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Or is it your gameplay action producing the narrative? Like...</p> <p>Henry: That one is narrative because it's like she stopped after Clementine after Clementine tell her to stop. Then it's like...</p> <p>Interviewer: That means it's like after the gameplay then it's the narrative. It's like causing the narrative?</p> <p>Henry: Say again?</p> <p>Interviewer: I mean is it occurring after after your gameplay fight with Molly? So it's like...</p> <p>Henry: Ya it's...</p> <p>Interviewer: It's like your gameplay action is causing that narrative or is it just leading to the narrative?</p> <p>Henry: I think it's just leading to the narrative.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's not causing?</p>	Resonance succession
------	---	----------------------

	<p>Henry: Ya it's not causing. Because I also didn't know Clementine was there what.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So it's a kind of surprise.</p> <p>Henry: Ya it's a surprise. Cos Clementine was supposed to be at the house what.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So leading is like a succession of events ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. A succession of events. It's like one lead to the other lead to the other.</p> <p>Interviewer: Not very strong link?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya. Not not very strong. But then I remember I saw when I saw er Clementine then I was like Ben didn't do his job.</p>	
3.100	<p>Interviewer: And then when you choose to keep the arm, does it make the gameplay more tensed?</p> <p>Henry: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: er like...</p> <p>Henry: What do you mean by when I choose not to saw...how?</p> <p>Interviewer: When you choose to keep the arm ah.</p> <p>Henry: Ah huh.</p> <p>Interviewer: Does it make the gameplay more tensed? Because you feel that you have less time to find Clementine?</p> <p>Henry: A bit lah. It's a bit rushed.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence – Player's narrative interpretation

	<p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: But it's a it's something like I already decided that okay never mind I should just save Clementine.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Henry: So to do that I need to ahem I need to be er...</p> <p>Interviewer: So it's like cost and...</p> <p>Henry: Ya cost and benefit analysis lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. Like more practical but then...</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: It would make you turn faster.</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Correct lor.</p>	
3.101	<p>Interviewee: Well, now that you mentioned it, I I I have I think there was once er where I won't say clash, but it sort of rubbed against each other. Like erm the point where they give you the option apparently for the main character which is who you play, Lee, okay to hide his background from whoever whoever he met right? But in the options they give you the choice you know, to everyone you talks to right to tell them who you are and stuff. Like that. But you know, that I I'm guessing from what I played, they want you they want you like I mean the character is the main character is supposed to hide his background from the people which I didn't get. You see I want to tell everybody who I am. But apparently, the erm the main thing to do er is to hide your background.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think the story the character doesn't want to tell his background ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Yeah.</p>	Dissonance



	<p>Interviewer: But you want to tell ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Correct. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so the thing the thing that we want to choose to tell you think it's part of the gameplay lah. But the character's story is narrative?</p> <p>Interviewee: Correct. It's the clash of this kind of thing because they allow the player er freedom of choice and stuff like that right? They are the narrative that that that they use or they make or the storyline, this fellow's personality and stuff like that. It's very very restricted. Because of that freedom of choice. Correct so it's I mean on their part, I believe it's very difficult lah I mean there's if you put too much, if you give too much freedom to the player right? Then there's too many routes.</p>	
3.102	<p>Interviewee: It's my own. <b>It's basically like what I have seen in other games or in tv series or in zombie zombie zombie movies, zombie series, zombie games that I have played or watched last time to tell me these are the typical stuff that survivals will do in this situation lah.</b> So when they put me in a similar situation, that is what I am probably going to think of first. Until I realise oh that's not an option that the game makers are giving me lah. So then I won't go and find every single thing like what is there else to do.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya the battery that one does. But that's only like sometimes only. You know anything happens erm like erm but not really because the girl doesn't say battery, is the player has to go and find himself like he has to flip. <b>I watched the walkthrough before this game right?</b> The guy didn't know that there was the he missed that flip over option. So he was trying press all the button but he didn't know. He put down the radio, going around you know? Not knowing what to do or what's oh that he has to find the batteries. Until he come came back and oh he found the second time you know. That's what I mean. So I mean this sort of thing they hint to go that oh check the back. The batteries at the back. I don't know whether the batteries inside there. I mean they do give you a hint that the girl doesn't know what she's doing at all so it could be probably it's just er she's she's IT retarded or something. I don't know. But probably so but because of that right? That I have a sense of I know what to do which is to switch and check for batteries lah but like erm as with most players right? I will I press the on buttons first, it doesn't then. You know it's just normal thing what you do.</p>	Player's experience – prior experience of gaming; game guides and walkthroughs

	If you just press on button, it like it's nothing wrong with the hardware but you know, there's no light, there's no online right? It's not working right? You check the batteries right?	
3.103	<p>Interviewer: Do you see this as a narrative event ah? Because it cannot be avoided.</p> <p>Henry: Ya it's a it's a narrative event lor. It's not a gameplay choice what. I think I cannot do anything to stop the car from falling down.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. And then it also does it create tension in the gameplay?</p> <p>Henry: Ya la of course. Because the zombies started coming. The Walkers started coming then I have to faster...</p> <p>Interviewer: Take the battery.</p> <p>Henry: Get the battery and then faster get out. So got tension lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So this part is it the gameplay and narrative is together or separated ah?</p> <p>Henry: mm wait ah. It's together lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's together?</p> <p>Henry: Ah.</p>	Resonance Motivation
3.104	<p>Interviewer: Camcorder explaining to you the gameplay ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya because at first when you see Molly attacking the doctor...</p> <p>Henry: er huh.</p> <p>Interviewer: You don't know why she is doing that.</p>	Resonance Motivation

	<p>Henry: Ya. Then now is okay makes sense.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p>	
3.105	<p>Interviewer: You see this as a narrative event?</p> <p>Henry: Ya it does. It's a narrative event. As in he tells you...</p> <p>Interviewer: There's some gameplay hint?</p> <p>Henry: It's a gameplay hint ah. Gameplay goal.</p> <p>Interviewer: Gameplay goal.</p> <p>Henry: What to do that kind ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: And to get more tapes lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay and then the tape also explains.</p> <p>Henry: Ya explains ah so ya.</p>	Resonance Motivation
3.106	<p>Henry: Ya even though the story doesn't really change. I think it's just just this it's a very very rare occasion that I I see a ahem a narrative event as a gameplay choice.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so this is a very rare rare event?</p> <p>Henry: Ya a bit. Ya. Because I didn't want to lie to her. That's the that's one of the main reasons.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. In this scene, were you also very bonded to Clementine?</p>	Resonance Motivation

	<p>Henry: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Because...</p> <p>Henry: Ya as in...</p> <p>Interviewer: You don't want you don't want her to feel sad ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya I don't want her to feel sad. Although I know she will feel sad because her parents...</p> <p>Interviewer: You just want her to know the truth?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. I I it's like it's like how at the start you you cannot say that kind of thing but then you know sooner or later that you have to say this so...</p>	
3.107	<p>Interviewer: So far do you find any story information that helps you to make a gameplay choice ah? Like speaking to the different characters, do they help you to progress the gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya they help me to understand er what am I supposed to do next. And where am I supposed to go so I won't be won't feel lost. Ya otherwise, I mean the map is so big right? I also don't know where to go but with their help right? They act as like er guiding ah they will guide me along. They will guide me along the game and they also help me kill enemies ah. Ya. Like they they will mm they will provide feedback to the character.</p>	Resonance Guidance
3.108	<p>Interviewer: Ya. Like if you don't put any points into the Intimidate, and Charm then I think the story will be less interesting.</p> <p>Interviewee: Okay.</p> <p>Interviewer: I think this is a spoiler.</p> <p>Interviewee: Okay. Okay.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p>	Resonance Consequence/Contingency

	Interviewee: Okay maybe I can try that ah when I play it again.	
3.109	<p>Interviewer: So in general, do you do you play games for the story or gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: erm that's always a hard question but I think I will put more emphasis on the gameplay than the story. Because after a while, you play games, because it's fun. I mean even if the story is really good, but the gameplay is really bad, then you might as well watch a movie or something.</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences
3.110	<p>Interviewee: Ya. Ya. Ya. The fact that there's a huge disparity between the threat of the Geth and the gameplay threat. Ya because they painted it like oh some very powerful as some very ruthless species but they seem rather ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: The Geth story is er where did you get it from? Is it from the dialogue or the Codex ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ah I I see it from the cutscene. The cutscene is like sort of set the stage for them. Like they impaled this guy so that tells you that oki these people are obviously not very civilised. Ya and they look robotic so obviously there's no need no room for negotiation. You just shoot them. Ya. Ya.</p>	Dissonance – logical inconsistencies
3.111	<p>Interviewer: Do you find any characterisation of the Geth in the cutscene ah? Like do they show that do they show any characteristics of the Geth?</p> <p>Michael: er they look like robots ah. That's all.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you think that they are they can be easily killed when you see them?</p> <p>Michael: er yes. For obvious thing when you look at the placement of their eyes. It's like attached to the head with one hinge.</p> <p>Interviewer: So they are not very challenging?</p> <p>Michael: I don't think they are challenging.</p> <p>Interviewer: In the gameplay?</p>	Dissonance – logical inconsistencies (Absent)

	Michael: Ya I think killing the Husk is tougher.	
3.112	<p>Interviewer: mm the narrative representation of the Geth do you find any conflict with the gameplay like in the cutscene when you first see them they were quite intimidating.</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Then in the gameplay, they are quite easy to kill?</p> <p>Nasir: mm I guess like then again to be fair, you are supposed to be I don't know, some special, very skilled soldier compared to the very normal soldiers. So maybe that's why you can kill them easily. Maybe it's just a relative thing.</p> <p>Interviewer: So for you there's no conflict ah?</p> <p>Nasir: Not really. Ya.</p>	Dissonance – logical inconsistencies (Absent)
3.113	<p>Interviewee: Ya it's just like a story. It's like a motivation for you to find out more. But because you don't really encounter them in game, you don't see them shooting.</p> <p>Interviewer: So far you never encounter.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: But you will be encountering Saren much later.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya er ya I suspect that because he seems like the main big main bad guy. So there probably will be a boss battle of sorts.</p> <p>Interviewer: But so far, not much connection to the...</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya so far not much connection.</p>	Resonance Motivation

3.114	<p>Interviewer: So there's no other parts where you think that there is conflict between story and gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm let me think. Well there's a part well this one affects a lot of games. Ya it's like the first part where you're the Jenkins fellow he died. Okay so he died permanently. And then later when you are playing the game, your character can die but sort of revived at the end, so there's no explanation. Why why is it different between this guy dying in the game, and this guy who died in the cutscene. So it's a disconnect here. Why must this guy die? Why mustn't that guy die?</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh so you mean the Jenkins guy there's not much explanation.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. It's just poof he's dead and then why why can't we revive him? I mean later my characters can die too. But they don't die permanently. So that's it's more you can tell there's a gameplay reason and there's a narrative reason.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it's kind of disconnected lah.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. It is disconnected.</p>	Dissonance Negotiation
3.115	<p>Interviewer: So you also got put some points in the "Charm" and "Intimidate" ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya but that's more because of previous experience. Because I've played <i>Dragon Age</i>.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: So if you put some points in something right? The "Charm" equivalent.</p> <p>Interviewer: Then there will be more story options,</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya then there will be more conversations. And these conversations may open up like new quests or give you extra rewards and stuff like that.</p>	Player's experience – prior experience of gaming
3.116	Interviewer: So you think that helping others will assist the gameplay later?	Player's experience –

	<p>Interviewee: Ya cos I imagine there will be some advantage the more Paragon points you get. Ya anyway for the “Charm”, you need to I think I read that you need certain level of ranks in Paragon.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewee: So ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Then they can open up the dialogue.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p>	<p>karma/relationships with npcs</p>
<p>3.117</p>	<p>Interviewer: So far are there any gameplay that influences you when you make the story choice?</p> <p>Interviewee: No. Definitely no.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the only one is you want to get the Paragon points.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: That is the only one.</p> <p>Interviewee: That’s the only one. Cos you can’t kill the NPCs. They are immortal.</p>	<p>Resonance Motivation</p>
<p>3.118</p>	<p>Interviewer: So far do you find the scripted sequence interrupting your gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: er so far, it’s oki but it seems to be a bit too much cutscenes like every time you come to a battle, there seems to be a cutscene.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. But I guess they need to introduce the things to you.</p>	<p>Player-(Game Designers’) Character dissonance</p>



