Exploring The Drama of Virtual Realities Found In

Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn:

A Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game.

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An Abstract of

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by

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Abstract

How do digital games convey meaning? New forms of communication such as a Massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) can still be examined with traditional techniques. This paper analyzes the 2013 video game FINAL FANTASY XIV: A Realm Reborn (FFXIV:ARR) using the dramatistic pentad, a methodology derived from the work of literary and rhetorical scholar Kenneth Burke. Since the virtual world created by this game is formulated around of a series of events, the five elements of dramatistic theory – act, agent, agency, purpose and scene – are also present in the medium. In this paper, the game is broken down along the lines of each of the five pentadic elements. These elements are then used to build a chart that defines the descriptive grammar of this game. Based on this information the most influential and dominant ratios between the elements are defined. It is argued that the most dominant pentadic element in *FFXIV:ARR* is purpose. This causes all the other dramatistic elements to become subordinate. The designers of this game use the economy of the virtual world to give purpose to the arguments the game presents to the player.

Introduction — Video Games and Rhetoric

Video games have become increasingly popular as a form of entertainment. There are, however, growing concerns in the education and research fields about the underlying meaning-making processes in games (Gee, 2010). Ian Bogost stated in his paper "Persuasive Games" (2007) that video game players are subject to a new type of persuasion which he refers to as procedural rhetoric. This new type of rhetoric is based on "player versus system" arguments that are created through the selective simulation of specific rules. Video games argue with players by confronting them with the results of their actions through the game rules. According to game scholars who stress the strong influence of the game rules and procedures, players voluntarily submit to the game rules in order to overcome the argument that the game presents. In other words, they are "being persuaded to think within the constraints of the game" (McAllister, 2004). Based on this observation, the interactions between the player and the game becomes highly significant because video games now have the ability to capture and hold a player's attention for extended periods of time. This interaction is unique because it is creating an active and continuous two-way dialogue that most mediums such as film and literature lack. By combining visual, textual and audio elements, video game producers are creating a unique interactive experience for the user. This in-game experience is largely based around some sort of goal: typically the player plays to beat, or "win" the game. However, it is clear that most of the time it is the game developers' intention to create an argument of systems and obstacles that requires the player to use wit and skill to manipulate the game's elements in order to overcome barriers found within the defined structure of the game. This paper will attempt to provide a

grammar of MMORPG games as well as answer the following question: how are massively multiplayer online video games structured to create arguments between the game and the player?

Current research in video games focuses on how people can become more reflective and critical about in-game meanings in order to learn something about the dynamics of systems found within the game (Gee, 2010). While Bogost has contributed to the theoretical understanding of these processes, he did not offer a practical tool for such descriptive analysis; he did, however, point in the direction of the American rhetorician and literary critic Kenneth Burke. Based upon these suggestions and the work of numerous other authors, this paper focuses on and examines the potential of Burke's theory of dramatism and his dramatistic pentad as a methodological tool to critically analyze perspective taking and meaning making in video games. According to Kenneth Burke, humans understand re-tellings of events primarily as "drama" through the metaphors of stage, actors, roles, and so on, and a critic ought to be able to examine the language used in any re-tellings or "statement of motives" in order to build conclusions about the motives and worldview of the speaker (Burke, 1945). In Burke's dramatism there exists a pentad of five elements of the drama – the act, the agent, the agency, the purpose and the scene, each of which is featured or dominant in any given rhetorical artifact (Burke, 1945). The research conducted in this paper focuses on the idea that in video games, the element of purpose is dominant, even though the other elements play important roles in creating a meaningful complex experience for the users.

The Dilemma With Current Video Game Scholarship

Based on the review of literature, there is a clear difference between video game studies that discuss the context of a video game, which includes the historical significance, psychological or sociological effects, and culture reverence of the medium, and video game studies that analyze the particulars of the medium itself, which includes literary studies, film studies, and new media studies. The goal of this paper falls somewhere in the middle of these two schools of thought—between the medium and the context. While past research efforts are well intentioned and attempt to make a valuable contribution, the basic premise of this thesis is that there have been too few studies to make any definitive statements about the connection between the content of the medium and the context in which the games exists. In other words, before this research can fully explore how the medium works in a context and the conversation the medium has with the context, the researcher must fully understand the medium.

Most problematic, three decades and numerous game consoles after the creation of in home video game systems, there is a significant lack of research devoted to assessing Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) video games. In short, the academic community does not currently exhibit a comprehensive understanding of MMORPG video games. This lack of research also affects how researchers analyze the content of a video game and how that game encourages players to identify, interact, and argue with the game. Most astonishingly, there has yet to be a definitive theory of video game studies. This study applies Burke's Pentad as a starting point to creating a new discussion on how MMORPG's interact and argue with the players.

MMORPG As A Medium of Study

The current research offers more than just a simple dissection of the video game to see how it interacts with the player. Rather, it seeks to provide insight beneficial to future researchers and game developers. This will benefit the academic and gaming communities by providing them with a better understanding of why people dedicate their finite recreation time and income to this specific medium. As an artifact, *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* is a rich source of material, offering discussions of in-game player-to-player interactions, player versus environment interactions, how in-game economies function, and the significance behind users' in-game experiences. This type of Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG) has become widely popular over the years, due primarily to the level of engagement and interaction that an online multiplayer game can provide the player. Indeed, those who played the game generally considered it to be a superior product, earning top scores from many reviewers and maintaining an online player base that consists of millions of paying customers worldwide.

As a medium, the digital game is an extremely interesting subject for critique. Because the technology behind the medium is rapidly evolving, video games in many ways are relativity new to academia as a source of analysis. Some of the past published work on general video game studies include Janet Murray's *Hamlet on the Holodeck (1997)*, Brenda Laurel's *Computers as Theatre* (1993) and Gary Selnow's Playing Video Games (1984). Unlike traditional artifacts such as literature, the field of video game studies is constantly evolving. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that these researchers spent time working with and analyzing video game artifacts that would be considered extremely outdated by today's

standards. One of the primary innovations in video game technology that previous researchers were not able to examine is the MMORPG, which came into being in 2004. Hence, further research into the field is needed.

So why is it necessary to study games? The answer is not an obvious one. As a medium, the act of playing games has been around for as long as humans have. Huizinga famously noted that play behavior predates civilization itself, and that the increasingly complex encodings of play and games have existed for quite some time as well (Huizinga,1938). Indeed, games have served as vessels of culture and containers of social values and norms. As computer technology evolves and it becomes possible for humans to enter into and interact with increasingly complicated and complex digital worlds, the importance of digital games is only going to increase. Numerous critics such as Juul, Aarseth and Frasca have predicted significant shifts in paradigms and alterations in the fundamental nature of human communication. This current study does not attempt to answer such assertions, but rather aims to describe the human to computer interaction experienced during MMORPG play in an effort to find out how this artifact communicates and argues with the millions of players who participate in them.

Limitations

The pentadic analysis of *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* presented in this paper does not suggest a single 'appropriate' descriptive analysis of the game but rather illustrates how the pentad serves as a useful tool for analyzing video games. In the case of *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*, the perceptions of the game developers and the systems that players encounter are analyzed, revealing an interactive dialogue that revolves around a constant argument between

the player and the game. In addition, this study demonstrates how the pentad can be applied to interactive artifacts to enable future research on this subject matter. It should be noted that one major limitation of this research is the overall lack of previously published scholarly articles regarding Dramatism as a method to critique a MMORPG. To overcome this issue, the current research applied the general concepts that stem from a few previous applications of Burke's pentad to games in general. These concepts are discussed in detail in the methods sections of this paper and these past works provided the background necessary to explore Burke's pentad within a new digital environment known as the MMORPG of, *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*.

A second limitation that this research concerns the constantly evolving nature of MMORPGs. The majority MMORPGs—including *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*—are funded by a monthly subscription service that is paid by the player. This business model requires game developers to create and introduce challenging new content into the world of the MMORPG. These constant updates help to continually challenge players, who in return continue paying the monthly subscription charge. These updates are known as patches or expansions and they allow the games developer to adjust, add or eliminate any elements within the game. Elements that have been adjusted in past MMORPG's include quests, level caps, the skills and abilities that the players have access to, adding additional character classes, implementing new end game content such as boss fights and dungeons, adjustments to the in-game economy and even how the game's graphics or interface function. These patches become a noteworthy limitation because the version of *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* that this paper analyzed might differ from subsequent versions. However, even if the developer adds new elements by implementing patches later on that change the game, the fundamental game play will remain the

same. The idea of having a lasting core of fundamental game play elements become evident by reviewing *The World Of Warcraft* as a established example of how a successful MMORPG functions. *The World Of Warcraft* MMORPG, released in 2004, has managed to maintain its popularity via the release of five major expansion packs. Though these expansions included vast amounts of new content for the player to experience, the fundamental gameplay elements and in-game mechanics have generally stayed the same. The research that is described within this paper will eventually become outdated as video games evolve, though when this evolution takes place this research then can be used as a point of comparison, thus allowing for continued academic research relevance.

The last limitation that this research relates to the hardware used to experience the game. The research conducted in this paper used the Playstation 3 gaming system by Sony to run and operate *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn.* It should be noted that *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* is also available on Windows-run Personal Computers. The content within the game is exactly the same for both the PC and PS3 platforms, and users of both systems can also interact with each other in real time during gameplay. However, PC players have access to a few features not available to PS3 players. The main feature that PC gamers have access to is the ability to use Voice over Internet (VOI) technology to speak directly with fellow players. The PS3 players, by contrast, must use a keyboard to type text in order to communicate to fellow players. This clearly presents a different in-game experience for the PS3 player due to the lack of direct verbal communication between players. While this variable is not included within the current study, future research could investigate whether direct player-to-player verbal conversations dramatically change the findings that are established within this paper.

The various limitations that have been mentioned in the section are evident within all studies in the field of video game research. It is safe to assume that technology will keep on evolving, new forms of media will continue to be created, and the tools that we use to experience this media will keep on changing. The music industry provides a clear example of this kind of progression, as the medium for its delivery began with the record, moved on to tape, followed by CD, and now MP3s.

Current Video Game Studies

As is elaborated throughout this paper, the current state of video game studies is largely a side effect of the development of the medium. When video games first became popular, they were very unrealistic. They consisted of a limited number of colored images on screen, computer-generated noise for sound effects, a relatively simple interactive experience, and a sparse narrative. Consequently, the first studies of video games discussed the world outside of the game, which usually meant a discussion of psychological and sociological issues that resulted from interacting with video games. Some of the most popular and noteworthy studies involving this subject have asked the following: “Are video games causing violent behavior in adolescents?” Current video game studies have their origins in these types of studies, and it makes sense that those who wished to study ideology in video games likewise focused on select images and simple interactivity and then drew conclusions about the ideological allegiance of an individual video game from this simple analysis.

Granted, recent theorists such as Espen Aarseth and Gonzalo Frasca have encouraged scholars to study video games as dynamic, interactive texts, and recent video game studies by

Mark Wolf and Ted Friedman have proposed that the connection between identification and interactivity is an important site for "winning" a game, with respect to the production of narrative, and ultimately the communication of ideological content. Yet no framework has been proposed to distill dynamic video game content or the intersection between identification, interaction, and ideology. The result is that our knowledge and understanding of how the content in video games interacts with the user is incomplete.

Accordingly, this paper develops a framework to help future scholars explain the content of MMORPG video games as well as the "secondary production hidden in the process" of a video game's "utilization" that results from identifying and interacting in a dynamic virtual world (DeCerteau, 2011). The research that has been conducted in this paper helps to illustrate that video game studies first require a method for distilling complex and expansive video game content. Such a framework can help to ensure that no content is ignored or disproportionally discussed. This study utilizes the ratios of the pentad to frame its analysis. These ratios between the elements of the pentad help to identify the predominant elements found within the artifact, all of which constitute the substance of the game world. Secondly, this paper proposes that although the content presented to players during the course of a video game play may differ depending on the choices a player makes, video games are rhetorically structured, making it possible to study how interactivity is encouraged and created by means of predetermined, programmed arguments between the game and the player.

This Paper's Outline

First, this paper presents an overview of the creation and evolution of the video game industry, then focuses specifically on the history of the *Final Fantasy* video game series. This historical review is necessary to provide the foundation of knowledge about the artifact that was used for analysis. Next, the current state of literature is discussed, which helps to define the field of video game studies as it exists currently as well as to bring to light some key terms related to video games. Contained within this literature review is an in-depth analysis of rhetorical theory and previous Burke research that has been explored as a framework for understanding video games.

Next, Burke's pentad is explored to help illuminate the ways in which it can be used as a tool for analyzing video games. This section on methodology also explains the various ratios that were examined in this research. These ratios and strategies are then applied to the MMORPG game *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*. Next, the outcomes of applying Burke's methodology are explained.

Finally, suggestions for future research are formulated. Ultimately this research has provided conclusions about the use of the pentad as well as the implications for the study of rhetoric, games and game playing, and *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* itself. It is the goal of this study to provide an in-depth understanding of one specific game in hopes that it will allow future researchers to build on and develop various conclusions about future gaming experiences. This of course is based around the concept that our culture has indeed entered into a time in which digital games are increasingly common and prevalent. The global integration of video

games within society as a medium for entertainment demonstrates the need to begin the work of rhetorical analysis in this emerging and specific field of study.

Literature Review of Dramatistic Theory and Video Games

The goal of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of Burke's pentad. A review of recent pentadic scholarship will demonstrate how Burke's pentad has been previously applied to various media artifacts. This review of past applications of the pentad will build the foundation for the introduction of video games, in particular *Final Fantasy XIV- A Realm Reborn* as the medium for study.

To accomplish this review of literature, the various ideas and concepts are introduced in chronological order. By using chronological order as an organizing principle, the first step will to explain the fundamentals of Burke's pentad. This includes the five elements of the pentad, which consist of act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. Then the literature of pentad versus hextad is covered. The next step covers ludology, the discipline that studies games, versus narratology, the discipline that studies how stories are told. Then previously published research that has applied the Burke's pentad to video game scholarship will be reviewed. In step three, the history of both video games and the *Final Fantasy* series is reviewed. This is followed by a critique of Burke's pentad and its various parts. This review of previous published literature and research will provide the foundation to explain the current study's research, and what it is reveals about the meaning of games, how games communicate, and how games argue with the player.

The Evolution of Video Games

Video game enthusiasts of today are accustomed to using complex multifunctional wireless controllers while viewing ultra-realistic images on their flat screen 3D LCD televisions. The gamer of today may find it hard to believe that at one time it was the norm for people to

entertain themselves with simple dials and a few white squares on a black television screen. Yet video game creators and fans have always strived for one thing: progress. The industry and its consumers have constantly sought new content, new games, dynamic graphics, complex controls, and perhaps most importantly, the realism. Through decades of constant technological advancements, video games have evolved immensely since they were first introduced over forty years ago.

The first video game technology came in 1966 when an engineer named Ralph Baer, who was working as a military contractor, obtained permission from his company to develop a computer system that could be connected to any television, allowing people to play simple video games (Baer, 2005). Baer had originally thought up this concept of a home gaming system in 1951, but his employer at the time failed to realize the full potential and scope of this type of invention. The system he developed was finally completed in 1972, licensed by Magnavox, and sold in stores as the Magnavox Odyssey (Baer, 2005). The Odyssey failed to capture the market, primarily because of its rudimentary application of the technology. The technology at the time required that players attach overlays on their television screen in order to play the games. Another reason that it resulted in poor sales was ambiguous marketing that led people to believe the system worked only with Magnavox televisions. Ultimately the company ceased production of the Odyssey due to poor sales figures and the fact that other companies had entered the marketplace with competing game systems (Baer, 2005).

In 1972 the first commercially successful video game was introduced to the public: . Pong. This very simple game consisted of the following instructions: “Step 1, Insert Quarter. 2. Ball will serve automatically. 3. Avoid missing ball for high score” (Montfort, 2000). The first

Pong machine was placed in Andy Capp's Cavern, in Sunnyvale, California and customers were intrigued by the game (Winter, 2013). The first maintenance that was needed on the machine was not due to a technical problem but rather that the coin box was full of quarters and jammed; and thus the world's passion for video games was underway (Montfort, 2000).

The Atari company was responsible for inventing Pong and placing it in that California tavern, and Al Alcorn was the first Atari game engineer (Kent, 2010). Nolan Bushnell who was the CEO of Atari, had assigned this project to Alcorn so he could develop his skill set for designing games. The goal of this Pong assignment was never the development of a finished product. Alcorn stated, "I found out later this was simply an exercise that Nolan gave me because it was the simplest game he could think of. He didn't think it had any play value" (Kent, 2010). After Pong's huge initial success, Atari began to manufacture full-sized arcade units. The next major development came and three years later when Atari teamed up with Sears & Roebuck to manufacture a home version of Pong that they called the Sears Tele-Games System (Demaria, 2009). According to Demaria, "Pong for the home sold for about $100 and was a phenomenal seller for Sears during the 1975 Christmas season" (Demaria, 2009).

A variety of home game systems appeared on store shelves following the release and success of the Magnavox Odyssey and the Sears Tele-Star System. However a large percentage of the new systems were simple duplications of the original Pong unit manufactured by other companies. These new machines upset Bushnell and the rest of the Atari Company, with Bushnell recalling his feelings about them during an interview. He had attended a convention titled "The Future of the Video-game Business" and was not invited to take part in the "expert" panel that had been assembled. Sellers (2003) quotes Bushnell as stating the following: "I stood

up with a microphone and said, ‘this is the biggest sham I’ve ever seen. How in the hell do these guys know what the future is when their only technical capability is copying me?’” (Sellers, 2003). In 1977 these basic gaming systems that focused around the game of Pong were ultimately overshadowed by Atari’s new machine, the 2600. (Demaria, 2007).

