



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

**THE SEMIOTIC CONSTRUCTION OF EVALUATIVE
MEANING IN VIDEOGAMES: EXPLICATING THE
PORTRAYAL OF VALUES**

A Thesis submitted by

Nathan Lowien (Bach. Ed. Primary, Grad. Cert. ESOL, M. Ed.)

For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

2022

ABSTRACT

Videogames have evolved into a ubiquitous form of entertainment that requires player engagement. Popular press and research literature are scattered with concerns over the values represented in videogames that have traditionally been designed for male audiences such as action-adventure videogames like *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). Given the increasing importance of the study of multimodal texts in school education, as evidenced in the *Australian Curriculum: English* and both the *Australian Curriculum the Arts: Media Arts* and the *Australian Curriculum Technology: Digital Technology*, the concerns over the values represented in videogames and their use for learning in schools are potentially problematic for educators. Therefore, a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach to understanding how values are conveyed in videogames could offer educators insights into addressing the pedagogical use of action-adventure videogames. The thesis investigated how action-adventure videogames convey values by communicating evaluative meanings about game characters. The thesis drew on Systemic Functional Semiotic (SFS) theory and the conceptual semiotic tools of attitude, focalisation and ludic gameplay operations. A critical multimodal discourse analysis methodology was utilised to analyse the represented evaluative meanings and inferred values conveyed by the characters' dialogue and accompanying images in the games. Findings revealed that the two selected videogames convey values of morality such as *collaboration* and *friendship* and social and political values such as *justice*, *accountability* and *a commitment to the rule of law*. The findings of the thesis offer theoretical, conceptual and methodological knowledge contributions resulting from SFS accounts of attitudinal meaning conveyed by language and image as action-adventure videogames. Empirical implications resulting from the study suggest the establishment of a critical interpretive play pedagogy, which could be used by teachers to develop a critical interpretive appreciation of how action-adventure videogames convey values to their students. The implementation of such a pedagogical approach would require further research.

Keywords: appraisal; attitude; evaluative meaning; moral, social and political values; multimodal critical discourse analysis; systemic functional semiotics; systemic functional linguistics; values; videogames

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I Nathan Lowien declare that the PhD Thesis entitled The Semiotic Construction of Evaluative Meaning in Videogames: Explicating the Portrayal of Values is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date: 22 December 2022

Endorsed by:

Professor Patrick Danaher
Principal Supervisor

Dr Elizabeth Curtis
Associate Supervisor

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to thank for their support while writing this thesis. This endeavour would not have been possible without their encouragement.

First, I am incredibly grateful for the wisdom of my supervisors, Professor Patrick Danaher and Dr Elizabeth Curtis. Patrick and Elizabeth nurtured an environment where I could think through my ideas, write and seek feedback. I am grateful for your encouragement and guidance during my journey. Patrick, your celebration of knowledge production through the PhD candidature is inspiring for early career academics. Elizabeth, your advice provided a strong trunk for my scholarship to branch out. I would also like to thank Professor Len Unsworth for inspiring me to think about multimodality and videogames. Len refined the logic of my ideas, patiently listened and kindled my interest in educational semiotics. Furthermore, I would like to thank Professor Kristina Love, Dr Paul Chandler and Dr Amanda Gutierrez for their encouragement, support and feedback during my candidature. Additionally, I would like to thank Professor Susan Edwards, Professor Catherine Beavis, Professor Mary Macken-Horarik, Professor Beryl Exley and Professor Carmel Diezmann for their constructive feedback during my candidature milestones.

Second, I would like to acknowledge my academic and teaching colleagues. You have all supported and encouraged my growth as an education scholar over the years. You have provided moral support and an ear to listen to my academic ramblings, which I know were puzzling at times. I feel fortunate to have had your encouragement and support during this time. I would also like to acknowledge Elite Editing. Their editorial intervention was restricted to Standards D and E of the *Australian Standards of Editing Practice*. Also, this research has been supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Third, on a personal level, I would like to express my gratitude to my family. I am indebted to my parents, brother and sister. Your unconditional love, support and encouragement have inspired my interest in education and its positive impact on our lives. You have always believed in me and never doubted that I would reach completion. Finally, to my daughter Lucy. Your love and laughter have enriched my world and kept my spirits high throughout my journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
CERTIFICATION OF THESIS	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xviii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xxii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – PRESS “PLAY” TO BEGIN	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Ubiquity and popularity of videogames	4
1.3 Defining values	5
1.4 Identity and gaming.....	7
1.5 The study of videogames.....	8
1.6 Social concerns and game classifications.....	9
1.6.1 Gender	10
1.6.2 Race.....	11
1.6.3 Violence	11
1.6.4 Videogame classification	12
1.7 Values at play	14
1.8 Educational studies: Videogames and values.....	15
1.9 Curriculum documents	18
1.9.1 The <i>Australian Curriculum: English</i>	18
1.9.2 The <i>Australian Curriculum Arts: Media Arts</i>	21
1.9.3 The <i>Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies</i>	21
1.9.4 The general capability of ethical understanding	23
1.10 Research problem	24
1.11 Research questions	24
1.12 Research approach.....	25
1.13 Research data.....	27
1.14 Chapters.....	28

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW – THE GAME ARENA	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 The <i>Values at Play</i> heuristic.....	31
2.3 The Ludic Framework	33
2.4 The <i>Games as Action-Games as Text Framework</i>	35
2.5 A social semiotic approach to videogame design	38
2.6 SFS approaches to explicating values	40
2.6.1 Expressing evaluative meanings in language.....	41
2.6.2 Image evaluative meaning.....	44
2.6.3 Player-game character affiliation: Interactive meaning and focalisation resources	45
2.6.4 Intermodality: Instantiation, commitment and coupling.....	47
2.7 A conceptual framework for the explication of values in action-adventure videogames	49
2.8 Summary	51
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – GAME EQUIPMENT	52
3.1 Introduction	52
3.2 Social semiotic philosophical orientations	53
3.3 Systems.....	55
3.4 The narrative dimension.....	56
3.5 Research Sub-Question One: The evaluative meaning resources of attitude.....	58
3.6 Affect.....	59
3.6.1 Happiness	60
3.6.2 Security.....	61
3.6.3 Satisfaction	61
3.6.4 Inclination.....	62
3.7 Judgement.....	62
3.7.1 Judgements of social esteem	63
3.7.2 Normality	63
3.7.3 Capacity.....	64
3.7.4 Tenacity	64
3.7.5 Judgement of social sanction.....	64
3.7.6 Veracity	65
3.7.7 Propriety	65
3.8 Appreciation	65

3.8.1 Reaction.....	66
3.8.2 Composition	67
3.8.3 Valuation	67
3.9 Invoked attitude.....	68
3.10 Language evaluative meaning example	69
3.11 Research Sub-Question One: Visual attitude	71
3.12 Visual evaluative meaning example.....	73
3.13 Research Sub-Question Two: Player-game character affiliation	74
3.14 Interactive meaning	75
3.15 Interactive meaning example	76
3.16 Focalisation	77
3.17 Focalisation example.....	78
3.18 Research Sub-Question Three: The ludic dimension.....	79
3.19 Ludic-representational meaning.....	80
3.19.1 <i>The Arkham Asylum</i> character system network.....	81
3.19.2 <i>The Arkham Asylum</i> ludic character actions	81
3.19.3 <i>The Watch Dogs</i> characters system network.....	82
3.19.4 <i>The Watch Dogs</i> ludic character actions	83
3.20 Character and ludic action example	84
3.21 Ludic-compositional meaning.....	87
3.21.1 Scripted.....	88
3.21.2 Soft-scripted	88
3.21.3 Emergent narratives.....	89
3.22 Interactivity example.....	89
3.23 Overarching Research Question: Intermodality: Commitment and coupling	91
3.23.1 Commitment.....	92
3.23.2 Coupling within system networks	93
3.23.3 Coupling between system networks.....	93
3.23.4 Coupling across metafunctions	97
3.23.5 Coupling across dimensions.....	100
3.23.6 Intermodal co-patterning: Converging and diverging.....	100
3.24 Summary	102
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY – INSTRUCTIONS AND HOW TO PLAY.....	104
4.1 Introduction	104