	<p>Interviewer: The main antagonist?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. The main antagonist and well the cutscenes show a lot of things that your character is not supposed to know. So it's a bit weird because you as a player knows what's going on. But you have to pretend your character doesn't know anything. Ya.</p>	
3.119	<p>Nasir: mm ya. As in initially, I was like er how come how come I see him as in how come I see this part because Shepherd wasn't there right? And all the stuff. So I was like initially I was wondering er was he a bit in front or what? Then I was like but oki lah as in then later you found out that this guy was was sleeping behind the crate. Then he he found out so I supposed that was his perspective ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think it's his flashback ah?</p> <p>Nasir: mm I think it's that other guy's er the other guy's perspective ah the the guy who was hiding behind the crate.</p> <p>Interviewer: The smuggler?</p> <p>Nasir: Ah as in I thought it was him that as in it was his perspective that saw that part. So then later Shepherd knew about it. But oki lah as in initially it was when I first saw it, it was like but Shepherd isn't there what. Why am I seeing this?</p> <p>Interviewer: Like quite sudden ah?</p> <p>Nasir: A bit a bit sudden. But as in it's not something that I would find, it's not something that I will object lah. Initially it was just a bit sudden but oki lor, then so so this this game let's you see things from as in from like like when like when Saren was heard about heard about he was what was angry on his own ship like ok lah, then if you are going to adopt this I I can I I can adapt to it. That doesn't really matter but initially, it feels a bit sudden lah. Mm.</p>	Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance
3.120	<p>Interviewer: Because when you add points to the Intimidate and Charm, then the dialogue option will become more.</p>	Resonance Consequence/Contingenc

	<p>Nasir: Orh I see. Ya but...</p> <p>Interviewer: So it will change the story.</p> <p>Nasir: Ah I see. I see but ya. I also don't know why it didn't add.</p> <p>Interviewer: So that one is gameplay will how you customise your character it will affect the story.</p> <p>Nasir: mm oki oki. I understand ya.</p>	y
3.121	<p>Interviewer: So in general do you play games for story or gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ah normally is because the first person shooter right? So I will give it like I would play more for gameplay. Like 40-60. 40 for you know, erm story and 60 for gameplay or sometimes the game is really good like you know, Battlefield and stuff. Actually Battlefield has no ya so it's like 70-30 70 ah 30-70. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you like the gameplay more?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. The gameplay ya because I think it's just the different type of people with different like game choices because for me is first person shooter right? And for that you also need a like you also need a game plot like you know like erm ya ya. So you just need the game plot to follow like oh you you just need a game plot to actually erm know that erm where the missions you are doing.</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences
3.122	<p>Interviewee: But generally, ya it gives you a sense of involvement like you have a say in what thing is there and you I think a sense of accomplishment ya a sense of accomplishment. Like oh you just kill someone. Or you just destroy something. You have a sense of accomplishment. Like for movies, it's just like it has a tension but it's also like sometimes you just have the feeling that oh it's only scripted. No. Captain America is supposed to win this kind of thing. But for now, you you had you face a very real threat of you know being killed.</p> <p>Interviewer: In video games ah?</p>	Resonance

	<p>Interviewee: Ya. In gaming.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in games, the difference is that you will feel some kind of accomplishment?</p> <p>Interviewee: Accomplishment, involvement.</p> <p>Interviewer: But movies you won't feel.</p> <p>Interviewee: You won't feel. You only feel the tension and then after the the erm protagonist right actually has gone and has moved on, achieved what he is supposed to achieve right? You feel like oh oki then you then he's defused the tension. But it's you just didn't feel very you feel like ah yes yes yes yes yes but you didn't that that yes is different from...</p> <p>Interviewer: Not that involved ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya that doesn't...you are not involved in the whole process.</p>	
3.123	<p>Interviewee: Then gameplay twist I would say my choices lor influencing the influencing each event and everything. Like er gameplay is like it's quite direct leh I find like mm your application for gameplay events like you can choose because of your through your interactions you can choose what can happen after that. Then by then you earn er different points mah it's like the last part I could have said the council was blind then you earn renegade points that's direct impact on your outcome next time mah.</p> <p>Interviewer: You mean outcome of the story?</p> <p>Interviewee: For the story ya.</p>	Resonance Consequence/Contingency
3.124	<p>Interviewer: But then the story choice most of the choice is it you try to be good to the other people?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. Try to be good lor. Be compassionate ah ya. Not very objective.</p> <p>Interviewer: Is there any reason ah why you want to?</p>	Player's experience – personality factors

	<p>Interviewee: It's just the way I am ah as a person. Like I prefer I prefer to I would want people as I prefer to ya lah I ya lor like that lor. Prefer to interpersonal skills rather than to be real objective. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: er...</p> <p>Interviewee: So you could say like my choice in the gameplay is a reflection of how a person I am. Ya lor.</p>	
3.125	<p>Interviewee: I think I'll just start again. I'll probably read the wiki like thoroughly before I...because I don't want to miss out on anything ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya can ah.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. But even for <i>Bioshock</i> right? I haven't played I already read the whole storyline of <i>Bioshock</i> because the whole storyline of <i>Bioshock</i> very intriguing ah. <i>Bioshock Infinite</i> and everything. Then the juxtaposition of the different worlds very deep. I haven't touched played the game I already watched the YouTube walkthroughs until almost the final stage because I know I scared so I watched first. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it doesn't spoiler for you ah? Is it?</p> <p>Interviewee: For me not really as in when I watched someone playing it is as if I am playing already lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: But of course if I am playing it myself, I will get more er er satisfaction out of it ah. Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oki.</p> <p>Interviewee: I don't mind watching games people talk. Ya.</p>	Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs

	<p>Interviewer: Ya that one can.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya.</p>	
3.126	<p>Interviewee: Ya actually same for <i>Mass Effect</i>. Ah because I as in maybe because I haven't played the game enough. But I don't see any benefit in trying to be the bad guy. Because erm you are on the good side. So I just try to like make all the good decisions try to get everybody on my team. So that erm it will make er playing the game er much easier definitely because er people will follow you and ya I think you get more benefits on the good side than the evil side. So ya.</p>	<p>Player's experience – karma/relationships with npcs</p>
3.127	<p>Interviewer: But when you replay it again, do you choose another choice?</p> <p>Michael: Usually I will for this kind of game I will run it through four times ah. If I have the time ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you choose the same choice when you re-run or you will still choose the Paragon?</p> <p>Michael: er the second time I might try total Renegade. Just for the fun of it.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Michael: But the third and fourth time, I might want to open up easter eggs. That means I will be looking at FAQs ah. At the third and fourth time.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you the easter egg er you will not looking by yourself ah. You need the guide to know where to find. You will not try to find it by your own?</p> <p>Michael: mm. I can spend 90 hours probing every box. Or I can read a guide and finish it in 30 hours.</p> <p>Interviewer: But usually, you will read the guide?</p> <p>Michael: First time playing I will try not to read the guide.</p> <p>Interviewer: Have you succeeded without looking at the guide?</p>	<p>Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs</p>

	Michael: I have. I have.	
3.128	<p>Interviewer: So for all those choice with negative ones, you will find it harder to make the choice?</p> <p>Mary: Like this situation?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Mary: Yes. Like especially if it clashes with my own character like my my personality lah. To ya.</p>	Player's experience – personality factors
3.129	<p>Walter: erm not really. Erm the way I the way I am sort of looking at it is as though she is a child. And you are trying to just throw I think they just wanted to frame the perspective that you know you were sort of like er try and experiencing this apocalypse that was starting from her eyes first and then the I think they then did the transition shift when there was a car accident which then shifted you over to Joel. So er I thought that it was I guess it was straightforward but at the same but playing as her didn't really feel like anything. I thought it was a bit that when you started, you know you walk, you wake up, you answer the phone. And then as you walk, if you enter the bathroom, you can read the newspaper. And which give you some background information. I thought that was rather weird. Because you are a child and then you are looking for your dad, you wouldn't be paying attention to weird things like that.</p>	Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance
3.130	<p>Interviewer: Oki. Do you feel that any instances where they (Story and gameplay) cannot be separated?</p> <p>Walter: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Or do you think that you cannot find any? Anytime where they cannot be separated?</p> <p>Walter: I suppose the introduction prologue scene where you are running with Sarah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Walter: And then like it's very obvious that they are things happening and you can look left and right. That one I would argue is kind of gameplayish and kind of narrativeish but I er not really</p>	Resonance

	narrative lah, it's sort of just you can see what is happening but it doesn't actually progress the narrative.	
3.131	<p>Interviewee: Ya I can only choose one. Ya so ya lah. So wasn't I didn't really feel in control of it even though I was given three choices. And also when I choose nightmare then they say nightmare about what? Then the best answer I would say I don't know lah but they only give us three. It was like "war", er "death", or "the Geth destruction" and ya la basically these three only then ya. Ya lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: So basically when you play the game, you want to explore all the options ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya I prefer to be I'll prefer to know whatever's going on. Exactly whatever's going on ya lah. Unless the game is meant to be very very er mysterious and everything then oki lah.</p>	Resonance motivation – plot hooks
3.132	<p>Interviewer: Just now do you find any conflict between story and gameplay?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm not so much a conflict between gameplay and story but at the start when you are supposed to recall the events sia, er honestly, I will I will have preferred it to play in chronological order. But when the interrogator ask the Witcher question what happened in the what happened during the assault, it doesn't really you don't really know which is which.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: So I thankfully I choose the first option lah because it was the first option. So it became er quite chronological. Apart from that there was this thing about the dragon which I totally, it came out of the blue. Like I I never seen him in the gameplay or no one talked about it before. So I don't really know what happened.</p> <p>Interviewer: There's no story about the dragon ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya before the dragon appears.</p>	Resonance motivation – plot hooks
3.133	<p>Walter: In terms of gameplay event, er significant gameplay event. It's probably the scene where you find the guy who's crushed under a wall and then you have to shoot him in the head. That one I would say it's a significant gameplay event that also has some narrative consequence. Basically says that you kill people with impunity. Because up until that point, you don't really know whether you</p>	Resonance

	<p>are violent or whatever. And when that happens, it's like like the guy you are shooting doesn't look like he cares he wants you to do it. Tess is also going like just do it quick like she doesn't even give you doesn't even give a second thought about about you know, I'm ending another man's life. It's basically like just get it over that kind of thing. So that was a I would say it's a I think that's a good say for indicating that oh people people's lives are really worthless in this world.</p> <p>Interviewer: So do you mean that this gameplay event is also linking to the narrative?</p> <p>Walter: Ya. It I it it leads to the whole idea that you know, this world is really bleak and human lives are worthless.</p>	
3.134	<p>Matt: Ya lah it's not unexpected to me lah. On the other hand, it's you want to try and er oki I've read the synopsis before lah you know haha. I read the plot in wiki. Oki lah. Erm</p> <p>Interviewer: So far nothing stands out ah?</p> <p>Matt: It's oki. <b>Maybe maybe cos I have read the plot before so it's kind of dulled out on me.</b> So the plot has dulled on me. So er what I find it stands out like against like other er stories ah in general is that there is let me think. I don't recall there being any other stories that look like this. But er even that said, I am not er I mean this this is not my area of interest. I am not particularly interested</p>	Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs
3.135	<p>Interviewer: So just now you say you play games mostly for gameplay.</p> <p>Matt: That's right.</p> <p>Interviewer: er any any further comments ah?</p> <p>Matt: Further comments?</p> <p>Interviewer: About your own preference ah.</p> <p>Matt: My own preference. I mean well, story wise is nice to see lah. But er story is nice to see but that's not the reason I play games. If I want a story, I can read a book, right?</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences



3.136	<p>Matt: Narrative choices and gameplay choices may not necessarily be mutually exclusive. You understand that? You understand what I mean right?</p> <p>Interviewer: They are sometimes...</p> <p>Matt: A narrative choice can be a gameplay choice.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya sometimes together.</p>	Resonance
3.137	<p>Interviewer: When you played the game, did you discuss with any friends about the gameplay strategies?</p> <p>Nasir: mm not really. As in I guess the when I was stuck at something, or when I like wanted to find some some item or whatever then I will look it up like where do I find it. Probably the <i>Mass Effect</i> wiki. But in terms of strategies, not really ah. Strategies mostly I just did myself.</p>	Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs
3.138	<p>Interviewer: So it's more, so it's still quite separated lah, the gameplay and the story?</p> <p>Walter: I don't think it's separated. I mean they are trying to make it look like Ellie is not really this helpless girl. So ya I I'm ya I don't I don't I think they established throughout the entire game that Ellie is not helpless.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Walter: They that's pretty much her entire thing throughout the game. Even from the start when she had nothing, she always tries to say like, "I'm not helpless, give me a gun." That kind of thing. So ya that supports the narrative. I think it's perfectly support. I don't think that making her helpless had anything to do with the narrative. I think that goes against the narrative if they had done that.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So it's more realistic in this sense ah? More...</p> <p>Walter: Well, I don't know if it's realistic lah but it fits the narrative.</p>	Resonance - metaphor
3.139	<p>Interviewer: Are you a gamer that plays more for the story or gameplay? Or is it both ah?</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences

	Michael: Both ah.	
4.1	<p>Interviewee: I think I think er both okay lah I don't know the story lah. For starters. So it is a it is it is important for me for me to know the story. Like I will finish playing the game because of the story. But then the gameplay wise it's also very er challenging it's very dynamic like there is so much I can do. I can run around, I can er you know swing my sword or use my signs. Quick slots haven't got there yet but I think if I get there it will be quite useful though. And I feel that er ya lah like like there's so much that and there's so much interaction with the environment lah like it's not like those CS where you just run around. You shoot the the some ya lah I mean you shoot the chicken it will die but you shoot the wall and all that it's just like nothing happened. But this one it's so much more interaction with the environment. There are things to pick up, I will need to look for it and all that. And I feel that that's a that makes the gameplay itself erm important lah. But if I have to pick one I would I will pick the storyline ya.</p>	Resonance motivation
4.2	<p>Interviewer: I think you find the character, the Asari character after you killed her mother.</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: er is it because you you don't think that she is important character for the story ah?</p> <p>Michael: I think I didn't focus on her.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: You focus more on Shepherd ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: Because you only choose this character after you know that you can have lesbian sex with her.</p>	Analytical frame – Inventory: Optional Object

4.3	<p>Interviewer: They are focusing more on the gameplay?</p> <p>Mary: At that point, ya. I guess so because it's moving towards the end already.</p> <p>Interviewer: So there's also some kind of conflict between story and gameplay.</p> <p>Mary: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Where they cannot focus on both at the same time. So for you is it...your...</p> <p>Mary: I mean at that point, I was already like okay, I thought it's going to be the end, I am like anticipating the end already.</p> <p>Interviewer: So your focus is also more on the gameplay lah?</p> <p>Mary: Ya huh.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because you want to rush to finish the game.</p>	(Ir)relevance – gameplay focus
4.4	<p>Michael: Yes. So because this is a movie, after a while there's no white dot. Then suddenly, there's one white dot there. You'll be like eh, I need to do something hor?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Michael: Ya. This breaks the continuity of the game you know? Then this sequence is also thankfully I remember. I can go down the go up the log.</p> <p>Interviewer: There's no prompt at all?</p> <p>Michael: There's no prompt.</p> <p>Interviewer: You remember to move the joystick?</p>	(Ir)relevance – gameplay focus

	<p>Michael: Ya. This one? This one I didn't see the log.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: There, this one I don't know whether it's up or down?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ah so, the darkness also affect you?</p> <p>Michael: Ah of course.</p>	
4.5	<p>Nasir: Ya I guess ya because okay at least when you find notes, they they bother giving you a a like it's really handwritten or hand scrawled. But then then it's a nice feature that you can also at the same time use the like a translator so that they have overlay, what what their message is talking about so ya as in the that's a nice touch also in in in it makes the environment more alive. And like like if you were to actually find that item, ya that's what you probably that's what you would probably see. Ya so it's quite realistic in terms of the artefacts.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – mapping style (narrative/gameplay iconic object)</p>
4.6	<p>Nasir: The the the only time decryption unlock narrative is you unlock the armour that the Wrex's armour cos it was stored in the safe. But that's it I think ya. As in and I suppose if you decrypt some stuff, you unlock side side missions? So but then again, like for <i>Mass Effect</i>, the side missions are quite repetitive so...</p>	<p>Analytical frame – mapping style (narrative iconic object)</p>
4.7	<p>Interviewer: Ya but I'm wondering if erm do you see some kind of story emerging out of your gameplay action. Like erm when you choose to shoot the person, do you see that they are trying to characterise Joel as a more negative kind of character?</p> <p>Alice: Not really because that decision to shoot the guy or not to shoot the guy is a you do decision. Er if Joel didn't shoot the guy, then would you see he's a good person? I'm not really sure about that. Like he is a smuggler. He has done a lot of illegal things so you know Joel lives in the grey area in general. But choosing to shoot the guy or choosing to kill soldiers or leave Infected erm I don't think really offers characterisation of Joel because there's definitely ways that you can just not kill anybody and try to sneak your way through it? Erm and there's also another way where you can kill everybody and just continue the game.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in those gameplay actions, you don't see them characterising Joel so much?</p>	<p>Analytical frame – interactive character movement and action</p>

	<p>Alice: Not really.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because his characterisation is mainly in the cutscene?</p> <p>Alice: Yes.</p>	
4.8	<p>Interviewer: Do you see any narrative in this side quest? Er I think all these people turned into husks ah.</p> <p>Michael: In this particular quest, yes ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: er can you talk more ah?</p> <p>Michael: Then you will be wondering er I thought we are coming and there are people in there. How come all become husks?</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Michael: So it's like question mark lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in this side quest, do you see it more as a gameplay or narrative?</p> <p>Michael: It becomes a...</p> <p>Interviewer: They say they are trying to find what survey team?</p> <p>Michael: It becomes a narrative at this point leh.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ah.</p> <p>Michael: mm. But it is also a side quest itself mah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it's both ah.</p>	<p>Analytical frame –  interactive character  movement</p>

	Michael: mm. Ya so you don't have to care about it leh. I think you can proceed with the gameplay even if you don't come here.	
4.9	Nasir: Ya. Then as in a bit more light hearted in nature. But at the same time, he he also goes through all the same horrors or at least most of the horrors that Joel did lah but he he reached out and he wanted to he actually got people to come along with him compared to Joel who who prefers not to have other people involved in his business. So ya Ish seems to be more of a a I don't know inherentness there's more of a goodness in him compared to Joel so so I if given a choice, I rather be Ish. As in if they do make a side story about this or maybe a second game about <i>Last of Us</i> , it would be nice to find out what happened to Ish or maybe even play as Ish. Maybe like in a parallel story timeline or sometime in the future.	Analytical frame – mapping style – narrative iconic objects
4.10	Alice: Ya I mean he feels that I mean you say it that he is a more hopeful character then I feel that he would have tried to figure out a way and maybe he did er to try and save everybody but in the end what he did was that he killed all the children that he was stuck with. On the other hand, you had the cannibals that are fighting for a way to survive. I think that that is more hopeful than what Ish is doing.	Analytical frame – mapping style – narrative iconic objects
4.11	Alice: Ya I mean in terms of I mean in terms of gameplay you know there is certain points in time where you can go up to Ellie and say like you know are you okay or whatever which is a narrative event inside gameplay. Because you can choose to ask her that question. You can choose not to ask her that question. Erm and whether and how she responds creates that I guess emotional attachment because you are trying to you know gauge how she is feeling but on the other hand, it's also I feel like it's also very forced. Because it's like you see the thing pop up and then you have like to go over to her and ask her that question.	Resonance information solutions
4.12	Interviewer: So there's some link to the gameplay? This statement?  Alice: A little bit. There's something that says that they operate differently? But Bill is saying that the humans are more calculating? Which I'm not sure in the game that really comes true because it is so computer AI, I don't think it's sophisticated enough to really have people plot and plan.  Interviewer: It's only in the narrative?  Alice: Ya.	Analytical frame – Interactive character movement with action; Resonance metaphor

	<p>Interviewer: Do you find it also foreshadowing David's character?</p> <p>Alice: Yes. I think it does a really good job in setting up the fact that David was a very very difficult person that cannot...</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p>	
4.13	<p>Alice: erm on extreme, I've noticed that after playing on the normal difficulty, on extreme, you realise that everything is very sensitive. So if you make a noise, they will hear you. Any type of noise they will hear you. Erm it's usually a one shot kill. So if you don't kill them the first time, that's game over. That the game is going drag you dead. Erm whereas on normal you can you have more freedom to make mistakes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because when they discover you, you will die straightaway, is it?</p> <p>Alice: It's an almost straightaway. So if they discover you, in like the really difficult level, for the Infected you die. There's not if you stumble upon it or the Clickers and you don't kill them right away like if you don't press a button right away, you die. Erm if it's a human being if you don't shoot them, you don't kill them within two shots, you are dead. So and everything is just more sensitive to...like killing erm David on the highest difficulty level which is very very difficult.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because he can he is very sensitive to your movements?</p> <p>Alice: Ya he is very sensitive like he I think the computer actually can track where you are so when you are looking at that third stage where he like disappears off your like kilometre or whatever, erm if you don't lock him, you oh if you actually focus on it, you realise that he actually is following you erm and that might be a computer decision that he is actually aiming for you the entire time, so it's in normal, I can stay in one position, and slowly move around. But in the highest difficult level, if you stay in one position, Robert will find you.</p> <p>Interviewer: He will come and track you.</p> <p>Alice: Ya he will come for you. Whereas in normal one, he kind of like just hang around. And you</p>	<p>Analytical frame –  interactive character  movement and action;  Ludonarrative resonance  metaphor</p>

	<p>can go find him. In the highest difficulty level, he will come for you like in a real world situation.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it makes the gameplay more tense ah?</p> <p>Alice: Ya. It does make the gameplay more stressful.</p> <p>Interviewer: But there's no difference in the story at the higher difficulty ah?</p> <p>Alice: There's no difference in the story. I think it's all just gameplay</p>	
4.14	<p>Alice: When you play as Ellie, I feel like you're more ya you are more you are more...</p> <p>Interviewer: Very insecure ah?</p> <p>Alice: Concerned with what I do because Ellie Ellie...</p> <p>Interviewer: Is like a little girl?</p> <p>Alice: Is like a little girl and it's very hard to move from map to map.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's very...</p> <p>Alice: In terms of a huge map, Joel can take more hits so you can just go in guns blazing and I feel like Joel you know, sixty percent of the time will survive. But if you do that with Ellie, she will only survive like twenty percent of the time.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya so Ellie is like favouring a certain playstyle only. Like the stealth approach ah?</p> <p>Alice: Ya I think that Ellie is definitely...</p> <p>Interviewer: Joel can have more options in the gameplay. He can use brute force.</p> <p>Alice: Ya also throughout the game, as it turned out because when Ellie is running away in that</p>	<p>Analytical frame –  interactive character  movement and action;  Ludonarrative resonance  metaphor</p>



	<p>winter storm, she only has one health pack, and one dagger to begin with.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Alice: And when Joel starts off in the winter storm, he has all the weapons instead. He can go pass in it.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in this way, the gameplay mechanic is er is er what? Producing the story ah?</p> <p>Alice: Ya it's kind of forcing you in into feeling a certain way because since Ellie doesn't have a lot of weapons, she's ill equipped. Like you are been forced to play more stealthily and more conservatively and sneak around. Rather than Joel who can just go and you know, shoot people because he already has ammunition, he has weapons. So...</p>	
4.15	<p>Nasir: Maybe maybe at that point in time, it makes sense for her to pass you the health kit because the explosion occurred, you probably got injured, etc etc. So only because of that context, of that particular context that it becomes more related to the narrative.</p>	Resonance metaphor
4.16	<p>Matt: mm. But at the end of the day ah, at the end of the day, Jodie is is your version of Jodie. Aiden is your version of Aiden so your projection of both. Your projection. If you want to separate it, you can. Right? But how can you be how can you think how can you feel for two people at the same time? It's basically, it's at the end of the day, still your projection of them. So erm so your feeling is er so it is what you feel. It's not about what Jodie feels or what Aiden feels. It's what you feel. Right? If you feel that she should she should be er she should be frustrated, then eventually, it will it will naturally peel over to what you do with Aiden. So it is at the end of the day, it's your projection.</p>	Analytical frame – REFLECTING (Fludernik, 2003)
4.17	<p>Michael: Right now, you see ah, this game has confused me so much that I don't know what to say, you know? Relationship between narrative and gameplay. Until now, I think every choices I make will affect the gameplay and the narrative. So for this particular game, it's all about the narrative. It's a game that er you are playing the narrative. Ya there's no distinction from what I see. You are playing the narrative. So much so that I'm not in control. It's like reading a story book. I must read from left to right from page one to page two. Although I have a choice of er maybe at some junction to maybe like skip to the other pages like in a adventure story book. But that's about it. So I'm actually the gameplay. [Game asking player to get the oil from the garage]. See the gameplay is the</p>	Dissonance imbalance

	narrative. It will advance without it will not wait for me lah. It will do what he wants to do.	
4.18	<p>Interviewer: Does it tell you the location ah? This flashback.</p> <p>Michael: Does no. The second scene actually.</p> <p>Interviewer: Which scene?</p> <p>Michael: Just now that. It's not the flashback.</p> <p>Interviewer: Which one?</p> <p>Michael: That one after the flashback.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oh. So that means the darkness makes it less clear ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ya. So it's not obvious that I need to go to some place with tower. It show it again.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the narrative is helping you ah?</p> <p>Michael: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: The second one.</p> <p>Michael: It's telling me you must really go to the place with the tower.</p> <p>Interviewer: This one [The flashback image] not much [use] ah?</p> <p>Michael: Not much.</p>	Analytical frame – Inventory: Obligatory object; Redundancy
4.19	<p>Interviewee: Ya because because I I have feel like the the the game trend right is more shifted now they shifting toward action packed. And then you are like you have er erm you know intermittent of er storytelling in between. It is not like a lot of storytelling. A lot together like all over the game like</p>	Analytical frame – Interactive character movement with action

you know you just walk and listen to the person it's very distracting. Ya.