In creating the 2600, also known as the VCS, Atari included every conceivable form of flexibility into the console. Some of the new technology that the 2600 introduced included various difficultly switches for both the left and right player, and an output selection for both black & white and color televisions (Demaria, 2007). The game console also came packaged with joystick controllers as well as a set of paddle controllers. The inclusion of this hardware gave the customer the ability to purchase and play nearly any game at the time (Goldberg & Vendel, 2012). Furthermore, in addition to the games that were developed specifically for the Atari 2600, the console could also run simpler translations of popular arcade titles such as *Pac-Man*, *Missile Command*, and *Space Invaders* (Goldberg & Vendel, 2012). The combination of hardware and a flexible operating system led to the phenomenal success of the 2600 and the Atari company itself. Over the years, various companies produced hundreds of different game cartridges for the system, stretching the console’s capability further than Atari itself had ever imagined. “Available until 1990, the VCS was on the market longer than any other system in history” (Goldberg & Vendel, 2012).

In 1985 Japanese company Nintendo released the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). The English translation of the word “Nintendo” means “leave luck to heaven,” and the company got very lucky. As of 2014, “more than 40 percent of American households have owned a Nintendo game system” (Sheff, 2011). One element that helped boost sales of the NES was the

addition of the light-gun with the console package, which was used to play the game "Duck Hunt". The game Super Mario Brothers was also packaged with the system, and the characters Mario and Luigi became household icons. The extreme popularity of the Super Mario Brothers game led to Nintendo creating various spinoffs and sequels (Sheff, 2011). The NES was the first in a line of successful video game systems released by Nintendo. In 1989, the company went on to develop the first portable game system with interchangeable game cartridges, the Nintendo Game Boy (Sheff, 2011).

In the early 90's Sony had "joined forces with Nintendo in a bid to create a CD drive for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES)" (Parish, 2013). Nintendo, however, backed out from the deal, which led to Sony's development of the PlayStation game system (Parish, 2013). The Sony PlayStation achieved great success and over the years, with global sales reaching "104 million units" ("*Platform Totals*" n.d.). The advantages the PlayStation had were that Sony was a reliable household name in consumer electronics. Sony wisely marketed the system towards an older audience, through TV and magazine ads, helping to create a whole new set of video game consumers (Demaria, 2007).

This development led to the next stage of video game systems: Sony's PlayStation 2, which was released in 2000, as well as Nintendo's GameCube, and Microsoft's X-Box, both released in 2001. In addition to video games the PlayStation 2 and Xbox are capable of playing DVD format movies. Technologically the three systems are very similar, so the differences in game play are very subtle. The sales figures indicate that the PlayStation 2 was the system of choice for gamers. According to Forbes.com "cumulative sales of PlayStation2 systems reached 150 million units worldwide as of the end of January 2010" (Ewalt, 2011). The runner up was the

"Nintendo Wii with 85 million units sold and Microsoft's Xbox 360 with 51 million sold" (Ewalt, 2011). Also, "Nintendo's portable gaming unit known as the DS did come in close with 145 million units sold" (Ewalt, 2011). The success of Sony could be due in part to the backwards compatibility of the PlayStation 2, which could support and run all of the original PlayStation titles. PlayStation 2 also experienced enormous support from game developers, with "more than 10,828 different software titles and more than 1.52 billion units of software have been sold" (Ewalt, 2011). Sony managed to secure "deals to publish big name games and offer exclusive releases from some of the most popular gaming franchises like Rockstar Games/Take-Two's Grand Theft Auto, Square's Final Fantasy and Konami's Metal Gear" (Ewalt, 2011). Those deals proved hugely important in keeping gamers on Sony's platform, instead of losing them to Microsoft's new Xbox.

Sony would go on to develop the PlayStation 3 and gain a solid share of the video game market. The sales data collected in May of 2013 by VGChartz shows "the PS3 has sold 77,313,472 units to date, making it the second-best selling console on the market. In comparison, the Xbox 360 has 77,311,669 units, which downgrades its sales ranking to third" (Reyna, 2013). The Nintendo Wii, however, still holds the majority of sales with in the current market at "99.66 million units sold"(Reyna, 2013).

The competition between Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony helps to explain why millions of dollars are spent developing new games, a big difference from the budgets from early '70s. The video game market has grown tremendously over the last few years, which the following quote from Michael D. Gallagher, president and CEO, Entertainment Software Association, illustrates:

> There has been doubt and straight out denial from other industries, but the proof is irrefutable. The games industry has over the last decades grown from an insignificant

> niche market to the mainstream form of entertainment it is today. No other sector has experienced the same explosive growth as the computer and video game industry. Our creative publishers and talented workforce continue to accelerate advancement and pioneer new products that push boundaries and unlock entertainment experiences. These innovations in turn drive enhanced player connectivity, fuel demand for products, and encourage the progression of an expanding and diversified consumer base. (Newell, 2013)

Forbes.com has projected that "the video game industry is expected to grow from $67 billion in 2012 to $82 billion in 2017"(Gaudiosi, 2012). Also, the amount of time that is spent playing such games has been staggering. According to author and researcher Jane McGonigal, "we spend 3 billion hours a week as a planet playing video games" (McGonigal, 2011).

So what is in store for the future of video the video game industry? According to *Time Magazine's* Chris Taylor, science fiction movies such as *TRON* and *The Matrix* foreshadow the future of gaming technology, where the user can plug a cable directly into the brain and enter a "clean, well-lighted universe of one's own, built by computer but experienced through as many senses as you can afford" (Taylor, 2000). This concept and technology may seem a little outrageous, but considering the advancements that have been made over last 30 years, it seems that anything is possible.

The History Of *Final Fantasy*

The Final Fantasy series helped create the genre we now refer to as the Japanese Role Playing Game, a statistic based strategy game that involves monster hunting, dungeon crawling and micro-management of innovatory. 2012 marked the 25th anniversary of the Final Fantasy franchise and over the years they have experienced a tremendous amount of changes and development (Moorhouse, 2012). Square was the development company that created the *Final*

Fantasy series, but back in 1987 they were facing tremendous financial trouble. These financial woes were brought on after a series of unsuccessful games. Having the resources for one more game, the company assigned Hironobu Sakaguchi, who at the time held the title of director of planning and development, with the task of creating a game to save Square from bankruptcy. On deciding what type of game to design, Sakaguchi stated, "I don't think I have what it takes to make a good action game. I think I'm better at telling a story" (Yevonite, 2013). Sakaguchi had a vision that involved combining all of the popular elements from the RPG genre to build a diverse world that held a variety of story elements for the player to interact with. He was convinced that due to the financial troubles Square faced that this game would be Square's last project, so with that "he ironically named it, *Final Fantasy*" (Yevonite, 2013).

Final Fantasy was released for the NES on December 18th, 1987. The game's story told of four "warriors of light" who were sent on a quest to find four crystals that could save the world. While far from the expansive and detailed tales the series today is known for, the story in the original *Final Fantasy* was extremely detailed for its time. The gameplay and story also put a heavy emphasis on creating a highly customizable role-playing experience., and *Final Fantasy*'s gameplay implemented a new style of combat system. It was the norm for Role Playing Games (RPGs) at the time to use a first person view, whereas *Final Fantasy* showed the entire battle from a side view, allowing the player to see all the action at once. *Final Fantasy* had an extensive soundtrack with twenty unique tracks. A number of these songs from the first game would become forever associated with the *Final Fantasy* brand. This first game was extremely successful and become one of the best selling games for the NES, "selling over 500,000 copies" ("*Complete*", 2013).

From the immense success generated from this one game, Square and the *Final Fantasy* series flourished. *Final Fantasy* as a global brand became incredibly successful and game designer Sakaguchi was promoted to the president of the company in 1995. Sakaguchi had a long career in the gaming industry and his productions sold "over 100 million units" of video games worldwide (Complete, 2013). Imagine Games Network, a leader in multimedia news, ranked Sakaguchi at #4 in their list of top 100 video game producers ("*#4. Hironobu*", n.d.).

Sakaguchi played a vital role in all stages of the development of the games. During the '80s and '90s he oversaw all the major titles his company was working on and acted as a director, producer, supervisor, and conceptual mastermind. The games he oversaw include "every Final Fantasy from parts 1 through 9, Final Fantasy Tactics, Xenogears, Parasite Eve, Ehrgeiz and Chrono Trigger" ("*#4. Hironobu*", n.d.). For more than a decade, admirers would claim that Sakaguchi didn't just work at SquareSoft, he was SquareSoft ("*#4. Hironobu*", n.d.).

Since its inception, there have been "64 Final Fantasy games produced across many different platforms and in various global markets"(Complete, 2013). The Final Fantasy series has experienced tremendous success and is known as one of the "highest-selling franchise in all of video gaming with 85 million units sold" (Ellison, 2009). The most recent addition to the *Final Fantasy* series is *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn.* This game was released on August 22, 2013 and as of October, 2013 has sold 512,000 units (*Final Fantasy XIV*, 2013). Because this game is designed as a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG), it requires players to pay a "monthly subscription fee of $12.99" ("Final Fantasy XIV." n.d.).

Final Fantasy was the catalyst for a whole new genre of games known as Japanese role-playing games (JRPGs). These fantasy role-playing games have been enjoyed by people across

the globe and with current advancements in technology they have been translated to many different languages. For example, the most current game, *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* offers players "the choice of Japanese, English, German, and French translations" as a standard option (Square Enix, n.d.). The latest Final Fantasy game is a great artifact to study because of its popularity and rich history.

Introduction To Burke

"Strictly speaking," wrote American social philosopher and literary critic Kenneth Burke in his 1945 work *A Grammar of Motives*, "we mean by a grammar of motives a concern with the terms alone, without reference to the ways in which their potentialities have been or can be utilized in actual statements about motives" (Burke, 1945). The key terms he refers to are the five elements of the dramatistic pentad, which make up the methodology for rhetorical criticism in *A Grammar of Motives (1945)*. In constructing his grammar he conducted a detailed analysis of literature and philosophy. His writings left a powerful legacy that remains useful in the works of the "students of composition, communication, psychology, sociology and history" (Blakesley, 2002), as well as to this study. In *Grammar of Motives* Burke went into great detail and outlined all of the elements and steps that are needed to understand and apply the dramatistic approach.

The main concept of dramatism is divided into two main parts. These parts are action and motion. In Burke's essay "Dramatism and Development,", he described the relationship between motion and action by noting that "things move, people act."(Burke, 1972). This phrase seems to indicate a fairly simple distinction. Researcher Cohrs stated the following: "Action is something that people do on purpose in way of their voluntary behavior and motions are all the

behaviors that are non-purposeful and non-meaningful" (Cohrs, 2002). According to Burke, basic forms of thought can be made prevalent through attributing motives (Burke, 1945). Motives are the particular way people understand events and the recommendations for response inherent to the discourse that it presents for its audience (Burke, 1945).

In order for motives to be understood, Burke presents a framework that is knows as the pentad. The pentad is seen as the backbone of Burke's Dramatism. There are five key terms in Burke's Pentad. They are act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke stated: "Act names (what took place, in thought or deed)," *scene* names "(the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred)," *agent* is the "person or kind of person" that performs the act, *agency* describes "what means or instruments" were used and *purpose* answers the question why" (Burke, 1945). In sum, Burke's Pentad is similar to what reporters in journalism call the "who, what, where, when and why."

The Elements Of The Pentad

The significance of the five elements of the pentad lies in their range and application. It is necessary to understand that each of the terms are ambiguous, because they overlap with human motives and can be shown to arise out of them and to terminate in them, with the pentad as the generating principle:

> We have likened the terms to the fingers, which in their extremities are distinct from one another, but merge in the palm of the hand. If you would go from one finger to another without a leap, you need but trace the tendon down into the palm of the hand then trace a new course along another tendon. (Burke, 1945)

Because "these terms are flexible it allows for philosophic systems to pull one way and another"(Weitz, 1990), analysis using the pentad typically requires the utilization of more than

one term. The margins of overlap provide access to any other term and this can be done without having to leap between terms. Weitz stated: “If you reduce the Pentad to one term and treat this as the essential terms — the causal ancestor — then you may proceed across the margins of overlap, deducing the other terms from it as the logical descendants” (Weitz, 1990)

Burke provides a basic example that demonstrates how the elements of the pentad can be found in an event: “The hero (agent) with the help of a friend (co-agent) outwits the villain (counter-agent) by using a file (agency) that enables him to break his bonds (act) in order to escape (purpose) from the room where he has been confined (scene)” (Burke, 1945).

This example by Burke offers a clear understanding of how the basic elements of the pentad can come together and help one make sense of an event. The power of the pentad comes from the fact that it can be applied to almost any artifact or situation. When using the pentad as a method of descriptive analysis numerous approaches can be used depending upon one's motives. Each term from the pentad can be isolated and discussed separately from the other elements. For instance, Weitz provides a detailed example of this separation of elements,

> The Act (art form) might be formally analyzed, perhaps using Feldman's description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation steps. This could lead into a discussion of Agency (artists). Who are the artists? How does this relate to the art forms they create? This would lead into the expanding or narrowing the Scene (context): For whom is the work intended? When? What economic enterprises does it involve? How has the context changed? This leads into discussion of Agency (the viewer's role) and Purpose (why was this art form made? Why does it look, function as it does? etc.). (Weitz, 1990)

This example provided by Weitz helps to illustrate how connected the terms are in Burke’s pentad.

Applications Of The Pentad

The most powerful aspects of the pentad are its simplicity and flexibility. It is extremely malleable and can be applied to the simplest of scenarios, like as a scene from a movie, or more complex ones, like an election. Burke himself discussed his feeling about the pentad in his book, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (1973): *"*I think these five terms are particularly handy for extending the discussion of motivation so as to locate the strategies in metaphysical and theological systems" (Burke, 1973). Burke goes on to state that by looking within the structure of these actions, one may find motivation within the structure. At the center of the Pentad is drama. The words scene, act, etc. are all have dramatic roots, thus his communication theory is known as dramatism. (Burke, 1973).

To further analyze this theory, it is necessary to review previous evaluations of it. With respect to evaluating theories, Cohrs stated that "it is important to check to see if the theory is necessary and desirable" (Cohrs, 2002). The theory is necessary because it is logically consistent and testable as previous research has shown and theory must also be desirable (Cohrs, 2002). The theory also needs to be "interpretable to explain and predict and thus, this theory also fits the standard functions of theories" (Cohrs, 2002). Burke's dramatism allows researchers to separate and organize the knowledge into five parts. With these parts defined and separated, it allows researchers to focus their attention on the important variables.

Yet another aspect to look at when analyzing theories is corrigibility. Cohrs stated: "Corrigibility is the persistence that no matter how right everyone thinks the theory may be, that there might be some sort of flaw or disconfirmation somewhere along the lines" (Cohrs, 2002). If the theory eventually is proven to be wrong, then this element of corrigibility allows for the

opportunity to build on the failed theories framework and create a revised theory that is even better. Thus, new theories advance our society.

Burke's theory offers a level of corrigibility because two individuals can look at the same event and interpret it differently. Each and every person has unique perspectives, education, and values, which lead us to understand the world slightly differently. Since this happens, "two individuals who experienced the same event may feel that they came up with a purpose that was not congruent" (Cohrs, 2002). For example, one person may feel that the senior football players hazed the freshmen players as a sign of aggression or abuse, while another person may feel that they acted out of kindness and an attempt to foster team bonding. These elements of the pentad work together in various ways to build these types of perspectives. The next section will illustrate how the elements work together to form various relationships within the artifact.

The Container and Thing Contained

One of the most central ideas to dramatism is Burke's discussion of container and thing contained. The idea is that the elements of the Pentad can "contain" one another (Burke, 1945). This idea is fairly straightforward from a strictly dramatic perspective – the act contains the purpose or that the scene contains the actors, and so on. Once the pentad for a situation has been determined, an analysis can be performed by comparing the relationship between any two of the five elements. Burke used this notion to introduce the concept of "ratios – dialectic and synecdochic interrelationships" between each of the five elements and each of the others (Burke, 1942). The standard methodology is to establish a paring ratio between any of the ten possible pairings. Those 10 possible pairings are:

Actor to scene
Actor to act
Actor to agency
Actor to purpose
Act to scene
Act to agency
Act to purpose
Scene to agency
Scene to purpose
Agency to purpose

However, it becomes possible to also reverse the order of the pairings thus creating another ten possibilities, for a total of twenty. The reversal of the two terms helps to find the dilemma and motive. In this way, the analysis "moves beyond the stated motives and looks for either corroborating evidence in the remaining elements of the Pentad, or to the truth of the motives by examining the reverse of those stated"(Cageyer, 2008). The order of the terms in the ratios, Burke notes, "is largely arbitrary and can be reversed if necessary to make analysis clearer"(Burke, 1945). In particular, Burke urged critics to consider ratios in which one aspect of the pentad impacts and controls another:

> For instance, by a ''scene-act ratio'' one would refer to the effect that a scene has upon an act, and by an ''act-scene ratio'' one would refer to the effect that an act has upon a scene. The Supreme Court would be exemplifying a ''scene-act ratio'' in deciding that emergency measures are admissible because there is a state of emergency. And we should be exemplifying an ''act-scene ratio'' in learning that an arms race may lead to war. (Burke, 1986)

The idea that the elements can "contain" one another is crucial to the central methodological step of dramatism – the identification of the "dominant" term or ratio in any artifact. Burke argues that the ratios serve as "principles of determination" (Burke, 1945), the central idea being that a critic will examine each of the elements present in an artifact, take note of predominant ratios and discover which element is the "dominant" term. If a critic can establish

which element is dominant, then he or she can examine the “philosophical terminology that underlies the conscious or unconscious authorial world view” (Burke, 1945) in any given artifact.

Pentad Or A Hexad?