4.2 Research design and methodology	105
4.3 The sampling of the games.....	107
4.3.1 <i>Batman Arkham Asylum</i>	108
4.3.2 <i>Watch Dogs</i>	108
4.4 Method for the narrative dimension	109
4.4.1 Language: Attitude analysis and coding	109
4.4.2 Language: Attitude analysis and summary	111
4.4.3 Multiple coding of attitudinal evaluative meanings	114
4.4.4 Coding of attitudes of humour and sarcasm	115
4.4.5 Image: Attitude analysis and coding	115
4.4.6 Image: Attitude analysis and summary	118
4.4.7 Player affiliation: Focalisation and interactive meaning analysis and coding	119
4.4.8 Player affiliation: Analysis and summary	121
4.5 Method for the ludic dimension	122
4.5.1 Ludic operation analysis and coding	122
4.5.2 Ludic operation analysis and summary	127
4.6 Summary of the methodological and analytical approaches	128
4.7 The validity and reliability of the study	131
4.8 Assumptions and limitations	132
4.9 Ethical and political considerations.....	133
4.10 Summary	134
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS – HERO VERSUS VILLAINS.....	135
5.1 Introduction	135
5.2 Narrative dimension	136
5.3 Research Sub-Question One: Inscribed language evaluative meaning	136
5.3.1 The Commissioner	137
5.3.2 The Guard.....	138
5.3.3 Batman	139
5.3.4 The Joker	139
5.4 Inscribed evaluative meaning coupling.....	141
5.5 Inscribed evaluative meaning similarities	142
5.6 Research Sub-Question One: Invoked language evaluative meaning.....	142
5.6.1 Batman	143
5.6.2 The Commissioner	144
5.6.3 The Guard.....	145

5.6.4 Harley Quinn	146
5.6.5 The Joker	146
5.7 Invoked evaluative meaning coupling.....	148
5.7.1 Batman	148
5.7.2 The Joker	150
5.8 Invoked evaluative meaning similarities	151
5.9 Inscribed and invoked evaluative meaning coupling	152
5.9.1 The Commissioner	152
5.9.2 The Guard.....	153
5.9.3 Batman	153
5.9.4 The Joker	154
5.10 Language evaluative meaning summary	156
5.11 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning.....	158
5.11.1 Batman	159
5.11.2 The Guard.....	161
5.11.3 Harley Quinn	161
5.11.4 Asylum inmates.....	161
5.11.5 The Joker	162
5.12 Visual evaluative meaning coupling	163
5.13 Visual evaluative meaning similarities	169
5.14 Visual evaluative meaning summary	170
5.15 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation.....	170
5.15.1 Batman	171
5.15.2 The Joker	179
5.15.3 Harley Quinn	179
5.16 Player affiliation similarities	182
5.17 Player affiliation summary	182
5.18 Research Sub-Question Three: Ludic operations.....	182
5.19 Playable characters	183
5.20 Scripted factum interactions	183
5.20.1 Batman	184
5.20.2 The Joker	185
5.20.3 Batman’s emergent narrative actum interactions	186
5.20.4 Batman’s actum fighting interactions	187
5.20.5 Batman’s actum exploring interactions	191

5.20.6 The Joker’s emergent narrative factum interactions	195
5.21 Non-playable characters	195
5.22 Scripted factum interactions	196
5.22.1 The Commissioner	196
5.22.2 The Guard.....	197
5.22.3 The Asylum Doctor	198
5.22.4 Harley Quinn	199
5.23 Emergent narrative tactum interactions.....	200
5.23.1 The inmates	200
5.23.2 The Commissioner	201
5.24 Coupling and similarities	202
5.25 Ludic operation summary.....	206
5.26 Summary	207
CHAPTER 6: RESULTS – PROTAGONIST VERSUS ANTAGONISTS	208
6.1 Introduction	208
6.2 Narrative dimension	209
6.3 Research Sub-Question One: Inscribed language evaluative meaning	209
6.4 Research Sub-Question One: Invoked language evaluative meanings	211
6.4.1 Clara Lille.....	212
6.4.2 T-Bone.....	213
6.4.3 Aiden	213
6.5 Invoked coupling.....	214
6.5.1 Aiden	214
6.5.2 T-Bone.....	215
6.5.3 Clara	215
6.6 Invoked and inscribed evaluative meaning coupling	216
6.6.1 Clara	216
6.7 Evaluative meaning similarities	217
6.8 Language evaluative meaning summary	217
6.9 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning.....	218
6.9.1 Aiden	219
6.9.2 Clara	221
6.9.3 The Hitmen.....	221
6.10 Visual evaluative meaning coupling	222
6.10.1 Aiden	222

6.10.2 The Hitmen.....	229
6.11 Visual evaluative meaning similarities	231
6.12 Visual evaluative meaning summary	231
6.13 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation.....	232
6.14 Similarities and player affiliation summary	239
6.15 Ludic dimension	239
6.16 Research Sub-Question Three: Playable characters.....	239
6.16.1 Scripted factum interactions	240
6.16.2 Aiden’s emergent narrative actum interactions.....	245
6.16.3 Aiden’s emergent narrative actum exploring interactions	246
6.16.4 Aiden’s emergent narrative actum fighting interactions	249
6.17 Research Sub-Question Three: Non-playable characters.....	258
6.17.1 Clara’s scripted factum interactions	258
6.17.2 The Hitmen’s scripted factum interactions	259
6.17.3 Clara’s soft-scripted factum interaction	261
6.17.4 The Hitmen’s emergent narrative tactum interactions	262
6.18 Coupling and similarities	263
6.19 Ludic operation summary.....	266
6.20 Summary	267
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – LEVELLING UP.....	268
7.1 Introduction	268
7.2 Revisiting the research problem.....	268
7.3 Research Sub-Question One: Language evaluative meaning	270
7.3.1 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Batman Arkham Asylum</i>	270
7.3.2 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Watch Dogs</i>	273
7.3.3 Positioning language evaluative meaning findings.....	274
7.4 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning.....	275
7.4.1 Game scene cross analysis: <i>Batman Arkham Asylum</i>	276
7.4.2 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Watch Dogs</i>	277
7.4.3 Positioning visual evaluative meaning findings.....	278
7.5 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation.....	284
7.5.1 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Batman Arkham Asylum</i>	284
7.5.2 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Watch Dogs</i>	285
7.5.3 Positioning player affiliation findings.....	286
7.6 Research Sub-Question Three: Ludic operations.....	288

7.6.1 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Batman Arkham Asylum</i>	289
7.6.2 Game scenes cross analysis: <i>Watch Dogs</i>	290
7.6.3 Positioning ludic operation findings	292
7.7 The overarching research question: Conveyed values and action-adventure videogames	299
7.7.1 Positioning conveyed values findings	301
7.8 Summary	302
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS – GAME OVER	304
8.1 Introduction	304
8.2 Contributions to the research problem	304
8.2.1 Contributions to knowledge	305
8.2.2 Theoretical knowledge contributions	306
8.2.3 Conceptual knowledge contributions	307
8.2.4 Methodological knowledge contributions	310
8.3 Implications for educational practice and further research	311
8.4 Conclusion.....	316
REFERENCES	318
APPENDICES	331

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Examples of affiliation resources – <i>Arkham Asylum</i>	46
Table 3.1 Terminology for the three metafunctions adapted from Painter et al. (2013).....	54
Table 4.1 Different evaluative meanings communicated about characters	111
Table 4.2 Coding of visual attitude	116
Table 4.3 The qualitative interactive meaning analysis table	120
Table 4.4 Example of ludic operations analysis in the Joker’s Escape	124
Table 4.5 Analytical approach table	129
Table 5.1 Quantitative inscribed evaluative meaning about characters – the Joker’s Escape	136
Table 5.2 The Commissioner’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and social sanction.....	141
Table 5.3 Quantitative invoked evaluative meaning about characters – the Joker’s Escape .	142
Table 5.4 Batman’s coupling of invoked judgements of capacity and insecurity	149
Table 5.5 Batman’s coupling of invoked judgments of tenacity and physical and mental capacity.....	149
Table 5.6 The Joker’s coupling of invoked judgements of social esteem, sanction and affect.....	150
Table 5.7 The Joker’s coupling of invoked judgements of social esteem and sanction.....	151
Table 5.8 The Commissioner’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and appreciation .	152

Table 5.9 The Guard’s coupling of affect, appreciation and judgements of social esteem and sanction.....	153
Table 5.10 Batman’s coupling of judgements of social esteem.....	153
Table 5.11 The Joker’s coupling of attitudes of appreciation and judgements of impropriety	154
Table 5.12 The Joker’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and sanction	154
Table 5.13 The Joker’s coupling of affect and judgements of social esteem.....	155
Table 5.14 The Joker’s coupling of affect and appreciation	155
Table 5.15 The Joker’s coupling of attitudes of appreciation and judgements of social sanction.....	156
Table 5.16 Visual evaluative meanings represented in the Joker’s Escape	159
Table 5.17 Coupling of Batman’s visual judgements of capacity during the Joker’s Escape	164
Table 5.18 Coupling of visual affect and judgements of physical strength during the Joker’s Escape.....	167
Table 5.19 Player affiliation with characters during the Joker’s Escape	171
Table 5.20 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Image 4	173
Table 5.21 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 35f and 35j	173
Table 5.22 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 35l, 35n, 37a, 37b and 37c ..	174
Table 5.23 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 35i.....	175
Table 5.24 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 20, 22 and 34.....	176
Table 5.25 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 31, 35k, 35m and 35o.....	177

