
Writer's Statement about "Video Games and the Hero's Journey"

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When the importance and beauty of a thing is wholly misunderstood by most, explaining said thing's feats remains fruitless unless the root of the misunderstanding is attended to directly. While attending to the misunderstanding many in our society have with what video games are and what they are capable of, it is pivotal that one frame video games in such a way that allows their merits to be seen with proper understanding. Without such user-friendly framework, there are those who will maintain the false notion that video games are juvenile—not paying mind to any claims made by the author of their artistic value.

Thus, figuring out how to approach the misunderstanding of video games was the most daunting part of the entire process. I had done my research, and knew all the arguments, but delivering such facts posed a problem: the stigmatization of video games as an immature, violent, and self-indulging means of entertainment left only a small audience who would understand the significance of the facts I had found.

Fortunately, with some observation on how my peers responded to the idea of researching video games, and with guidance from Professor Longhany (an experienced gamer himself), I found a way to attend to the misunderstanding and reach the larger audience. It was by looking solely at the narrative quality of video games and holding such narratives up to the structure defined by the Hero's Journey that this was accomplished.

While my first draft considered tackling the apologetics of video games more forthrightly, this revised method turned out to be much more manageable. An understanding of what the Hero's Journey may not be inherent in the reader; however, this is of no ill concern for after seeing how such structure parallels film, books, and video games alike, applying the apologetics became a much smoother, acceptable task. Not only did the revised structure allow me to educate my audience on the basics of story structure, but I was then able to present them with an organic, genuine understanding of what video games are.

The audience for this piece is anyone who does not understand what video games are, but, more specifically, I was hoping to reach those who are interested in exploring emerging narrative avenues. One of the main hesitations in approaching video games found in such audience is the literacy that is needed to actually consume them. Seeing in-game cues and responding with the right controller input is not a dexterity that everyone has and is not learned overnight. Because of this barrier, it is easier to dismiss video games as being exactly what their moniker states: games. To convince the audience otherwise and invite them into the most dynamic of all entertainment avenues was of capital importance.

What qualifies me to attempt such a feat is that I've been immersing myself into the rich, wondrous worlds that video games proffer all my life. I've kept up with the industry just as religiously as an avid sports fan follows his favorite team. Video games have been a part of my life as long as I remember, and I owe it to them to see that they are well represented.