Burke stated that "many times on later occasions: he "regretted" not adding a sixth element to his pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, & purpose), and turning it into a hexad (Burke, 1972). Burke occasionally adds the element of attitude to his five terms, transforming the pentad into a hexad. In *Grammar*, Burke discussed attitude as incipient and delayed action, building upon the ideas of I. A. Richards, who points out the following: “Every perception probably includes a response in the form of incipient action. We constantly overlook the extent to which all the while we are making preliminary adjustments, getting ready to act in one way or another” (Richards, 1961). For this reason, Burke calls attitude the “how” of symbolic action: “To build something with a hammer would involve an instrument, or ‘agency’; to build with diligence would involve an ‘attitude,’ a ‘how’” (Burke, 1942). In part, attitude relates to preparation and motivation for conducting physical action. For example someone may decide how and in what manner to swing the baseball bat before hitting a pitch. Attitude may also refer to an agent’s state of mind (Burke, 1942), which encompasses his or her orientation toward the world or “motivational properties,” such as “drives” or “instincts”, and may also refer to the figurative dimension of agency” (Burke, Rueckert, & Bonadonna, 2003; Burke, 1978). Unlike Richards and Alfred Korzyski, who “attempt to translate the problems of action into terms of motion” (Burke, 1942), Burke agrees with George Herbert Mead, who described attitude as “the

beginnings of acts," in terms of symbolic action rather than in strictly physicalistic terms (Burke, 1942). Attitude may be manifested outwardly or inwardly: "We have tried to show that the attitude is essentially ambiguous, as an attitude of sympathy may either lead to an act of sympathy or may serve as substitute for an act of sympathy" (Burke, 1942). In either case, the attitudinal "is the realm of 'symbolic action' par excellence' for symbolic action has the same ambiguous potentialities of action…. Here is the area of thought wherein actual conflicts can be transcended, with results sometimes fatal, sometimes felicitous" (Burke, 1942). Clearly, attitude is an major component of Burke's program. Yet, lack of certainty remains. Is attitude implied in the Pentad? Or, is it best viewed as the sixth term of a hexad?

This theme is demonstrated in *A Grammar of Motives*. The advertising and marketing industries, Burke stated, "want us to just respond to their messages, without any pause for reflection" (Burke, 1942)**.** But, in the "delayed action, there is a pause; we forestall the act or reaction to such a stimulus, while we hesitate to think critically of our mental attitudes and what act we will choose" (Burke, 1942). Most people, for example, have experienced an attitude of compassion that may have lead them to an act or to substitute another act of compassion: "In the traditional Aristotelian usage, potentiality is to actuality as the possibility of doing something is to the actual doing of it, or as the unformed is to the formed" (Burke, 1945).

Summary Of The Pentad

Overall, the academic world credits Burke for developing a theory that will continue to remain useful for the next hundred years. His theory provides a strong outline to analyze artifacts and events that take place in every aspect of the human experience. Burke describes how

the pentad of terms operates by identifying their use in stage drama, showing how the background scene of the drama provides the audience with cues on how to interpret the acts on stage, and how the acts on stage can provide information about the agents of the play. Like stage drama, video games provide locations for action, since they involve actors, include props and utilize background settings to reveal stories. Because of the many similarities between stage drama and video games, dramatism is a useful lens through which to begin to understand how video games operate to motivate the player to interact with the game in particular ways. A Burkean lens permits us to explore the influence of visual elements in-games and the player's reactions to certain conflicts, and in turn, the actions the player chooses to make in reaction to those conflicts.

Evaluation Of The Theory

Dramatism is an interpretive theory about understanding why people behave in the way that they do, and not so much in the predication of human behavior. Burke's theory offers a new understanding of people, behavior and symbolic interaction. Burke applied his theory to Shakespeare, and it has since been applied to various artifacts like public speeches in order to achieve a greater understanding of the underlying communications and texts. Applying Burke's pentad to texts can provide a clarification of values, as it can identify the principals behind the message.

Burke's work has appeared in many communication journals, and there is now a Kenneth Burke society dedicated to ensuring the understanding of dramatism (Kenneth Burke journal). Although there are debates and conflicting interpretations of dramatism, Burke's theory is widely

accepted, serving as a foundational theoretical perspective for interpreting events and texts. Beyond the Kenneth Burke society, there are Burkean scholars who are dedicated to the development and application of dramatism.

The Pentad And Applications To Video Games

This section will outline Burke's ideas as well as provide a theoretical justification for their application to new media forms, specifically video games. As Burke noted, a language is a means to symbolically represent reality and dramatism is a means to deconstruct the use of language to find rich critical material. If video games are also symbolic constructions, then any game that represents "reality" to some extent is rich material for a system of analysis meant to dissect such artifacts. This section includes four sections. The first section focuses on the ludology and narratology. This section provides background information on how video games tell stories. The next section provides a detailed history of the evolution of video games. This section outlines the technological advancements that the video game industry has experienced over the years. It reviews the history of the video game industry and conveys the rate at which this technology is evolving. The following section will highlight past research that utilizes the principals of the Pentad and applies it to elements found within video games. The last section covers the history of The *Final Fantasy* series. The research conducted on the history of Final Fantasy helps to set the stage for the descriptive analysis of *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*.

Ludology Versus Narratology

Warren Spector, a leading video game designer, stated, "It's vital that we determine how games make meaning" (Salen, & Zimmerman, 2010). One of the Spector's frustrations was the general lack of critical and academic material surrounding video games as a medium. Indeed, at this time only a few researchers and scholars have begun working in the emerging field of video game studies. Most people who consider themselves video game theorists generally also consider

themselves to be ludologists. Frasca elaborates: “We will propose the term ludology (from ludus, the Latin word for “game”), to refer to the yet non-existent “discipline that studies game and play activities” (Frasca, 1999). Just like narratology, ludology should also be independent from the medium that supports the activity (Frasca, 1999).

For scholars of rhetoric, this is an exciting time to turn our attentions to ludology, for the majority of communication research being done now on video games is joined together from a wide variety of academic disciplines – allowing researchers to break new ground in terms of discovering what games can mean, how games communicate and how games persuade. The field of ludology also presents some new challenges to examine. These challenges include the “limitations of textual analysis, the issue of analyzing interactivity, and the capacity of techniques to create meaningful analysis of these new media forms” (Shields, 2009). Mr. Spector asked the one of the most important questions: “how do games create meaning?” (Shields, 2009). Are the meanings games create any different from the meanings of films, books, speeches, etc.?

In the field of rhetorical criticism a few steps have been taken but there is a lack of significant research on this increasingly rich source of cultural artifacts. It is the task of the rhetorical critic to discover how it is that communication succeeds. Games in general have existed in cultures all across the world for thousands of years. Indeed, games have often in society served as reflections of culture or a vessel of social meaning. For example, as Parlett notes in The Oxford History of Board Games: “The modern game of *Monopoly* is derived from a game called *The Landlord's Game* developed by Quakers as a rhetorical tool to illustrate how rents impoverished tenants and enriched landlords” (Parlett, 1999). As video game technology allows humans to enter into and interact with virtual worlds, the importance of understanding the

digital games is only going to increase. With technology advancing so rapidly, one cannot deny the expected shifts in paradigms in the nature of human communication.

Video games create meaning in a number of different ways and Juul's describes this debate as "a discussion between narratology versus ludology, " or in this case, games as stories versus games as something unique (Juul, 2011). The narratology stance is that video games tell stories similar to traditional media forms such as literature, theater, or film. The ludology stance would like to see video games treated as a unique medium with its own characteristics that include but are not limited to storytelling. One could argue that this debate is the at the center of the classification of all the divisions in the field game studies that Juul describes.

Gonzolo Frasca's paper, "Ludologists Love Stories Too" argues the following: "In fact, the ludology and narratology debate never happened and that misunderstandings are the cause of the imagined rift between the proponents of each side" (Frasca, 2003). Celia Pearce responds to Frasca in her paper, "Theory Wars: An Argument Against Arguments in the so-called Ludology versus Narratology Debate," arguing that "the very act of bestowing the suffix "-ist" is a kind of spell-casting exercise that only serves to reinforce the so-called false polarity that Frasca attempts to critique" (Pearce, 2003). Pearce goes on to state that "games such as *The Sims* or *EverQuest,* though they have little in common in terms of gameplay, share some general features of storytelling" and that in these games, "players are given a set of options that allow them to craft their own stories *through* gameplay, effectively merging the act of story production and consumption into one" (Pearce, 2003), a phenomenon she calls "emergent authorship" (Pearce, 2003). Pearce suggests that game researchers should ask the following: "Not 'Are they/are they not narrative?' but 'In what *ways* are they narrative?'" (Pearce, 2003). This debate suggests that

video games can be a medium for storytelling and can deliver the content of the stories in a rather unique and unconventional way.

Dramatism and Video Games

Even though Burke developed the pentad based on the study of literature and drama, he did not limit the use of the dramatistic pentad to verbal and written language (Brummett 2006). Instead, he opened up the domain of rhetoric to "include nonverbal domains known and yet to be invented or discovered" (Bogost, 2008). He suggested that the pentad provides an answer to the question of '"what is involved when we said what people are doing and why they are doing it?" (Burke, 1969). Not surprisingly, the pentad is increasingly considered a useful tool for critically examining video games (Shields, 2009). Not only does it answer the call for studying the fundamental similarities between drama and human-computer interaction (Laurel 1991, Mateas 2002), it also fits the "Theory of Procedural Rhetoric" (Bogost 2007), since it enables a comparison between the game world rules with real-world issues. According to Voorhees (2009), 'Burke encourages us to look for linkages that direct the critic outside of the text to the contemporaneous situations they describe'.

The Pentad's ability to deal with ambiguity makes it an even more interesting tool for use in the field of video game studies. Not only can it help to identify the ideological content and thus engender critical awareness about video games, but the systematic pairing of elements can also help to open up the interpretation of the game to perspectives that would otherwise be ignored. Blakesley states: "Dramatism enables us to see not only the grounds of these interpretations, but to enable alternative ones by forcing categorical expectations to shift and thus

generate new ways of seeing" (Blakesley 2002). Therefore, it can serve as a useful tool to compare the perspectives of the designers as reflected in the game with the perspectives of the gamers as, for example, reflected on popular game websites, but also to contrast the game narrative with the interactive character of the game rules. The following sections will review the following elements of the pentad: scene, scene/ act ratio, agent, scene/agent ratio and agency. These elements have been applied to other games in the past. This framework will help to define the elements of the pentad as they are applied to the video game medium. These findings and definitions will carry over into the primary research that this paper conducted on *Final Fantasy XIV:A Realm Reborn*.

Scene Within The Game

In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke defines scene as "the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred" (Burke, 1945). Consistent with his comparison of dramatism and stage drama, Burke explained that "'scene contains the act' and that if we consider the actors in stage drama agents, we can say? that 'scene contains agents' as well". Burke noted the motivational power of scene when he stated: "From the motivational point of view, there is implicit in the quality of a scene the quality of the action that is to take place within it" (Burke, 1945). By stating this, Burke is suggesting that once the scene is examined, it becomes possible understand the motivation for the acts that have been carried out within it. Burke further stated the following:

> The nature of the scene may be conveyed primarily by suggestions built into the lines of the verbal action itself, as with the imagery in the dialogue of Elizabethan drama and with the descriptive passages of novels; or it may be conveyed by non-linguistic properties, as with the materials of naturalistic stage-sets. (Burke, 1945)

Here, when Burke identifies "non-linguistic properties" we can find space for the application of scene to FPS games. There are examples of games in the genre that use text to instruct the player or deliver aspects of the game's narrative. Much of the storytelling and instruction is done through the scenic aspects of the game, such as background images and settings. However, since video games are largely visual, wouldn't that place the entire game under Burke's term scene? McCall stated that this is not the case:

> The player sees a mixture of objects in the on-screen virtual environment including architecture, terrain, backdrops and other props consistent with the larger game narrative. In these environments, there are visual areas that contain condensed, more meaningful possibilities of action. These areas are where the action that progresses game play occurs and for which the surrounding visual environment acts as support, and therefore should be considered an example of Burke's scene in-games. (McCall, 2008)

In other words, the player may experience a virtual world on the screen, but only predetermined elements within that environment contain the visual elements that allow the user to make progression with the game.

A second example of how Burke's Pentad can be applied to video games to help describe the scene comes from Matthew J. Shields in a paper titled "A Pentadic Analysis of Tropico: Dramatism and Digital Games*" (2009).* The research conducted by Shields includes various applications of Burke's pentad to the game *Tropico*, a city-building simulation style game that focuses on managing economic problems on a Caribbean island in the 1950s during the Cold War (Chick, 2001). Shields made a point that may be noteworthy, though it may seem obvious to the player.

> It is not just to said that the game always takes place in the same "place," but that the trappings of the place are always the same. Any playing of the game will necessarily bring the player into consciousness of the same tokens, again and again. While this is not a profound insight, this basic realization allows this criticism to discuss the rhetorical nature of these relationships that always exist as part of the scene. (Shields, 2009)

A game like *Tropico* is classified as an open world or "sandbox" type of game. Open world games include "games where generally the player is left to his own devices to explore a large world" (Harris, n.d.). The concept of the game is to provide the player the freedom to create a unique world, though the developers still have implemented rules, parameters and limitations that player must abide by. Shields observation about the relationship between the scene and game demonstrated that players will encounter a unique "in-game" experience but at the same time they will encounter elements that are shared with anyone who has played the game. These consistent elements are the foundation of the scene. Shields also found that "Since the story of *Tropico* is ergodic, a player can choose which parts he or she wants to experience, but cannot change the parts of the story they never encounter" (Shields, 2009).

Scene — Act Ratio

Burke notes that the *scene* contains the *act,* and launches into what amounts to literary criticism in support of his principles. The first example he gives is Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (Burke, 1945). He argues that in this play the scenes both symbolize and realistically reflect the action. Burke also stated that the plot of the play is an "internality directed outwards" (Burke, 1945). Burke included similar observations and provided quotes from a scene from *Hamlet.* In this scene, Horatio is worried that the surroundings may inspire Hamlet to

commit suicide “the sheer natural surroundings might be enough to provide a man with a motive for an act as desperate and absolute as suicide” (Burke 1945).

Burke suggested, "scene is to act as implicit is too explicit," and he stated, "Stage-set contains, simultaneously, implicitly, all that the narrative is to draw out as a sequence, explicitly" (Burke, 1945). Burke acknowledged the following: “This scene-act relationship becomes obscured when the interdependence and overlap of the *scene* and *act* are considered” (Burke, 1945). To clarify, he explained how the interaction between two characters could serve as motivation for the act and this helps to modify the scene. He stated, "Our terms [stage and act] lending themselves to both merger and division, we are here trying to divide two of them while recognizing their possibilities of merger" (Burke, 1945).

Scene — Act Ratio Within Video Games

In *A Grammar of Motives* Burke explained that the guiding principle in an examination of the scene/act ratio is that “the scene is a fit ‘container’ for act, expressing in fixed properties the same quality that the action expresses in terms of development” (Burke, 1945). In other words, the scene must contain some type of identifiable cues that persuade the agent to take part in the acts that will occur or have occurred. McCall stated that visual in-game elements such as lighting “cues the player to act” (McCall, 2008)**.** He refers to lighting as the following: “The purposeful placement of in-game illumination devices such as lamps, streetlights, ceiling lights, or any number of devices appropriate to the game’s fictional setting to cue players toward the path of navigation that will allow them to interact with and complete the game” (McCall, 2008). These elements are found in many fantasy, action and adventure games. McCall provided examples to

support his idea about in-game lighting and how it causes the player to act. His examples included an in-game situation from the game *Half Life 2*, in which a player encounters "a scene where a street lamp illuminates a ladder, which the player must climb to overcome conflict in the form of a chain link fence in the background of the scene" (McCall, 2008). The lighting in the game environment can also be used to highlight or call attention to various important objects within the game. McCall uses an example from *BioShock* in which the developers placed lights directly over areas where these important items could be found.

Video game developers use these manipulations of a scene within a game to help guide the player; thus, we have a direct relationship between the scene / act ratio. Just as Burke used stage drama to demonstrate the ways that background scenes communicate the nature of the acts performed, these examples provided by McCall demonstrate that the scene/act ratio in games operate in a very similar way.

The Agent Within Video Games

In a description of the term agent, Burke points to the philosophic concept of Idealism. He explained that "Idealistic philosophies think in terms of the 'ego,' the 'self,' the 'super-ego,' 'consciousness,' will,' the 'generalized I,' the 'subjective,' 'mind,' 'spirit,' the 'oversoul,' and any such 'super-persons' as church, race, nation, etc." (Burke, 1942). Many video games allow the player to control the perspective of how the game is viewed. McCall elaborates on this concept by stating the following:.

> The first-person perspective is firmly located in Idealism in that, by putting the player in the perspective of the player character, games locate the player as the player character's will, its super-ego, its mind. The player's actions drive the player character. Thus, when we discuss the agent of games, we can mean both

> the live player at the controls and the player character within the game. (McCall, 2008)

This example helps to illustrate that the agent found within video games also encompasses the player and that player's reality. This in-game reality is reinforced by the fact that many games require these players to create an avatar that will represent them while inside the game.

When a user plays or interacts with a video game, the game is programmed to respond or interact back. Game designers argue that these alternating interactions between the users and games serve as a fundamental characteristic of the medium. The concept of alternating interaction between the user and the artifact is rather new to the world of rhetorical criticism. Salen and Zimmerman stated that:

> The primary importance of this observation is that the multiple pentads of a digital game all share a common point in agency: the means by which the player interacts with the game has implications both for them selves and for the game mechanics. It is important, then, to distinguish between what actions take place in the game and outside that game (the actual clicks of the mouse and button inputs of the user). (Salen, & Zimmerman, 2010)

Based on this observation it is clear that the players of the game are encountering more than one experience, natural realty and in-game reality, and thus are experiencing more than one pentadic element. The complex nature of multi-Pentad experience presents a challenge for the researcher. Based on this observation, the primary research in this paper will focus on studying what the designers *allow* a user to create, rather than what users *do* create.

The Scene — Agent Ratio

Burke continues his concept of ratios by examining person and place or agent and scene. In *Grammar*, Burke provides several examples of the scene-agent ratio, including Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and Seurat's paintings. Burke tells us that the scene in *Gulliver's Travels* has supernatural elements and that Swift portrays the Laputans as living on an island that floats in space, or "up in the air" (Burke, 1945). Finally, Burke notes that Seurat's "human figures seem on the point of dissolving into their backgrounds" (Burke, 1945). Burke ends this section by explaining how the logic of the scene-agent ratio has embarrassed the naturalistic novelist. He explains the following: "The naturalistic novelistic creates a scene of bad working conditions to show how this "brutalizing situation" hurts an impoverished indigenous people; however, since their characters are seen as "brutal," ironically, the audience may see them as not worth saving. Hence, the naturalistic novelist fails to achieve the humanistic end because the novelist neglected to follow the scene-agent ratio" (Burke, 1945).

