As someone who grew up on video games, how they work, and function has always been an interest of mine. With my capstone project as I'm needing to create a game project this of course made me quite excited. Looking into it I wanted to have a theme that quite interesting me as a person as when I was younger. So, my capstone question I will be using is.

"How can the complex theme of grief be sensitively portrayed within a video game context, intended for a younger audience?"

For my game I'll be creating a 3D game with a story and gameplay that is showing grief in its core elements of a game. That being it level design its game mechanics it narrative all of it. I want it to be very clear the second you load up the game it is about grief. So, for that I need to look at other games and information out there about how to depict grief. Also understanding how to depict it for a younger audience with the addends of doing this in a video game. For this ESRB Rating that is used on games and movies. I'm going to be using the rating Everyone 10+. So, the younger audience I want is older kids to teens 10-15.

Cite the text here:

Double Fine Productions. (2021). Psychonauts 2 [Steam]. Xbox Game Studios

https://store.steampowered.com/app/607080/Psychonauts_2/

5 Keywords:

Surreal, Third person, Psychological, Story rich, Psychedelic

Summarise:

A 3D platform adventure game combining quirky missions and mysterious conspiracies.

With the psychedelic surreal style. Platforming in the mental realms of mental issues. It can

be used as a useful source of how to visualise a mental theme and how to lighten it for more

general audiences. As it depicts serious mental conditions in level design. It is an extremely

fun game that I have personally put hours into playing and being one of the few games I have

100%. It also depicts how grief can affect someone with the use of create level design having

shown different versions of how to depict grief in a video game.

Assessment:

As the level design in the game can be quite colourfully but also quite dead on. Like the level

inside the alcoholic drink has giant bottles in the level, the level is even called Bob's Bottles.

It is very clearly about alcoholism as a form of grief. Sometimes it is quiet on the nose when

a level is about something. It also must deal with the fact that the levels are designed around

platforming first. Sometimes ideas are quite easy to see but not broken down more than the

base level. Which may not be a good thing. As the 3D platforming does come first and only

then the emotional layer is designed over top only acting as details. But for my project I want to bake in the theme of grief into the core gameplay. Though I still will take tips from the level design as it is an easy way of showing the theme I want to do.

Reflection:

I think it will be a useful game to be a reference for my capstone project. As it can depict different types of PTSD In the game. Which can help me for my capstone as the theme of grief is a serious theme. As like Psychonauts 2 I'm wanting to design my level around it but also treat it with respect. For example, the levels in the game that I think will be the best for me will be Cassie's Collection Which is about escapism. Lucrecia's Lament which focuses on forgetting memories but also having new ones in place. As the themes in these levels are the closest, I have to the theme I want to depict. Yes, they do depict grief but I'm hyper focusing on it. Taking these having parts of the game design like Psychonauts 2 design parts around it like having a part of the game where you as the player go out and collect memories. In all the Psychonauts games that is the memory vault in each level.

Cite the text here:

Wiseman. A.M. (2012). Summer's End and Sad Goodbyes: Children's Picturebooks About Death and Dying. Children's Literature in Education DOI 10.1007/s10583-012-9174-3.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257547841_Summer%27s_End_and_Sad_Goodbes_Children%27s_Picturebooks_About_Death_and_Dying?enrichId=rgreq-82c660defea889eaa3e56dcd7a9d360f

5 Keywords:

Children, Death, bereavement, Illustration, Children literature

Summarise:

This article is about exploding children's reaction and understanding of death and grieving. With other analyses before doing their test using three children's books between the years of 2001-2011. Before comparing the different reactions and how they understood it. With three different questions about how one is affected when a family member, friend or pet dies and how the children understood those questions. I view this as a very interesting article to look at for my capstone project.

Assessment:

The reason I chose to use this piece is because it can be a very useful tool. Even though it is not about video games but instead about children's books. But still all the knowledge I do take away from this article should be treated with a bit of salt. Books and videogames are two different mediums but can share parts with each other. One of them being visualise as the is a common ground for both a game and book can share the same visualise but be two different mediums. Ways a children's book may depict grief like a person being sad over a lost loved one can be reused into a video game setting. Which is what I am planning to do. For example, the video game Gris using a soft water colour style for it visualise. Water colour is a medium also use in children book for example the book Mudkin share the same visual. Another part is the language use. The children book Missing Mummy follows the child of a death mother. As it uses the idea children are used to as someone going away to explain death. The book depicts a child grief of not understanding why their mother left. Death is explained to be like leaving but if some dies, they just don't come back. Then later coming to terms with it. Something like this happen in the game Little Misfortune. Were we played a girl who had just died but hasn't realize it. As it slowly is explained like the children book. Sometimes explaining grief to someone is easier to explain it like they are a child. Which is something I want to keep in mind.

Reflection:

With my game focusing on grief and wanting to depict it for all audiences. Taking the knowledge I learned, which is that imagery is more effective than words, children are able to understand a lot more than most media depicts for them. So, with that knowledge It lets me be quite creative in my game making. It also means my visuals can be more creative with the use of symbols and means. Like depicting ghosts with physical injuries showing how they died. I had an idea to have my visuals be psychedelic and with this new knowledge I know if

I use that to depict my theme of grief the children who might play my game will understand what is going on in it.

