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Myths of “Bloodborne”, A New Platform for Applying Freudian Psychoanalytic Theories

In recent decades, the quantity of media, through which people receive information as well as entertainment, has been greatly enlarged. Among such dramatic improvements, video game is one of the most interesting cases. Despite the earlier generation of video games, which mainly focus on recreational perspectives, more and more recent video games shift their attention to create complex and enchanted storylines and portray multiple vivid characters. Moreover, in many occasions the interaction between the game and gamers becomes more and more parallel to that of novel and its audiences. In this case, Bloodborne would be a perfect example of this kind of game.

This game was released in 2015, in which the producer has created a mysterious, dark, and thrilling world that partially reflected the Cthulhu Mythos. This game’s worth of literature interpretation in general originates from the difficulty of acquiring clues about its storyline.

Bloodborne, unlike any other recent video games that provide excessive amount of navigations and instructions for gamers, requires gamers to dig and uncover hints and clues by themselves through interacting with NPCs and reading descriptions of different items. Here, this game invites gamers to read, search, and interpreting, so that they can anticipate where to go and what to do base on these fragments of information they get from different sources. This feature makes players much more active when they attempt to discover and understand the storyline of the game, which is similar to the process of interpreting literature works.

In order to provide a comprehensive Freudian interpretation about the story of this game, having certain broad and general Freudian theme that can underlie story as a whole is important. An emphasis

of dream is already mentioned at the beginning of the game, as "Oh, don't you worry. Whatever happens, you may think it all a mere bad dream"(Blood Minister). As progressing in the game, the character would then enter an area names "The Hunter's Dream", and it serves as a hideout for the character, which is one of few absolutely safe places in the game. Later in the game, protagonist would have the access to an area named "Nightmares of Mensis". These obvious emphases with dream suggest a potential of analyzing and interpreting this game from Freudian dream theories. In addition, various details of this game further demonstrate the applicability of Freudian dream theories to this game. Considering Freud's belief of the connection between dreams and creative writing, as he believes the plot would be as a depiction of the unconscious level of mind (Freud 441). A piece of creative writing would be unrealistic due to its nature of expressing unconscious. Yet this is not to say that creative writers have to recreate every concept and idea in his story in order to pursue an unprecedented novelty. According to Freud, a general procedure of creative writing is forming novel linkages and coherences between various long-lasting realistic concepts and ideas. This technique also represents a way in which dreams are formed, "The dream is unemotional disconnected and unintelligible; but while I was producing the thoughts behind the dream, the thoughts themselves fell at once into logical chains, in which certain central ideas made their appearance more than once "(Freud 147). Bloodborne depicts a world of distorted reality that properly fits this criterion. In this way, this feature of the game reinforces the applicability of Freudian interpretation to a work like this as a piece of creative writing. From another perspective, "the concept in the dream may often undergo a temporal suspension", this point of view is pretty important to understand the story of Bloodborne. The protagonist begins his hunting in the afternoon, and upon through defeating certain special bosses the time of the world would go forward into evening, night, and then midnight. This progression of

time pushes the plot so that the story would gradually move forward. This also means that prior to defeats of those special bosses time always stays the same. Consider this phenomenon as a metaphor of temporal suspension further strengthens the Freudian theme of dream within this video game. At this point, it would be reasonable to apply a Freudian method for interpreting dreams for this game. For that matter, various puzzling features or details of this game would be made clear, with which a comprehensive interpretation of this game can be developed.

By taking this perspective from dream and interpretation of dreams, an interesting Freudian interpretation can be developed via the observation of the Beasts within the game. Here some hints may shed some lights on this topic of interpreting the figure of the beast and this plague that turns people into beast. At the beginning, player's character undergoes a blood ministration, which is described as a kind of therapy that functions through injecting the subject with certain special type of blood. In this scene, an old man, has given the character blood ministration, after which the character closes his eyes. Upon the character reopens his eyes a wolf-like beast creeps out from a puddle of blood toward the character; yet once the beast touches the character, a flame suddenly surrounds it and burns out its entire body. Then there appears a voice, saying "Ahh, you've found yourself a hunter..." (MFPallytime. " Bloodborne (Let's Play) - #1 The Beginning"). This scene provides a way to infer the connection between beast and hunters. In this scene, the beast appears from a puddle of blood, suggesting that its presence is related with the injected blood. Then, the flame that burns the beast is triggered by the event that the beast touches the character. The character has shown some sort of ability that can dissolve the beast upon mere a body contact. Considering together with the comment, "you've found yourself a hunter..." , the plot implies that the ability of the character is somehow innate since this sentence emphasizes a sense of discover rather than a sense of developing