The Scene — Agent Ratio In-Games

In most games, the players will experience a fictional set of circumstance where they find them selves in a one-against-many scenario. The setting of this drama may occur in the past, present, or future, but the general premise of the game is always similar. The game challenges the player by presenting numerous challenges for them to face and overcome. In this respect, narratives in games work to construct the player as agent in a common way, by placing the players character in situation teaming with conflict. In his essay, "The Art of Computer Game

Design*,"* pioneering game designer Chris Crawford identifies conflict as an important element of gameplay:

> The player is actively pursuing some goal. Obstacles prevent him from easily achieving this goal. If the obstacles are passive or static, the challenge is a puzzle or athletic challenge. If they are active or dynamic, if they purposefully respond to the player, the challenge is a game. However, active, responsive, purposeful obstacles require an intelligent agent. If that intelligent agent actively blocks the player's attempts to reach his goals, conflict between the player and the agent is inevitable. Thus, conflict is fundamental to all games. (Crawford, 1984)

Crawford names the "active, responsive, purposeful obstacles as agents—a game as active agent approach" (Crawford, 1984). However McCall examines the reverse, and finds that "a player as active agent approach". McCall suggested that the art and objects contained in the scenes of a game are influenced by the game's narrative: "Each scene must adhere to the elements of the story— but the player as agent in the scene/agent ratio is determined by the *type* of conflict that arises within the scenes of the story" (McCall, 2008). As Burke stated, "It is a principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene" (Burke, 1945). Therefore, McCall theorized: "If the narratives at work in these games depict dangerous, malformed, even hideous environments, a strict scene/agent ratio would suggest that the agent in these narratives must also possess those same characteristics" (McCall, 2008). This example is true because in games where the character gets attacked by enemies, the game normally provides the character a means to defend against the attack or in most cases the means to strike back.

Agency in-games

To build a foundation of dramatism that will create new theoretical meaning in the study of the rhetoric of video games it is necessary to examine how the vocabulary of the Pentad is already present in existing ideas about the medium. The clearest example is the element of agency which Burke defined as "what means or instruments [are] used" (Burke, 1945). However, Janet Murray expanded on this concept when she described agency in a computer application as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices" (Murray, 1997). When applying this concept to technology, the user expects to feel agency when for example they enter a website URL into the Internet browser, press return and the website loads. Although Murray's definition is acceptable, McCall has refined the concept of agency to better fit into the context of the video game medium. In his paper "A Burkean analysis on the relationship of the image to player motivation in first-person shooter games*,"* McCall described it in the following way: "Agency in with in the game as the player's use of equipped items, abilities and, if the game allows, manipulation of objects in the game environment" (McCall, 2008). The use of these definitions will provide the framework needed to accurately describe the agents within *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*.

Critique Of The Theory

Some critics complain that Burke is too unclear and obtuse. "Dramatism is seen by some as overly complex and confusing and even proponents of Burke acknowledge that he is difficult to read" (West & Turner, 2007). Marie Hochmuth Nichols also stated:

> Burke is difficult and often confusing. He cannot be understood by casual reading of his various volumes. In part the difficulty arises from the numerous vocabularies he employs. His words in isolation are usually simple enough, but he often uses them in new contexts. To read one of his volumes independently, without regard to the chronology of publication, makes the problem of comprehension even more difficult because of the specialized meaning attached to various words and phrases. (Hochmuth, 1963)

A second noteworthy issue with Burke's work is that it has been labeled the “problem of agency”, and the issue is “figuring out a way to account for and interpret human reaction due to situations and past experience” (Conrad & Macom, 1995). When these added elements are taken into consideration “it becomes vague as to if a choice was voluntary or determined, as an crucial element of agency is choice” (Conrad & Macom, 1995). Burke was aware of this issue and dedicated some of his career trying to build a stronger and more accurate definition of agency, action and motion.

A third issue with Burke's work is the debate on whether “dramatism is epistemological and metaphorical, or that dramatism is ontological and literal” (Rountree, 2010). This issue was first debated at the Eastern Communication Association conference, but failed to settle the issue. There is “not as yet an answer to this issue, as Burke has stated that his work is not merely metaphorical, but is instead a literal way of speaking about the human condition” (Rountree, 2010). Although Burke has claimed his work is ontological and defined dramatism as literal: "the Dramatistic perspective is not a metaphor.... I claim that the propositions `things move, persons act,' is literal" (Thayer, 1967). There is still an ongoing debate on the matter.

Summary of Points

This review of literature has provided information about Kenneth Burke and his theory of Dramatism. A background of Kenneth Burke's theory was established and described before elaborating on the concept of Dramatism and its elements. The pentad was explained and examples were provided that showed how the pentad can define various elements of an event. Then the literature elaborated on the concept of ratios and how the elements of the pentad can relate to each other. After that the literature discussed the issue of whether Burke's theory should include a sixth element, thus making it a hexad. Attitude is the element that some suggest should have been included in his pentad. An evaluation of this theory was then conducted and this demonstrated that Dramatism is in fact a powerful tool for the analysis of artifacts.

The debate of ludology versus narratology was also covered. The literature found that the narratology stance is that video games tell stories similar to traditional media forms such as the novel, drama, or film. The ludology stance would like to see video games treated as a unique medium with its characteristics that includes but is not limited to storytelling. The purpose of this debate is that it shows that video games can be both a medium for storytelling and that they can deliver the content of the stories in a rather unique and unconventional way.

The literature then went on to discuss some previous applications of Burke's pentad to video game subjects. The major topics that the literature included were the scene within the game, scene to act ratio, the scene to agent ratio, agency within-games, agent within-games, the scene to agent ratio in-games, and the agent within-games. These sections provided the guidelines that are necessary for the methodology to be successful when conducting primary research of this paper. The major findings of those sections included the following points.

Shield's observations about the relationship between the scene and game demonstrated that each player will encounter a unique "in-game" experience but at the same time they will encounter elements that are shared with anyone who has played the game. These consistent elements are the foundation of the scene. When the research looked at the scene-to-act ratio, McCall stated that visual in-game elements such as "lighting cue the player acts"; this suggests that video game developers use this manipulation of the scene within a game to help guide the player. Thus we have a direct relationship between the scene / act ratio.

The concept of agent was then reviewed. A clear definition of the agent element is very crucial to the literature and the primary research in this paper will focus on studying what the designers *allow* a user to create, rather than what users *do* create. This angle is based on research provided by Zimmerman and Salen. They have found the following: "It is important, then, to distinguish between what actions take place in the game and outside that game (the actual clicks of the mouse and button inputs of the user)" (Salen, & Zimmerman, 2010).

The scene-to-agent ratio within the game was established by reviewing research conducted by McCall. McCall found that that the art and objects contained in the scenes of a game are influenced by the game's narrative, stating: "Each scene must adhere to the elements of the story— but the player as agent in the scene/agent ratio is determined by the *type* of conflict that arises within the scenes of the story" (McCall, 2008).

Researcher Janet Murray provided the definition for applying agency within games. She described agency in a computer application as "the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices"(Murray, 1997). Although Murray's definition is acceptable, McCall has refined the concept of agency to better fit into the context of the video

game medium. McCall defined “agency in within the game as the player’s use of equipped items, abilities and, if the game allows, manipulation of objects in the game environment”(McCall, 2008).

The subsequent part of the literature review covered the history of video games as a medium. This section provided a detailed timeline on the progression of the technology. Then the history of the *Final Fantasy* series was covered. This literature on the history of video games and Final Fantasy provided a solid understanding of how large the video game industry has become, reaffirming the need for the primary research to be conducted.

The last section of this literature review critiqued the theory of the pentad. This section discussed the challenging nature of Burke’s writing and the problem with agency. The main issue with agency is figuring out a way to account for and interpret human reaction due to situations and past experience.

Burke's theory of dramatism is highly respected in the academic community and is a valuable tool when analyzing and interpreting a communication event. His theory is used frequently by both students and scholars, although it is arguable if dramatism offers a complete solution as issues still exist and debates still occur. In sum, Burke's work has influenced the world of rhetoric but it may not be all encompassing, in the sense that Burke did not finish solving problems with the structure of dramatism, and debate continues. Although Burke is recognized for his concepts and ideas that evolved to the development of dramatism, Burke does not claim credit for the original concept of the Pentad. Burke did however make two changes to Aristotle's six poetic elements: he combined the dialogue and rhythm elements into one element he called agency and then renamed the elements into what we know today as the Pentad (Boje,

2011). The primary research in this paper will try to answer the research question of how video games argue with the player. To find an answer to this question the primary research will focus on applying the Pentad to *Final Fantasy XIV:A Realm Reborn*.

Methodology

It is the goal of this paper to explore the ways that digital games create an argument between the system and the player. This research explores the relationship between the interaction with the player and the game in an effort to find out how games create a purposeful, symbolic communication. This Player/System interaction can be examined via the same techniques and methodologies of more traditional forms of symbolic communication. The basis for this assumption lies in several key theories of game design and criticism. While the former half of this assumption has gained widespread support among academic video game scholars, it is the latter that deserves a more careful descriptive analysis. In Rules of Play, Salen and Zimmerman (2010) outline three schemas for the study of digital games: as rules, as play, or as culture:

RULES = the organization of the designed systemPLAY = the human experience of that system

CULTURE = the larger contexts engaged with and inhabited by the system

To discuss games as sets of rules is certainly engaging from a perspective that seeks to find deep analysis of system mechanics. For the rhetorical critic the most relevant idea is that games are play, or a system as experienced by the user. Salen and Zimmerman note that the schema do not exclude one another, "rather, they are conceptual design tools to help focus our thinking for particular design problems" (2010). For this study, however, Juul's most critical argument is that "in the game design process, the game designer must select which aspects of the fictional world to actually implement in the game rules" (Juul, 2011). This notion is reminiscent of Burke's idea of selective vocabularies – the designer of a game can choose to model parts of the real world, but, because of either technological or rhetorical constraints, must choose which

parts of this world to exclude. Without the gameplay present to describe the strategic and symbolic interrelations of these images they become static and the meaning is significantly diminished. As an examination of rhetoric, then, any analysis of a digital game can begin with the assumption that both game mechanics and the visual, written and audio symbols in the game carry an equal weight. This assumption is based on how the player interacts with the medium. Most games implement visual, written and audio symbols to guide the player. These elements then support how the game mechanics function. This idea is supported by the fact that many games include brief tutorials at the start of the game that allow the player to become accustomed to the rules of the game. These visual, written, audio and mechanical elements combine to build the virtual reality that the player engages in.

To build a foundation for the power of dramatism to create new theoretical meaning in the study of the rhetoric of digital games, we begin by examining how the vocabulary of the pentad is already present in existing ideas about the medium. Four steps that are needed for an successful pentadic analysis; Foss stated that the four steps of approaching an artifact for pentadic analysis are: "(1) selecting an artifact; (2) selecting a unit of analysis; (3) analyzing the artifact; and (4) writing the critical essay" (Foss, 1996).

The artifact for this study is a digital game titled *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn (FFXIV:ARR)* released in 2013 by Square Enix. In this game the player serves as the hero sent on a quest to save the world from invasion and to overcome evil. This game is categorized as a Massively Multiplayer Online Japanese Role Playing Game (MMOJRPG) similar in scope to the *World of Warcraft* game but with more emphasis on storytelling. As the game deals in depth with motifs such as teamwork, social interactions and a vibrant user-generated economy, the current

study's research question emerges as the following: How do video game designers create arguments that challenge the player? Whether or not *FFXIV:ARR* itself actually creates a serious argument is secondary; the primary academic relevance of this research question is that game design decisions that focus around player interaction are able to be analyzed by the rhetorical critic through dramatistic analysis.

Because this artifact will be looked at from the Burkean perspective, the first step in the descriptive analysis will be to identify all of the elements of the pentad—both those shared by the user and the in-game elements that interact with the player. These elements will be identified both from symbolic elements such as in-game menus, graphics, sounds, etc. as well as user-generated experiences such as gameplay mechanics, player choices, and various outcomes within the game. To accomplish this descriptive analysis an ethnographic approach is required. According to Harris and Johnson, "Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork" (Harris & Johnson, 2000). Therefore, the main method for conducting this primary research requires the researcher to actively engage and participate in the virtual world of *FFXIV:ARR.* To gain a solid understanding of the game and all of its elements, the researcher will spend over 200 hours experiencing the game firsthand. During this time the researcher will participate in all the various elements that work together to build the virtual world of *FFXIV:ARR.* Some of the elements that will be taken into account include the following: how the avatars are created, how the battle system works, how the questing in the game works, the class and job systems, visual style and choice of the producers, in-game communication between players, and how the economy in the game functions. From

this in-depth interaction with the artifact, the elements and ratios of the pentad should become clear.

After these elements are considered deeply, the next step is to look for predominant ratios that can be identified. The examination of ratios will ultimately lead to a discovery that highlights which elements and ratios are predominant. This should lead to some sort of conclusions about how the game or "world" is presented by the producers. This presentation should create some type of interaction that includes an argument between system and player. This argument is necessary in video games as a medium to create a fulfilling experience for the player. The act of disassembling the game to explore its ratios becomes essential for this research.

Critical Versus Quantitative and Qualitative

In chapter two, it has been demonstrated that most of the research in the field of dramatism and video games has been largely qualitative. Qualitative research involves ethnographic methods of data collection, such as the researcher immersing him/herself in the culture or group under examination and asking broad, open-ended questions, all while remaining an "unmoved," "neutral observer" (Bruyn, 1966). Qualitative analyses of virtual reality include Boellstorff's (2008) examination of Second Life in which he immersed himself in the virtual world as a way to understand the experience of being a frequent, actively engaged user of Second Life.

While both the quantitative and qualitative methods of research are useful in studying video games and virtual reality, this examination of video games utilizes the critical method of

research. At its most basic, critical research is a process of evaluating the "specific drives, desires, and motivations" (Brock, Scott, & Chesebro, 1990) behind human actions. The criticism stems from the idea that the more information available about a particular human venture or endeavor, the "more likely [one is] to feel the critical impulse" (Brock, Scott, & Chesebro, 1990). Criticism, Brock et al. note, is more substantial than a mere "statement of taste or preference" and must provide the reasoning and explanation behind the judgment; it must also be "directed towards some social objective or end" in that it seeks to alter the status quo perception about some sort of human enterprise" (Brock, Scott, & Chesebro, 1990). This thesis is critical in that it provides significant explanation in its evaluation of dramatism as applied to the *FFXIV:ARR*.

The ratios between the dramatistic terms are very important to the pentad because they demonstrate the relationships between each of the terms. The literature review discussed how Burke has likened the idea of the ratios to the five fingers: all five are separate and individually important, but they all "merge into unity" (Brock, 1990, p. 190). In addition to employing the whole of Burke's pentad to demonstrate storytelling and rhetoric in video games, this thesis, with its focus on the dimensions that contribute to the formation of a reality, would, in Burkean terms, be described as an agent-agency relationship in that it focuses on the people who inhabit the virtual world (agent) and the means through which they interact with said virtual reality (agency).

Heuristics

With rationalization of the dramatistic analysis of video games in mind, a brief note on heuristics is needed. A heuristic is known as a "discovery aid" used to help a researcher "identify a problem" and "make sensible choices" (De Jong & Van Der Geest, 2000) about possible solutions. Heuristics are essentially paradigms previously defined by others that a researcher then uses to qualify an observation, and they play an important role in this thesis. When looking at the individual elements that make up the framework for the game to determine what kind of dramatizing effect it has, established paradigms are used as a guide or reference.

Heuristics In Action

The examples of previously defined paradigms that will be used includes McCall's definition of "agency within the game is seen as the player's use of equipped items, abilities and, if the game allows, manipulation of objects in the game environment" (McCall, 2008). Also McCall found that that the art and objects contained in the scenes of a game are influenced by the game's narrative: "Each scene must adhere to the elements of the story— but the player as agent in the scene/agent ratio is determined by the *type* of conflict that arises within the scenes of the story" (McCall, 2008). The last finding by McCall that will be used is his notion that the scene-to-act ratio includes visual in-game elements such as lighting "cue the player acts" (McCall, 2008). This suggests that video game developers use this manipulation of the scene within a game to help guide the player. Thus, we have a direct relationship between the scene / act ratio.

Shields' (2009) observation on the relationship between the scene and game are also included in these established paradigms. Shields stated that each player will encounter a unique

in-game experience but at the same time will encounter elements that are shared with anyone who has played the game. These consistent elements are the foundation of the scene.

Heuristics play an even larger role in this thesis since the notion of Burkean dramatism and the pentad could also be viewed as a heuristic. Sifting through the myriad of in-game elements, quests, mini games, dungeons, boss battles and other in-game elements can be quite daunting, and thus, much in the way Burke's pentad of dramatism was employed in chapter two to characterize the literature surrounding virtual reality, the pentad is also utilized in the descriptive analysis of *FFXIV:ARR*. Each of the five pentadic terms (agent, act, scene, agency, and purpose*)* is demonstrated to be found within the content created by the game developers. The pentad is used as a lens with which to view the whole of *FFXIV:ARR* and is, therefore, a heuristic.

The different research methods employed in this thesis have been established and rationalized, as well as the specific object of study for the descriptive analysis. The virtual world of *Final Fantasy* clearly exhibits the three dimensions of reality that are discussed in this thesis: people, technology, and storytelling. This virtual world currently has millions of users utilizing various technologies to construct an overall, cohesive experience for the player, and various dramatistic concepts are readily observable. In the following chapter, the results of the dramatistic descriptive analysis are reviewed and discussed.

Terminology References

The literature review demonstrated that the *Final Fantasy* series has a long and rich history, so it becomes necessary to define many of the key terms used between players to

describe the in-game experience. The creation of game-specific vocabulary that is used between players allows them to label and define the virtual world that they are experiencing. These terms might hold roots that originate from our collective general culture but these terms evolved to become new and specific for this in-game application. One example would be the term “boss”. In American culture a boss is commonly known as someone who holds authority, while in the game the context changes to mean a large and difficult monster one must defeat. This following list or terms will help to clarify any ambiguity that might arise when the researcher is describing the game experience and its elements.