Table 5.26 Joker’s coupling of affiliation resources Image 26	179
Table 5.27 Harley Quinn coupling of affiliation resources Images 8 and 27	181
Table 5.28 Playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions – the Joker’s Escape	183
Table 5.29 Batman’s scripted factum interactions -the Joker’s Escape	184
Table 5.30 The Joker’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape	186
Table 5.31 Batman’s emergent narrative actum interactions – the Joker’s Escape	187
Table 5.32 Batman’s emergent narrative – actum fighting interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	189
Table 5.33 Batman’s emergent narrative – actum exploring interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	192
Table 5.34 The Joker’s emergent narrative - actum fighting interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	195
Table 5.35 Non-playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions – the Joker’s Escape.....	196
Table 5.36 The Commissioner’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape	197
Table 5.37 The asylum guard’s scripted factum interactions.....	198
Table 5.38 The Asylum Doctor’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	198
Table 5.39 Harley Quinn’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	199
Table 5.40 The inmates’ emergent narrative tactum interactions – the Joker’s Escape	201
Table 5.41 Commissioner Gordon’s emergent narrative factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape.....	202

Table 5.42 Example of coupling of ludic operations during the scripted and emergent narrative segments – the Joker’s Escape	204
Table 6.1 Quantitative inscribed evaluative meanings about Clara Lille	209
Table 6.2 Clara Lille’s pattern of inscribed judgements of capacity and trust.....	211
Table 6.3 Quantitative invoked evaluative meanings about characters – Clara Lille’s Death Scene	211
Table 6.4 Aiden’s coupling between physical capacity and immorality.....	214
Table 6.5 T-Bone’s coupling between physical capacity and disquiet	215
Table 6.6 Clara’s coupling between judgements of veracity and propriety.....	215
Table 6.7 Clara’s coupling between judgements of social esteem and propriety	216
Table 6.8 Visual evaluative meanings represented in Clara Lille’s Death Scene	218
Table 6.9 Aiden’s coupling between judgements of physical strength and mental capacity .	223
Table 6.10 Aiden’s coupling between judgements of mental capacity, physical strength and insecurity	228
Table 6.11 The Hitmen’s coupling between judgements of physical strength and insecurity	229
Table 6.12 Aiden’s focalisation and interactive meaning resources – Clara Lille’s Death Scene	233
Table 6.13 Images 1a, 1b and 1c’s coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden driving	234
Table 6.14 Images 2a, 2b and 2c’s coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden running.....	235
Table 6.15 Images 2a, 2b and 2c’s coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden during the gun fight	236

Table 6.16 Images 33a, 33d, 33e and 33f's coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden during the gun fight	238
Table 6.17 Aiden's interactivity and initiated actions in Clara Lille's Death Scene	239
Table 6.18 Aiden's scripted factum interactions during Clara Lille's Death Scene	240
Table 6.19 Aiden's soft-scripted actum interactions.....	241
Table 6.20 Aiden's soft-scripting – actum fighting and exploring interactions.....	242
Table 6.21 Aiden's emergent narrative actum interactions during Clara Lille's Death Scene	245
Table 6.22 Aiden's emergent narrative – actum exploring interactions during Clara Lille's Death Scene.....	247
Table 6.23 Aiden's emergent narrative – actum fighting interactions.....	250
Table 6.24 Non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions in Clara Lille's Death Scene	258
Table 6.25 Clara Lille's scripted factum interactions	259
Table 6.26 The Hitmen's scripted factum interactions	260
Table 6.27 Clara Lille's soft-scripted factum interaction	262
Table 6.28 The Hitmen's emergent narrative tactum interactions	263
Table 6.29 Example of co-patterning of ludic operations and evaluative meanings during different interactive segments	265
Table 7.1 Examples of provoked judgements of physical strength.....	283
Table 7.2 Example of converging coupling of mental capacity and focalisation	287

Table 7.3 Converging coupling of mental capacity and focalisation	287
Table 7.4 Converging coupling of interactivity and initiated actions semiotic resources	294
Table 7.5 Coupling of Batman’s judgements of capacity and emergent narrative actum interaction.....	295
Table 7.6 Coupling of Aiden’s judgements of capacity and <i>emergent narrative actum</i> interaction.....	296
Table 7.7 Example of ludonarrative dissonance in <i>Watch Dogs</i>	298
Table 8.1 ACE and ACAMA content descriptions (adapted from Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a, 2020).....	314
Table 8.2 ACAMA and ACTDT content descriptions (adapted from Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, 2017a).....	316

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Videogame classification matrix (Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts, 2012, para 4)	13
Figure 2.1: The <i>Values at Play</i> development cycle (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014, p. 78) ..	32
Figure 2.2: Different ludics operating in the game context (adapted from Aristov, 2017, p. 12).....	34
Figure 2.3: The <i>Games as Action-Games as Text Framework</i> (Apperley & Beavis, 2013, p. 9).....	36
Figure 2.4: The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework	51
Figure 3.1: The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework	53
Figure 3.2 Judgement appraisal system (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 38).....	55
Figure 3.3 Simultaneous visual subjectivity system (adapted from Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 149).....	56
Figure 3.4 Conceptual framework: Narrative dimension.....	57
Figure 3.5 Attitude system network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 38)	59
Figure 3.6 Sub-categories of affect (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 69)	60
Figure 3.7 Sub-categories of judgement (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 74)	63
Figure 3.8 Sub-categories of appreciation (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 78)	66
Figure 3.9 Invoked attitude system network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 67)	69
Figure 3.10 Example application of inscribed judgement.....	70

Figure 3.11 Example application of invoked judgement	71
Figure 3.12 Inscribed attitude – use of visual metaphor (White, 2014, p. 38).....	72
Figure 3.13 Provoked attitude (White, 2014, p. 38).....	72
Figure 3.14 Flagged attitude (White, 2014, p. 39)	73
Figure 3.15 Afforded attitude (White, 2014, p. 39)	73
Figure 3.16 Example application of visual judgement.....	74
Figure 3.17 Interactive meaning system network (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 149)	76
Figure 3.18 Example application of interactive meaning	77
Figure 3.19 Focalisation system network (Painter et al., 2013, p. 21).....	78
Figure 3.20 Example application of focalisation meaning.....	79
Figure 3.21 Conceptual framework: Ludic dimension.....	80
Figure 3.22 <i>The Arkham Asylum</i> characters system network.....	81
Figure 3.23 <i>The Arkham Asylum</i> ludic character actions	82
Figure 3.24 <i>The Watch Dogs</i> characters system network	83
Figure 3.25 <i>The Watch Dogs</i> ludic character actions	84
Figure 3.26 Example application of a playable character system network	85
Figure 3.27 Example application of a ludic action system network	85
Figure 3.28 Example application of a non-playable character system network.....	86
Figure 3.29 Example application of a non-playable character action system network.....	87

Figure 3.30 Interactivity	88
Figure 3.31 An example application of interactivity meaning resources.....	90
Figure 3.32 The conceptual framework's instantiated system and metafunctional meaning ..	92
Figure 3.33 Coupling within a system network	93
Figure 3.34 A coupling pattern between <i>interpersonal</i> systems in the <i>narrative</i> dimension of the conceptual framework	96
Figure 3.35 Coupling across metafunctions	99
Figure 3.36 An example of converging co-patterning between language and image	101
Figure 3.37 An example of divergent co-patterning between language and image.....	102
Figure 4.1 Inscribed attitudes between characters – the Joker's Escape.....	112
Figure 4.2 Example of how the frequency of attitudes varied within characters.....	112
Figure 4.3 Example of sub-sort: Character, inscribed attitudes and appraised items – the Joker's Escape	113
Figure 4.4 Example of coupling of inscribed attitudes of judgement	114
Figure 4.5 Example of similar evaluative meanings between characters.....	114
Figure 4.6 Example of the expressed visual attitude of the characters in the Joker's Escape	118
Figure 4.7 Example of sub-sort: Character expressed attitudes and verbal description – the Joker's Escape	119
Figure 4.8 Example of player-character affiliations in the Joker's Escape.....	121
Figure 4.9 Example of sub-sort: Focalisation and interactive meaning in the Joker's Escape.....	122

Figure 4.10 Example of interactivity and initiated actions count in the Joker's Escape.....	127
Figure 4.11 Example of sub-sort: Interactivity and initiated action in the Joker's Escape....	128
Figure 7.1 Typical examples of divergent co-patterning of evaluative meaning	281
Figure 8.1 The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework	308

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Classification Ratings

G	General
PG	Parental Guidance
M	Mature
MA15+	Mature Audience
R18+	Adult

Curriculum

ACE	<i>Australian Curriculum: English</i>
ACAMA	<i>Australian Curriculum Arts: Media Arts</i>
ACTDT	<i>Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies</i>

Semiotics

SFS	Systemic Functional Semiotics
+ve	Positive
-ve	Negative

Videogames

FPS	First Person Shooter
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
RTS	Real Time Strategy

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION – PRESS “PLAY” TO BEGIN

1.1 Introduction

Videogames are an exciting and popular form of entertainment for an increasing proportion of citizens throughout the world. Popular press and research literature are scattered with concerns over the values represented in videogames, such as their violence, race and gender depictions. However, curriculum documents such as the *Australian Curriculum The Arts: Media Arts* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a), *the Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies* (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015) and the *Senior English Curriculum* of the Australian State of Queensland (Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c) include videogames as multimodal texts that can be used for learning in schools. Educational research has also demonstrated several benefits for literacy learning involving videogames (Beavis et al., 2012, 2017; Gee, 2003, 2004, 2007). These benefits are attributed to the changing nature of literacy due to the advancement in communication technologies and the changes in literacy practices, which have had implications for the teaching of English in the classroom. It is considered that multimodal texts such as videogames are authentic, real-world texts that can support students' literacy learning. Furthermore, the educational research reasons that many young people engage with videogames in their out-of-school-world and this engagement with videogames could be used as a source of knowledge to inform students inside school literacy learning. Notwithstanding the curriculum and learning advocacy, concerns over the values represented in videogames and their use for classroom learning are potentially problematic for educators.

