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GAT330 — Fall 2016

Professor: Jen Sward

Homework Assignment #1

Full Throttle Character Analysis

1. Do you like Ben or not?

Yes, I find Ben from *Full Throttle* to be likable.

2. Why?

It is impossible not to like Ben. Ben is a gruff, tough, independent biker who “can’t be bought or sold”. This kind of character is a lot like the lovable scoundrel Han Solo from *Star Wars*.

3. What did the designers do that made you like him, or not like him?

Within the first few moments of *Full Throttle*, the designers set up Ben to be likable in both his presentation and in how he reacts to the other characters in the game. Within the opening moments of the game, Ben is established as a rebel when he rides his bike up and over a corporate limo. Even the corporate owner, Malcom Corley, is impressed with this brazen act of defiance, when he states, “Now there go some boys I could ride with”. If this is not enough, loud rock and roll plays as the camera catches up to Ben riding his motorcycle as the game’s title is revealed. This moment is clearly designed to impress the player. Despite his gruff appearance, Ben is also given a moment to appeal to the player as a leader when a member of his biker gang approaches him saying that the gang is broke. Ben’s response to his fellow biker gang member establishes Ben as having a cool demeanor who is not worked up easy over problems.

Further into the opening bar scene, the designers use Ben’s interactions with the likable Malcom Corley and the despicable Adrian Ripburger to ensure that the players like Ben. When Ripburger enters the bar, we see Malcom Corley and Ben laughing, enjoying one Malcom Corley’s stories. Ripburger, interrupts this moment by putting down Ben’s “little club” and pushing Malcom Corley to get back to the sales pitch he was sent in to sell to the biker gang. By seeing Ben enjoying his time with a “likable” character, it makes the player like Ben, too. Likewise, hearing Ben reject Ripburger’s proposal by saying “we’re not for rent” helps cement Ben as a likable player due to the villainous nature of Ripburger. This scene makes Ben seem strong and willing to take a stand for something he believes in, even if his biker gang could actually use the money.

4. What type of engagement do we get with a character like Ben? (extra)

Ben’s character allows for the player to experience the fantasy of being a tough as nails rebel who is a principled leader of a biker gang. Even though the game is not in first person, this type of game allows for the player to perform actions that only someone like Ben would

do, giving the fantasy of being Ben. This is especially apparent in the contextual actions menu that pops up when you click on something. While this menu serves primarily as a mechanical means to play the game, it also helps give the flavor of being Ben. In particular, the option to interact with things via the fist or boot really plays into the idea of being a tough biker. The actions available in this menu are the way Ben interacts with things, helping to fulfill the idea of the player getting to engage in the game through fantasy.