Joshua Schudt – Exploratory Essay Draft #2

 Computers have always been an important part of my life. When I was 8 years old, I had a Macintosh I played games on. My little brain back then didn't think too hard about how the computer worked. All I cared about was doing a three-sixty across gaps in Tony Hawk Pro Skater. As I got older I would get new consoles and computers. Allowing me to play video games such as Super Smash Brothers, Minecraft, and some flash games.

It wasn't until I was about fifteen years old when I first started to take an interest in how these gifts of mankind worked. My grandpa sent me a book about a computer language called "Just Basic". The name of the language told me exactly what I would be doing with it before I even started coding. Normally, I'm not one to read books. This time, however, was an exception because I felt guilty for not reading it. I don't know what exactly pushed me to continue with the book (It was really boring), but I would give anything for that motivation I had as a kid. I felt like a million bucks because I knew something my brothers and sisters had no clue about. Although, I didn't see any future with this language. All I wanted to do was make my own video game. Or, you know, that green stuff.

Since I couldn't make a reasonable game with "Just Basic" I decided to find a different language that suits my needs. I wanted a language with versatility, elegance, simplicity, and robustness. Python was the language that fit the bill. I started making a game called "Elther" with Python. The basis of the game was that you were a green alien that could fire cubes and get propulsion from them. You would go from level to level fighting off other aliens and collecting treasure. After I developed the game for about half a year to a year, I realized there was a huge flaw in the design of the code. So huge that it would take a ridiculously long amount of time to fix the issue. Not to mention that Python was too slow of a language for big games. This was one part of a series of majorly disheartening moments in my list of ambitions.

I really should have given up there, but I kept going. After dealing with the stress of losing so much work, I started working on another project. I decided to use C++ because it was fast, detailed,

and object orientated. I made another game called "Avoidance". This time I knew enough about programming that the code structure stood up over time. The game was a top-down grid based dungeon crawler. The idea was that enemies would only move if you moved. I gave it a fast-paced feeling as well. I took inspiration from "Cave Story", an old indie game. I never entirely finished the game. Procrastination is real kids.

After "finishing" my game, I tried to find a way to earn money to help fund my projects. I tried, mobile game development, mobile app development, and website development. None of them worked out too well. I built a mobile game but never finished it. I tried freelancing and developed a mobile app but got paid very little. Finally, I worked with a German startup on a website but lost interest and got too stressed out. I never finished or succeeded in any of these ambitions. I saw someone failing everything. I felt someone ambitious yet lazy. I heard someone talking to me. It wasn't a friend. It wasn't an enemy. It was myself. Finally, I was able to see my flaws.

After failing so many times, I started to realize that money isn't as important as I made it out to be. What is the point in being successful if you aren't happy? Stress is a devilish thing. Stress likes to put you in a special kind of loop that draws you in. When you are stressed you don't accomplish your goals. Work gets harder, life gets more boring. When work gets harder, life gets more stressful. Thus, you end up in this internal fight with yourself where stress always wins.

In conclusion, my interest in coding has been an adventure. One that I am not yet quite done with. Just like with writing, I never want to do it and I always find places to get stuck, but I always get such a rush when I finally solve a problem I have been working on for days.