This problem first occurred to me when playing the videogame *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016). The game required me to take on the identity of the superhero Batman as he fought to take back control of the asylum after the supervillain, the Joker, had escaped and released the asylum's mentally ill patients and other inmates who were villainous criminals. I noticed that despite Batman's role as a superhero, he was a vigilante acting without legal authority. During gameplay episodes, he used brute force to subdue the patients or supervillains. The game's narrative justified Batman's role as a vigilante by referring to his origin story, in which a young Bruce Wayne witnessed a criminal murder of his parents. The Gotham judicial and law enforcement systems were unable to deal with the criminal responsible, leaving the young orphan to conclude it is better to deal with crime by working

outside the law. Bruce decided to become Batman to protect Gotham from the crime brought on by the supervillains. The game made it evident that Batman valued justice but not the lawful pursuit of justice. Being a superhero, Batman must have had a moral code; however, his moral code was ambiguous and never explicitly defined in the game.

I noticed the dialogue and types of words that characters used to make evaluations about themselves and other characters. The Joker's sarcastic humour was often expressed through affective words of happiness; for example, after he was captured by Batman and returned to Arkham Asylum, the Joker states, "Gotta say it's **good** to be back". Also, the Joker's dialogue invoked feelings of satisfaction when recounting to Batman his plan to take over the asylum, for example, "I set a trap, and you sprang it gloriously!". At other times, the Joker conducted dastardly deeds, such as choking a guard to death, conveying his impropriety and commenting with dark humour, "The chokes on you", while standing over and looking down at his victim. The Joker's dialogue indicated an immoral value position. Yet, as a player, it was engaging and intriguing as to how this position enabled the Joker to seem clever and amusing, even if it was in a dark fashion.

In contrast, Batman's dialogue focused on positive judgements of his character through his ability and determination to capture the Joker, for example "If you [the Joker] think I'll let you [the Joker] run" or his ability and determination to escape after being trapped, such as "I'll find a way out!" At times Batman would evaluate the night with the Joker by invoking a negative reaction such as "Long night, Jim [Police Commissioner Gordan]", while also expressing a positive reaction that it may be the last night he would have to deal with the Joker "Hopefully, the last one we'll ever have to deal with him". Batman was represented as moral, earnest, concerned and physically capable, but not as clever or amusing. This dynamic contrast between the superhero Batman and the supervillain, the Joker, made the game engaging and entertaining.

I also noticed that while playing the game, I was sometimes positioned to look upon the characters from an outside perspective, while at other times, I was positioned as a character. For example, when I was positioned as Batman, the dialogue established his value position as a superhero, and I became Batman in pursuit of the supervillain the Joker. I noticed Batman was a playable character and the videogame was designed to naturalise Batman's perspective for players. However, this naturalised perspective was also problematic for players as it did not consider the values of the player engaging with the game. I observed, as a player I empathised with Batman's perspective, possibly because of a shared value of justice. However, I did not have the same empathy for the Joker's perspective, possibly because of the difference in shared values and maybe because he was not a playable character

for most of the game. I wondered how the game was designed to represent these diverging character positions. I began to realise videogames were not only problematic for educators because of concerns over violence, gender and race. However, they were also problematic because of the ambiguity between player and game character values and the design of naturalised character perspectives in the game. How could educators address the issue of students' interpretation of and response to, such values in the games?

This thesis aims to address how action-adventure videogames such as *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. Action-adventure videogames are an appropriate videogame format for the examination of conscious or unconscious evaluative meanings about game characters in action-adventure videogames, as they are a blend of different game formats such as first-person shooter (FPS) and fighting formats, which have been traditionally designed for male audiences. Examples of action-adventure videogames include the *Grand Theft Auto* franchise (Rockstar Games, 2004; Rockstar North, 2013), *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) and *Tomb Raider* (Square Enix Ltd, 2013). These games are widely popular and many have been traditionally designed for male audiences and contain storylines that contextualised social and political concerns of violence, gender depictions, racial stereotyping and sexualised violence (Alexander, 2014; Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Kowert et al., 2015; Todd, 2015; Tomkinson & Harper, 2015). Many action-adventure games also have classification ratings of M, MA15+ and R18+ because of their mature themes. The game format is also popular, as evidenced by a combined total of 30.3 per cent of games sold in the United States in 2016 (Entertainment Software Association, 2017). Action-adventure videogames also contain narrative storylines and playable game segments, which contain embedded values (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that action-adventure videogames, which have been traditionally popular with male audiences, are a suitable game format for the examination of how values can be consciously and unconsciously depicted in games.

Given the popularity of action-adventure videogames, the recognition of videogames' importance by educational research and their inclusion in formal curriculum documents, this chapter will outline the significance of pursuing an investigation into how videogames convey values about characters and how players are visually positioned in relation to these evaluations about the characters. In order to commence the investigation, this chapter will first examine the ubiquity and popularity of videogames. Second, how the thesis defines moral, social and political values will be discussed. Third, the identities utilised by players when gaming will be examined. Fourth, the academic field of Games Studies, social concerns

and game classification will be reviewed. Fifth, the study of values, educational studies about videogames and connections with the *Australian Curriculum* will be explored. Sixth, the research problem, questions and research design for this investigation will be described. Finally, an overview of the chapters for the thesis will be provided.

1.2 Ubiquity and popularity of videogames

Videogames have become a ubiquitous source of entertainment in the economic and socio-cultural tapestry of the 21st century. These games utilise many platforms ranging from plug-in television consoles to portable devices such as smartphones or tablets. The videogames industry's economic success is evidenced by an expected \$180 billion US dollar earning during 2021, a growth of 20% assisted by the coronavirus lockdowns during the year (Witkowski, 2021). The industry is also reported to have economically surpassed, in terms of profits, the North American sports and film industries combined during 2021 (Gilbert, 2021). A similar economic success is evidenced in Australia, with the 2019 consumer spending of 3.614 billion Australian dollars (Interactive Games & Entertainment Association, 2020). The 2019 Australian videogames market increased by 12 per cent from 2017 (Interactive Games & Entertainment Association, 2020). In comparison, the Australian film industry considered 2019 a successful year, with 39.8 million Australian dollars recorded from box office sales (Screen Australia, 2020). The commercial success of the videogame industry in Australia and North America is a significant indicator of the extensiveness of games as a cultural pursuit.

Videogames are not only commercially successful, but they have also influenced the socio-cultural tapestry of the 21st century. An indication of this influence is the harnessing of the popularity of videogames being used by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to promote the potential, abilities and ingenuity of migrant and refugee children (UNICEF, 2020). The UNICEF promotion cast migrant and refugee children as superheroes, and viewers are positioned as the children/superheroes who achieve their dreams of becoming a doctor, author or pilot. The promotion construes a social value of inclusion for migrant and refugee children and emphasizes the skills they can bring to their new community. A further indication of this influence is the growing ubiquity of Esports (competitive gaming at a professional level). During 2020, broadcasters such as ESPN held Esports days due to the coronavirus pandemic limiting the live broadcasting of many professional sports (Adgate, 2020). Esports includes several different games such as multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA), first-person shooter (FPS), fighting, sporting and real-time strategy (RTS) games (Dewley, 2021). Esports in Australia are becoming more familiar with the establishment of the Australian Esports League, with many universities,

clubs and high school leagues established across Australia (Critical Hit Entertainment Pty Ltd, 2020). The emerging interest in Esports gameplay is also an indication that videogames are a commonly used form of entertainment amongst Australian families. Another indication of the influence of videogames on the socio-political tapestry is their ubiquity in many Australian families. A report by the Australian Interactive Games and Entertainment Association indicated that 97 per cent of Australian homes with children have videogames (Brand, 2018). Also, 67 per cent of Australians play videogames (Brand, 2018), and 47 per cent of these Australians identify as female (Brand et al., 2019). Furthermore, 59 per cent of parents will play games with their children in the same room, and 43 per cent will play with their children online (Brand et al., 2019). Additionally, 52 per cent of parents advise schools use videogames for education, and 60 per cent advised that games promote student creativity (Brand et al., 2019). In summary, videogames are now a part of the socio-cultural entertainment for many Australian families. It is important to understand the values communicated in the digital socio-cultural worlds occupied by children and equip them with knowledge and methods that can be used to critically explore these worlds.