Cite the text here:

Harrer. S. 2018.Games and Bereavement: How Video Games Represent Attachment, Loss, Grief.Media Studies | Volume 55 DOI 10.14361/9783839444153.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330799132_Games_and_Bereavement_How_Video _Games_Represent_Attachment_Loss_and_Grief?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7InBhZ2UiOiJwd

5 Keywords:

Grief, Case study, Emotional experiences, Loss, Greif theory

Summarise:

This case study created by Sabine Harrer. Explores how video games can portray along with how they can help process grief. The game she looks at is Final Fantasy VII with the death of

the game character Aeris. ICO and the fate of Yorda. Passage with the loss of the spouse. Brothers: A Tale of Two Sons with the lose of an older sibling. Shelter loss of children this being badger cubs. She breaks argues how these games and there design can depends and make grief tangible for the player of these games. As it also useful knowledge for future games using the theme of grief to learn from games that work.

Assessment:

The case study breaks down it theory first how video game representation then the history of using games as a subject to explore bereavement. Bereavement just the word of the experience of losting someone important which experience in grief. Before breaking down what each game is and the subject of there grief. Which forms of greif that games are using and how effeticve it is to the game design. An idea I usually thought of best way to depict grief is to at first let the player go through it themself. Let them get attached to the one who going to die. Because i'm planning this game for a ten up audiecene I can't show the death on screen. But I can differently show what was the reason behind it. For example, one of the game used in this case study was the game Shelter which came out in 2013. This game is rated Everyone 10+ which is the rating i'm going for. You the player will never see the body of the dead cub but that gut feeling when you check and there one missing is much more effective than seeing the body. Harrer brings up the angle of playing as a mother as a big core element of the game play is taking care of the cubs. If they died it you the player failing as being their mother. Parent grief over a lost of a child is one of the worse thing a parent can go through. The idea of losting an love one hurts and the idea of losting a young life being a child hurts more. For my capstone game the main reason behind the grief is going to be a lost of a child.

Reflection:

Harrer work is great for not only me for my capstone game and question but others to doing similar ideas. Reflecting this document has already affected what my capstone game will be. Mainly in the story as given me the main for reason behind the grief will be a death of a child. Then having the after math of that death. The greif from not only the player themself at the lost. But the reaction of the other characters in the game. I don't think i'm going to show the death on screen as that effect the audience I want. But instead hint at it explain that something bad did happen to the child and that why there is grief. Though for a game play part hiding secrets of the real reason could be fun for the more older people playing.

Cite the text here:

GoodbyeWorld Games. (2021). Before Your Eyes [Steam]. Skybound Games.

https://store.steampowered.com/app/1082430/Before_Your_Eyes/

5 Keywords

Emotional, Story Rich, Philosophical, Colourful, Mystery

Summarise:

Before Your Eyes is an Inide game created by GoodbyeWorld Games which tells a first person story of character name Benjamin Brynn who is on his way to the after life after dying. The story follows as we the player interact with Brynn's memories. Which base on the player eye movements and blinking effects the story. It a rich story with some soft moments and heart breaking ones. Critics enjoyed the game story but couldn't care for the eye tracking feature of the game. In this I'll be foucsing on the game narrtive not the unique game feature of eye tracking.

Assessment:

The Player character Benjamin Brynn had live quite the life. As we see most of it though flash back in the game. Benjamin is a silence potagtist but in game it explain he can't talk or gesture because of an unnamed illness. Which does explain the gameplay. The Ferryman gives us the narrative reason as we relive Benjamin past as the Ferryman judges him from them. During the game Benjamin mother Elle dies as long with Benjamin falling to getting into art school. Even the idea he found a lover with meeting with his childhood friend. But that never happen because of this unnamed illness. Even though Benjamin life is cut short the game ends on a hopeful note. That Even if ones life is short with ups and downs. This game depicts Greif very well with the death of a love one being Elle and then Benjamin himself. It focus more of the acceptation part of grief. How one deals with greif is different for each person but most of the time one goes through denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. I want to be able to take that part the ending of acppeting that this grief has happen and moving on.

Reflection:

The Idea we the player is going through a person life is quite interesting. Which got my brain to ich. For my capstone I want to do something like Before Your Eyes did. But instead of focusing on one whole life and the grief of it coming to an end. I want to take that element in the game with how it was grief over someone so young. But then coming to accept that. Which works very well for the video game story line. Having the literally ending of the game can be the moment of were one accept their grief.

In short what I'm learn form these four bibliography will help me a lot for making my capstone project. Because the younger auciende i'm going for is around the ten to fifthteen I know taking the theme of grief. Must be done clearful as one wrong move will make me loss the audience I want. Grief is an complex feeling as it is quite interesting to me. I've gone through it and I feel like others have to. It a feeling that makes us human but is mostly seen as a negtie light. I hope from what I learn that the capstone project I made can help explain grief and be an enjoy part of the game.

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82c660defea889eaa3e56dcd7a9d360f

Harrer. S. 2018.Games and Bereavement: How Video Games Represent Attachment, Loss,

Grief.Media Studies | Volume 55 DOI 10.14361/9783839444153.

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_Games_Represent_Attachment_Loss_and_Grief?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7InBhZ2UiOiJwd

GoodbyeWorld Games. (2021). Before Your Eyes [Steam]. Skybound Games.

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