

OMORI Narrative Analysis

MEDIA 4, Introduction to Game Studies

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For a game that turns characters to toasts when they die in battles, OMORI has an incredibly dark story to be unveiled by the players. The player starts the horror RPG as Omori, the short haired boy who lives in the White Space. After opening the door in the White Space, the players can discover a colorful world and Omori's lovable friends. OMORI is the perfect example of captivating video game narrative created through elements of fictional world and mechanics of narrative. The following paragraphs will dive deep into the fictional world of OMORI and its use of the hidden story structure.

The setting of OMORI jumps back and forth between the reality and the Headspace. The Headspace is the imaginary world the protagonist enters in his dreams. Starting the game in the White Space of Headspace, the players learnt that the protagonist is called Omori through meeting his friends Aubrey, Kel and Hero. The trio then leads Omori to his sister, Mari, and their other friend Basil, who later went missing. In the rest of the game, the player explores Headspace to find Basil with Aubrey, Kel and Hero as party members that the player can control in battles and map exploring. In different parts of the map and dungeons, the player can find Mari on her picnic blanket, where player can save the game with her picnic basket, restore the party's health and juice with her food, etc. Therefore, it can be concluded that Omori, Aubrey, Kel and Hero are the player characters controlled by the player, while Mari

and Basil are the casts characters who have personalities and has a particular function in the game's narratives. In the real world, however, the protagonist could be named by the player and the story takes place in Faraway Town, where the protagonist is moving away from in three days. Unlike being in Headspace, the player can only control the protagonist in the beginning. The player will also discover that the protagonist's older sister Mari has already passed away and the friend group grew older and distanced. The personalities of his old friends also drastically changed after the tragedy. The contrast between the imaginary world and reality drives the player to find out what took place between this group of friends, since the player is now emotionally connected with the playable characters. Through introducing characters and the settings, the game created a narrative in a fictional world that draws the player in.

The game adopted the hidden story structure for the narrative mechanics, where new narratives reconstructed on the fixed narrative. In the game, the player first meets the protagonist as a boy who displays symptoms of depression and anxiety, lost his sister, and grew apart from his friends. Three days before moving out of the town, the protagonist is visited by his childhood friend Kel. In the rest of the time before the protagonist moves out, the duo explored the town and revisited their old friends. In-between these days, the protagonist enters the Headspace, where he could hang out

with his sister and friends, as Omori in his sleep. As the game progress, the player learnt about the saddening truth behind the fallout and the protagonist's unstable mental state: the protagonist accidentally killed his own sister Mari by pushing her down the stairs after a heated argument. Their friend Basil witnessed the tragedy and offered to help framing her death as suicide. Out of grief and guilt, the protagonist isolates himself from everyone and created Headspace where he could escape reality and pretend the tragedy never happened. In the game, there are a few routes the player could take that leads to different endings, for example, the protagonist can reject Kel's invitations to explore the town, which will result in Omori taking over and the protagonist's demons will follow him out of this town on the moving day. If the player chose to open the door for Kel, the protagonist will fight Omori in the final boss fight of the game, and the battle is fixed to be a lose fight. The game will ask whether the player would continue or give up, resulting in the bad ending and the good ending of the game. The hidden story structure is an advantageous narrative mechanic because the hiding the essential part of the story spikes the player's curiosity and lures the player to find out what has happened in the past.

By employing elements of narrative, including setting and characters, and a hidden story structure, the narrative component of the text heavy game is strongly enhanced. Omori is an excellent example in showcasing how narrative study can

connects with the player's emotions and leaves a strong impression thus enhancing the overall gaming experience for the players.

Resources:

Watts, Rachel. "Omori Review." Pcgamer, 13 Jan. 2021, from

<https://www.pcgamer.com/omori-review/>.

"Routes." OMORI Wiki, <https://omori.fandom.com/wiki/ROUTES>.

"OMORI - Full gameplay - No Commentary" on YouTube, video by

Morpheus, 10 Mar. 2021, from <https://youtu.be/BmCRo795IBk>