1.3 Defining values

This realisation led me to think about values. Martin (1985) explained that values are often noticeable during a crisis of ideologies, such as Batman realising he valued justice but did not believe in the capacity of law enforcement agencies to bring criminals to justice. Similarly, Maton (2014) simply described values as being a contrast between ideologies that are perceived as being attractive or not so attractive. Whereas Sinde et al. (2015) were more specific in their definition of values as being:

“criteria used by people to select and justify their actions and assess people (including oneself) and different events” (Kluckhohn, 1951; Roakeach, 1973; Williams, 1968). Thus, we could say that values are the qualities people develop, initially, to respond to biological needs and, later, according to their social context; based on which people shape their representations of reality and acts. (p. 233)

Furthermore, Flanagan and Nissenbaum (2014) defined values as being:

... properties of things and states of affairs that we care about and strive to attain. They are similar to goals, purposes, and ends, but usually they possess a higher degree of gravitas and permanence, and they tend to be more abstract and general. Thus, while you might set a goal to exercise and lose three pounds, it would be odd to cite this as a value. Instead, the relevant value might be good health. ... Values may take a variety of forms – qualities of the environment (such as species diversity), personal traits (such as honesty), and political states (such as justice and democracy). Values may be specific to individuals or shared by groups,

and they may bind communities, cultures, religions, or nations. We acknowledge these differences by speaking of personal values, cultural values, religious values, human values, and so forth. We may further differentiate among types of values by talking of ethical, political, and aesthetic values and more. Finally, values are often ideals: we promote them even as we accept that we may never achieve them. World peace, tolerance, kindness, and justice are instances of such ideals (p. 5)

These definitions categorise values according to behaviours and assessments within individuals and between individuals (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014; Sinde et al., 2015). Values can be classified into subcategories. One being values of morality, which guide an individual's behaviour and assessments of oneself (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014, p. 6). Examples of moral values included "kindness", "honesty", "respect", "peace", "friendship", "collaboration", "autonomy" and "happiness". Values that describe the difference between individuals can be described as social and political values (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014, p. 6). Examples include "justice", "equality", "cooperation", "accountability", "democracy", "liberty", "equal opportunity" and "government transparency". Further examples of social and political values can be found within significant documents such as the United States of America's Declaration of Independence and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, at a national level, Australian values are described by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020, p. 4) as including:

- Respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual,
- Freedom of religion (including the freedom not to follow a particular religion), freedom of speech, and freedom of association,
- Commitment to the rule of law, which means that all people are subject to the law and should obey it,
- Parliamentary democracy, whereby our laws are determined by parliaments elected by the people, those laws being paramount and overriding any other inconsistent religious or secular "laws",
- Equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, or national or ethnic origin,
- A 'fair go' for all that embraces
 - Mutual respect,
 - Tolerance,
 - Compassion for those in need
 - Equality of opportunity for all; and

- The English language as the national language, and as an important unifying element of Australian society

In regard to these definitions of values, I considered how the characters' dialogue in the *Arkham Asylum* game could infer a character's values and how the visual positioning of players as game characters affiliated gamers with a character and the character's established values. I wondered how the character's communication implied their moral values, such as "kindness", "friendship" and "collaboration" or their social and political values, such as "justice" and "accountability" (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014, p. 6). Also, how did the character's communication imply the above listed Australian values? Were the values represented in the Batman game or similar games problematic for educators due to their representation of violence, race and gender depiction as described by popular press and research literature? Moreover, were videogames such as *Arkham Asylum* problematic due to how they naturalised and provoked empathy with characters such as Batman despite his ambiguous value position? Furthermore, how did players' personal values align or conflict with a character's represented values? I wondered about the implications for learning about character values through such an analysis of dialogue, images and the afforded game and player initiated actions in the videogame. Also, what implications would an analysis of dialogue, images and afforded game and player initiated actions in games offer students who played these games and educators for examining videogames in their classrooms? I considered such an approach could form the basis for a critical interpretive appreciation of values communicated in videogames. A first step in answering these questions involved understanding the conflict between a game character's represented values and a player's personal values.

1.4 Identity and gaming

How the values of players may conflict with a game character's represented values was examined by Gee (2003), who explained three separate identities that players engaged with when gaming: *The real-world identity*, *the virtual identity* and *the projective identity*. These identities are significant as they influence players' values and prior experience, which they bring to the text when playing a game. The *real-world identity* refers to the identity of the gamer playing the game (Gee, 2003). Attributes comprising my real-world identity would consist of my name: Nathan Lowien, gender: Male, age: 40 years old, nationality: Australian etc. *The virtual identity* refers to the protagonist's identity used by the player in the simulated world of the videogame. For example, a player may take on the role of Batman and control an

avatar identified as Batman throughout the game. *The projective identity* refers to the gamer's values and desires for what they hope and envision their virtual avatar's identity will become while playing the game (Gee, 2003).

Furthermore, in making this projection, players may also desire the avatar to reflect their personal values, history and persona. For example, players taking on the role of Batman may project a strong personal value for investigating and bringing criminals to justice. However, when beginning to play the game, players discover the videogame has interpreted justice as Batman violently knocking out criminals. This conflict between the different interpretations of justice concerning the *projective identity* and the *virtual identity* is important to consider when investigating values at stake in action-adventure videogames because players' real-world values and the values required by a game's virtual or projective identities may conflict (Gee, 2003). This conflict can create situations where gamers have to decide and sanction ethical or unethical actions to complete required tasks to progress the game's narrative storyline to proceed to new game levels. The next step, in understanding my questions about how values were conveyed in action-adventure games involved investigating the academic field of Games Studies.

1.5 The study of videogames

Games Studies emerged as an academic discipline during the first decade of the 21st century. Games Studies as an academic field was established by a divisive debate between narratology (the study of narratives) and ludology (the study of games) (Frasca, 1999, 2003; Kapell, 2016). Narratology perceived videogames as a new form of cybertexts in which traditional narrative theories could be applied (Murray, 1997; Ryan, 2001, 2006). For example, the game *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) followed a narrative genre involving an *orientation*, which created the setting of the game and introduced the game characters such as Batman and the Joker; a *complication*, which introduced a problem into the narrative, such as the Joker escaping; and a *resolution* in which the complication was resolved, such as the Joker being apprehended. Ludology (the study of games) perceived games as coded cybertexts (Aarseth, 1997, 2003) that are governed by *Mechanics*, *Dynamics* and *Aesthetics* (Hunicke et al., 2004; Juul, 2001). The *Mechanics* refer to the codes and algorithms which realise the rules of a game, such as what characters are playable or not playable when playing the game, but also the player initiated and game initiated actions of the game (Walk et al., 2017). The *Dynamics* refer to how players can harness the actions of a playable game avatar to play the game. The actions of playable characters are made possible

by the coded algorithms of a game. The *Aesthetics* can be described as the emotional responses invoked in players when gaming.

Eventually, a consensus was reached to understand videogames as being ludonarratives (Kapell, 2016). Ludonarratives united narratology and ludology perspectives, which considered videogames such as *Arkham Asylum* as containing narrative storylines (Jenkins, 2004; Murray, 1997; Ryan, 2006) such as an *orientation*, *complication* and *resolution*. The *complications* of these narratives often introduced a problem in which players were required to instruct playable characters to perform actions to resolve the problem. For example, in *Arkham Asylum*, when the Joker escapes, Batman is required to fight asylum inmates released by the Joker. During Batman's fight with the inmates, players must use the *Mechanics* and *Dynamics* of the videogames to control the playable character of Batman and instruct him to fight the inmates. Also, the inmates fighting Batman are programmed using coded algorithms activated by the game system to chase after and fight Batman. The playable game segments incorporate ludology perspectives (Aarseth, 1997, 2003; Bogost, 2006, 2007; Juul, 2011). It has been further acknowledged that the relationship between narrative and gameplay segments in videogames helps players draw on their prior knowledge of games to support their understanding of a game's context and how the game can be played (Juul, 2011). Also, a game's ludic capabilities are progressively becoming integrated into the narratives of videogames (Menon, 2015). Therefore, a ludonarrative perspective seeks an understanding of how a game's narrative can be integrated into the composition of a game's ludic interactive segments (Burden & Gouglas, 2012; Frasca, 1999, 2003; Kapell, 2016; Koenitz et al., 2015; Toh, 2015). Developing an understanding of the academic field of Games Studies helped me realise there were many different types of videogames; however, I was interested in action-adventure games that utilised ludonarratives such as *Batman Arkham Asylum*. I wondered about the concerns raised in the popular press, research journals and game classification ratings about these games. What did these concerns have to say about the communicated values in ludonarrative action-adventure games?