Aeathernet Points – These are teleportation devices that will allow you to port around town without running from place to place.

Auction House – An in-game market place where players buy and sell items and weapons to one an others. This feature supports and encourages the in-game economy and player interaction.

Alternative Classes – In *FFXIV:ARR* you can level more than 1 class on the same character. This is called Alternative Classes. (BETTER STATE)

Boss – A large monster the player is required to fight in order to progress to the next level. These battles are completed in parties.

Chocobo – The Chocobo is a rideable mount that becomes **able** at level 21/22. A player can ride them around the world and teach them to fight alongside the player.

Class Guild – Class Guilds are where the player will get your quests related to his class or to obtain an alternative Class. These act as hubs to progress through the story.

Class Quest – Quests specifically relate to the player's current class.

Classes – The type of character the player chose, i.e. Archer, Conjurer, Lancer , Arcanist, Marauder, Gladiator, Pugilist and Thaumaturge.

DPS – Damage Per Second. Also a term used to describe classes whose main role is to deal damage to the enemy.

Duty Finder – Duty Finder is an alternative way of saying group matching. If the player can't find a group of people to join, the player can queue up for the Duty Finder and it will find them a party of players from across all servers.

End Game Content – Refers to the things the player can do when they reach maximum level for their class or job.

***F.A.T.E* –** Fully Active Time Events. F.A.T.E. events are large-scale battles that take place in real time. They can start at anytime and anywhere on the map. They can also be started by NPC's (Non-player Characters).

Gil – The name for the most common currency used in the game.

***Grand Companies* –** Grand companies are army-like factions associated with the 3 different starting areas. There are 3 Grand Companies, one for each starting area. Later in the game the player can join one of the Grand Companies and earn points (seals) to buy unique items from their Grand Company.

***Grinding* –** Grinding is where you repetitively kill monsters, gather materials or craft items.

***Hunting Logs* –** A log obtained after your first level 5 class quest requiring you to kill a certain number of particular types of monsters. Completing an entry grants bonus experience points.

***Ifrit* –** A particularly strong Boss that every player encounters in the level 20 dungeon. This fight is a crucial point in the game that every player must face in order to continue the story.

***Jobs* –** Each job requires its primary class to be level 30 and the its secondary class to be level 15 before being unlocked through a quest. The job grants new abilities to increase the

potential of the primary class, allowing the player to fulfill a particular role in group content. Jobs are designed for, though not restricted to, group play where each person has a role to fulfill.

Level – A number from 1 - 50 that is used to show a player's progression. Levels are increased by gaining experience. When new levels are acquired the player's character becomes more powerful by learning new skills and abilities.

Levequests – Levequests are tasks that may be obtained though-out the world. Some examples include: escorting someone safely through a dangerous zone and kill quests. They give higher XP and Gil than normal quests. The player will obtain a certain number of allowances or tokens if you will, for Levequests daily.

Main Scenario – This are found in many games known as Campaigns. These are your main quest lines. This usually provides the baseline for the Lore of the game.

Mob – Also known as trash, these are small monsters or any normal monster you have to fight.

NPC – NPC's (Non Player Characters) are server-operated characters, not players. They provide the quests, the lore, and the content of the game.

Party– A group of players who are all on the same mission or quest. These parties can include groups of 4, 8, 12 or 24 players.

Rank Up – When players join a Grand Company, they are given an entry level rank, similar to an army rank. You are able to improve your rank by doing certain quests, Company Hunting Logs and obtaining Seals.

Seals – A special currency used to buy items from the Grand Company.

Unlocking – Opening up new content within the game. Some classes unlock specific in-game jobs. Some quests unlock endgame content and other key features of the game.

XP – Experience Points. Also known as EXP. These are the points earned by completing tasks, and killing enemies. These points are used to progress players to higher levels.

Conclusion

Based on the literature review, Burke's methodology of pentadic analysis or dramatism serves as a functional model for the analysis of *FFXIV:ARR*. One of the main reasons that the pentad acts as an appropriate method to conduct this descriptive analysis is that the game makes an attempt to model some aspect of the real world –a form of digital reflection that can be analyzed in the same way as a linguistic vocabulary. Foss notes: “Pentadic criticism provides a means to understand the way in which a rhetor encompasses a situation through rhetoric –

through the selection and highlighting of particular terms – it is particularly useful for answering questions about rhetors'...attempts to structure audiences' perceptions of situations" (Foss, 2009).

Digital games can present a "situation" as an interactive world the user may participate in. In *FFXIV:ARR* the player is given just such a situation and must manage the dramatic, economic, social elements that are presented. The research will attempt to draw conclusions about the implications of design choice on both "structuring of audience perception" and the creation of arguments between the player and the games systems.

ANALYSIS

Video games create virtual worlds that create drama by confronting the players with various choices and the results of their actions are predetermined through the games rules. According to game scholars who stress the strong influence of the game rules and procedures, players voluntarily submit to the game rules in order to overcome the argument that the game presents. In other words, they are "being persuaded to think within the constraints of the game" (McAllister, 2004). Based on this observation, the interactions between the player and the game becomes highly significant because video games now have the ability captured and hold the player's attention. This interaction between the machine and the player is unique because it is creating an active two-way dialogue that requires the combinations of visual, textual and audio elements in order to function properly. This paper will attempt to answer the following question: how are massively multiplayer online video games structured to create arguments between the game and the player? In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke describes in great detail each of the five components of the Pentad. These elements include the act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (Burke, 1945). More importantly, each element of the pentad has a direct effect on other elements of the pentad, Burke insists that an investigation of one term cannot be conducted properly without a corresponding investigation of the other terms. The research that has been conducted in this chapter helps to build a grammar of MMORPG video games. The five elements of the pentad have been used analyze *FFXIV:ARR,* each one designated by its own section. After the five elements of the pentad have been applied to the artifact this chapter will then provide a detailed diagram that outlines the player's interaction with the virtual world and how the various parts of the game function. This diagram will provide insight that will later be used during the

descriptive analysis of the key ratios found within the game. By defining these ratios this research demonstrates that MMORPGs use these relationships to create the arguments between the system and the player.

To accomplish the research that was necessary to write this chapter, the researcher spent over 200 hours playing *FFXIV:ARR*. The avatar the researcher assumed was known as Midnight Voodoo and this avatar could be found on the games Balmung server. From experiencing the virtual world firsthand and devoting a substantially large amount of time to the game, the researcher was able to obtain three level 50 classes that included Armorsmith, Blacksmith and Goldsmith, as well as a level 18 Carpenter. The research also spent time completing the main story and gained a full understanding of how the combat system in this game functions. The researcher was able to obtain a level 42 Marauder, level 15 Gladiator, level 15 Archer and a level 30 Thaumaturge. The last area the researcher explored was the disciples of land branch of the game, and was able to obtain a level 30 as a Miner. The majority of the research provided in the paper comes directly from the researcher's firsthand accounts and his ethnographic experience with the virtual world of *FFXIV:ARR.* It should be noted that within this chapter a number of visual aids are used. These aids are in the form of are screen captures taken directly the game and are covered by the Materials Usage License which is included in the appendix.

The Act Within *FFXIV:ARR*

For this descriptive analysis, it is interesting to focus on the world that game developers have created in order to define this particular virtual experience, also known as the act. According to Burke, the act is defined as what takes place. By describing the whole game as an

act, this allows for the combination of elements from all different layers of the pentad that influence the game experience. The player acts as both audience and actor within the game narrative. Because the player is considered an actor within the game of *FFXIV:ARR,* he or she is given a set of options that allow them to freely craft their own unique in-game experience. Some of the elements that the player will encounter and engage in includes the main quests, side quests, player verses player battles, boss fights, F.A.T.E battles, crafting, gathering and selling items on the real time market during gameplay. This idea that the whole game is the act can be supported by the fact that *FF XIV:ARR* is an open world or sand box game. According to Cory Janssen the term sand box game is "a style of game in which minimal character limitations are placed on the gamer, allowing the gamer to roam and change a virtual world at will" (Janssen, 2014). In contrast to a progression-style game such as *The Super Mario Brothers*, a sandbox game encourages and requires the player to explore the world and allows a player to select various tasks at will. Instead of featuring segmented areas or numbered levels, a sandbox game usually occurs in a "world" to which the gamer has full access from start to finish. Massive multiplayer online role-playing games like *FFXIV:ARR* include a mixture of sandbox and progression gaming. The progression aspects of the game include the leveling systems. Here the player completes tasks or quests and gains EXP as a reward. After the player earns enough EXP, he or she levels up. With each level the player's avatar learns new skills, acquires more magic, stamina and health points. This game allows the player's avatars to max out at level 50 for each class and job in the game.

This progression and sandbox-style hybrid type of game effectively merges the acts of experiencing the different progression and story elements within the game into a seamless

experience. The best part about this integration between the two game types is that no matter what order the player chooses to encounters these elements they will always be available for them to experience.

An example of this open world freedom is seen when the player is given the option to learn and pursue any of the game's crafting skills. The eight disciples of hand offer the players a chance to experience subclasses within the game. These subclasses that are currently available include Carpenter, Blacksmith, Armorer, Goldsmith, Leatherworker, Weaver, Alchemist and Culinarian. A player has the choice to join any, all, or none of these crafting classes. A player who joins the Blacksmith Guild, for example, will encounter specific quests that pertain to the subclass as well as learn a how to craft items that are specific to that class. This freedom of choice helps to sculpt the player's unique in-game experience.

The Scene Within *FFXIV:ARR*

In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke defines scene as: "The background of the act, the situation in which it occurred" (Burke, 1945). Consistent with his comparison of dramatism and stage drama, Burke explained: "'Scene contains the act' and that if we consider the actors in stage drama agents, we can say that 'scene contains agents' as well" (Burke, 1945). Burke noted the motivational power of scene when he stated: "From the motivational point of view, there is implicit in the quality of a scene the quality of the action that is to take place within it" (Burke, 1945).

According to Burke, the scene is used as a 'container' or the place where the actions of the act occur. This includes both physical location and the contextual

situation, occasion, and events. In this instance the scene is the virtual world that the game developers created. The scenes in *FFXIV: ARR* are by far the most complex of any scenes in the Final Fantasy series, and among some of the most complex scenes in any video game to date. This is due to the massive virtual world that has been developed by the game designers. One powerful aspect of the scene is that if it changes, it also changes everything else within the pentad. The scene of *FFXIV: ARR* is set in a fantasy world much like Tolkien's Middle Earth and this fantasy world is supported the rich lore found within the game.

The prologue to this begins with the telling of a story about the Guardian Gods and Goddesses known as the "Twelve," who watch over the city-states of the realm of Eorzea. These three main city-states are known as the seafaring nation Limsa Lominsa in the La Noscea Region, and the desert nation of Ul'Dah in Thanalan and Gridania, tucked away in the Black Shroud. According to the narrative, these nations have a long history of betrayal between each other as they waged bloody wars over territory and even tried to impose uncompromising interpretations of their patron God's wills. The fate of Eorzea would soon change though; fifteen years prior a new threat appeared from the East: the mighty Garlean Empire. With its vast fleets of airships and powerful warriors who wield mighty weapons they were able to crush the most powerful of the six known Eorzean states. This fallen state was known as Ala Mhigo whose castles were located out in the deserts of Thanalan. Galvanized by the fear of a common enemy, the remaining city-states set out to form a clandestine alliance; however, the imperial invasion never materialized and the realm slipped into an uneasy calm.

As the various city-states continued to amass armies that included a growing number of mercenaries and adventurers who found themselves without employment. The city-states were subsequently concerned about the rise in the number of gangs who were resorting to less honest means of survival. The city-states gathered together to form a network of guilds. These guilds provided the adventurers with a chance to utilize their specific talents for the benefits of themselves and others. This is when the age of the adventure had begun.

The lore provided in this game is very detailed and the plots and subplots all interconnect. The players of this game not only slay beasts but they do so because the story leads them to believe that their actions are directly influencing the game's plot. The ability to capture the player's imagination and surround them with this rich universe that is filled with detailed stories is why the scene of the game is so important.

Another key element that sets the scene for *FFXIV:ARR* are the inclusion of Primals. Primals have been a staple of the Final Fantasy series and they have appeared in almost all of the titles since the series' inception. The primals that are found in this game are Bahamut, Odin, Ifrit, Garuda, Ramuh, Shiva, Titan and Leviathan. These primals play a large role in the development of the story, and players are required to battle them to progress through the game. Primals are worshipped by the beastmen tribes, with each tribe having its own primal. The beastmen tribes are responsible for calling them down to Eorzea and the general population of the world fears them and perceives them as a threat to their cities. Within the game these primals do not die no matter how many times they are defeated. The player will fight primals to contain their threat, to progress in the main quests line, and to reap rewards in the form of rare weapons and armor.

FFXIV:ARR goes into great detail about the history and importance of the presence of these primals within the game. The primals are featured in the main boss battles during the game.

For example Ifrit is the Primal of the Amal'jaa beastmen. He is known as the primal of fire and is found within the deserts of Thanalan. He also squares off with players in boss battle during two different quests. The first quest Ifrit is encountered in is *It Kills with Fire*. This quest is designed for a group of 4 players near level 25 and the second quest the player must fight this boss is *Ifrit Bleeds, We Can Kill It*. This quest is designed for a group of 8 players level 50 and above. If the game designers were to remove these well known primal boss battles from *FFXIV:ARR,* they would be greatly

changing the meaning and purpose of the game. Hence, these primal beasts are the backbone of the scene found within this game.

The Agent Within *FFXIV:ARR*

The agent is loosely defined as the person or group of people who perform the act. They are the characters in the story or the people who enact the meaning during an event. However, this paper chooses to consider the roles of organizations as agents. In fact, the most significant and complex objects within Final Fantasy are agents. The two main agents this research focused on were: 1) the way in which the game allows the player to create a unique avatar, and 2) the role of the auction house, which also acts as an agent. The auction house is an in-game organization that supports the game's trade and economy.

Any player who chooses to partake in this online MMORPG will be required to build an avatar. This avatar provides the human player with a direct connection to this virtual world. The appearance of this avatar is also important because every other player's in the world will see and interact with this avatar. Because the avatar acts as the virtual representation of the player in the game, the creators have included a very detailed character creation process. To illustrate the importance of this feature, the steps of the character creation process are listed below, followed by some examples of other players' avatars.

The first thing the player will do during the character creation is chose a race and gender. There are five different races, and each one has a male and female option. The races are: Hyur,

Elezen, Lalafell, Miqo'te & Roegadyn. During this part of the game, the player can preview what the male and female versions of each race looks like.

The next section of character creation is all about customizing the overall aesthetics of the player's avatar. Depending on what race the player selects there are many different features that he can alter including: height, skin color, hairstyle, hair color, face, jaw shape and size, eye shape, iris size, eye color, eyebrows, nose shape, mouth shape, lip color, facial features, tattoos, tattoo colors, face paint, face paint color and the sound of the player's voice.

The game provides the player countless combinations that allow him or her to make their character unique compared to other avatars in the game. One thing that *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* offers for customization that most other MMOs don't is the voice. This setting allows you to select from a range of different grunts, cheers, and disapproval sounds that your character will make while in-game.

The next thing the players are asked to do is to pick which class they want their character to play. This is a hugely important decision, allowing the player to know the different abilities, styles, and roles that each class is designed for before making his or her choice. The available classes to choose from during character creation include the Disciplines of War classes and Disciplines of Magic classes. The Disciplines of War classes are primarily made for standard combat and include the Gladiator, Pugilist, Marauder, Lancer and Archer classes. The Disciplines of Magic category includes the Conjurer, Thaumaturge and Arcanist classes. *FFXIV: ARR* offers a unique opportunity for players to switch classes at will once they reach a specific point in the plot. This ability to switch classes affords the players a chance to experience all of the various quests and play styles that these different classes offer.

The last part of the *FFXIV:ARR* character creation process involves confirming the details that the player has chosen in previous sections, selecting a server to play on and both a forename and surname for the character. Once they have completed this section they are finally ready to get started with the game. Below are two images that showcase the various classes and the various races found in the game. The second image illustrates some of the various classes. From left to right the classes found here are Archer, Lancer, Marauder, Knight, Conjurer and Black Mage.

The In-Game Economy

The economy in *FFXIV:ARR* also acts as an agent. This idea is demonstrated when the players of this game are required to buy or craft better weapons, armor and consumables to progress in the game. By failing to continuously upgrade gear every few levels the player will not be able to defeat more difficult monsters and bosses, causing them to fail at making new progress in the game. To overcome this obstacle the player must rely on the Auction House or the game's virtual market board to buy these improved weapons and armor. This market functions in real time and works very much the same as the real-world economy. Every item in *FFXIV:ARR* is made from various resources that can be found somewhere within the virtual world. Players can learn various skill to create goods, weapons and armor and then they set the price for these items they craft. If the players identify an item that they wish to purchase, they can do so directly from this auction house and the item and Gil are instantly exchanged.

The following example will provide a more detailed description about how the crafting system works. Let's say a level 2 Blacksmith wants to craft a Bronze Dagger, and creating this item it will require the following: 1 Fire Shard, 1 Earth Shard, 1 Bronze ingot, 1 Maple Lumber and 1 Bone Chip. Once he has obtained these items he will be able to craft the item. When an object such as a Dagger is crafted by the Blacksmith, it consumes resources that are now eliminated because they are tied up with its creation. However, once a player equips and uses any item such as this Bronze Dagger, the item becomes bound to that character. The binding of items results in the fact that no other players can use or equip these items. This example of the Bronze Dagger shows how various items are combined to create one item that can only be used by one player. The issue with this type of game design that binds items to players is that it clearly

eliminates goods from the market. The economy suffers because sometimes the cost of the raw materials used to create the item is much greater then the value of the newly crafted item. This online auction house market also suffers from the same effects as our real-world economy with issues like supply and demand. In theory the in-game economy has an advantage over our reality because the developers can control the amount of Gil, how it is obtained and set prices for NCP merchants who sell very low-level items.

