Reflective Response

If anything, writing, presenting and discussing my synopsis, assured me that *this is definitely a thing you can write about*. The real issue is, do I even want to? I have some hesitation regarding the subject matter, possibly because it feels like you can fit anything and nothing into the field of Software Studies. For better or worse, anything related to software can be written about, however unfitting or inappropriate. That is not to say that I think the question of value obfuscation in video games is at all inappropriate or too *out there* for this course. On the contrary. It fits right in. I just find it ever so slightly difficult to summon the enthusiasm required to really get started on the project. I’ll get there, I suppose.

Tell the truth, I chose the subject matter on a whim. I read a news article (while on the toilet, if you want to know the details) about changes to a microtransaction heavy video game and thought: “That’s kind of ridiculous. Maybe I should write about that.” As tends to be the case, these ideas are the like bolts of lightning: bright, burning and illuminating the whole place in an instant. Shortly afterwards, however, one is left with the seared, ashen remains of what used to be a thriving forest. This metaphor is going nowhere. Anyway, I picked a topic and I suppose it would be better for me to stick with it, rather than go through the trouble of picking something else (that I will inevitably also regret picking, alas).

As for presenting the synopsis for the members of my study group, I felt greatly encouraged by their optimism *by proxy*. Like I said, this is a substantial topic; this is something you could write a paper about, no doubt. And there are many interesting angles to approach this topic from, even opportunities to get terribly critical with some of the business practices surrounding microtransactions in video games. If would say that I received a great deal of new information from my fellow group members; rather, they agreed with and further encouraged the reasoning behind the project. I have no doubt that they will prove valuable (whether obfuscated or not) in the future, during the process.

I am asked to reflect on what I learned from writing ‘this’ (the synopsis, presumably). Well, I re-learned the importance of carefully picking a topic ahead of time. We are still in the early stages of development, sure, but time waits for no one and at this point it is probably better to stick with what you have, rather than running the risk of spending/wasting more time on picking another topic. So yeah, dedicate a sufficient amount of time to just thinking about how and what and why you want to write about. As is, it seems like you can examine just about anything you want in a paper like this.

Which brings me to another lesson. What exactly is Software Studies? This is still some ambiguity as to what is and is not Software Studies. I suspect this is by design. Anything that is software can be studied – easy. Still, with regards to this paper I am left with some questions. Can I even write about video games in relation to Software Studies? How much academic legwork, if any, is required beforehand? Is any prior justification necessary – or can said justification be baked into the paper itself? It’s been mostly interesting (if a little pedantic, indulgent and redundant at times) discussing alternative perspective on technical terms. It’s like watching the collective whole of the humanities make a claim on the digital world. It’s not always terribly elegant to behold, nor is it necessarily justified in its inquiries, but I cannot blame them for trying. This place, the computer on which I am writing, is where all the fun stuff happens. This is what you want to be writing about in the 21st century.