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Digitalizing the Narratives: Structural Analysis of Far Cry 3

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Abstract

Every form has its own structure. Technically, though there is a difference between computer games and literature, but structurally both reflect same modes of the presentation which is carried out by certain codes. The present paper looks into the structural analysis of computer games with technical aspect as well as literature aspect with special reference to Far Cry 3, a first person action adventure computer game which received several awards and critically acclaimed for its graphics, story line, features etc. Besides this paper relocate Vladimir Propp's theory of narrative function in Far Cry 3 and decode how the computer game with the help of certain binary opposition and codes have become one of the fundamental tools of getting entertained in the popular imagination.

[**Keywords:** Vladimir Propp's theory, Computer Game, Structural analysis of adventure game, Far Cry 3]

In the twenty first century, technology has gripped every aspect of the society with the increment of the influence of technology, people started seeking the pleasure and even consolation from the digital world. Earlier, when the technology was in developing phase people gratified from folk tale, short stories, fiction and moreover from literature. But now people get his ultimate satisfaction from the digital world. This digital world comprises all sorts of genre which have been carried out by the people till now. It has started pampering the mind of the people. Computer game is one of those thousand technologies on which today's teen get much pleasure than reading a book or fiction. It has become a kind of addiction to the young generation. But a close and critical observation of the recent computer game also offers a way out to the narrative structure which is there in any literary work.

Before we go deep into the article, there are some points which are quite necessary to clear. There are various genres in literature, like poetry, fiction, short story, drama etc. The computer game also bears the same quality of having various types, for example action game, strategy game, adventure game, racing game etc. Like any literary text where literariness is necessary, the computer game also bears some kind of reflection of the literariness, which bears the plot and a specific storyline. Moreover, like any literary text the computer game can analyze from any theoretical point of view. Let's

analyze how the narratives have been given a digital frame with special reference to *Far Cry 3*.

Storyline

Far Cry 3 is a game about the exploration, exploitation and experimentation. It is an advanced action-adventure first person game, which is set on the Rook Island between the Indian and Pacific Ocean. This game has earned the fame for its storyline and its presentation throughout the world. It was honored with the several awards, including British Academy Video games Award and National Academy of Video game Trade Reviewers Award in 2013. According to Jeffrey Yohalem, the writer of the game the plot is about “what shooting means and what it does to humanity” (*Far Cry 3*, 2014). The protagonist of the game is Jason Brody, who, along with his elder and younger brothers Grant and Riley and some of his friends, come to Bangkok on vacation to celebrate Riley’s getting license. They come down to the Rook Island, during their skydiving. Rook Island is captured and controlled by the pirates under the control of Vass, one of the most notorious antagonists in the game world. Vass imprisons all of them and tortures them brutally. Jason and Grant are kept in the same cell when the others are taken for the ransom. Grant, the elder brother of Jason, makes a plan to escape and finally they manage to free themselves, but unfortunately Grant is killed by Vass and somehow Jason successfully escapes from that place and takes shelter in the jungle. Shortly thereafter, Jason meets a member of the Rakyat tribe named Dennis, who wanted to help him as he finds Jason has the ability to obey the “path of the warrior”. Rakyat tribe also wanted to take over Vass as they are also exploited and tortured by that psychopathic villain. Citra, the leader of the Rakyat tribe and the sister of Vass, is agreed to help Jason in rescuing his friends, but in a condition, i.e., if he can manage Silver Dragon, a knife which the Rakyat tribe revered. Buck Huges buys Keith, one of the friends of Jason as a human slave but he promises to give him back to Jason if he is able to manage the Silver Dragon. The Silver Dragon is managed but Buck refuses to give Keith back, so the fight takes place and Jason kills Buck. Jason manages to rescue Lize, Keith and Oliver to Dr. Earnhardt, who helps them a lot in that island. They have been given a boat to escape from that island, but Jason refused to leave as he wants to free his younger brother Riley from Vass. Keith tries to convince him that Riley has been shot dead by Vass and he witnessed it. Still Jason wants to take revenge on that and wants to kill Vass.