Interviewer: So do you think this is better ah if it focus more on gameplay?

Interviewee: I think so. Ya because normally it's ya just just that or maybe just that if if you ask this question like ten years ago, oh this is good. But now is like you know after you are more exposed to you know like very fast paced and action packed like games right? Like if you like oh this thing is really bad.

Interviewer: Ya I think there needs to be some kind of balance ah.

Interviewee: No because it's it's like they give you a punch like even like for for like even like because it's a oki because I think for the *Battlefield* right? And the *Call of Duty* right? Especially the *Battlefield* right? The *Battlefield 4* right just came out and then the the *Call of Duty Ghost* right? They came out and then you know the the very first scene right? The very first erm like mission right? It's actually this have like cutscene like it it only have one one mission right? We don't have cutscene like erm it's very little action but it's like it's more like story storytelling for that just that just the first mission and then the rest...

Interviewer: So the rest all gameplay lah.

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: All no no story ah?

Interviewee: mm. No it's not no story. But is less story compared to this.

Interviewer: So you think like that is better for you?

Interviewee: mm.

Interviewer: Your gaming preference ah?

	<p>Interviewee: Ya I think for young people yes because I know a lot of my friends who she what the hell is this.</p>	
4.20	<p>Alice: Ya. I think that if you need if you need to tell a really important point of the story, it is better to do it in a cutscene. Because if it's in an environment, there's a tendency that...</p> <p>Interviewer: You get distracted by the gameplay.</p> <p>Alice: You get distracted by the gameplay or you just so wrap up in the gameplay. For example, if you I noticed you collect a lot of like documents in game. So if you are telling people the story of what you know the narrative through those documents you collect, there is a chance that as collectibles, people might collect them and not spend the time to read all the details. Erm and thus be caught up in the gameplay so it's very important if you are telling narrative to force I guess the player to watch whatever's happening and that you can only do that through cutscene.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you mean do you mean that not giving you an option is better for the players? Like the narrative.</p> <p>Alice: I think not giving an option is definitely better. I think it is just the way of telling the story. And telling the story to the player. In this case, we are sitting them down and saying take care, you have to focus on what is being said in front of you.</p> <p>Interviewer: So that means in <i>The Last of Us</i>, the more important story information is given in the cutscenes but the less important story information is given in the notes, do you feel it that way?</p> <p>Alice: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in this way, er <i>The Last of Us</i> is quite is working quite well?</p> <p>Alice: So far yeah so far I think it's pretty balanced.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – Interactive character movement with action</p>
4.21	<p>Interviewer: When you play the game, do you know that this option open up because you finished the side quest ah? The Wrex armour.</p>	<p>Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs;</p>

	<p>Michael: I wouldn't know right?</p> <p>Interviewer: You don't know ah?</p> <p>Michael: I don't think I will know.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence
4.22	<p>Interviewer: This part I want to ask you when Bill helps you in the gameplay...</p> <p>Walter: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Are you able to form any kind of emotional bond to him?</p> <p>Walter: No.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you feel that he is more of a gameplay tool for you?</p> <p>Walter: Yes. I mean I like his character because his character can defend himself. His character has a proper gun.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Walter: Up and then, all characters that you sort of allied with were kind of, I mean Tess was not bad but Tess only had a bloody pistol. Everybody else before that only had a pistol like Marlene had a pistol. She had a pistol and it kind of kind of crappy.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm so it's more useful.</p> <p>Walter: So Bill now has a shotgun so Bill is obviously a good companion but I mean yes there was emotion going back yes a good decent amount of companion that can defend themselves but other than that, no.</p>	Analytical frame – Interactive character movement with action; Resonance metaphor
5.1	<p>Walter: No, they know very fast. If you rescue three Little Sisters, they give you a reward immediately. And then you tell oh this is actually more worth it than if I have gone the evil route.</p>	Analytical frame – delayed facilitating mechanic

5.2	<p>Interviewer: So you think the choice how is it narrative or gameplay ah? I mean how do I phrase it? Do you mean that in <i>The Walking Dead</i>, you see the choice you don't see the choice as gameplay or narrative?</p> <p>Walter: er when I looked at <i>The Walking Dead</i>, I see them as one and the same. As in the entire conceit of <i>Walking Dead</i> is that the gameplay is choice. That is the way the entire game is structured around. It's by choice. So ah...</p> <p>Interviewer: It's very hard to separate them ah?</p> <p>Walter: I don't think you can separate them because literally the choices that you make changes the narrative. But the whole game is built around making choices.</p>	Resonance
5.3	<p>Mary: Oh ya. It's a it's very like it really depends on your instinct already at this point because it's it's ya it's so fast. Like you you don't know whether you are making the right or bad choice. Like they don't give you time to think so it's good in a sense because it's like at that instant like whatever that has influenced you before that you already know what choice you want so you just make the choice. The player might regret it lah but then like at that particular point that's how you feel about it lah. Which is what they want you to do what, split second decision.</p> <p>Interviewer: So do you find it more realistic ah?</p> <p>Mary: Yes. In real life we do not have much time to think about this sort of thing one what. For a lot of the conversations as well. Actually honestly, we don't have so much time to think. So yes. I I quite like this feature like they make you, they pressure the player to think. But then they don't do it all the time lah which is very stressful for the player lah. Which is good lah like they spaced it out.</p>	Analytical frame – Instrumental Actions: Language-based communication
5.4	<p>Nasir: I was thinking I also also I also thought that er like once you finished the main storyline, you have like a free free to roam kind of mode where they just let you finish your side quests. But apparently not lah so I did want to I did want to finish the side quests but only later on. I I thought it was possible to clear it after the main mission.</p> <p>Interviewer: Why did you thought it was possible? Was it because you play other games?</p>	Player's experience – prior experience of gaming

	<p>Nasir: Ya because as in I guess I'm used to MMOs so...</p> <p>Interviewer: Is it like <i>World of Warcraft</i> that influenced you?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya I guess as in the main like ya the main story is more important. You can do all the side stuffs later on. Like even for <i>World of Warcraft</i>, I guess if for that example, like like let's say example would be let's say you are level okay you are level 20, let's say er they give you the option of you want to go to this zone or that zone and both both of these zones are for that level. It's just give you a option ah. Ya so it's like if you choose to go this zone then the the the stories would be different. Each as in each zone would have its kind of its own story if you if you bother to read. And follow the quests. Ya then once once you are done with let's say you have option with this zone A and zone B. Once you are done with zone A er you could go back to zone B. But you are of a high enough level such that the experience points you get from you are from A right so B the experience points you get from B isn't that much. You rather just go on to the next er let's say you are level 30 by then go on to the next level 30 zones that they offer you. Then later on, once you as in you could like go back to A just just because you are kind of low level, you still get some experience but not not profitable experience. Ya it will be more like slowing your game down so so what I did was I just continue with the level appropriate areas then at the end of the game, once I maxed level, then I just go back to that place and do the complete the quests in that zone just to find out about the story in that zone.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Nasir Ya so ya I guess you could say I was influenced by how <i>WOW</i>...</p> <p>Interviewer: <i>World of Warcraft</i>?</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p>	
5.5	<p>Mary: I'm an explorer. (Laughs). I have to explore everything.</p> <p>Interviewer: I think I think his splicer attacked you first is it?</p>	Player's experience – play style preferences

	<p>Mary: Ya ya ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Then you fought back.</p> <p>Mary: Ya. He he his spider I think his spider splicer something like that one ah attacked me then I killed then he he came and attacked me then I just killed him. Then he just die lor then I was like...</p> <p>Interviewer: Because because the wiki says that you can choose not to kill him.</p> <p>Mary: Ya I know I read that part. Then I was like but he attacked me then I just killed him lor like as in if he didn't attack me, then I had a choice, you know what I mean? But he was like killing me so I had to kill him. So I was a bit confused by the wiki that lah. But I supposed if I don't go into his house, then I won't but I won't get the Power to the People machine if I don't go.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the er reason you want to kill him is because of what?</p> <p>Mary: I mean he killed me lah (laughs). As in he fought me so I fought him lah but after that I get rewards lah so why not right? Just fight lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Mary: I mean he's he's nuts lah. (Laughs). It doesn't hurt me in a sense to kill crazy guy.</p>	
5.6	<p>Peter: But I have no choice in this case. Eventually I found that he's quite a mad person so I forgive him for that. That's why I didn't kill him in the end.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So it's more of the story influence ah?</p> <p>Peter: He's actually quite a crazy artist before he go mad.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So you got some sympathy for him ah?</p> <p>Peter: But at least he is good at heart since he helped me. Ya even though he halfway through he</p>	Player's experience – karma/relationship with npcs



	<p>doubted me.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you have some sympathy for him ah?</p> <p>Peter: Ya.</p>	
5.7	<p>Interviewer: Then the second Sander Cohen ah. This one this one you just go into his house and then go out. Sander Cohen.</p> <p>Peter: I was looking for the code.</p> <p>Interviewer: At the first time ah?</p> <p>Peter: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the first time you, you are not you didn't really want to fight Sander Cohen because you are looking for the code ah?</p> <p>Peter: mm hmm. And then eventually, I was forced into a fight with him because I didn't know what I did. Because I disturbed the dancers is it?</p> <p>Interviewer: Because you...ya. Because you...and then you come here. So this part you still trying to find the code?</p> <p>Peter: mm hmm.</p>	(Ir)relevance – gameplay focus
5.8	<p>Mary: No I mean before that. Initially lah, I did say I was going to try harvesting, I can't remember where lah but somewhere. I did say right I was like maybe I should try harvesting because I can get more but then like after getting the first two the amount of ADAM that I get right? I am like since I mean I'm not going to buy much at that...because for me I don't do a lot of upgrades if you realised. I don't really do a lot of upgrades and what not. So it's like to me, ADAM is not very critical to my progression. So I was just like okay lor just save them. Then once I saved the third one, I suddenly get like the rewards from Tenenbaum. Then I was like okay, I am going to save all of them. And get all the rewards. Like you know, why not right? Since and then they repay you with some ADAM</p>	<p>Analytical frame –  delayed facilitating  mechanic;  Player's experience –  play style preferences</p>

	<p>anyway. I I think it's not it's not equivalent lah then if you harvest them but then I don't need that much anyway, and they give me plasmids. So it's already paid off already.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the reason you are going to save them is because you don't need so much ADAM ah?</p> <p>Mary: Ya and I can get plasmid rewards anyway so...</p>	
5.9	<p>Interviewer: Ya I'm asking you is the gameplay push towards a morally good or bad direction greater? For you.</p> <p>Peter: Morally bad I guess because hacking is actually because hacking is not a good deed. You are stealing someone's items. You are ahem you are...</p>	<p>(Ir)relevance – gameplay focus;</p> <p>Analytical frame – Immediate facilitating mechanic</p>
5.10	<p>Henry: So it's pretty obvious that the weapon to use is the screwdriver so I have to find some way to get it quietly. Oh no no. Back down. Let's see. I've to first I've to kill this. I've to kill this guy probably with the screwdriver before making use of the car to kill something else. So let's head back to brick wall and find see if can find anything. There's a pillow here. Oh have to use the pillow to stuff stuff the probably make lessen the noise I guess. So let's just take it.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – Strategic Actions – Kinesics and Spatial Behaviour; Resonance</p>
5.11	<p>Nasir: I'm guessing they use the yellow thing to actually indicate where to go next.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – feedback types; Resonance – guidance</p>
5.12	<p>Interviewer: er what do you think the gameplay consists of?</p> <p>Interviewee: er gameplay I think it's about killing the zombies in that area. I suppose. Gameplay other than that let's say mm what exactly is gameplay? I mean what are you expecting is?</p> <p>Interviewer: Like the actions that you take the shooting.</p> <p>Interviewee: Okay. Okay. So I think ya shooting of zombies and and that's the gameplay I guess. And gameplay what else does it consist of? Er sometimes the actions are there and sometimes I need to find some items or just kill a specific er zombie to progress mm I think it's okay.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental actions</p>
5.13	<p>Loke: Then I just listen to the audio as in just for backstory lah like what's going on. Ya but there's</p>	<p>(Ir)relevance – gameplay</p>