The goal of obtaining a perfect economic balance in any MMO game has yet to be achieved. *FFXIV:ARR* provides a classic example of the challenges game designers face. These issues are called Gil sinks and Gil fountains. Sinks and fountains are game design terms for systems or features that create and destroy things in the game (Simpson, 1999). Gil sinks are features of the game that destroy the game's currency and Gil fountains are features that inject currency back into the game's economy. Every time a player earns Gil other than as a direct result from quest completion, they are simply transferring part of the world's total wealth from another player to themselves. In fact, Gil is not being created by this process, it's being destroyed. Since most of these transactions are taking place via the real time Auction House that charges a percentage fee each time an item is bought or sold, this results in the irreversible elimination of Gil. This is just one of the many Gil sinks found throughout the design of this in-game economy. These sorts of sinks are common in just about any MMO and the game designers put in various money sinks in order to curb inflation. But in the case of this game, which relies on the players earning the majority of income directly from quest rewards, the total wealth on any particular server will only shrink over time in proportion to the state of quest completion in the game.

In order to keep the economy healthy in this current state players would need to constantly create new characters and level them up to create new Gil. The main issue with this is that it creates a direct opposition to one of the game's main selling points: the ability to change classes at will and experience every aspect of the game with just one character. The obvious solution would be to add more Gil fountains to the game; however, some players have devised a profitable workaround to this sink and fountain issue. There are a number of websites like www.GoldCEO.com that allow players to buy large amounts of Gil with real world currency. The practice of buying Gil violates the ToS agreement of Square and *FFXIV:ARR.* For example a player wanted to buy 500,000 Gil from GoldCEO.com it would cost $19.68 USD or they could buy 5,000,000 Gil for $196.81 USD. The Gil gets directly delivered to your character via the in-game mail system. So how do these companies make so much Gil while the average player can barely afford a new sword? The answer to this question is that *FFXIV:ARR* can also be run on a PC. These companies like GoldCEO create player accounts and implement an automation code for the computer to follow. This code makes the avatar that they use and they act as a robot that farms the in-game resources 24 hours a day, nonstop. The owners of these accounts then sell these items that are normally only worth one Gil to the NPC merchants and collect millions in return. Because the in-game economy plays such a huge role it is in the best interests of the developers to implement a system that eliminates this gold farming issue. This gold farming issue can also be used as an example of things future games developers should take into consideration.

So why does the economy fall under the category of agent? As demonstrated above, a player's primary source of income will come from selling items on the market. This is because

the game only offers a finite number of quests that reward the player with Gil. So once the player completes all of these quests he or she will be forced to use the auction house as way to gain income. The online market acts like an agent because like the real world stock market it is always in constant motion and can greatly affect how the player interacts with the game.

The Agency of *FFXIV:ARR*

Agency is what the player use to perform the act. *FFXIV:ARR* offers a few variations on what the proper agency could include. From a technological standpoint the agency would include the hardware and software used for the game to run. While that example of agency is correct, the definition of agency could also include what tools are used for the player to succeed within the game's virtual environment. This section will cover both variations of this idea of agency.

The technology that is used for players to play the game clearly falls within the definition of what agency is. *FFXIV:ARR* is a video game based in virtual reality that is hosted on the Internet. To access this game, the player must buy or download a copy of the game for $39.99 ("Final Fantasy XIV." n.d.). The agency that each player experiences is almost identical due to the fact that each player will need very similar equipment to access the game. The required equipment includes the PlayStation 3 or PlayStation 4 gaming consoles or a PC with a monitor or television to view the content. Each console or PC will also need access to a high-speed Internet connection. Each player will also need to have a Square gaming account that is in good standing. To keep one's avatar active on the Square server, the player is required to pay a "monthly subscription fee of $12.99" ("Final Fantasy XIV." n.d.). This concept of the technology acting as agency does not offer much insight into the actual gameplay experience that is presented to the

player. The following idea of the player's avatar serving as the agency offers greater insight into the world of *FFXIV:ARR*.

The Agency and Player Experience

McCall defined agency as: ". . . within the game as the player's use of equipped items, abilities and, if the game allows, manipulation of objects in the game environment" (McCall, 2008). By this definition the player's avatar is also considered an element of agency. Without this avatar the player is unable to experience this game and in a way this avatar acts as an extension of the player. One of the things that complicates the Final Fantasy MMO relative to its competitors is the single character concept developed for this game. In most MMO's, players will have multiple characters, each bound to a single class such as Archer, Warrior or Mage. This single character structure determines that this character has a defined leveling and skill path for the entire game. *FFXIV:ARR* MMORPG focuses solely on the player's identity. Players will most often choose to play a single character that has the ability to learn and occupy every role. This includes the ability to change classes at any point in the game, learning crafting or gathering skills or focusing on learning job specific skills. This means the same character returns to the same leveling content multiple times. *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn* functions by creating specific quest hubs. Once a quest has been completed it cannot be reactivated. *FFXIV:ARR* gets around this in a couple of different ways. Through use of multiple leveling systems and a variety of starting hubs, the player will have lots of content to level any or all of the classes offered in the game.

Leveling paths are the various ways a player can gain EXP in *FFXIV:ARR*. These paths generally include the main storyline, quest hubs, gaining EXP from completing Dungeons and F.A.T.E. grinding. Because these elements are the most critical for progression in the game they will be overviewed in detail.

Storyline quests also include the main story line that players get to experience only one time. Players are also given class specific quests to complete. The main story unlocks most of the content in the game, while the class quests unlock special abilities, the job system, as well as granting some basic leveled gear on completion. The storyline quests are one of the main reasons that players enjoy the Final Fantasy games as they offer such a rich and detailed story that is full of lore and fantasy.

The quest hubs are, like most modern MMOs, the traditional “one and done” system. During the player’s first time into a new city or village, he or she will find that there are a number of general fetch quests or other various side quests. These types of quests can only be completed once. While most of these quests are considered side quests and do not affect the main story line, they can open up other quests or provide the player with a rare weapon, armor or item.

Each class has a personal hunting and completion logs and the player is rewarded each time he initially complete an activity in the log. The adventuring, gathering and crafting classes all offer a specific type of log. For adventuring classes, this is the hunting log. Each class hunting log gives the player a list of creatures to kill in his leveling tier (1-10, 11-20, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50). The player needs to complete all duties on a page to open up the next page. Each section includes at least one rare creature that may take the player a while to find.

For gathering and crafting classes and the logs are based around discovery. When a harvester finds a new type of item (Iron ore, Bronze ore, Fire Shard, etc.) or when a crafter successfully completes a first attempt at an item (Bronze Dagger, Iron Ingots, etc.), these items check off a line in the player's journal. Every time the player checks off an item (hunting, gathering or crafting), he is rewarded with an EXP bonus. Completing entire pages yields another bonus. These logs provide a good method to accelerate players' leveling.

The dungeons that are found within *FFXIV:ARR* are the first of the fully repeatable content found within the game. Each dungeon is unlocked once a player reaches a specific level. The advantage of replaying the dungeons is that they grant a good amount of experience points and the player has a chance to obtain rare weapons, armor and other items. Dungeons are timed events where a groups of 4 - 24 players (also known as a party) work together to defeat various enemies. These enemies include large numbers of mobs and very tough bosses. Additionally, if a player in the party is completing the dungeon for their first time, the whole party will be granted an increase in the experience points earned on completion.

One major feature that Square-Enix included in this game is the F.A.T.E. battle. F.A.T.E. stands for Fully Active Time Event. F.A.T.Es are events that spawn semi-randomly throughout the world, allowing all players in a region to participate and once completed they are awarded EXP. The difficulty of F.A.T.E varies substantially by level, player involvement, as well as general difficulty. The amount of EXP awarded in each F.A.T.E is based on the players' involvement in the event. Some F.A.T.E. events allow the players in the game the opportunity to fight the various Primal monsters like Behemoth. The F.A.T.E. events appear in real time on the player's minimap as a pink octagon.

FFXIV:ARR offers the player many methods of gaining experience. The variety of this system is a key component that helps to keep the game feeling fresh. Because *FFXIV:ARR* depends on the fact that players buy a monthly subscription, it is in the best interests of the game's developers to constantly create new content. This content is released as expansion packs that give players who have maxed out a character at level 50 new challenges and dungeons to complete. All of the ways a player can gain experience help to support the idea that the player's avatar is the main source of agency within the game. The game rewards players by providing them with new abilities and skills that allow them to overcome the greater challenges.

The Purpose of *FFXIV:ARR*

Burke includes the concept of purpose in his pentad, which serves to answer the question "why?" For example, one could ask: why do people play video games or why do players choose this game? A possible answer could be that the Final Fantasy series has such a long history that players have become brand loyal and keep playing these games because they enjoy the world the game developers have created. The main issue with trying to answer this question is that every player will provide a different answer. From a research standpoint, this researcher can only offer his personal insights on why he chose to play the game. Put succinctly, I played this game so that I could conduct the necessary research to provide firsthand insights of how the game functions. This was my first experience with a MMO game and these experiences have allowed me to become attached and get lost in this virtual world. I now see Midnight Voodoo, the avatar I used, as an extension of my own personality. By participating in this game I have also formed

meaningful friendships with other players from around the world. These friendships would have never happened without this game.

Burke's research allows for deeper insight into this ambiguous question regarding the purpose of this game. The dramatistic purpose of the game should also align with the strategic purpose of the player. For example, in *FFXIV:ARR*, this concept is fairly straightforward, since a player of a video game should "want" to win the game, and so the player should try and evolve his avatar so that they can overcome any challenges the game presents. These desires clearly coincide with the average player's actions. Perhaps it could even be said that the video game forces the player to fully understand the purpose of the game thus making their in-game actions correlate with a winning strategy. In the opposite case, players will understand and learn that they are making poor in-game decisions when they find obstacles that they cannot overcome and they begin losing the game. One element that this open-world gameplay provides is that if a player's perspective is focused on a different purpose from the start of the game, that is, a different meaning for achieving success, it will result in different style of gameplay. Being able to enter this virtual world without a strictly defined set of objectives to complete helps to create the feeling that the player is having an unique experience. This illustrates that any purpose the player wishes to accomplish will become realized through the course of the game.

The concept of purpose is also fulfilled once the player's realizes that nothing will happen in a digital game unless they take action. Thus, the player's purpose becomes intertwined with the dramatistic purpose in the represented virtual world. For example, in *FFXIV:ARR,* this element of purpose is fairly straightforward, since if a player should want to advance and evolve his avatar within the game, he or she will need to gain EXP. However there are a few key

elements to think about while on the topic of purpose. First, since this is an open world game that comes with relatively few predetermined goals and, to a large extent, what a player choose to do is up solely to the player. It certainly creates discussion for the game's encouragement of individuality. All players have the capacity to act in any way they wish – but at the end of the day most players are striving towards a single goal. The player of the game is not trying to save the world as the story suggests but he or she is trying to win the game that in actuality has no end. Since this measurement of success is also measured by the level that the player's avatar obtains as well as the weapons, armor and items he or she uses, the implications carry even further. The message created is that players in general try to become powerful or rich. This message is further enforced when the game introduces the PVP arena. This arena mimics the Roman Colosseum and allows players the opportunity to fight to see who is more powerful.

The Framework of An MMORPG

The framework that is presented in this section is a way to structure the core and key components of the *Final FantasyXIV:ARR* video game. The largest challenge that is presented when trying to study video games is that they are a nonlinear medium unlike a book or movie. Because of this a chart is needed to describe the various parts and how they function in relation to each other. This framework is even more important because it allows for a clearer understanding of the elements of the pentad that help to form the various ratios. The core components used to describe the virtual reality within this game are as follows:

(1) *Objects*— any element with in the world of a video game that has been assigned a purpose to help the game function.

(2) *Agents*— entities that directly act within the game world to make things happen, and are both player and non-player controlled (NPC).

(3) *Virtual Interaction*— the depiction of agents interacting with and within the world that has been created by the rules of the video game.

(4) *Programmed Response*—a response the game recognizes when specific criteria or objectives are met.

(5) *Scenes*— the completed virtual world of the game created through the integration and combination of objects, agents, virtual interaction, programmed responses, and various audio elements.

By starting the game, programmed responses are initiated. These responses may include the appearance of a main menu or the automatic loading of a animated sequence that begins the narrative. In the case of *FFXIV:ARR*, the first time a player experiences a computer-generated imagery (CGI) event, it is followed by the character creation screen. A player who has already established a player profile will skip these steps. Returning players will automatically be shown a login screen where they are prompted to enter in account information and corresponding password so they can load the world and access their avatar. Once the player's have entered into the game they are presented with a multitude of choices that will shape the interaction they have with this virtual environment.

The following chart will be used to help demonstrate how the various elements of the game function. Detailed descriptions of the various elements that are provided on this chart will be provided. This chart will help future video game researchers understand the flow of information and how the players act in relation to it. This cart will also be used to help reinforce

the ideas that are discussed in the section about ratios within the game. The concepts found within the chart are broken down into three main sections and they include Virtual Interactions, Objects and Programed Responses. Each of these sections are tied together by the player's avatar or the agent found with in the game. These sections are used to complete the cycle or flow of information that is used to help the player progress in the game.

This chart is also used to demonstrate the relationships of these elements and how they break down into the various subdivisions presented within each category. The connections between them are illustrated by the solid lines and arrows on each chart that point to divisions of content, while the dotted lines with hollow arrows trace the input and output of the user data. I also propose that these various elements constitute a completed grammar of the *FFXIV:ARR* video game.

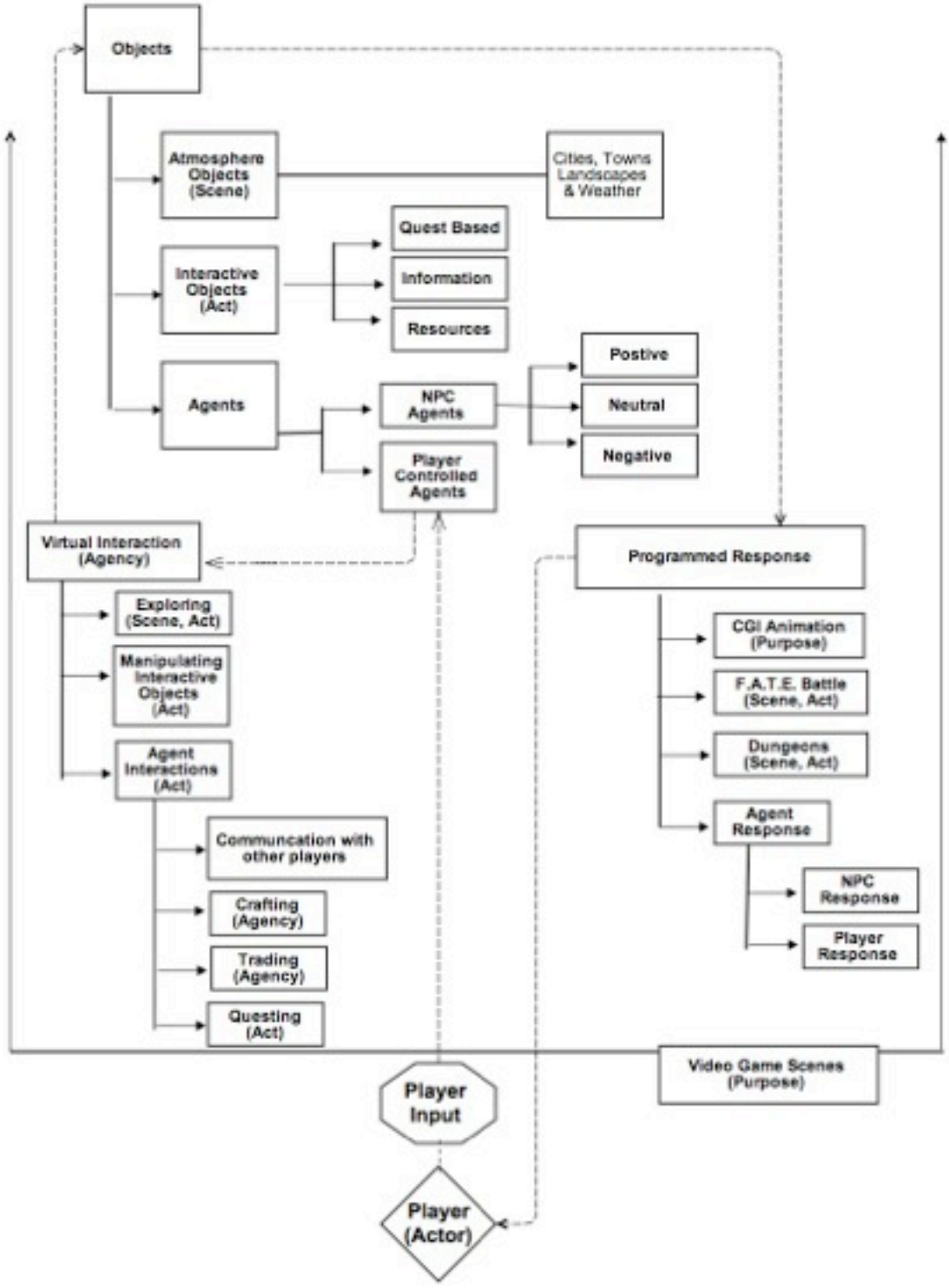

Figure 1. This chart illustrates how the game's grammar or various elements function in correlation with one another.

