I. Main Character

Game: Prince of Persia : sands of time

Describe one of the Main Character's skills that you find best used / polished. Explain your choice.

Prince of Persia: the sands of time introduced a "time rewinding" system, allowing the unnamed hero to briefly go back in time.

At first, this skill may appear as a nice looking trick used to avoid a high frequency of "game over" displayed in inexperienced players screens, but its consequences are more interesting.

The level design in sands of time is spectacular and surrealistic. When a player enters a big room, the camera travels around it, revealing lots of dangerous traps of all kinds. But when he plays, the player can not see the whole room at once, and his avatar can often fall in a trap without having been able to see it at the moment he jumped.

The "rewind ability" improves the player confidence and allows him to perform those numerous jumps of faith that are required to pass the room, which is a very elegant way to overcome a camera constraint inherent to 3D games. Such an ambitious design would probably not have been possible with a classical gameplay.

What is interesting though, is that this skill is not usable at will; As the "sand" bar empties, performing even the simplest actions becomes challenging. By this way, despite such a powerful skill, the game never bores the player, and he is encouraged to explore the rooms as much as possible to fill the precious bar.

 II. Enemy

Game: Prince of Persia(classic)

Describe the behaviour of a regular enemy (not a boss) that you find most interesting in the game. Explain why.

The first Prince of Persia deals with challenge and repeatability issues in an unconventional way. Where usually, in that kind of game, the player would frequently encounter several type of enemies, becoming stronger and / or more numerous as the player progresses, the game takes quite the opposite approach : Most of the relatively rare encounters oppose the player to one single enemy, a vizier's guard, which, except for its life points, does not really evolve trough the game.

What is so interesting about those guards to keep the player entertained
?
First of all, they have the exact same fighting abilities as the prince.
The fact that no one has superior skills is somehow similar to fighting
games. As the player, enemies can block, attack, and each duel can be
pretty stressful and challenging.
Another point relies on how the level design enhances the opponent's
behavior. The various strategic positions occupied by an enemy allow him
to push the player into the different traps, "force" him to endanger
himself and make mistakes. This adds variety to the duels, and, combined
with the main enemy in the game, the time, enhancing stress, is used to
handle the difficulty level in prince of Persia. Jaffar himself is "just"
a guard with several life points and a very good position. Also, the
player's interest is renewed by the desire to trick an enemy in such
delicate situations.

III. Mechanic translation

Game: Prince of Persia(classic)

Choose a mechanic from one game, and explain how its gameplay would
translate into 2D (if the chosen game is 3D) or into 3D (if the chosen
game is 2D). What are the gameplay differences according to you?

In Prince of Persia classic, one of the most recurrent interactions the
player has with the environment is the triggering of mechanisms, such as
traps or gate opening. This is obtained by walking into a tile. The
player often has the possibility to visually determine that a tile has a
special property, and may choose to walk on it or not.

In a 3d version, such as sands of times, the player will walk voluntarily
into a tile when he thinks it can open a door, but we can not expect him
to simply walk into spikes disposed in the middle of a room when he can
just walk aside from them, and putting spikes all along a big room is too
restrictive in terms of level designing. Also, the solution consisting in
hiding the trap is not always convenient because the player may decide,
at some point, that the game is unfair.

A smart solution found in sands of time was to impose a 2d navigation in
a 3d world, without the player being aware of it.

For instance, the corridors areas are those where the biggest number of
traps is usually found, because the lateral freedom of the player there
is restricted, and his progression becomes similar to the old game in
this case.
Also, a lot of traps are disposed on walls, because when the prince is
running on them, his vertical freedom is also restricted.