	<p>one there's one audio log specifically about the pipes one. So that's the one that help you get the Telekinesis right?</p> <p>Interviewer: But if I never tell you, do you know?</p> <p>Loke: er...</p> <p>Interviewer: Because I...</p> <p>Loke: Ya. Ya. Ya. That's also true lah but when cos the what audio was near the freezing pipes.</p> <p>Interviewer: It's frozen in the...</p> <p>Loke: Ya so if you didn't tell me, then I'll probably take longer. Like figure out eh what I supposed to do with it. Then I can probably draw the link that the ice will can be melted by the fire but I didn't draw the link that there are other rooms that I saw previously that are covered by the ice can also be melted so ya. So I think the interesting thing is er er.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think the game like never give you any explicit hints ah?</p> <p>Loke: Ya in a way in a way.</p> <p>Interviewer: You have to find out by yourself.</p> <p>Loke: Then it's like when you fight cos after you play then you go and search online about the things right? Then there's a lot of other things you can do. So er...</p>	<p>focus and incomplete information problems</p>
5.14	<p>Peter: Ya you you need to use erm you need to have at least two or three first aid kits ah in order to survive the damage that he deals. He deals a lot of damage to you. Usually can kill you in two three hits ah. But you need to plan the your how you want to destroy him. Maybe you hack some turrets and use the turrets to help you distract him to so that the Big Daddy will hit the turret instead of hitting you.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – strategic gameplay actions; (Ir)relevance gameplay focus</p>
5.15	<p>Interviewee: erm gameplay wise my favourite <i>Bioshock</i> is <i>Bioshock 2</i> because erm they kind of</p>	<p>Analytical frame –</p>

	<p>perfected the formula. If you really want to talk about the gameplay. One of the main things about this game that I don't like is the fact that erm you have to switch between weapons and plasmids cos in the second one you have one on each hand. So it's a lot easier to control in that sense. Erm also the the guns in erm the weapons in the first game are quite standard ah there's nothing really much different but then in in <i>Bioshock 2</i>, the weapons they are they are the same guns like you have your pistol, you have your machine gun, your shot gun all that. But they look very very different and like the upgrade system I couldn't remember how different it is but I know for the fact that the upgrade system in <i>Bioshock 2</i> like erm they really change the way the guns look and it's a very unique aesthetic ah. Because like for example, the the machine gun in <i>Bioshock 1</i> is just a regular Tommy Gun you know like you you have those real life but in in <i>Bioshock 2</i>, your your er machine guns like er 50 cal 50 cal mini gun that's like welded to your hand so that's quite interesting.</p>	<p>instrumental actions: gameplay PC customisation</p>
5.16	<p>Interviewee: Oh oki. Er basically, you have to fight off the splicers. Erm who are like the crazy people. Like just the crazy drones lah in the game. Erm then there's some bosses who are extra crazy er and of course you have to decide whether to harvest the Little Sisters or whether to release them. Ya.</p>	<p>Analytical instrumental actions frame gameplay –</p>
5.17	<p>Interviewee 1: Gameplay oh right erm oki I can okay let's discount the fact that <i>Bioshock</i> is an old game. Like really long time ago and erm even though the game crashed a few times, I I actually find the gameplay the the whole erm you get to collect powers and then you have to choose to keep some, you can't keep all of them. Like it's quite realistic weapons ah. Ammo isn't found all over the place. Like most shooters like <i>Call of Duty</i> and er <i>Battlefield</i> and all that you find ammo here and there. You will find ammo. The game will try to give you ammo. But in <i>Bioshock</i> erm for every enemy you kill, you probably need like 5 bullets if you are like a bad shooter like me. But you can only find 3 of the bodies. At one point, you will find yourself scarce like in terms of ammo and you have to resort to meleeing. So it forces the player out of his comfort zone. He doesn't stick to...like most of this kind of game, we have our style. If it's stealth, we try to work our way slowly through. We have to kill just kill and move on.</p>	<p>Analytical instrumental actions frame gameplay –</p>
5.18	<p>Interviewee: er gameplay in terms of, it's a first person shooter. So the gameplay I think it consists of problem solving, the the puzzle solving where you trying to hack the machines. And then also er first person shooter where you encounter the encounter the different kinds of erm enemies lah. Then the gameplay is also like pretty unique in the sense that you just cannot shoot your way through. You need to...because you got different kind of skill, you have like the...</p>	<p>Analytical instrumental strategic actions frame and gameplay –</p>
5.19	<p>Interviewee: Oh ya erm actually one of the most challenging thing about the game is the lack of</p>	<p>Analytical frame –</p>

	<p>resources. Like most of other er games like that you find a lot of ammos and health packs around. But this one you actually have to conserve and think of what you want to do before you actually do it. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So before you fight the Big Daddy, did you like prepare for it or you just engage them?</p> <p>Interviewee: Oh I did er because they said the Big Daddy was coming around. I swapped to the pistol with the armour piercing rounds first. So I did what I could to damage him as much as I could before er before I realised that er I thought the best tactic was to take him head on because it was a very confined area anyway ya.</p>	strategic actions	gameplay
5.20	<p>Interviewee: er gameplay is a first person shooter er traditional one except that they got some er er you got some power, er EVE that give energy that allow you to do ah basically just that it just like er another gun ah which basically can shoot at people. So it's other thing is ah I think it's simple. It's pretty much same er person as the first person shooter style.</p>	Analytical instrumental actions	frame – gameplay
5.21	<p>John: And then there are also you need to make some choices. Then for example, you gain the new power, then after that, there are not enough slots.</p> <p>John: Then after that er I walked around and ya I found a robot. I hacked a few robot. Then make them shoot the Big Daddy.</p> <p>Interviewer: So your strategy is to hack the robots to fight Big Daddy?</p> <p>John: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>John: Give us the choice to choose whether you want to save or harvest the little girl?</p>	Analytical instrumental strategic actions	frame – and gameplay
5.22	<p>Interviewee: Ah for me I just roam around lah. See what I can find. As in I don't don't really actively go and explore but just search the area like for loot ah. Cos ammo in this game very important. Run out of ammo, they cannot survive, especially cos at the beginning already. But er I feel that the the Big Daddy is er harder to kill compared to Atlas. So I a bit the final boss is easier to kill than the small boss.</p>	Analytical instrumental strategic actions	frame – and gameplay

<p>5.23</p>	<p>Interviewee: Ah okay. The question is a bit tricky. Yes ah I find that it's interesting. Because you know it's something like you know, <i>GTA, Grand Theft Auto</i> that kind of thing where you get to explore a bit of the world. But it's restricted to certain areas and stuff like that. And you know not all things are interactive and stuff. And er just for until the point where I kill it so far, er the items that are explorable or interactable, erm it's limited to how much of the story you have gone. Like for example, if you haven't talk to this certain character, this much right? Then er these items or these things are uninteractable until then for example. But ya I will say that it's interesting lah then erm especially at the point where I'm stuck at the pharmacy right? You have to find a way to get out of it or at least to progress the storyline and there's there's only a certain way where you can do it and it's up to the player to go and to go around because it's like they don't tell you what you need, how to get out and stuff. They just give you like little hints and clues so it's up to the player to go around and search every damn thing that is searchable, and then like think for himself lah like so if after a while, searched whole place and then you went back, goes back to the point where the storyline is supposed to continue right? But it doesn't allow you to continue. It just means that you missing out something. So the player oh crap I missed something so he goes back and find what type of stuff he missing so ya lah it makes the player think a bit lah. So it's like on the feet. It's not something mundane like you need to do it's the same thing over again and it's the stuff like that ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you don't find the gameplay too simple lah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ah it's not simple at all. And for example, erm there was that quite a few of the interactions are are time limited. So you know, it puts the player even more on their feet so in the end, they had like...and it's like represented by white bar. Like counting down, some sometimes it's rather slow, sometimes it's faster. The faster ones are the ones that really you know gives you something like adrenaline high. Like you need to oh shit what do you need to do? Which choices do I have to make. Stuff like that lah. Er so I don't know lah it's different lah it's what makes me interested in the gameplay lah. It's what's different.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay. So the do you think the quick-time event ah is it, do you like the quick-time event? Have you heard of this?</p> <p>Interviewee: Yes. The quick-time event?</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions</p>
-------------	---	---

	<p>Interviewer: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewee: That means like the...</p> <p>Interviewer: Pressing button ah. When they asking you to press Q.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ah then they giving me a time limit is it? That one also I know. Yes. I like it because like er for other games like most games right? They give you a choice. The player is like I mean it's really weird to me lah er like doing a conversation with two characters right? Then the player is given an infinite amount of time to choose what he wants to choose so he can have you know, takes his time and then read through and what not. This one doesn't give you that that option. You know, it's what what happens to you in real life lah. I mean like in real life you get if our conversations our conversations between two persons right? Two people. You don't give then like er like for example, I ask you how's your day, you don't take like half an hour to say okay that's good.</p>	
5.24	<p>Interviewee: I think well in this game, I think that er because it's so very story driven, it's very it's very linear. But er so I think that all narrative events can actually become gameplay events and all gameplay events can become narrative events. But the so I mean it does complement each other that it takes up the more the the monotonous ah the monotonous erm...</p>	Resonance
5.25	<p>Interviewee: Ya so anyway, ahem ya gameplay event would be like parts of the game where you actually look for items to help you with that particular event. And transit, transition to the next one.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewee: And then but then in this particular game, majority of gameplay also involves selecting responses and you know, picking choices on the spot.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think that the gameplay is integrated with the narrative event?</p> <p>Interviewee: You can say that. So that's why when you say an example of a gameplay event so which one do I exactly? Do I give, are you looking, what are you looking out for? Are you looking out for the narration part? Which is actually covered under narrative event? Or are you looking</p>	Resonance

	<p>specifically for since all the parts where we have to look for like scavenge items to help you.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. So ya that's what I said, that's what I mean like this part. You feel that narrative and gameplay cannot be separated. So like what I said, not sure if gameplay involves deciding making choices. Erm in response to comments or questions or things said by the other in-game characters.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. So that's why I said it's it's together.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Interviewee: Then when there's a clear divide between narrative and gameplay, this is the part where I don't really understand. Because I feel that this one is more through this one so I find it hard to answer like there's a clear divide between narrative and gameplay because to me clearly, these two are is together.</p>	
5.26	<p>Jim: The gameplay? Well it's a point and click and a little bit of WASD walking and because this is just episode one so some of the gameplay did not show up. But in episode 4, there's a little bit of first person shooting.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay so erm those parts with the quick-time event ah.</p> <p>Jim: Oh quick-time event.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you have any comments ah?</p> <p>Jim: Quick-time event. To be honest, quick-time event is quite old mechanism in video games.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you think it works in this game?</p> <p>Jim: It does. Okay. I think it doesn't work in any games today. Because we have more and more</p>	Analytical frame – instrumental gameplay actions



	<p>technology. If we have more and more mechanism that can, we have more and more innovation they can put into this game just a matter of erm effort. Mainstream games they I don't think they really have much innovation as the independent ones. We call the Indie games. And quick-time events are quite common if I'm not mistaken. When I was young, they are quite common in much older games in the 1990s that's what I can remember and today a lot of lazy games you see if you look at the review of those some of the games like those games that ripped off from the movie titles like the recent Rambo video games right? Today I think quick-time event if you implement into video game right? It can be seen as a kind of lazy. Check out Angry Joe on YouTube and you see how much he was angry about the game. He gave it a very bad review. Too hardcore. I'm not a hardcore gamer.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p>	
5.27	<p>Henry: Gameplay is just er choice it's based on your choice lor. It's like for example, if you choose like there's one case where you choose to save the Duck the kid or the the other guy, the Shawn at the farm there...</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Henry: And it's based on it's based on whatever you choose lah. Then then the story will unfold into what you what you choose lah. And then and then from there the characters will, the relationship between you and the other characters will kind of will say like develop like that but it's ah ya lah it's like developed lor. Ah. If you choose another choice then it would develop differently or something like that lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. Are there any other types of gameplay that you find in <i>Walking Dead</i> ah? Besides the choice.</p> <p>Henry: Oh erm besides that then there is also the I can't remember what is that the what's that thing called? What is like the the action eh quick quick action.</p> <p>Interviewer: er what's that? Quick-time action.</p> <p>Henry: Ah quick-time action. There's quick-time action. Then there is like er ya there is just quick-</p>	Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions

time action. There's no FPS ya no FPS ya it's quick-time action lor. There's more like platform. Not only platform lah but it's more on the er narrative than the gameplay cos it's more of like telling a story what. Ah.

Interviewer: So far, the quick-time action er do you find it quite repetitive ah or is it?

Henry: er...

Interviewer: Do you like it so far?

Henry: So far it's episode 1 lah as in the first episode. So I still find it okay but er I don't know for for the next few episodes I don't know how I will react to it lah but so far it seems ok lah. It's not that not that repetitive.

Interviewer: So other than the quick-time gameplay are there other gameplay you encounter so far?

Henry: As in in *The Walking Dead*?

Interviewer: Ya.

Henry: er oh the interaction, I forgot what's it called. What is for example, you can go and er er eh is it interaction with object? Ya you just for example, those those those objects that you can take up you will take them or whatever er choice that you can choose you choose like for example, you take you take the brick to throw at the store.