Virtual Interactions

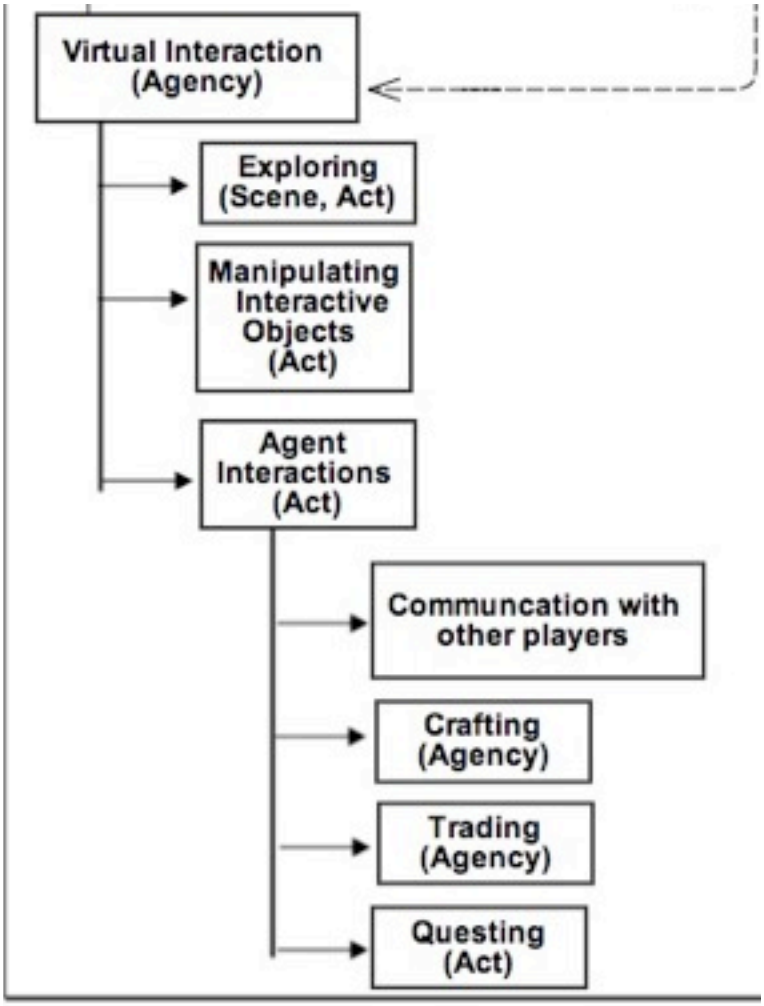

Figure 2. The Virtual Interactions section of the games grammar chart.

The player who is also referred to as the as the agent will encounter various virtual interactions within the game. These include the ability to explore the environments by moving the agent-controlled avatar around the world. The agent will also use other vessels to explore the world, which include Chocobo for faster land travel and Aeathernet Points for when the agent chooses to teleport to a location. The agent will be asked at times to manipulate interactive objects. These objects will be defined and further discussed later on in the chapter. The agent will also be presented with very specific interactions that the game generates based around the play

style and experience level of the player controlled avatar. These interactions include the crafting and trading systems as well as completing the game's quests.

The most complex agent interaction relates to the different ways that players are able to communicate with each other. Players can send shouts that are text-based messages that get sent to all the other players in the area. These shouts are good for when players are looking for other players to join dungeon parties, or if they need to have items repaired. Players can also send each other messages via the MogMail system. This system acts just like a traditional email account. The advantage of this system is that players can also send each other items or Gil via this system. The last way players can communicate with each other is based on the emoticons actions. These are animated actions that cause the player's avatar to display the corresponding emotion. There are 79 various emoticons in this game and they all represent a different feeling or action. For example, a player might convey to other players that he is away from the game by choosing the sleep emoticon. This will force his avatar to lay on the ground as if he were really sleeping.

The next virtual interaction that can take place between agents would be the crafting system. This crafting system is very complex and requires the player to invest a significant amount of time leveling up each of the various crafting classes. The reason this element of the game is included with the virtual interaction section is that the player must complete an interactive minigame to successfully craft an item or object. This minigame interaction presents the player with a challenge and the outcome is decided based on what skills the player uses when trying to craft the item. Each crafting class has 14 abilities that can be used during a synthesis in order to complete the item and if the player chooses the wrong combination of skills then the item will not be crafted.

As explained earlier the economy and trading system found within *FFXIV:ARR* is very complex. This area of the game also falls within this virtual interactions section because it requires that players directly interact to trade, sell and repair items. The players must take into account that the weapons, armor and items they use will slowly deteriorate over time. To repair these items the player must contact and pay other players' avatars that are master craftsmen in order to perform these repairs. For example, if an avatar's gold ring breaks, that player would have to use the shout command and find a Goldsmith to have it repaired, or repair it on their own if he or she is a master smith for that item's specific category.

The last of the interactive agent interactions includes questing. While many of the game's quests can be completed by a single player, some of the larger quests require players to work together in order to complete a task or goal. The two most common examples of this include the F.A.T.E battles and the dungeons found within the game. Overall, these interactive experiences make up the majority of the actions the player will experience. From questing to crafting to just exploring the world, these interactions make up the core gameplay. However, this gameplay would have no meaning if the world were not populated with various objects. These objects will be discussed within the next section.

Objects Found Within *FFXIV:ARR*

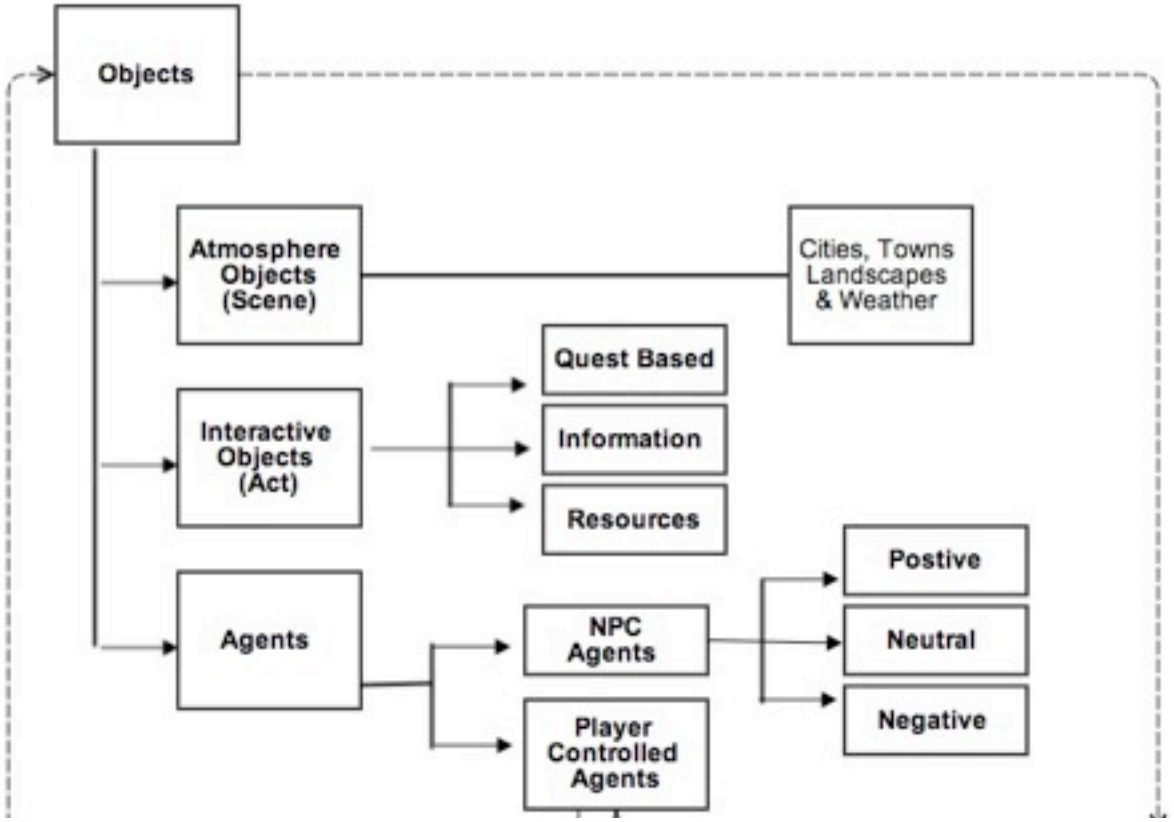

Figure 3. The objects section of the game's grammar chart.

The players of this game are presented with a world that is populated with environments realistically filled with ambient objects. These objects are necessary to demonstrate meaning and help support the story of the game. There are three main categories of objects found within this world and they are as follows; Atmosphere Objects, Interactive Objects and Agents. Each of these categories has been further analyzed to include the supporting categories.

Atmosphere Objects

The first and most noticeable type of objects found in this game are the atmosphere objects. These include all the elements in the game that build the in-game environments. These

environments include the towns, castles, forests, caves, dungeons and anywhere the player can move his avatar. These environments are then populated with a variety of supporting elements that help to add to the level of realism. Some of the supporting elements include finding fish swimming in a pond, rain falling from the sky when the weather turns to cloudy or the art work that hangs on the walls inside the castle. The majority of these objects are static and have no real function related to gameplay, yet nonetheless set the game's tone and atmosphere, helping to bring the world to life.

Interactive Objects.

The next type of object found within the game are interactive objects. There are three examples of this type of object interaction within *FFXIV:ARR*. They include the quest-based interactive objects that are found during the fetch quests, information based objects and interactive resource objects.

The first quest-based object interaction takes place when the player is asked to partake in a fetch quest. This is the most common type of quest that requires the player to navigate the world and to find the object or objects that the NCP requests. To illustrate their particular importance, the game is programmed to make these objects glow. Once the object is found the player must interact with it by pressing the command or action button. This action will in turn trigger an in-game interaction that will fulfill the requirements of the NCP and thus the story or quest can progress.

The second type of interaction objects are the ones that are information-related. These objects include signs, some of the most predominant of which hang outside of the shops and are

located on the world map. These signs act as a quick reference guide for the player to know what merchant is found inside that specific building or what area of they map they are heading to.

Other information objects include key items that can be found within the game. These key items such as recipes unlock new abilities once the player finds them. An example of these types of items are the recipes that are used by the Culinarian. For example, when the Culinarian completes the quest titled “Moving On,” the player is awarded the recipe for pan-fried mahi mahi. This recipe then allows them the ability to combine a list of specific items to craft and create this item.

Another noteworthy information object that is used in this game is the auction house. This element is vital for the success of the crafting and gather systems. The auction house provides vital information to the character, like an idea if the player is in possession of the proper gear for their current level.

The last type of interactive objects are in-game resources. In the virtual world of *FFXIV:ARR,* the player can spend time gathering various resources. Because the in-game economy directly relies on the players gathering resources, these objects are very important. They include water for fishing, forests for harvesting, and wood and rocks for mining ores. These locations in the virtual world are defined by a glowing star that informs the players that they can use them to gather specific resources. They also show up on the player’s map, so that he or she can quickly orientate him or herself.

Agents As Objects

The next type of object includes agents. Perhaps the most frequently discussed and analyzed objects in the video game are those that actively interact within the game world to make things happen. As discussed in the agent chart included in this paper, gamers have already made the terminological distinction between those agents that are controlled by a player in a video game and those agents that are not. The terms already given this distinction are appropriately player-controlled and non-player-controlled (NPC). This section covers the player as well as the NPC agents in the game. There are three types of NPC players found within this game. They are described to be positive NPCs, negative NPCs, and neutral NPCs, based on how they complement or challenge the player.

Positive NPC's are the in-game characters that provide players with quests and information about starting or completing quests. They can be found anywhere in the world but normally the majority of them are in the quest hub locations inside the three main castles. Also included within the positive NPC's are the other players found in-game. They are considered NPCs because the player cannot directly control or change the other player's behaviors. These other players can be considered positive because they will help the player to complete tasks and quests.

Neutral NPCs include the players in the game that do not offer any quests or information. Some of the NPC's will activate or provide quests if predetermined objectives are met. An example of this can be seen when the player notices NPCs guarding a door. The player cannot pass into that room and the guards do not respond to the player. Therefore, these NPCs would be considered neutral. However later in the story the player will receive a note from the King

informing the guards they must allow the player to pass. The guards are now no longer considered to be a neutral NPC because they are helping to progress the story. This is an example that shows how NPC agents might transition between these positive, neutral and negative categories.

Negative NPC's are the most common and these include all of the monsters and bosses found within the game. They are considered negative because when players approach them they become hostile and attack the player. These hostile interactions account for all of the action and challenges that the game presents. Because this game is an open world environment there is nothing stopping a level 1 player from wondering into a level 50 zone where the monsters will kill the player in a single blow. Negative NPCs account for all of the drama in the game, and the threat and challenge that they present consequently motivate players to constantly upgrade and develop their avatars.

The virtual interactions that were first discussed in this section are only made possible by having all of these supporting objects. Every agent or player chooses an avatar and these avatars make up the main population of the world and are considered the most complex type of objects because they are being manipulated by other players. The combination of these three very unique object types allows for this virtual world to come to life and mimic our own reality.

Programmed Responses Found Within *FFXIV:ARR*

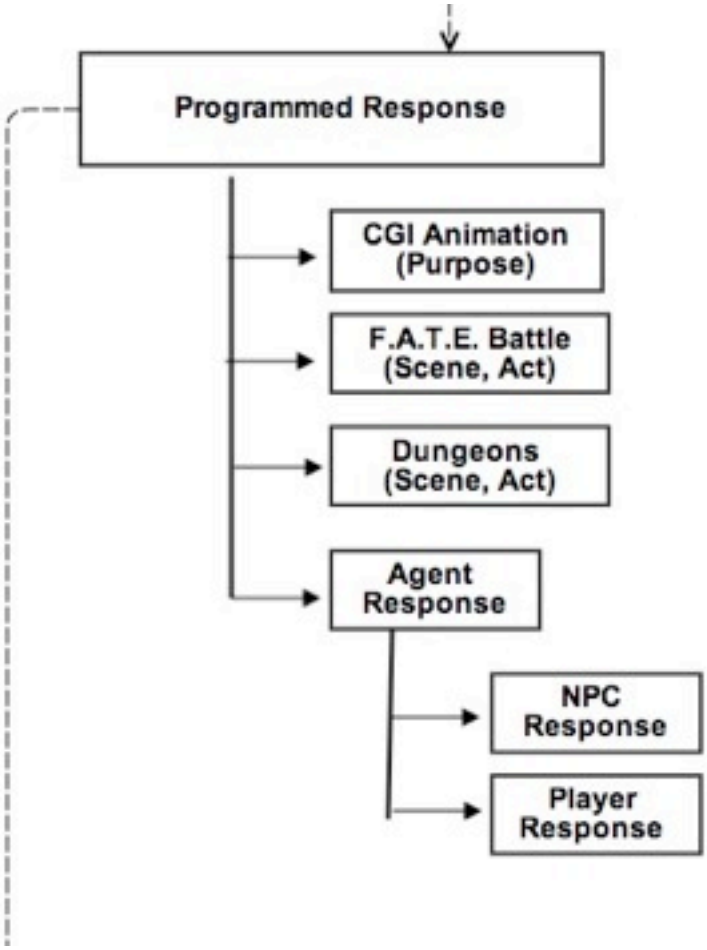

Figure 4. The Programmed Response section of the games grammar chart.

Programmed responses are the reactions or responses that a video game executes when the player meets specific conditions. These types of responses may be defined as the rules of the game or they also could be found in the objects or agents. When evaluating *FFXIV:ARR*, research has identified four primary types of commonly depicted programmed response (Figure 4). They include CGI Animations, F.A.T.E Battles, Interactive Objects and Agent Responses.

CGI Animation Programmed Responses

A CGI Animation is an automatic response that takes place when gameplay is interrupted in order to present an animated sequence, mainly consisting of scripted CGI events used to helpsupport the game's storyline. For example, in *FFXIV:ARR,* when an agent enters a dungeon, the game introduces the enemies in the dungeon by showing a short video clip of the environment and the main boss. Because gamers do not have control of their agents during these scenes, they are one of the most static part of the game's experience. They are similar to movie trailers and contain a very high production value, serving to communicate the narrative and build suspense before players enter a dungeon.

F.A.T.E and Dungeon Programmed Responses

The Fully Active Time Event or F.A.T.E Battles that are found on the world map of *FFXIV:ARR* are also considered a programmed response. These F.A.T.Es are important events because for the most part the game introduces these events at random. These battles are unique because they give all of the players in the world a chance to come together as a group and defeat the toughest of monsters and Primals.

Dungeons found within this game also fall under the programmed response section. The main reason for this is that every time a player enters or loads a dungeon the game provides the same experience for all players involved. This means that no matter how many times you play a dungeon and no matter who you play it with, the enemies and bosses of that dungeon will start out the same. The way the dungeon is set up could be compared to the game of chess: while

every chess match is unique, the players start with the pieces set up in the same configuration. This is exactly how the dungeon system in *FFXIV:ARR* functions.

Programmed Response and The Agents

This section of the chart covers the game's programmed responses that include the NPC and the player-controlled agents. The NPC's programmed responses are based around the concept that each player is presented with the same exact quests that are provided by the same NPCs. Because the world is structured like this, when the player's become lost, stuck or confused by what to do, they are able to Google the quest name and find a FAQ or quest guide that will help them to figure out what needs to be done in order to complete the quest. The game follows a defined set of rules and the NPCs simply follow the protocol that they were programmed to follow. Having this defined set of guidelines allows the developer to have control over the gameplay even if it is an open world game.

The player response is also found within this programmed response section because even if the players are free to make choices they still must follow the set rules of the game. For example, even though the player is presented with millions of options on how to customize an avatar, they still have to follow and respond to the rules of the games. For instance, my avatar cannot have horns and wings so that he looks like a demon, these options are not an available even though there are other NPC's in the game that have this appearance.

A second and more important way that the player response is listed as a programmed response is found within the game's battle system. The player chooses how to fight the enemies by choosing different attacks and choosing to defend, heal or retreat. If the player fails at

defeating the negative NPCs, the player's health goes down to zero they die. This health and damage system is one of the fundamental rules of the game that all players must learn to accept and master. Hence, the battle system is a perfect example of how the player's response is directly connected to the programmed response within the game.

Video Game Scenes

The scenes found within the game are created through a combination of all of the various elements found on the chart, creating the virtual world as a whole. The concept of the scene is then enhanced by the fact that the game developers include background music that correlates with the environment and actions that the player is experiencing. The developers also include countless sound effects that bring the world to life, like the chirping of birds as the player walks through a forest, or the sound of the swords hitting an enemy's armor. The developers even include sound effects that represent the different types of surfaces the player is walking or running on. For example, if the player is running across a stream, the game will produce a splashing sound effect. These details enhance the player's experience and work to bring the virtual world to life. Another element that is unique to the *FFXIV:ARR* game and helps produce the scene is the game's weather system. The game has a night and day cycle along with many other realistic weather patterns including sand storms, snow storms, rain and fog. These are used to help the world feel vibrant and alive while at the same time foreshadowing in-game events. For example, certain enemies and monsters are only be encountered at night.