Jason hands over the Silver Dragon to Citra. Citra helps Jason to kill Vass after getting that Silver Dragon. Sam Becker, a CIA agent who is working undercover in Hoyt’s island, helps Jason to find Riley. There Jason, with the help of Sam, wins the trust of Hoyt and later through a poker game Jason kills Hoyt and successfully rescues Riley with the loss of Sam, who is killed during the game by Hoyt. Jason and Riley escape from the island to Dr. Eanhardt after seizing a helicopter from Hoyt. On the other hand, Citra kidnaps all the friends of Jason and kills Dr. Earnhardt. Citra gives two choices to Jason, one is to complete his path of the warrior by killing all his friends and allowing her to be his partner, or to abandon it and return to the life he is craving for. The choice of the player affects the mode and tone of the game. If the player chose to play as a warrior and kills the friends to be the king of the Rakyat tribe, then Jason after having sex with Citra, is killed by her with an assurance that the child which she will carry will be the new king

of the tribe in the future. And if the player goes for the second option that is to deny to kill the friends and to take over the throne, then Dennis with the fury tries to kill Jason but by mistake he kills Citra. While Dennis regrets at his deed, Jason and his friends escape from that place and at last they manage to escape from the Island.

Now a detail analysis based on various aspects of Far Cry 3 is given, for this we organized our rest of the paper as follows. In the first section we discuss the technical background of a 2D/3D game with technical analysis of *Far Cry 3*. In second section *Far Cry 3* is illustrated in literature point of view. Finally, we conclude in the third section.

Technical Background

In this section we describe what a computer game with its 2D and 3D property is, besides the hardware requirements and graphic impact on *Far Cry 3* follow with its brief technical description.

Definition 1 (Computer Games): A computer game is a coded program that works on personal computer where an end user called as a gamer who controls the electronic game manually to get fully entertainment by achieving the game goal by offline or online, in which case the activity is known as online gaming.

In an electronic game, a player played by means of images on a video screen and often strengthens fast action. A computer game can be in the form of 2D or 3D based on a concrete graphics concept where 3D games are more difficult to build than the 2D ones that concern of little bit modified version of perspective projection, which is an approximation representation on a plane e.g., on a paper of an image as it is seen by the eye. As we know in every dedicated game there is a program simulator that simulates the rays of light traverse backwards from monitor, one for every pixel and checks what it hits, which alternately cancel or remove the computation of trajectories of million rays of lights that pass form light source, hit an object, and miss the viewer. This is called as a visibility problem (time of projecting a 3D image scene onto 2D plane, it is very much necessary to decide which polygons are important to visible and which are hidden) which is one of important matter need to consider in a 3D game. The painter's algorithm is the one best known simplest and easiest solution of such problem in 3D computer graphics. The process of making 3D graphics may be categorized as five basic parts, Basics of 3D Modelling, Lighting Techniques in 3D, Materials and Textures, Animating 3D Models, and Rendering. In many situations, movie and game coincide each other. The basic and easiest way to differentiate (though both has a lot of similarities in terms of its storyline) is that in movie a person has no control over the scene and has to get entertained whatever it has. On the other side, in the game a person can control over the scene by taking the choice throughout the period and amplify his/her entertainment. In other way, movies are sequences of scenes shown to the person without any decision/control over the scene. Now a day, people get more interest in the high impact real word 3D games over 2D games.

Technical Analysis: Every high level 2D or 3D PC game uses the game engine, and similarly *Far Cry 3* also use a game engine named as *CryEngine* written in C++ provided by *Crytek*, a German video game company. A *game engine* is a software framework handling with graphic scene, rendering, animation, sound, artificial intelligence, network, memory