1.6 Social concerns and game classifications

Concerns about mature themes, gender, race and violent representations in videogames have been a controversial and a much-explored subject within the field of Games Studies. A particular interest is the differences in the types of games played by male and female gamers. Research literature in this area describes FPS, sports, roleplay and action-adventure games as being traditionally played by more males and digital versions of traditional or casual games such as card games, board games, quizzes, dance games or

simulations being played by more females (Greenberg et al., 2010; Phan et al., 2012; Vermeulen et al., 2011). Studies that focus on female engagement with games propose that gaming communities are becoming more diverse as females now comprise almost half of the gaming community and call for further consideration of inclusive values and socially just representations of violence, gender and races by game designers, specifically in FPS, roleplaying and action-adventure games that have been traditionally more popular with male audiences (Alexander, 2014; Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Kowert et al., 2015; Todd, 2015; Tomkinson & Harper, 2015).

1.6.1 Gender

Despite videogames traditionally attracting male audiences, a content analysis of the female characters represented in videogames between 1983 and 2014 revealed changes in the representation of female characters had occurred (Lynch et al., 2016). The results indicated a diminishing sexualised representation of female characters during that period. Also, there was an increase in playable female characters; however, games often placed these characters in secondary roles and sexualised them compared with the lead male character. There was also a positive relationship between a female's physical capacity and her sexualised depiction. Also, traditional male-oriented games such as fighting genres represented more sexualised characters compared with roleplaying games. The sexualisation of female characters occurs through the use of women as rewards, which represent female characters as in need of saving and after being saved offer their body and affection as a reward, such as in the roleplaying game *The Witcher 2* (Feminist Frequency, 2020). Female characters are also sexualised by the use of camera angles and clothing, such as in action-adventure videogames like *Batman Arkham City* (Rocksteady, 2011). In this game, designers use third person camera perspectives, which often zoom or pan across a female character to enable gamers to look upon the backsides of the characters, who are clothed in short or tight-fitting outfits (Mulvey, 1975). For example, the character of Cat Woman in the action-adventure videogame *Arkham City* wears a tight black bodysuit, and the camera angle focuses on her backside, which is further emphasised by her body language and swaying hips as she moves. In contrast, male characters are often dressed in clothes that hide their backsides through the use of a coat or a cape, for example in the videogame *Arkham City* Batman is represented as having a cape covering the full length of his back. Also, the game camera often focuses on his back from waist up or is positioned to look over his shoulder (Feminist Frequency, 2020). In summary, the literature concerning the depiction of gender in videogames traditionally designed for male audiences did not address the moral, social or political values represented in these

games. Nor, did the literature address how character dialogue communicated evaluative meanings about characters or how the game initiated or player initiated actions of games inferred moral, social or political values.

1.6.2 Race

Studies concerning race in videogames focused on the stereotypical depiction of characters in games that were traditionally favoured by male audiences, such as FPS, fighting, roleplaying and action-adventure videogames. The game franchise *Grand Theft Auto* is often used as an example of how non-white game characters are depicted through racial stereotypes in derogatory and unfavourable ways (Buckmaster, 2014; Dickerman et al., 2008; Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2007; Kent, 2014; Leonard, 2006). For example, *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* (Rockstar Games, 2004) is set in Los Angeles during the 1990s, in which gangs rule. The game represents stereotypical African American and Latino characters and allows players to form gangs to rob, perform drive-by shootings and rape victims, these representations in the game have been critiqued by game scholars and popular press for their depiction of characters' gender and sexuality, Leonard (2006) argued more attention needs to be given to racial character stereotypes in the game (Flanagan et al., 2007). The racial stereotypes of characters have also been critiqued in the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014), as the African American characters contribute to the game's narrative by being either victims or criminal gang members (Gies, 2014). In summary, the literature concerning the depiction of race did not address how videogames traditionally designed for male audiences conveyed moral, social or political values. Furthermore, the literature did not address how characters' dialogue communicated evaluative meanings about game characters or how the visual positioning of players as characters and the game initiated and player initiated actions could infer moral, social or political values.

1.6.3 Violence

Studies concerning violence in videogames traditionally designed for male audiences, such as FPS and action role-playing games, have examined the psychological factors involved when playing these games. The psychological process of moral disengagement when playing violent videogames such as *Doom* revealed gamers enjoy playing violent games when the graphic shooting of game characters is justified (Hartmann & Vorderer, 2010). The examination of moral decisions made in relation to loyalty, adherence to authority, purity and aggression during FPS segments of the action role-playing game *Fallout 3* revealed players used moral reasoning to inform their in-game decisions during gameplay segments (Krcmar

& Cingel, 2016). In summary, the literature concerning the depiction of violence did not address how videogames traditionally designed for male audiences conveyed moral, social and political values. The literature also did not discuss how characters' dialogue communicated evaluative meanings about characters or how the visual positioning of gamers as or along with characters and the game initiated and player initiated actions could infer moral, social or political values. Overall, it can be concluded that popular press and research literature concerning videogames traditionally designed for male audiences have focused on concerns about the representation of gender, race and violence; however, the literature has not addressed how these games convey moral, social and political values. Values permeate the decisions by game designers when writing a character's dialogue, deciding how to position players to look upon or see along with a game character or deciding the game initiated or player initiated actions of videogames. The game designers' decisions about characters' dialogue, the use of camera angles to position players as a character or to see along with a character when playing a game and the game initiated or player initiated actions and how these language, image and action decisions of game designers are incorporated into the narrative and gameplay segments of ludonarratives are considered when games are classified in Australia.

1.6.4 Videogame classification

Similar to other popular forms of entertainment, videogames in Australia have classification ratings to support parents and guardians in deciding on the suitability of a game for their children. A matrix (represented in Figure 1.1) is used to classify the games according to their content's impact level across the elements of *themes*, e.g., mature, horror etc, *violence, language, drug use, nudity* and *sex* (Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts, 2012). Games with a higher impact rating have mature themes of horror, violence, language, drug use, nudity and sex, which are directly communicated through verbal and visual representations and included in a game's ludonarrative through detailed, prolonged, realistic and interactive segments (Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 2021). Games with a lower impact rating contain content that is verbal and not visual and incidental and not direct (Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 2021).

	None	Very mild impact	Mild impact	Moderate impact	Strong impact	High impact
Themes			✓			
Violence			✓			
Language				✓		
Drug use			✓			
Nudity	✓					
Sex				✓		

Figure 1.1: Videogame classification matrix (Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts, 2012, para 4)

The classification categories are divided into two sections. The first section involves an advisory classification starting with “G” rated games that contain content with very mild impact; progressing to “PG” rated games which contain content with mild impact, and “M” rated games which contain content with moderate impact (Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts, 2012). Games with an “M” rating are recommended for people aged 15 years old and above. The second section involves age-restricted classifications starting with “MA15+” games that contain content strong in impact. These games cannot be shown in public, and children under the age of 15 must be accompanied by a parent or adult to purchase the game. Next is “R” rated games that are restricted to people 18 years and over. “R” rated games contain content that is high in impact (Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts, 2012). Mature themes of horror, violence, language, drug use, nudity and sex are often contextualised in game narratives with higher classification ratings such as M, MA15+ and R18+. Games with these classifications are allocated higher ratings as the representation are communicated through the use of language and visual depictions (Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 2021). Similar to the concerns raised by popular press and research articles, the classification ratings of games are indicative of the social concerns about the content represented in videogames. Classification ratings highlight the importance of language, visual and interactive gameplay decisions made by game designers when developing games. I then investigated how these design decisions

influence the representation of moral, social and political values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences.