Interviewer: mm mm.

Henry: Window that kind.

Interviewer: That kind of basic action lah.

Henry: Ya. Ya. Basic action ya.

5.28	<p>Interviewee: mm ya. Erm I think er the gameplay in this game er I use an axe to kill The Walking Dead. And try to save the girl and er using a gun to shoot The Walking Dead. And mm try to get the keys from the dead people. And mm try to attract those er Walking Dead. And to get the keys. Mm and to save the people who is threatened by The Walking Dead.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the next question is asking you about the event. Er if event is defined as the change of one state to another, for example, you have a change in the setting ah, so can you think of any example of a narrative event or gameplay event?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm narrative event is that means the conversations between the people in the group. Mm and the gameplay event er I think is make choice to save the woman or the man in there.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think choosing to save the woman or the man is a gameplay choice ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay. Mm for the next question, are you able to clearly see a divide between the narrative and gameplay ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Or when you see that they are together?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm I think narrative is narrative is er just conversations.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay.</p> <p>Interviewee: For gameplay, is to make some choices. Make decisions to affect the final progress of the game.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you don't see any division between the story and gameplay?</p>	Resonance
------	---	-----------

	<p>Interviewee: mm not so clear division.</p> <p>Interviewer: Okay. So you feel they cannot be separated?</p> <p>Interviewee: mm.</p>	
5.29	<p>Interviewee: mm mostly is shooting, picking up items, exploration, erm and seeing how the story develop lor. And learning how to use the character in the game. Cos there are a lot of functions the character can use. Like change weapon ah, sniper la erm all all the kind of different functions ah.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions</p>
5.30	<p>Interviewee: erm usually I play a good character because because it does quite align with your real self.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: As in you find it very hard to do bad things like you know let's say like in <i>Star Wars: The Knights of the Old Republic</i>, if you choose to play a bad guy, you end up killing your own characters. So obviously, it's quite hard decision as a player to kill somebody that you have like you know nurtured throughout the game and then you kill him because you are a bad person. So it's easier to be a good person and you sort of save everyone you know in an ideal world. So it's easier lah. It fits more in terms with my real self.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you are trying to impose your real life personality.</p>	<p>Player's experience – personality factors</p>
5.31	<p>Interviewee: erm well it's not a straightup shooter so well there's a bit of a strategic factor. You got to get out your AI partners are not very smart which is a bit weird because they are soldiers so you expect them to take like cover and do things like this automatically. But you got to like point them towards the cover.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – strategic gameplay actions</p>
5.32	<p>Interviewer: Do you think there's any characters you like in <i>Mass Effect</i>?</p> <p>Michael: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then is it more for the narrative than the gameplay?</p>	<p>Player's experience – karma/relationship with PCs</p>

	<p>Michael: er I think it's more for the gameplay lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because Wrex is very strong.</p> <p>Michael: So it allows me to hammer through the game.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm. So there's not much memorable characters in the story?</p> <p>Michael: The who's the commando ah? The one eye guy.</p> <p>Interviewer: One eye guy, which?</p> <p>Michael: er the one who worked for the security that one. The sniper ah?</p> <p>Interviewer: Got one eye guy ah? I cannot remember.</p> <p>Michael: The sniper lor, the native sniper. Oh no the alien sniper. He's the most memorable because every time I bring him out he dies.</p> <p>Interviewer: er Garrus ah?</p> <p>Michael: Ah ya. Garrus is the weakest character who I have no use for him because his sniping sucks. That's why I prefer Wrex because Wrex will go in front and kill everything for me.</p>	
5.33	<p>Interviewer: There's some parts of the game where the health bar turns...</p> <p>Nasir: mm which part ah?</p> <p>Interviewer: Green colour.</p> <p>Nasir: Oh.</p> <p>Interviewer: Did you know? Does the game explain to you ah? Or do you find out later by yourself?</p>	(Ir)relevance metaphor; Analytical frame – feedback types

Nasir: I think I found out later. I think she was healing right?

Interviewer: But you still don't know what is this ah? The green colour coding.

Nasir: Ya. I'm assuming it's healing. Because in in *Mass Effect 2* they didn't they don't really play around with er as in it's not so obvious about poison and stuff lah. I don't think there's any poison in *Mass Effect 2*. It's only because *Mass Effect 1* got poison so...it's a bit vague.

Interviewer: Do you want to? I want to search.

Nasir: mm?

Interviewer: Search to see if it gives me any info or not.

Nasir: Oh search lor. Oh poison lah?

Interviewer: Oh is it? Is it is this reliable reliable information?

Nasir: mm I'm not sure. I guess so. There. Ah oki. Okay lor. Then I was wrong.

Interviewer: I don't know.

Nasir: Ok lah if...

Interviewer: Is there anymore reliable one? Toxic gas ah?

Nasir: mm oki.

Interviewer: I don't know.

Nasir: I guess so.

	<p>Interviewer: It's either negative effect or positive effect ah.</p> <p>Nasir: As in since you come across so many, I'm guessing I'm probably wrong. As in since her health was still high, it didn't really concern me.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p>	
5.34	<p>Nasir: mm gameplay wise is about knowing how to play your character and I supposed er you assign the points and like upgrade your weapons and stuff like that. So basically just making your character better lah. So that you can er fight the challenges in the game. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: erm is there any interesting thing you find about the gameplay?</p> <p>Nasir: mm gameplay ah?</p> <p>Interviewer: Is there anything that you like?</p> <p>Nasir: Oki lah as in I think the ahem as in I think the taking cover behind the the whatever wall or crate or what was nice as in the sense that like you don't need to like you don't need to initially I thought you had to manually do it right? Just hide behind and sneak out the side to shoot then I didn't realise that if you go close enough to the wall or something, you will automatically face your back then you can automatically er shoot from the side based on the ya so I think that part of the gameplay wise was useful. Erm ya just that I think initially at the start was quite a lot of things to take not. So it's like initially it was like how cannot jump then ah how do you do everything all that. So ya it it took took a while to get use to ah. That's why at first I was like like how to play. Then then after a while, like ok lah I think I got it somewhat. Ya.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions</p>
5.35	<p>Interviewer: So far the gameplay is it erm oki for you ah? Just now you choose easy mode or normal?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ah I choose ah normal mode. But ya and I think is oki just that er it's a bit different er from the normal like it's it's a bit different from the normal ah first person shooter you know like you have the WASD right to move forward?</p>	<p>Player's experience – prior experience of gaming</p>

	<p>Interviewee: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewee: And then you have the R for ah reload and stuff.</p> <p>Interviewer: But this one not so much reload. It's just...overheating.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya because it's like I keep pressing because I have a habit of like after like a every like battle or after a few seconds, I just keep pressing to reload.</p> <p>Interviewer: So your previous game experience influence your...</p> <p>Interviewee: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: Playing in <i>Mass Effect</i>.</p>	
5.36	<p>Interviewer: So far, the gameplay of <i>Mass Effect</i>, do you think er how do you think about the gameplay ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: I think it's quite realistic ah. Quite realistic for once for once. And also like it's you have to constantly use your brain ah, cannot just point and click orh. Then usually cos like you go you go rogue you go crazy you shoot.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. You have to think first.</p> <p>Interviewee: I must think and how I want to strategise how you want to shift your squad mates and everything in order to achieve the best outcome lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So far the gameplay er is there any part you like about the gameplay and then is there any part you don't like ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: I like the part er being able to customise the weapons and everything.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions; Resonance causality and consequence</p>



	<p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: And also mm basically the storyline you having you being able to impact the storyline lah. Through the questions and everything. Then what I don't like is the basically the it gets too much a lot of information to handle. A lot of questions to read and everything. Then the cutscenes also like because for me I feel like I need to know everything so I keep asking question then the gameplay can get really draggy.</p>	
5.37	<p>Interviewer: Do you find your gameplay actions is it scripted? Like er you like you like to have more control?</p> <p>Interviewee: er.</p> <p>Interviewer: Or is it does it feel scripted ah?</p> <p>Interviewee: I feel ya it's a bit it's a bit contrived leh. Like the point...it's good that it is giving you a lot of control but then like it's so much control that you you after a while I I lost on what to do because it is so many things you I feel that you need to do to enable to get over...</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewee: Get through the scenario lah like one thing you need to rally your soldiers. It is as if they are like they are not trained at all that means you are ordering them around. I prefer them to be able to do their own stuff. And I do my own stuff.</p> <p>Interviewer: That means their AI is not so good ah.</p> <p>Interviewee: It's I don't know maybe it's maybe this gameplay is supposed to give you more autonomy ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Interviewee: But then I prefer like you do your own stuff so then I don't need to worry about my</p>	<p>Player's experience – play style preferences; Analytical frame – strategic and instrumental gameplay actions</p>

	<p>team mates.</p> <p>Interviewer: So that means...</p> <p>Interviewee: Go through then my team mates die also quite sian.</p> <p>Interviewer: That means you want some kind of er what?</p> <p>Interviewee: I prefer independence ah.</p> <p>Interviewer: er you want them to do their own things.</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya. I prefer some of them to do their own things like I prefer a mission like where you are preferably on your own lah. Then you are up based on yourself ah. Then ya lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: So do you mean that you don't like so much multitasking?</p> <p>Interviewee: Ya I prefer not to multitask too much.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oki.</p>	
5.38	<p>Interviewee: er for <i>Mass Effect</i>, I would say like er regarding the way you played the game, yes you can play the Rambo style and the like stealth style also. Because erm they allow you to hide behind a cover and stuff like rocks or anything. And then for me I choose to just from a distance snipe my enemies instead of going like full on and hit them erm up against them because erm preserving health and stuff like that because I keep restarting such a feeling there. Er so ya then erm but one thing like I didn't really like about the game was that erm oki from what I experienced so far is the weapons seem to be erm infinite ammo because they don't run out of ammo but they do overheat. So after a while, you have to like stop shooting and just wait for it to cool down. Though so but like I haven't familiarise myself with the whole equipping of special ammo and stuff so I don't really know if it will run out. But ya just from what I experienced so far is that the weapons are quite limitless lah in that sense and also the erm type of combat is also once again limited to just firing weapons ah. Like I would prefer it if maybe like you can use like handheld er maybe like swords or</p>	<p>Analytical frame – strategic and instrumental gameplay actions</p>

	something to for other types of combat lah ya.	
5.39	<p>Interviewee: The gameplay consists of two distinct parts. So that means er first part where you are on the ship. You interact with a lot of people. You get a lot of information about the world the game is. Sometimes you get extra items just by talking to people. You can unlock more weapons. Then er after that, you transit into the FPS ah during the deployment. During the deployment still have a little bit of narrative ah with gameplay. Gameplay with storyline there. You find that when you can rescue people or you can just don't rescue people and run over. Then even after you rescue people, you can decide whether you want to talk to them. And er check out information from them. So if I didn't drag out information from that guy just now, I wouldn't have get more grenades. So it actually helps in the gameplay.</p>	Resonance causality
5.40	<p>Nasir: Ya as in I guess you as in it does work that way in the sense that but Mass Effect is like the currency is based on the points you earn when you level up. But over here is more like er finding I think you find the pills or drugs or something like that. Ya you that's that's why I was like looking through the environment to see whether can find extra stuff. Because as in it seems though when I watched the gameplay like on YouTube and stuff, like er finding finding items in your environment is quite important in this game. Otherwise, you no weapons then you die. So ya that's why I think in this case, it's less dependent on you levelling up. It's more on you then forcing you to er explore the environment for all these small small hidden items. Not hidden ah but ya.</p>	Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs, prior experience of gaming
5.41	<p>Alice: erm currently the gameplay consists of a lot. Well, one is scavenging. I think like that. That's the mechanic. Erm you have to scavenge a lot to find ammunitions. And to find other materials that you can compile together to make something else like health packs or Molotov cocktails or shivs. Erm so that's one of the scavenging is one of them. Erm another one is well scavenging exploring then. And then another one is I guess it's also fighting. Cos you have to kind of fight your way to different checkpoints. Erm and what part of the gameplay? I think that's about it. Exploring, scavenging, fighting.</p> <p>Interviewer: The weapon customisation.</p> <p>Alice: Weapon customisation is I guess see would you argue that it's part of scavenging, exploring though? Gameplay. Cos I think is that that the weapon customisation haven't really come into play yet. I guess you fire faster. But that's not really apart from having what ammunition had had being able to hold more ammunition and firing at a faster rate, erm weapon customisation hasn't really</p>	Analytical frame – instrumental and strategic actions and gameplay

come into play yet. Other customisation, I guess ya the gameplay, a part of the gameplay I guess is then you can customise whatever you want in terms of like supplements or...

Interviewer: But so far not much upgrade yet lah?

Alice: Ya I don't think that upgrades have really come into play yet. I mean there's only very few of these. There's only two weapons. There's a revolver, a pistol. And at times that's but...