management, threading, etc. Ubisoft Entertainment S.A. develop many 3D games in which Far Cry series is the one among many (Far Cry 3, 2014). It is a French game developer multinational company which is not only a leading producer, but also publisher, distributor of interactive entertainment products worldwide and has grown considerably for its products and partnerships that results fourth-largest independent game publisher in the world. Far Cry 3 launched for a huge demand of people as an enhancement of its previous series. We give some basic hardware requirements mentioned in Table 1. Here it is shown three ways to achieve the installation process successfully, shortly named as *minimum requirement* below which installation is not possible, *recommended requirement* ensures the standard requirement and *optimal requirement* ensures the system requirement to get ultimate fun with high performance, visual effect and smooth playing experience. Using the power and performance of the new generation computer graphics, Far Cry 3 overcomes the shortcomings by using DirectX 11 graphics features that ensure the most visually dynamic and smooth gaming experience ever (Boba Fatt, 2004). These features are mentioned in Table 2.

AMD Eyefinity and CrossFire Technologies came together, taking advantage of the outstanding next-generation technologies to make Far Cry 3 a world class game by enabling high stunning visual effect, realistic environments with excellent performance for AMD Radeon PC gamers and achieve lots of success within short duration.

AMD and Ubisoft have worked together to make 'Far Cry 3' a state-of-the-art gaming experience on the PC, the world's most powerful gaming platform. The AMD Gaming Evolved program aims to put gamers and developers first, and we're making sure we deliver on our promise. By working with industry-leading developers like Ubisoft, we're not only helping to develop cutting-edge titles, we're also advancing the state of PC graphics for gamers. (Matt Skynner qtd. in AMD, 2012)

Now we come to the technical part of Far Cry 3 that can be successfully installed and played on the PC, PS3 and Xbox360 video gaming consol (Thomas Morgan, 2012). In the game, there are eighteen radio towers, each tower represents/marks of new objective on the map, discover various new weapons that can buy at local shops of the nearest place indicating on the map and each tower is a unique game challenge (Tom Bramwell, 2004). A wonderful panoramic view is revealed after successful completion of those interesting challenges before using the zip-line. There are over thirty enemy outposts each of which offer a new safe house and alleviate enemy presence in the surrounding area, and there are some similarities among the layout of outposts, each is surrounded by either the foot of a mountain surrounded by jungle, top of a hill, or on a rock at the edge of the beach. Coming into the environment of the forest, every forest is dwelling place to some species of wild animal, some are not scared of the player than are of them. Every road winds past shanty full of loot; every cave and military camp is a gateway to know the history of the island. A more technical description is given in tabular form in Appendix.

Performance Analysis: Using the latest NVIDIA patch, which improves performance by 38% (approx.), it can run at high resolution, i.e., 1080p on DirectX 11 with all settings. Performance remains well enough without the multi-core rendering option which is removed entirely from the DirectX 11 menu list with the day one patch. This caused major

stability issues for a player when selected, but even without the option to defer tasks to more processor threads, the code feels well optimized.

Far Cry 3 will also require a one-time online activation via Uplay. An internet connection is required for this activation. Once a player activated the game successfully, can play online to enjoy new extra social features with single player and multiplayer facility, or switched to offline mode by the help of Uplay PC settings menu for a single player, at that time no internet connection is required to play this game.

Ubisoft is committed to developing industry-leading games that offer non-stop action, gritty storylines and deeply immersive gaming experiences, and the latest addition to the highly acclaimed 'Far Cry' franchise continues that tradition. Through this relationship, Ubisoft worked with AMD and its Gaming Evolved program to develop a game that takes full advantage of the outstanding next-generation technologies offered by AMD Radeon graphics, which enable an incredible PC gaming experience. (Dan Hay qtd. in AMD, 2012)