1.7 Values at play

An examination of the literature concerning values in the design of videogames reveals many of the game elements that need to be considered for the intended or unintended representation of values during the creation of a game. The *Values at Play heuristic*, described by Flanagan and Nissenbaum (2014), is a theoretical and practical framework for understanding how moral, social and political values can be considered by game designers when creating games. It is argued that studying values in games is important as games enrich ...our understanding of how deep-seated sociocultural patterns are reflected in norms of participation, play, and communication. Second, the growth in digital media and expanding cultural significance of games constitutes both an opportunity and responsibility for the design community to reflect on the values that are expressed in games. Third, games have emerged as the media paradigm of the twenty-first century, surpassing film and television in popularity; they have the power to shape work, learning, health care, and more. (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014, p. 3)

The *Values at Play heuristic* argues moral, social and political values are embedded either consciously or unconsciously by designers in the narrative and gameplay segments of games (Flanagan et al., 2005, 2007). Values can be embedded in a game's narrative through a character's origin story. For example, Batman's origin story involved him witnessing the murder of his parents and the failure of the legal and criminal systems to bring the criminal to justice. This failure in the social value of justice drove Batman to become a vigilante to bring criminals to justice. Values can be realised in a gameplay segment by only enabling players to instruct a character using violent fighting actions such as punching, kicking and knocking out other characters. For example, the game *Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) represents mentally ill patients as being criminally insane. The game is designed for the patients to jump onto Batman's shoulders and attack him if he walks too close to them. The patients attack weakens Batman's health points in the game. Batman can stop the attack by knocking the patients unconscious. This gameplay element of *Arkham Asylum* represents mentally ill patients as being dangerous instead of people in need of medical treatment. It is unclear if this representation of mental illness was intended or unintended by the game designers, but it does exemplify why a further examination of the values depicted in the gameplay segments of videogames is required. Analysing games for how they convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters in relation to character

dialogue, the visual positioning of players as characters and game initiated and player initiated actions would further illuminate how values can be consciously or unconsciously depicted in games. This led me to investigate educational studies that had been completed on action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences for represented moral, social and political values.

1.8 Educational studies: Videogames and values

Educational research about videogames was interested in how young people's out-of-school world engagement with games could inform students in school literacy learning. Beavis et al. (2012, 2017) investigated ways that could bridge the in-and out-of-school worlds of students and argued

...that for schools to fully benefit from digital games in the classroom, it is necessary both to recognise the influence of context on how games are understood and played and to understand the ways in which gameplay is linked to issues of identity, performance and sense of self. ...educators must have an awareness of the role of context in gameplay and of the links between digital culture, gameplay and identity in young people lives (Beavis et al., 2017, preface para 3).

Beavis et al. (2012, 2017) took an interest in the changing nature of literacy due to advances in communication technologies, culturally and linguistically diverse societies and the implications for the teaching of literacy using digital multimodal texts such as videogames (Coiro et al., 2008; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis et al., 2016; New London Group, 1996). Emerging from Beavis et al.'s (2012, 2017) research was an understanding of the literacy practices engaged in when gaming, referred to as the *2.4 Games as Action-Games as Text Framework* (Apperley & Beavis, 2011, 2013; Beavis, 2014). Findings from this research noted that students were more agentive with their learning when engaged with games. Teachers also noticed students demonstrated a critical literacy edge in relation to games and gaming, which was often not acknowledged in popular press and opinions regarding videogames (Beavis et al., 2012, 2017). Many of the classroom literacy examples described by Beavis et al. (2012) critically explored the representations presented in action-adventure videogame such as violence and gender (Beavis, 1998, 1999; Byrne, 2012; Cann, 2012; Cuddon, 2012; McNeice et al., 2012; O'Mara & Richards, 2012). Similarly, another study by Sanford and Madill (2007) examined the literacy skills and understanding utilised by male adolescents when playing, creating and composing games during their outside-of-school time. The findings suggest significant literacy learning occurs during these times. However, many of the games played "promoted hegemonic Western masculine traits of competition, strength,

speed, aggression and domination” (Sanford & Madill, 2007, p. 449). The ideologies described in para-texts, such as news articles about videogames were investigated by Bacalja (2018). The investigation did not uncover moral, social or political values represented in para-texts or games and concluded that further inspection and explicit discussions were required for students to assess the gaps and silences in games (e.g. who is missing or has been left out of the game?), or the unpacking of the world views and perspectives presented in games (e.g. what is the world view presented in the game?). Nevertheless, these studies did not address how action-adventure games conveyed moral, social or political values through the communication of evaluative meanings about characters’ dialogue or how the games visually positioned players as characters and afforded game initiated and player initiated actions, which infer moral, social or political values.

Another noteworthy study conducted by Dezuanni and Zagami (2017) investigated the teaching of morals in a Religious Education course. Students explored the text-based adventure game *Secret Agent: Mission One*, which presents gamers with a range of ethical dilemmas involving lying, theft and murder. Players consider the ethical and moral implications before inputting their decision into the game. Students also created their own videogame that involved game characters in an ethical dilemma. It was observed that students found it challenging to design games with a moral framework because they were not familiar with how games could be designed to represent positive moral frameworks (Dezuanni & Zagami, 2017). Dezuanni and Zagami's (2017) study reveals the importance of understanding how the design principles used to create videogames and how these design principles permeate values in a game’s narrative and gameplay segments (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014). Therefore, understanding the design principles of videogames would be beneficial for developing a critical interpretive appreciation of values communicated in games. The design principles in videogames were described by Gee (2003), who argued that through interaction and engagement with videogames, gamers develop an appreciation for the design principles and how these principles are deployed in simulated game worlds. Furthermore, these design principles require knowledge of the operation of multiple sign modalities such as language and image and also an appreciation of how these modalities connect with each other (Gee, 2003, p. 207). Gee (2003) argues that the manner in which the modalities such as language and image connect with each other builds up the meaning and knowledge instantiated in the simulated world of videogames. In this way, Gee (2003) argues the relevance of a design grammar that can describe the multiple modalities such as language, image, sound, gesture etc utilised in the design of simulated game environments.

Educational studies have also described a need for a design grammar to discuss the multimodal composition of videogames as an essential component of game literacy which explored an approach to literacy education based on game design (Buckingham & Burn, 2007; Salen, 2007; Walsh, 2010; Zimmerman, 2009). Further, educational studies that investigated the design modalities of action-adventure videogames include Burn (2003, 2005, 2006), who examined the different representations of Harry Potter across similar scenes in different media platforms including books, films and videogames. It was revealed the design modalities, specifically the semiotic choices concerning the affiliations between characters and viewers made in each media platform influenced the interpersonal meanings between characters and viewers. For example, the film and game portrayals of Harry Potter used visual camera angles to create an affiliation between viewers and characters by focalising viewers to see along with the characters and the use of different interactive camera angles to create solidarity and involvement between viewers and characters. The character's perspectives were created differently in the book depictions. Similarly, how action-adventure videogames were designed to visually position players as game characters through the use of camera angles was investigated by Bradford (2010) to deepen students' critical interpretation of how games create solidarity between players and game characters by enabling players to see along with a character. Systemic Functional Semiotic design grammars using evaluative language resources of attitude (Martin & White, 2005) and visual camera angles to create player-game character solidarity were drawn on by Lowien (2016) to investigate the evaluative stance and visual perspectives of characters in the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). It was argued an understanding of SFS design grammar would support students' critical appreciation of action-adventure videogames. Finally, Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) investigated the ludic gameplay design of action-adventure games and argued that a games setting, its playable and non-playable characters and the game initiated and player initiated actions of games were social semiotic design principles used by game designers when creating videogames. Overall, these studies have revealed how videogames utilised modalities such as language and image to convey meaning in games. However, these studies have not investigated how action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences convey moral, social or political values through language, image and gameplay action. Understanding how the modalities such as language, image and gameplay actions co-pattern to form evaluative meanings about game characters would inform a critical interpretive appreciation of values communicated in games.

In summary, the investigation of how values were conveyed in action-adventure videogames had educational significance for the following reasons. One, educational games

research has demonstrated how young people's out-of-school world engagement with videogames can be used as a bridge to inform their in-school literacy learning (Beavis et al., 2012, 2017). Two, there is educational interest in multimodal forms of communication and how multimodality can be used to examine how a text conveys values (Coiro et al., 2008; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kalantzis et al., 2016; New London Group, 1996). Three, understanding how the modalities of language, image and gameplay actions form patterns of evaluative meanings across a game would inform a critical interpretative appreciation of the moral, social and political values represented in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. A further step in establishing the significance of how values are conveyed in videogames required an examination of how videogames, multimodality and values were included in the *Australian Curriculum* documents of the *Australian Curriculum: English (ACE)*, the *Australian Curriculum the Arts: Media Arts (ACAMA)* and the *Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies (ACTDT)*.

1.9 Curriculum documents

The ACE, ACAMA and the ACTDT documents explain learning requirements for studying values. An examination of the curriculum documents will enable an understanding of how the curriculum could support a critical interpretative appreciation of values in action-adventure videogames and provides further reason for the investigation into how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meaning about game characters. The curriculum will be reviewed for how SFS multimodal design grammar resources mentioned in previous educational research (Burn, 2003, 2005, 2006; Lowien, 2016) will be conducted. An SFS approach using multimodal design grammar resources of evaluative meaning (Martin & White, 2005; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014) and interactive meaning and focalisation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter et al., 2013) would enable the values conveyed by videogames through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters to be investigated. These semiotic resources have been recontextualised in the sub-strands of evaluative language, visual language (Exley, 2016) and as point of view (Unsworth, 2013a) in the Literature and Literacy strands in the ACE.