Interviewer: The pills also not much ah?

Alice: I haven't been able to use wait I used the pills once. So but not much ya.

Interviewer: And then the quick-time events. Do you see it as a gameplay?

Alice: Say that again.

Interviewer: The quick-time events.

Alice: Like cutscenes?

Interviewer: Ya those that prompt you to press the buttons.

Alice: Oh so the tutorials. Erm...

Interviewer: I mean sometimes they asked you to press some buttons.

Alice: Oh I see. Erm ya I mean...

Interviewer: Do you think that is that is also narrative?

Alice: That is part of the narrative ya because they are...no I don't think they are part of the narrative because it is just prompting you to do an action.

	<p>Interviewer: So it's gameplay ah?</p> <p>Alice: Ya I think it's gameplay too. Ya so those things are gameplay. It's just a reminder that you could do certain things.</p>	
5.42	<p>Interviewer: But the narrative is not restricting the gameplay in <i>Mass Effect</i>?</p> <p>Nasir: er I think some points it does. Like I think there's one side mission where you think there might be the last side mission I did in the gameplay. The one about the base about the <b>Father Kyle</b> and his biotic followers thing. Ya I guess if if I didn't invest in the the blue thing, I think as in I wouldn't know because I didn't go down that path. But I'm guessing that you would somehow like be forced or eventually kill him. Which would cause his followers to attack you. So forcing you to like clear that level. But because I either because I invest in Charm or I had the option to at least talk to talk to the person, so it trigger the option where I can just walk in and find Kyle instead of having to fight through the place. So in that sense, narrative does affect gameplay as well. At least, but that's a side mission, er if you are talking about main storyline, I guess the last part where Saren where you are confronting Saren just before the final final boss battle, the the part where he's still Saren, he's still er what you called him? Er Tauren ya. Where he was still a Tauren er before he became the cyborg thing. Ya so because I had the Charm option so I didn't have as in he decided to commit suicide instead of me having to fight him. I'm guessing if I didn't invest in Charm, I would have to fight him. So in that sense, narrative does influence gameplay.</p>	Resonance consequence
5.43	<p>Interviewer: There's another part got 2 options greyed out ah? I think what is it ah? I think that one is the <b>C-Sec</b> officer.</p> <p>Nasir: Oh oki.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya this one. This part you also your character level still haven't enough.</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: This one ah?</p>	Resonance consequence

	<p>Nasir: Oh ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So this part you when you see that the option is greyed out...</p> <p>Nasir: Ya as in...</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you do you feel that it's very restrictive ah?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because you haven't played a lot then they restrict you so fast.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. So I did feel it a bit restrictive. At this point in time.</p>	
5.44	<p>Henry: er as in after that, I realised oh ya I only can save Duck then er the only thing that matters at that point was as in the only difference that made was the relationship with Kenny what.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Henry: Cos you choose whether to save Duck instead of er Shawn. Or Shawn instead of Duck. Then but other than that, doesn't really make a difference. As in you can feel that as in when I originally saved Duck right, then Hershel chased as in he chased everybody out but you can tell that he's directing his anger at everybody including me.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Henry: But when I saved Shawn, then he was directing his anger...</p> <p>Interviewer: At Kenny ah?</p> <p>Henry: At Kenny.</p> <p>Interviewer: So there's some change in the story.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence

	<p>Henry: There's some change lah ah but as in gameplay no change right? Cos in the end you cannot.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya in the end, will get chased out of the farm.</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Will get chased out of the farm. Just that the anger directed at you will not only.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oki. So the meaningful part is that the story will change a little bit ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. Will change a little bit.</p> <p>Interviewer: Oki.</p>	
5.45	<p>Matt: It's just a means lah. The the means to an end. The same ending you know? Ya lah not very meaningful lah. At the end of it, we still reaching the same end. Ya.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence
5.46	<p>Interviewer: So far do you find the narrative and gameplay influence each other?</p> <p>Mary: Very...</p> <p>Interviewer: Like does the narrative choice you make change the gameplay?</p> <p>Mary: Nah not really. Hehe honestly, no. Not really.</p> <p>Interviewer: So this part if you choose to go out in the dark, you also think the gameplay will be the same ah?</p> <p>Mary: I actually never choose it so I mean I never seen anyone choose it so I have no idea what the outcome would be. Do you know?</p> <p>Interviewer: Yes.</p> <p>Mary: They will travel at night.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence

	<p>Interviewer: Yes.</p> <p>Mary: Will they meet Shawn? Another guy?</p> <p>Interviewer: If I tell you, it will be a spoiler.</p> <p>Mary: Is it? Then I better not ask you then hehe. But oh because I never knew whether this part has a you know er?</p> <p>Interviewer: Something will happen to Chet.</p> <p>Mary: Oh damn. I don't want but nothing happened to him when he travelled in the day so...</p> <p>Interviewer: So you think the story choice will not influence the gameplay ah?</p> <p>Mary: erm maybe a bit because like if your characters some of the characters die then they won't appear in the future parts where the gameplay require them in that sense. But er it doesn't feel that impactful when you are playing it lah to be honest unless you played it multiple times lah then you realised there's a difference lah. But at the first run, don't really feel much difference I suppose.</p>	
5.47	<p>Walter: It's got a lot of tools given to you at your disposal. And I can see the way they sort of laid out the areana like things as you went into an area and like there's a bunch of enemies around and you either stealth or shoot them or whatever. And then even if you are shooting them you can do flanking manoeuvres and also things to get around things which is I mean the AI holds up quite well but it's a bit difficult I guess like you know a few of the of the of the scenes where they are going like oki you go into stealth, oki you get this guy, you get this guy. It wasn't very very clear what you were supposed to do. What? And the I think it was supposed to be very guided but at the same time, I think I messed up a few of them. So they were going like distract them but then it's like...</p> <p>Walter: Yes, I would I would say yes you have scarce resources, but your enemies don't seem to have that. They seem to have unlimited ammunition.</p> <p>Interviewer: So there's some kind of disjunction you see.</p>	<p>Analytical frames – instrumental and strategic gameplay actions; Resonance guidance, Dissonance – logical inconsistencies</p>



	<p>Walter: mm ya. Like even there was one scene that earlier on when we were going to Robert's compound, I was shooting a bunch of these guys outside the warehouse, I go in, literally go up the stairs and people go like where did you come from? Like I was shooting right out there, like not like what? Fifty metres from where you were, you couldn't hear me? Ya and people were yelling a the top of lungs and everything.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya the AI is really very separated.</p> <p>Walter: Ya and another thing for a game which has stealth, when you stealthed kill people, you can't moved which is a bit annoying.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Walter: And then people find that oh then everybody's on alert already and then you have to kind of faster finish so ya that was slightly annoying. So I feel like the stealth aspect is a bit maybe half baked? Like it's not quite there. But I don't know. Because I mean like oki it's supposed to be realistic but if it's realistic why you move bodies that kind of thing.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then the gameplay like you can carry limited weapons do you also find it also quite realistic?</p> <p>Walter: erm.</p> <p>Interviewer: I think so far not much of this ah?</p> <p>Walter: Actually, I find that a bit unrealistic because you have the backpack you could only carry one bottle like...you have a bottle you cannot cannot put more than one into your backpack. That one is kind of odd.</p>	
5.48	<p>Matt: Gameplay. Er gameplay gameplay gameplay. I feel like I feel gameplay wise is very it's the same thing over and over again. Er it's not very it's not very er there's no challenge. Right? So obvious. So whoever is playing this is clearly not is will not clear will clearly be dissatisfied if he is looking for a challenge. Er if that's the case, one other thing the game was trying to do was make it</p>	Dissonance imbalance

	<p>er present itself as being derivative right? Derivative having variety interesting you can like like like Aiden can possess people like for example. Right? Oki. Your Aiden's interesting enough. You know but er er then it is like it only happens once. Er then what else you got what else you got? You have er like you can you can many things are out of your control. So gameplay wise is not great it's not great at all. It's not er you don't feel like you are agent. You don't feel like you are you are capable agent of of your own actions. You don't feel like you are really in control of your actions. You feel like you are...</p> <p>Interviewer: You are just driving the story forward.</p> <p>Matt: Ya you are just driving story forward.</p> <p>Interviewer: er wait ah. So in this game, the gameplay is just some interaction with the environment.</p> <p>Matt: The environment and then and there's not much after that. It's you just er you just fiddle with this, fiddle with that and then you just drive story forward and that's all.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Matt: Ya really that's all. You are still trying to...it's only interesting from a drama perspective. From a story, it's from a pure story perspective, it's interesting because there are many things you don't you don't understand about er about the whole about all the characters in general. Like what are their what are their angles on this. You if you are that kind of person, you like that kind of thinking, then this game will interest you. Otherwise, it will be it will be like you know, you you got the general gist of the story, that's good enough. Ya.</p>	
5.49	<p>Interviewer: After you finished the game, do you find that the entire game is like a series of quick-time events where you have only a little bit control ah?</p> <p>Michael: Very much so. Mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in this sense, is the narrative much more than the gameplay ah?</p>	Dissonance imbalance

Michael: There's no gameplay lor.

Interviewer: Do you consider the quick-time events and controlling the characters' movement as gameplay ah?

Michael: If you consider that as gameplay right?

Interviewer: And the interactions with the other objects and humans in the narrative?

Michael: The other parts are fine lah.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: It's just the quick-time events they are overdoing it lah.

Interviewer: So you think there's too much quick-time events?

Michael: There is too much quick-time events. Er yes.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: Because if you don't put the quick-time events over there which we already experienced, the story will continue to flow also.

Interviewer: mm.

Michael: If you asked me it is oki to make a game that is a movie. All I need to do is to press triangle once in a while.

Interviewer: Do you consider those interactions as gameplay?

Michael: Interactions are gameplay, yes. It's very much so of a RPG element lor.

6.1	<p>Interviewer: But the your previous experience would have some help help help to you in making the choice ah?</p> <p>Mary: erm...</p> <p>Interviewer: So it will be...</p> <p>Mary: So called good outcome lah but then again for such like dialogues, I wouldn't remember every single dialogue right? My memory is not that good. Like this sort of dialogues, I wouldn't remember them so I would say that the walkthroughs have no impact on these decisions ah. Maybe the bigger decisions lah like whether I should kill Jolene or not, whether I should hand Irene the gun or not, such things I can remember but for this tiny dialogues, I wouldn't remember them. As in the walkthroughs wouldn't impact at all.</p> <p>Interviewer: So for all those choice with negative ones, you will find it harder to make the choice?</p> <p>Mary: Like this situation?</p> <p>Interviewer Ya.</p> <p>Mary: Yes. Like especially if it clashes with my own character. Like my my personality lah to yah.</p>	Player's experience – prior experience of gaming, personality factors
6.2	<p>Interviewer: Ah then the third question, the third part of the question is do you find the game is trying to push you to side with specific characters ah? Like you cannot become neutral when you are neutral, they will push you to side with certain characters ah?</p> <p>Henry: erm...</p> <p>Interviewer: Like you cannot stay neutral always ah? Is it ah?</p> <p>Henry: Ya. I don't think you can stay neutral always.</p>	Player's experience – karma/relationships with NPCs
6.3	Interviewer: I think this one, this option is choosing to be direct with him ah?	Player's experience –

<p>Jim: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: But erm any reason why you choose this option?</p> <p>Jim: You destroy this group. First of all, I cannot answer in my own term. There's no answer that I can answer with which I decided. Secondly, in real life, I'm also quite entire person. Er sometimes oblivious, indirect to be honest. Ya so my I think I choose that kind of choice.</p> <p>Interviewer: So it is because of your real life personality ah?</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: er wait ah.</p> <p>Jim: But I think you are no hero is even more...</p> <p>Interviewer: More more harsh ah?</p> <p>Jim: Ya harsher.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you didn't want to choose too harsh options.</p> <p>Jim: I usually choose the kind of sentence that...</p> <p>Interviewer: In the middle ah?</p> <p>Jim: Try to become frank ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Jim: Although usually people don't think about their mistakes.</p>	<p>personality factors; (Ir)relevance consequence</p>
---	---

	<p>Interviewer: So you want him to reflect on his mistakes ah?</p> <p>Jim: Exactly.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you think that if you select the other options, there will be any change?</p> <p>Jim: It doesn't matter.</p> <p>Interviewer: It doesn't matter?</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: It will also still be the same relationship with Kenny?</p> <p>Jim: Ya.</p>	
6.4	<p>Interviewer: erm so so far there's no no story option?</p> <p>Alice: No story is pretty is being pretty linear so far. There's not really a choice that you could have made that would alter the story.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya but I'm wondering if erm do you see some kind of story emerging out of your gameplay action? Like erm when you choose to shoot the person do you see that they are trying to characterise Joel as a more negative kind of character?</p> <p>Alice: Not really because that decision to shoot the guy or not to shoot the guy is a you do decision. Er if Joel didn't shoot the guy, then would you say he's a good person? I'm not really sure about that like he is a smuggle. He's done a lot of illegal things. So you know Joel lives in the grey area in general. But choosing to shoot the guy or choosing to kill soldiers or leave Infected, erm I don't think really offers a characterisation of Joel because there's definitely ways that you can just not kill anybody and try to sneak your way through it. Erm and there is also another way where you could kill everybody and just er continue the game.</p>	(Ir)relevance consequence, (Ir)relevance    gameplay focus

	<p>Interviewer: So in those gameplay actions you don't see them characterising Joel so much?</p> <p>Alice: Not really no.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because his characterisation is mainly in the cutscene?</p> <p>Alice: Yes.</p> <p>Interviewer: But erm during the gameplay do you see any kind of narrative coming out from your gameplay actions?</p> <p>Alice: Not really all my gameplay actions are just to get to the next main story point. It doesn't really it hasn't really been that one of my decisions really has effected our story when we go.</p> <p>Interviewer: So when you engaged actions, you are just thinking of the gameplay. You are not you are not so much thinking of the narrative?</p> <p>Alice: Not really. I'm just trying to focus on the goals of the gameplay.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya because I'm trying to ask about emergent narrative.</p> <p>Alice: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: If you have heard of it.</p>	
6.5	<p>Interviewer: Is there any other missions where you go and read the wiki ah?</p> <p>Nasir: mm ya I think for who's that? Finding Liara. Ya I was wondering where she was. Think think I read the wiki.</p> <p>Interviewer: But the the quest log didn't give you enough information ah?</p>	<p>Analytical frame – Inventory – optional object; (Ir)relevance guidance; Player's experience – game guides and walkthroughs</p>

Nasir: Ya they just said search that cluster then that cluster got like 4 different systems.