The video game scenes can also play out like a scenes from a movie. Indeed, future research into this topic might choose to examine the relationship of these elements. A video game

scene is a highly complex event and research could explore these elements using film or media studies methodologies. Such descriptive analyses might consider the common themes of scenes.

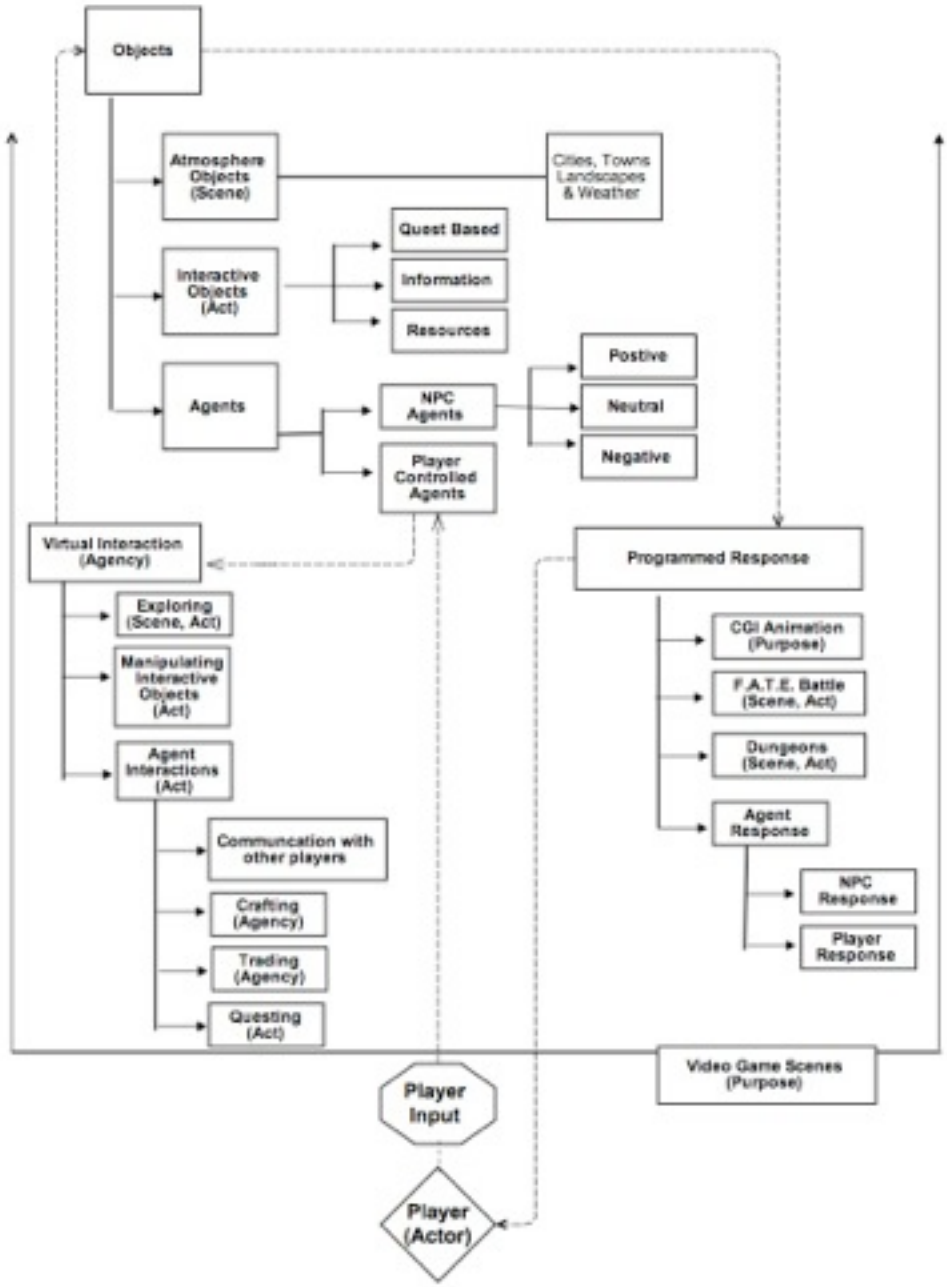

Figure 5. The grammar chart demonstrating that the scenes include all the elements.

FINDINGS: THE RATIOS FOUND WITHIN *FFXIV:ARR*

This current study has provided and applied the five elements of Burke's pentad to *FFXIV:ARR*. Using this theoretical orientation, this study then applied them to create an outline that functions as the blueprint to illustrate the player's experience. Now that this chart has provided the structure of how the various elements function with each other, the ratios of the pentad can now be defined. The ratios that are explored include: scene-to-act, scene-to-agent, scene-to-purpose. agency-to -purpose, agent-to-act, and the overall dominant element. These ratios provide insight as to the most salient elements in the creation of virtual worlds programmed to engage the player.

The Scene — Act Ratio

In *A Grammar of Motives,* Burke noted that the guiding principle in an examination of the scene/act ratio is the following: "The scene is a fit 'container' for action, expressing in fixed properties the same quality that the action expresses in terms of development" (Burke, 1945). In other words, the scene must contain some type of identifiable cues that persuade the agent to take part in the acts. McCall found that visual in-game elements such as lighting inspire the player to act. By lighting he is referring to following: "The purposeful placement of in-game illumination devices such as lamps, streetlights, ceiling lights, or any number of devices appropriate to the game's fictional setting to cue players toward the path of navigation that will allow them to interact with and complete the game" (McCall, 2008). Lighting cues are found within the world of *FFXIV:ARR*. For example, when players look for a place to gather resources within the game,

they do not look for specific rocks to mine— rather they look for a gold star that is placed on these rocks. This gold star instantly informs the player that it can be mined for resources.

A second example that shows how lighting plays a key role in providing the player with information would be the AoE attacks. AoE stands for “area of effect,” and this is a style of attack that is used by both players and negative NPCs. These areas are represented by a red ring of light that appears on the floor and anticipate an enemy attack. These AoE attacks happen very fast and the red ring informs the player’s that they need to move away from this area as soon as

possible. If the player fails to leave the area, he or she will suffer damage from the attack. Below is an example of how AoE attacks are illustrated during gameplay.

The scene-to-act ratio plays a critical part in *FFXIV:ARR*. Because the elements of a scene cause the player to act, there needs to be a proper balance of game data presented to the player. Without a proper scene-to-act ratio, the player could be overloaded with visual information, or not provided with enough. The games designers took this into account and provide the player the freedom to customize the way the information is presented on the screen. Every on-screen informational element of the game can be adjusted, including the brightness and saturation of onscreen actions and status bar as well as the size and position of the players' status bars, abilities and maps. Below are two examples of how players have customized the way they receive the information from the game. The player in the first image uses a minimalist approach

that only displays his name and his three tiers of action commands. The player in the next image is using all of the various informational elements including the local map that is found in the top right, the chat box that is found on the bottom left, the stats that display the amount of damage in the middle of the screen, and the health and status information in the top left.

The Scene — Agent Ratio

In *FFXIV:ARR* there are two ways that the scene-agent ratio is immediately apparent. This first comes with an examination of the NPC's of the world as a "collective" agent. Any time the player loads the world, the composition of the world's population will be significantly different. Since the world is populated by other real players who possess various strengths and skills, the population will have varying degrees of social diversity. In this way, each moment in the game presents an entirely new social scene to navigate; the same tactics used to appease one real player will not work for every player.

Secondly, during character creation the player may select various attributes that will permanently affect the way the other players view this avatar. The result of this is noticeable in two ways. First, players will often choose their avatar with a tactical eye, aiming for a specific build with a specific strategy in mind—for example, creating an elf that will be an archer to mimic other famous fantasy characters. At the same time some players who take the lore of the game seriously will refuse to communicate or interact with this Elf player if they are part of the rival Orc clan.

The Scene — Purpose Ratio

In the scene-purpose ratio, as well, the game's developers encouraged players to respond to the pressures of enemies who constantly get stronger as play progresses. In *FFXIV:ARR*, however, it is possible to make almost all types of players happy, because for the most part there are jobs, classes and skills that will appeal to all types of players. Some players might not like the idea of completing dungeons and would rather spend time crafting items. This game offers

various scenes that can change the purpose of the game. To say that the purpose ought to be in keeping with the scene has a specific implications in the world of *FFXIV:ARR.* The player is allowed to define his or her own purpose, as has been discussed above. The developers of the game gave players a choice as to how they would measure their success at the end of the game, and this in turn would affect the choices of the game.

The Agency — Purpose Ratio

In his discussion of agency and purpose, Burke uses the metaphor of a piece of laboratory equipment— an instrument designed to fulfill a specific need by performing a specific function. Burke asks the following: which is the agency, and which is the purpose? Clearly an examination of the agency-purpose ratio ultimately will be more beneficial than a discussion of either element alone. Similarly, we can observe in our artifact an equation of agency and purpose in many aspects of the game's design. Although the avatars found within *FFXIV:ARR* may be numerous and varied, each individual will serve, at most, a handful of functions in the running of this online virtual world and society. Their primary function will be their specific jobs or classes, and others may serve as the heads of guilds or clans. To this end it becomes difficult to distinguish agency from purpose, since each job and player fulfills a specific function within the virtual world.

The Agent — Act Ratio

The intensely personal nature of participating in a virtual world as a medium encourages this research to examine the act – agent ratio in *FFXIV:ARR*. Although the acts are mostly

defined by the game's designer ahead of time, the agent is produced entirely by the player. It is curious to note that in his discussion of agent and act, Burke observed that although the act and agent were contained in the scene, neither the act nor the agent could positively be said to contain the other. "The agent does not 'contain' the act," writes Burke, "although the results might be said to 'pre-exist virtually' with him" (Burke, 1945). There are great truths found in Burke's words because within any digital game all available acts exist hypothetically, and do not materialize unless the agent realizes and then produces them.

At the beginning of any given game of *FFXIV:ARR* all possible actions have already been specified in advance by the rules and code of the game. The nature of a virtual medium make this a substantially different kind of "virtual pre-existence" because these acts are now dependent on the player choosing to perform them. Having stated this, it becomes clear that the potential actions under the developer's control, not the actual actions, will be performed by the player. To this end, as described above, the act-agent ratio as a generating principle leads to a similar conclusion as the discussion of agent itself. In the world of the game the player is always the main hero, but every player may complete the quests and story in their own unique way.

The game ultimately consists of the choices and rules that the developer makes available to the player . A game allows the player to gain access to a realized world that is run by rules and laws, and this designates which actions are possible and which are not. Since a player is restricted by roles and their available decisions, it is safe to state that the game serves as a glimpse into the complex decisions of the game's leading protagonist. Can a person playing *FFXIV:ARR,* come away with a greater understanding of the mindset that it takes to be a leader in our non-virtual world? Although a player may do whatever he or she likes within the game, he

or she is still placed in the role as the hero and made almost solely responsible for the completing the story of the game if they choose.

The Dominant Element

Although the world of *FFXIV:ARR* is richly detailed and the possibilities for gameplay are virtually endless, the pentadic elements all fall under the greater purpose. As discussed earlier, although the act-agent ratio is central to any discussion of a virtual medium, the most important ratios in our discussion of video games are scene to purpose and agency to purpose. It is clear in two ways that scene is dependent on purpose. The majority of the content in *FFXIV:ARR* is based on the gameplay choices of the agent. In addition, the world that is created for the player is heavily dependent on purpose, since the appearance and role of the player's avatar at any given moment is an end result of the user's actions. Also, since the actions that any given user takes is dependent on their ultimate purpose, both the scene and the acts that occur in the playing of *FFXIV:ARR* are ultimately dependent on the player's purpose. These ratios are the answer to the original research question of why sandbox and open world MMORPG games like *FFXIV:ARR* are so successful at crafting a virtual world that the player becomes lost in.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Research

Specifically, video game studies can try to speculate about the meaning of the content of a video game. Unlike film studies, the video medium offers no guarantee that video games are consumed in their entirety and in the way the developer intended. This lack of guarantee is based around the concept that the gamer contributes a fair amount of agency. As was discussed, scholars cannot assume the individual activity of a video game player; such assumptions do not accurately impart the breadth and significance of a video game to readers. If a researcher was to tape record someone playing a video game for several hours, the individual isolated experience of the played video game might reveal play styles and game outcomes much different than how a video game designer might depict a preferred objective based playing style. Increasingly, gamers are given the choice of how to tailor their individual game experience, and the ideological content of a "played video game" is directly linked both to the content that gamers are given and how they choose to interact with this content. This concept is one of the most powerful elements that allow the MMO style game to succeed.

Indeed, the possibilities for cooperative game play, although always possible, have exponentially increased in modern video games. For example, in *FFXIV:ARR*, a game with a rather complex fantasy based narrative, the players are not required to participate in the narrative. In fact, players can freely explore the world and may choose to simply socialize with friends, partake in side quests, work on completing the hunting logs or go gather resources. Without a doubt, as open world video game's become larger and increasingly more dynamic and complex, there is a greater potential for players to deviate from the scripted events, and produce a game

style that runs counter to what games developer might have planned. As Carsten Jessen says, in his essay "Computer Games and Play Culture": "Games become what they are in use, through reception" (Jessen, 1998). He goes on to state: "The first question that has to be asked is therefore not what the computer and the games do to children, but the opposite: what do the children do with the computer and the games" (Jessen, 1998).

Accordingly, analyses of video games would be incomplete if they did not also take into consideration "what the cultural consumer 'makes' or 'does' during this time and with these images" (Fiske, 1989). In short, if we want to study a game's content, we must understand what players are given to interact with, how they are encouraged to interact, and finally what they actually do. The research preformed in this paper attempted to shed light on this vast and greatly unknown subject matter with the goal to answer the question of how are massively multiplayer online video games structured to create arguments between the game and the player. By using Kenneth Burke's pentad of Dramatism this research has provided the basic outline of how this virtual world uses these elements to create an interactive experience. Games can be summarized by looking at the pentadic terms— by using these terms the player's adventure can be described as a dramatic situation. The players (agents) find themselves in a ravaged, war torn world, under constant threat of primal monsters (scene). If they want to survive and save the world (purpose), they need learn new skills to become very powerful warriors in order to keep up with the enemies that get stronger as the player progresses through the game. This requires players to complete quests and gain experience (act). In this sense, the monsters are no longer considered agents, but rather as an the agency; that is, the means that players use to gain experience and advance in the game.

The answer to the question of how the game creates drama is a very complex one. This game presents a number of challenges to the player, but after analyzing this virtual reality as a whole, it becomes clear that within *FFXIV:ARR,* the economic challenges the players face create the most common experiences that all players must overcome in one way or another. This challenge is so prevalent that a new industry selling virtual commodities such as Gil has been created to meet the demands of the gamers.

Future Studies

Over the last two decades the development of the video game market has expanded so rapidly that researchers and theorists have not had time to catch up. Because of this constantly changing medium, the ability of scholars to discuss video games appears to becoming increasingly difficult due to the noticeable lack of published research. The video game industry as a whole could greatly benefit from conducting future research that is similar to what has been done in this paper. For example, if a researcher were to create a grammar for the best-selling first-person shooter game *Halo,* this would provide insight into what elements made this game such a blockbuster. Then the industry could compare the research that has been conducted between studies and use it as a functioning framework to create a brand new segmentation of games. This could be called a MMORPGFSP or Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game First Person Shooter. This type of game would benefit from having the complex world that the MMORPG offers and provide the gamer with the fast-paced action that popular first-person shooters offer. The game developers will have a greater understanding of what elements are

needed to produce a successful game by using the previous research to compare the grammars between the two types of games.

The idea of adjusting the ratios found within the game would also help to create new research for this field of study. One could speculate that by altering these ratios the researcher could predict that it would have a tremendous effect on the overall game and experience. This type of research would offer an alternative application of the pentad to the game.

Another element that could also be used as a focus of study could include the specialized in-game language that is created and used by players. The fact that players create new terms, words, and abbreviations that allow them to communicate more efficiently with each other is a very important part of the gaming culture. Gaming has become a daily activity for many and the lingo that is created during gameplay crosses over into pop and mainstream culture. This concept is supported by our cultures use of the term pwned. This word “pwned" expression originated in the 1980's from the word "owned". It was used to describe when a hacker would take remote control of a server or another computer. With today's MMO games, the term "pwned" has now become a way to gloat in one's victory over another player. Conversely, pwned is an expressive way to say that you yourself have been defeated by another player. This is just one example of how game-speak has led to the emergence of a new and commonly used word.

The last suggestion for future research focuses on the gaming community. The general research question could be: “How does community and identification work within the gaming world”? Subsequent analysis could provide a deeper understanding into the human psyche because MMO games allow the player to escape into a fictitious reality where their physical appearance and economic status are irrelevant even though they are interacting with other

people. The researcher could ask gamers to complete a series of personality quizzes that focus on their real life personally and then retest the gamers to answer from the point of view of their in-game character. This type of research could be used to help create new communication theories that deal with self-identification and physical appearance.

Conclusion

To conclude, the most important thing we must understand is that game players create their own paradigm or reality in experiencing a game that is based around the conditions at hand. A simplistic example of this can be found in the author's childhood experience: a box of Legos comes with a variety of pieces and a set of blueprints to build a specific object. However once that blueprint is completed, the Legos do not become obsolete. Rather they become a tool for the user to explore, which allows them to envision other ways that they can manipulate elements from their imagination and for their own pleasure. This example reflects the way in which games have evolved from basic plastic blocks to complex interactive virtual realities where players can use their imaginations to become heroes who slay demons and dragons with their best friends. Open world games, in a way, provide the same level of interaction and freedom as a box of Legos, and the element of purpose is the most predominate factor found within *Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn*.

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