Theoretical Analysis

The structuralists in literature believe that it is the overall unity and significance which is the basic form of any communication and social behavior. The cultural context and the act play a greater role in developing the meaning by using the language. According to Saussure (1857-1913), the meaning of any literary text resides among the various elements in a particular system. Like language, literature has certain codes through which the meaning with the external unity gets its fulfilment. Moreover, the act of reading is a self-enclosed practice in a culture, which contains its own codes and meaning exists in these codes (Bressler, C. E. 2007). And the computer game like Far Cry 3 is nothing but the combination of codes with some binary opposition through which the meaning is conveyed. So the proper study of literature, according to the structuralists is not to investigate the individual text, but to analyze the conditions surrounding the act of interpretations of the particular text. The meaning which resides in Far Cry 3 is conditioned by the act of interpretations, not as a lonely game but among the situations and unity of structure. Claude Levi- Strauss (1908-2009), another prominent critic of structuralism asserts in his *The Structural Study of Myth* (1958) that the myth from the different culture and tradition has some kind of parallelisms and he believes that it is because of its structure. Amplifying the model of myths by Strauss, various structuralists later on developed another science of narrative, i.e., 'structuralist narratology'. And they gave emphasis on the development of the meaning from the structure, its langue, ignoring the remote theme of any individual story. Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp (1895-1970) in his famous *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) scrutinizes thirty one elements and theses thirty one elements construct the base of any folk or fairy tale, which are fixed. He calls these elements as the 'narrative function', which occurs in a certain sequence determining the function and the pattern of the characters. Paul Vehvilainen has simplified Propp's narrative function and reduced it to five. Propp is in the view that "Five categories of elements define not only the construction of a tale, but the tale as a whole" (Propp's Morphology, n.d.).

The structure of any computer game is quite similar to any literary text. It is the character which by its movements makes the story and the story which helps to framing the character. The characters and the incidents are unified with some codes which determine the process of storytelling. The only difference between literary text and computer game is that one's structure is determined by the language and the latter is presented by its visual effect. But both of them have the structure in their own in different ways, but in the same level. Let's analyze how these structures of language and the language has come under the influence of digital framing in the twenty first century. Computer games are nothing but an advance digitalization of a particular structure. It would be clearer after applying Propp's narrative functions on *Far Cry 3*.

At the onset of the game the player is given a short introduction that the protagonist Jason along with some other friends goes for a trip after getting the news that Riley has got the license of a pilot. They start a journey of amusement, but ended with brutality. There is a kind of lack in their life, and this lack is the first narrative function according to Vladimir Propp. What is this lack actually? A critical observation of the game shows that the lacking matter was the reason to go for the trip and they were imprisoned. After the skydiving all of the friends of Jason come down to the Rook Island, which is run and controlled by Vass, the leader of the pirate group. Vass captures and imprisons Jason and his elder brother Grant and the rest of them are taken for the ransom. Later on, Grant and Jason manage to escape from that place and make a plan to rescue the friends. But during that process Vass kills Grant and Jason somehow escape to the jungle. After running hither and thither in the jungle, he realizes that he should not run away like a coward and decides to fight back to the crew and rescue the others including his younger brother Riley. This lack forces Jason to go for the quest, which is the second method of narrative function and by this quest the hero will eliminate the lack. Jason starts his journey to kill one by one, of the pirates and tries to find out the friends.

There in the jungle, he meets up with a person called Dennis Rogers and the other helpers, who on this structure acts as a helper. According to Propp the third method of the narrative structure is that of the encounter of the helper, who helps the protagonist during his quest. (Propp's *Morphology*, n.d.). In *Far Cry 3*, the story is so well narrated that it peered with the every form of the narrative function. There are three helpers in this structure. They are Dennis Roger, Dr. Earnhardt and Willis. Dennis Roger, one of the inhabitant of the island agrees to help Jason. Roger is basically from the Rakyat tribe, whose queen or the leader is Citra, the sister of Vass. As Vass has captured the whole island and exploited the people who lived out there Citra wants her power back from his brother at any expense. In the course of the quest Jason happens to meet Roger and he tries to help him only because he saw that Jason has the ability to follow the 'path of a warrior' according to the norms of the Rakyat tribe. With the assistance of Dennis Roger, Jason finds Daisy and some other friends. They are taken to Dr. Earnhardt who also act as a helper here. Dr. Earnhardt even died for helping them. Another helper Willis, a CIA agent is having the knowledge of both about the whole island and of the Silver Dragon. So, he helps Jason to find out the rest of his friends like Keith, Liza and Oliver and gives him the idea about the place where the Silver Dragon can be found. So these three helpers are supposed to be there for the development of the plot of the game.