or inventing. Thus, this scene implies that the character has an innate ability of countering the beast, i.e. immunity to this plague of beast. This draws a distinction between player's character and those savage villagers, the immune and the infected. However, this plague does not originate from something external, as hinted by another clue within the game. In the game a part of description of an item names "Beast Roar" states like this, "...The indescribable sound is broadcast with the caster's own vocal cords, which begs the question, what terrible things lurk deep within the frames of men?" This piece is crucial to the interpretation regards this conception of beast. Here, this description hints that the origin of this beast nature also resides internally. Therefore, the immunity to the beast-hood and the nature of beast both have an internal root within the human (in this game), this observation properly corresponds to Freudian division of mind. The beast represents the id within a human being which Freud believes is primitive, erotic, and savage, same as represented by the beasts within the game. More specifically, the beast-hood can be understood as an externalization of the id; it is a surrender to and embracement of the erotic, savage, and destructive drives as well as a loss of self-control and self-discipline. In this way, those villagers are not infected, rather their erotic side of the mind, the id, has taken over the right to control their body, which appears external as becoming a beast. The nature of the id is instinctual and primitive, and in regard to those erotic drives Freud believes that "...we must repress from ourselves, and they have been repressed, pushed into unconscious" (Freud 440). Regarding this game as a dream or a fantasy, it is reasonable to interpret the concept of beast is a distorted representation of the id since "Repressed wishes of this sort and their derivatives are only allowed to come to expression in a distorted form" (Freud 440). Moreover, along with the progression within the game, the presence of beast becomes more distorted and dehumanized. In the first few areas of the game, Yharnam and Old Yharnam, beasts-like villagers,

whose body are partially covered with fur like a wolf, occupies the city, together with few werewolves. As progressing in the game, these beast-like enemies become more dehumanized. Later in the game in areas like “Nightmare Frontier” or “Nightmare of Mensis”, some distorted wolf-like beasts can be seen as representing a complete surrender to the erotic drives. Here conclusively speaking, the beast is a visualization of the erotic drives that root in the id, and the deeper they are repressed into the unconsciousness, the more vehement they would let themselves be expressed. From this perspective, the story of this game can be read as depicting a voyage that travels gradually deeper into the dream, representing the unconscious world, where the repressed can express themselves. As the old man stated at the beginning, this story indeed may be a bad dream; player’s character can be seen as trapped in a nightmare, where the id distortedly expresses and visualizes itself in the form of savage beasts. Taking the concept of beast as an exaggerated resemblance of the id demonstrates only one perspective of Freudian theme in regard to this video game, and there are other perspectives that can also be properly analyzed in terms of Freudian themes. The conception of insight may lead to an equally fruitful direction as this conception of the beast.

Within the game there is a trait of the character names insight. Unlike other traits that can increase the strength of the character, this trait mostly affects character’s interaction with the environment of the game. For example, when the insight reaches 40 one can observe certain previously invisible scenes, such as a big monster hangs by the side of a chapel. Also, the insight increases every time when the character encounters something novel, for example defeating a boss, or entering a new area. Moreover, two consumable items be directly increase this trait, and one of them, names Great One's Wisdom, provides some interesting hints within its description. "Fragments of the lost wisdom of the Great Ones, beings that might be described as gods ... At Byrgenwerth Master

Willem had an epiphany: "We are thinking on the basest of planes. What we need, are more eyes ("Great One's Wisdom")." This description emphasizes the connection between the insight and eyes, where eyes are medium to gain insight. However, this character, the Master Willem of Byrgenwerth, actually appears to cover his eyes in the game since these eyes he refers to are internal eyes. Here, if regard insight as a way of representing knowledge or experience this concept of internal eyes suggests that real knowledge of the environment comes from inspecting oneself internally, which is similar to Freud's belief in the "Civilization and its Discontent". Freud believes that individual psychological activities may collective forms a trend in the civilization, which means that psychoanalysis is a methodology to introspectively investigate individuals as well as a way to inspect the whole civilization. In this game the internal eyes has a similar effect, it is a mean to gain more insight, through which the player can find more novelty in its surroundings. Both of these two concepts suggests a kind of methodology, through which it deepens the understanding of oneself and, thus, helps to develop a more insightful view regard some kind of structure in a larger scale. Moreover, another feature of insight may also provide connections with Freudian beliefs in regards to civilization. As he believes, "Civilization has to use its utmost effort in order to set limits to man's aggressive instincts..." (Freud 750). However, "any restriction of this aggressiveness directed outwards would be bound to increase the self-destruction, which is in any case proceeding" (Freud 754). Here, the civilization is the opposite of the aggressiveness of human. Within the game the consumable item that increases insight can only looted from those non-beast enemies, which partially support the idea that the savage beast is opposite to the insight. Moreover, understand insight as a measure of one's wisdom and knowledge, it is obvious that the beast-hood, which reveals the savage instinct, is the opposite of it. However, within the game high insight makes the character very vulnerable to a special kind of

negative effect, namely, frenzy. This negative effect would suddenly curtail the character's health point by almost eighty percent upon encounter some special enemies, usually leading directly to death. In this way, insight also relates to Freudian belief regard the will of self-destruction under his discussion about civilization. Taking the whole story as a dream-like fantasy, the trait of insight actualizes this will of self-destruction simply as making the character more vulnerable to this fatal negative effect, leading to death.

Through interpreting the whole from the perspective of Freudian dream theory, various conceptions within the game can be understood as representing Freudian notions regard the id or the will of self-destruction. In this way, this game, Bloodborne, may have certain literature value, at least from Freudian perspective. By interpreting this game as a literature work, a trend can be shown that more and more media are created which can bear literature works with the development of technology. In this way, literature works as well as this Freudian methodology to interpret literatures works are no longer limited to traditional forms, like novels or films. Especially for video games, which emphasizes on the interaction and actualization of fantasy, is exceptionally favored by Freudian interpretations.

Work Cited

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