Interviewer: Ah so you need more information to find which planet?

Nasir: Ya. And also because initially I thought because I didn't really explore the the erm that how you explore different planets right? I thought you need to like land on every single one. I thought everyone had a Mako level. Then I found that very daunting. Like ya as in only later did I found out that when you scan, as in when you orbit around certain planets, it just gives you a description and ya that's it. Then down that oki lah if if if I knew that from the start ya, I would have been more motivated to find Liara first. Cos I was thinking that if every planet I need to find Liara using that Mako, it's going to be very tiring so that's why I left her until last. So ya.

Interviewer: So in the end, you went to search the wiki.

Nasir: er ya in the end I was like which planet was she on. Then I found her lor eventually.

Interviewer: At first, you thought is er is you thought the game didn't give you enough information which planet she's on is it?

Nasir: Ya because the game just said that find her in that er in that cluster. Ya then initially, I thought it was a very big place ah but now I'm more familiar with *Mass Effect*, I realised it wasn't that hard to find her.

Interviewer: But when you clicked on the different planets...

Nasir: mm.

Interviewer: Is it only one planet can land?

Nasir: er ya that's as in most of them. Ya as in I thought every planet can land. I didn't know that it was like one system only a few planets to land on.



	<p>Interviewer: So later then you realised then...</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. When I was think I was exploring or during the game itself.</p> <p>Interviewer: So at first you thought it's quite daunting ah.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya I thought.</p> <p>Interviewer: That's why you go and search the wiki.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya as in cos it's going to be like how come got so many planets then ya.</p>	
6.6	<p>Nasir: Ya. As in the stuff you can find in the planets where you land. So ya ya and like finding Polonium and all the metals, the heavy metals also like, at least in <i>Mass Effect 2</i>, there's a reason why you are looking for them because you use them to upgrade stuff so I get it. But in <i>Mass Effect 1</i>, it was like oh why gathering all these, like okay lah, for money. But I can get money some other way mah. I don't need to resort to this. So I found the the side quest a bit meaningless there ah. At least, if they wanted to put it there, I don't know, unlock some, let's say you complete then I don't know, you unlock some quests.</p> <p>Interviewer: Passive skill ah or?</p> <p>Nasir: No, no. As in more like you unlock one storyline for the Asari where I don't know. Some something about the Matriarch's writings. Maybe you found out more backstory about Asari. But and so on. But there wasn't anything ah so in that sense, in that part I was disappointed ah and I see, I was not very motivated to complete that part.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you mean you need some narrative motivation?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. Ya. I'm more motivated by narrative rewards than gameplay rewards.</p> <p>Interviewer: So er did you just do a few then you give up already?</p>	Dissonance imbalance, (Ir)relevance – narrative focus

	<p>Nasir: For the first one?</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya. The that one collecting the Insignia.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. As in my first play through I never really care lah, for the second playthrough, it's like er ya as in I tried my best to gather as much stuff as I could while while let's say they ask me to go certain planets to do some side quests, then I try to as in if I come across anything in between the objective, then I would go there, but after a while, it just felt meaningless. So I just didn't bother after a while. I think my second play through, I managed to like finish getting the Matriarch writings and some the Taurian thing maybe? But the other two I still didn't finish and I didn't get all the different heavy metals so ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because still don't have narrative support ah?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya so it felt quite pointless to me.</p>	
6.7	<p>Interviewer: Can you describe your experience ah?</p> <p>John: It's boring. Really it's really very boring that part.</p> <p>Interviewer: When you becoming the Big Daddy.</p> <p>John: It's very boring.</p> <p>Interviewer: Very boring?</p> <p>John: Too many parts to find ah. Then you keep walking around back and forth the place. I got lost over there for quite long.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>John: I got stuck there.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental actions: PC upgrades; Dissonance demotivation</p>

Interviewer: And then that part also quite empty is it? Only got the enemies?

John: Ya only keep fighting the enemies and then find the parts.

Interviewer: They didn't like populate it with the non-enemies ah? Like...

John: Like...

Interviewer: Like er they only put the enemies there ah.

John: Ya lor.

Interviewer: No no friendly enemies.

John: (Laughs).

Interviewer: It's like, is it very isolated ah?

John: I don't know. I think it's just like dragging the game.

Interviewer: That's why it's like. Because you have already gone through the first two parts, tell you to find the bomb and the other part is the what?

John: Ya.

Interviewer: The Julie Langford that part ah. It's like dragging the game ah?

John: Still have to find the Big Daddy as in become the Big Daddy to get the Little Sisters to open the door.

Interviewer: So it's not interesting?

John: No. Why can't you just have a potion that transforms me into a Little Sister? Then I just crawl through. Ya. It's no.

Interviewer: So that part never tell you about the Big Daddy, never let you experience how you become a Big Daddy?

John: Let let ah.

Interviewer: I think their intention is to...

John: You became the Big Daddy ah but ya lah but oki lor. Just like that lor.

Interviewer: You find it very boring ah?

John: But you you are not so powerful leh after that ya.

Interviewer: You are not not very powerful ah?

John: You are not very powerful.

Interviewer: You don't feel?

John: Ya I don't feel that powerful. That's all.

Interviewer: mm. The gameplay that part, how you find it ah?

John: Becoming the Big Daddy was hard.

Interviewer: Hard ah?

John: But after becoming after you became the Big Daddy then it doesn't make much difference. Ya really.

	<p>Interviewer: You you mean the gameplay is also very challenging ah?</p> <p>John: I mean it's normal lor. I wouldn't say it's challenging.</p> <p>Interviewer: Normal ah?</p> <p>John: Just normal.</p> <p>Interviewer: Like the other parts ah?</p> <p>John: Hmm?</p> <p>Interviewer: Like the other parts ah?</p> <p>John: Like the other parts lor.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>John: Because you use, I think the Big Daddy used the same weapons also. Used the launcher, grenade launcher. Then you also have the grenade launcher.</p> <p>Interviewer: So the same lah?</p> <p>John: Ya it's the same lah.</p>	
6.8	<p>Interviewer: Then the next chapter Joel was trying to ask Ellie to boost her up, but she doesn't respond.</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Do you see that one is a gameplay that reflects the narrative?</p>	<p>Analytical frame - Interactive character movement with action; Resonance metaphor</p>

	<p>Nasir: Ya. I guess so. Ya. Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Nasir: Because at that point it tries to reflect that Ellie is a bit distracted at that point in time. As in she knows that she's at the end of her journey. It's like she's getting emotional.</p> <p>Interviewer: So in that part, it's both narrative and gameplay is coming together?</p> <p>Nasir: Slightly lah.</p> <p>Interviewer: mm.</p> <p>Nasir: As in I think it's just trying to, because by that point in time you already played the game so long.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Nasir: So it's like it's a nice change to suddenly you want to boost and Ellie is not there. So it's a refreshing change ah. Ya.</p>	
6.9	<p>Interviewer: Freezing pipes.</p> <p>Loke: That one is the ya I was unable to link.</p> <p>Interviewer: You cannot link also?</p> <p>Loke: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: So you had to explore by yourself?</p> <p>Loke: Ya.</p>	<p>Analytical frame – instrumental actions; (Ir)relevance gameplay focus</p>

	<p>Interviewer: Trial and error in the gameplay?</p> <p>Loke: Ya.</p>	
6.10	<p>Bill McDonagh: Steinman, I know Medical Pavillon is your manor, but you might want to cogitate on this: ocean water is colder than a witch's tit. You don't heat the pipes, the pipes freeze. Pipes freeze, pipes burst. Then Rapture leaks. Now, I realise you're a posh sort of geezer, and, frankly, I don't give a toss if you piss or go fishing. But once Rapture starts leaking, the old girl's never gonna stop. And then I'll be sure to tell Ryan he's got you to thank.</p>	Freezing pipes audio log
6.11	<p>Walter: Ya see this is basically what I was talking about. Basically, you can you can share cover with Ellie.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya she's integrated into you.</p> <p>Walter: Ya. It's a very nice touch.</p>	Analytical frame – kinesics and spatial behaviour
6.12	<p>Mary: This room can be entered. But it's not unlocked yet. Dude, you got to wait. Just give me a second. I am a genius. I am a genius. I supposed there will be a text message telling me but the game the game, the map showed me that this area can be entered and it'll be weird if I can't right...Ya I supposed there might be some text messages that could let me that tells me that I'm able to do to unlock that tomb, but I don't really need that. It's quite obvious like one side is lit up, one side isn't so...</p>	Analytical frame – Strategic Actions – Environmental Details and Setting Modifications; (Ir)relevance gameplay focus
6.13	<p>Michael: In this kind of situation, both will die if I don't do anything. But this is Mass Effect. All of them will die. You see as Shepherd now as a Commander, Ashley is a lost cause now. If she activate the bomb, mission will accomplish. If I go to Kaidan, yes if I go to Kaidan, mission will accomplish. If I go to Ashley, I will accomplish the mission, but Kaidan will die in vain. So I am forced to make a choice here. This choice is made in regarding Ashley, not in regarding whether Kaidan is my boyfriend or not. You see, if I go to Kaidan, and Ashley will activate the Nuke. Mission will accomplish. It's the most logical way to do things right? But if Kaidan is the one arming the nuke, he dies. That's how it is in the war you know? Commanders have to make the toughest decision.</p>	Analytical frame - Strategic Actions - Language-based communication; Resonance parallelism integration, and Resonance consequence
6.14	<p>Interviewer: And then in the Winter Chapter.</p> <p>Nasir: Oki.</p>	Player-(Game Designers') Character dissonance (Zero

	<p>Interviewer: You you were able to shift between Ellie and Joel ah?</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: When you played as Ellie, did you find that it was quite it was quite it was quite er vulnerable?</p> <p>Nasir: Slightly lah because at that point in time, you were stripped off your weapons right? You only had your knife.</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Nasir: Ya. So ya it did feel a bit vulnerable. But you know that you know that you...because I tried meleeing people, and that that just failed. So it was very important to use stealth ah. Because like Joel you can just melee what. Melee your way through if you can't handle them but in this case, because they had guns and you had no guns so ya. It emphasise the stealth, at least hit and run tactics ah at least.</p> <p>Interviewer: So later on when you shift to Joel to control him to save Ellie ah.</p> <p>Nasir: mm.</p> <p>Interviewer: Did you feel an even more urgent need to save her?</p> <p>Nasir: Ya.</p> <p>Interviewer: Because you discovered Ellie's backpack.</p> <p>Nasir: As in as in because you played what Ellie's going through right? So you know that she needs help lah.</p>	focalisation)
--	--	---------------



	<p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Nasir: So in that sense, ya you you feel you are in more you can empathise more with what Joel is feeling ah</p> <p>Interviewer: Ya.</p> <p>Nasir: As in Joel doesn't know what is happening to Ellie but you know the emergency ah. So...</p> <p>Interviewer: When you discover all her objects ah.</p> <p>Nasir: mm hmm.</p> <p>Interviewer: And then the slaughterhouse.</p> <p>Nasir: mm hmm. So he knows that she's not in a good place ah.</p>	
--	---	--