The plot develops by taking the help from the various helpers. Accordingly, the fourth method is that these helpers are supposed to take one or more tests during the quest of the protagonists. As the player plays Far Cry 3, there is a stage when he is given some situations where he will only be given the options and the options will determine his further future. For example, after killing Vass, Jason is forced to make love with Citra. Citra offers two choices to Jason, one is to complete his path of the warrior by killing all of his friends and allowing Citra to be his partner, or to abandon it by killing Citra and return to the life he is craving for. The choice of the player affects the mode and tone of the game. If the player chose to play as a warrior and kills the friends to be the king of the Rakyat tribe, then Jason after having sex with Citra, is killed by her with a statement that as he is a foreigner, he is not supposed to be the king but the child which she will carry will be the new king of the tribe in the future. And if the player goes for the second alternative that is, to deny to kill the friends and not to take over the throne, then Dennis with the fury tries to kill Jason but by mistake he kills Citra. So the possibility which has been designated to Jason or the player is nothing but the test conducted by the helpers.

The last method of narrative function is that after passing the test the hero will be rewarded. If the player chooses the first option, then he will certainly be failed in the test and will encounter with death. Because if Jason is presented like a warrior then Citra will kill him, so the poetic justice is not done. Here in this context Henry James's statement is quite relevant. He says that character is the determination of incident and incident is nothing but the illustration of character. The last method of Propp's narrative function is well understood through this statement. Far Cry 3 is not presented from the narrow point of view, but will develop its story only after interacting with the other characters.

Conclusion

There is no doubt in the fact that the game is an 'honest to God' video game, which gives a long lasting impression even after finishing the missions. According to Dmitry Olshansky, "His research on fairy-tales achieved world recognition as the first application of structuralism to the humanities and created the foundation for new disciplines, such as narratology, semiology and structural anthropology" (Pow, 2012). The game has been presented in the realistic manner and 'realism' is embedded in every inch. The game is the combination of the beauty and brutality where the bright sand, beautiful forest are contrasted with the violence and horror. But the structure, the technical as well as literary has shown that how certain codes form the story. This formation will have a long lasting experience the way a reader gets impressions after reading a literary text. So, structurally there is not much difference between the computer game and the literary text. The only difference is the technique of presentation.

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Appendix:

Table 1: Hardware Specification for PCs

System requirements	Minimum	Recommended	Optimal
CPU	2.66 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo E6700 / 3.00 GHz AMD Athlon 64 X2 6000+	Intel Core i3-530 / AMD Phenom II X2 565	Intel Core i7-2600K / AMD FX-4150
RAM	4GB	6GB	8GB
VIDEO CARD	NVIDIA 8800 GTX / AMD Radeon HD 2900, 512MB DirectX 9c	NVIDIA GTX 480/AMD Radeon HD 5770, 1GB DirectX 11 card	NVIDIA GTX 670/AMD Radeon HD7970 1GB DirectX 11 card
SOUND CARD	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2: Features overcome/achieve by *Far Cry 3* using DirectX 11

Features	Short Description
Rendering with Multi-Sample Anti-Aliasing (MSAA)	Taking advantage of advanced DirectX 11 features, <i>Far Cry 3</i> produced a fully supporting MSAA by optimizing deferred renderer including tile-based light culling. In the meantime it is also upgraded image quality over the post-process anti-aliasing techniques used by other deferred rendering engines;
Illumination System	<i>Far Cry 3</i> produced with a distinction of an advanced real-time global illumination system that is able to compute indirect or reflected lighting by enabling more visually coherent and realistic world rendering.
Accelerated High Definition Ambient Occlusion	<i>Far Cry 3</i> implements a new and improved version of HDAO* that uses full 3D camera space position data to detect different regions in the scene. <i>Far Cry 3</i> significantly improved in both performance and quality relative to previous implementations.

Storyline in a pictorial view: The storyline of *Far Cry 3* is given as a figure below in brief.