1.9.1 The *Australian Curriculum: English*

The *Australian Curriculum* describes the required learning content for the Australian primary (foundation to year six) and high school (year seven to 10) educational contexts. The educational significance for the investigation of values is underpinned by the rationale, key

ideas and structure of the *Australian Curriculum: English (ACE)*. The rationale and key idea statements of the curriculum do not list videogames as a text, perhaps because of their problematic nature. However, children's out-of-school world engagement with digital technologies is acknowledged as the curriculum advocates that digital multimodal texts can be used to teach the language and image content descriptions embedded throughout the ACE (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020). Therefore, action-adventure videogames can be used as multimodal texts when utilising the ACE and examined for how they convey values through the communication of visual and verbal evaluative meanings about characters and player-game character affiliation.

The *Australian Curriculum: English (ACE)* is structured by the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020). The Language strand focuses on the grammatical knowledge of the English language and the design of images. The strand describes sub-strands for learning descriptions concerning grammar resources required for the *Interaction with Others*; *Expressing and Developing Ideas* and how *Texts are Organised and Structured*. The Literature strand explores the engagement with different types of literature. The Literacy strand focuses on students interpreting and creating texts for particular social purposes. The Language stand contains a sub-strand concerned with the *Interaction with Others*. This sub-strand contains the sub-thread of evaluative language, which is described as learning about "how language is used to express opinions, and make evaluative judgments about people, places, things and texts" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, p. 2). The curriculum's description is similar to evaluative language resources described by Martin and White (2005). In addition, how these evaluative language resources have been recontextualised in the ACE has been described by Exley (2016). The curriculum also contains a sub-thread of visual language, which is described as learning about "How images work in texts to communicate meanings, especially in conjunction with other elements such as print and sound" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, p. 5).

The inclusion of the sub-thread of visual language further indicates how the curriculum supports the teaching of multimodal texts. The sub-stand of visual language describes how images work to create relationships with viewers through the use of camera angles and is similar to resources of interactive meaning described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Also, how camera angles can be used to position viewers of images to take on a character's visual perspective referred to as focalisation has been described by Macken-Horarik et al., (2018); Painter (2009) and Painter et al. (2013). In addition, how focalisation resources have been recontextualised as point of view in the ACE Strands of Literature and

Literacy has been described by Unsworth (2013a). Therefore, action-adventure videogames can be used as multimodal texts when utilising the ACE to examine how the games convey values through the communication of evaluative meaning, interactive meaning and focalisation as recontextualised in the evaluative language and visual language sub-threads and point of view descriptions in the Literature and Literacy strands.

The ACE also describes the creation of multimodal texts. While videogames are once again not explicitly stated, the Literature and Literacy strands of the curriculum contain sub-strands that describe the creation of multimodal texts. The Literature strand of the curriculum contains a sub-strand of Creating Literature, which is described as

Students learn how to use personal knowledge and literary texts as starting points to create imaginative writing in different forms and genres and for particular audiences. Using print, digital and online media, students develop skills that allow them to convey meaning, address significant issues and heighten engagement and impact (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020, para 17).

While the Literacy strand of the curriculum contains a sub-strand of Creating Text, which is described as:

Students apply knowledge they have developed in other strands and sub-strands to create with clarity, authority and novelty a range of spoken, written and multimodal texts that entertain, inform and persuade audiences. They do so by strategically selecting key aspects of a topic as well as language, visual and audio features (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2020, para 22).

The Literature and Literacy sub-strands encourage students to draw on learnings from other English strands, such as the evaluative language and visual language sub-threads from the Language strand, to support their critical appreciation of multimodal texts and to inform their creation of multimodal texts. Therefore, the ACE's understanding of multimodal text creation is similar to Gee's (2003), argument that an appreciation of the design principles in videogames is developed through players' interaction and engagement with games. Furthermore, an appreciation of the design principles involves understanding the multiple modalities in videogames and the semiotic meaning these principles convey in games. A critical interpretive appreciation of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters would be consistent with the learning requirements represented in the ACE Language, Literature and Literacy strands. Additionally, a critical interpretive appreciation would need to include the analysis of the language and visual modalities. The characters' dialogue could be used to analyse the patterns of evaluative meaning in the language modality. Also, the accompanying visual modality could be analysed for patterns of evaluative meaning and visual camera angles used to create

player-game character affiliation. This multimodal analytical approach would enable students to infer how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames but also respond to the creative multimodal design of videogames as required by the Creating Literature and Creating texts sub-strands of the ACE. Given the emphasis on creating literature and texts in the ACE, it is also helpful to consider how critical media literacy practices concerning videogames are represented in the *Australian Curriculum Arts: Media Arts*.

1.9.2 The Australian Curriculum Arts: Media Arts

The educational significance for the investigation of values conveyed in videogames is further supported by the *Australian Curriculum Arts: Media Arts (ACAMA)* acknowledgment of videogames as a text and describes the need for students to create games as texts (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a). Given game literacies have been influenced by previous research into the media representation of gender, race and violence, it is important to consider the ACAMA requirements about values and critical representations in media texts such as videogames. Consistent with Buckingham and Burn's (2007) description of game literacies involving critical literacies understandings, the ACAMA states that students will learn about the values represented in media when creating, exploring and critically interpreting diverse, dynamic cultural, social, historical factors that influence communications (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a). The learning requirements of the ACAMA for students to critically examine the representations communicated in multimodal texts such as videogames indicates the educational significance for the investigation into how values are conveyed in videogames. The ACAMA and ACE both acknowledge the creative dimension and critical literacy aspects of game literacies (Buckingham & Burn, 2007), but these curriculum documents do not acknowledge how the game initiated and player initiated actions during gameplay segments in action-adventure videogames convey values (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014). For an understanding of how the playable actions of games are represented in learning requirements for students, the *Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies (ACTDT)* will now be examined.

1.9.3 The Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies

The educational significance for the investigation of videogames is supported by the *Australian Curriculum Technologies: Digital Technologies (ACTDT)* descriptions of digital solutions that require users to make choices to interact with a digital program such as a videogame. The curriculum explicitly acknowledges games in the year three and four band description, which states:

By the end of Year 4, students will have had opportunities to create a range of digital solutions, such as interactive adventures that involve user choice, modelling simplified real world systems and simple guessing games (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, para. 2).

While the year five and six band description extends further:

By the end of Year 6, students will have had opportunities to create a range of digital solutions, such as games or quizzes and interactive stories and animations (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, para. 2).

The descriptions of interactivity required for digital solutions in the ACTDT increases across the year seven and eight, and year nine and ten descriptions of the ACTDT. This requirement of interactivity is consistent with game literacy understandings (Zimmerman, 2009), which requires system literacy knowledge to understand how gameplay segments may require players to press buttons on a game controller to instruct a game character within the simulated game environment. The ACTDT requires students to learn about coded algorithms and conduct design tests of algorithms that necessitate an input and have an output (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015). This learning requirement of the ACTDT relates to how players can input information into videogames by pressing buttons on a controller, which have an output effect of instructing a character to complete an action on the screen being watched by the player. Walsh (2010) argues this algorithmic system-based literacy is essential to game literacies and is not traditionally covered in English curriculums. Ultimately, it can be inferred that the ACE and ACAMA describe the audiovisual depictions in multimodal forms of communication and the ACTDT describes the interactivity required for the text to function. Therefore, action-adventure videogames are useful multimodal resources for the ACE and ACAMA, in which the narratives can be examined, whereas the ACTDT focuses on describing the interactive opportunities of videogames, such as players pressing a button that instructs a game character to kick, which in turn is represented in the audiovisual narrative aspects of games. It is essential to consider the interactivity involved in videogames as Flanagan and Nissenbaum (2014) explain that the algorithmic coding used to design a character's playable actions can also represent a value such as not respecting the rule of law if only fighting actions are made available to players to complete game tasks. Therefore, it is important to consider how the study of values is contextualised in the *Australian Curriculum* documents.

1.9.4 The general capability of ethical understanding

The *Australian Curriculum* incorporates the study of values through the general capability of ethical understanding with the intended purpose of students interpreting, analysing and evaluating a range of texts which include social, moral and ethical dilemmas (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017b). In the ACE, students are required to explore imagined characters critically, consider the behaviour of characters and make judgements about the character (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017b). In the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, students are required to cultivate an ethical understanding when observing or designing artworks (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017b). Students are required to learn about how ethical principles influence behaviour and judgements of artistic issues and events and develop understandings of values and ethical positions when interpreting and evaluating artworks. In the *Australian Curriculum Technology*, students are required to explore complex issues involving technologies and consider the ethical implications for legal, environmental, economic, health, social and emotional contexts (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017b).

In summary, ACE, ACAMA and the ACTDT documents describe learning requirements that would enable students to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. The curriculum documents represent the learning requirements for students to explore interactive multimodal texts such as action-adventure videogames that convey values. SFS multimodal resources of evaluative meaning (Martin & White, 2005; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014) and interactive meaning and focalisation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter et al., 2013) would support students to learn about how the values are conveyed by videogames through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Furthermore, these semiotic resources have been recontextualised in the Language Stand's sub-threads of evaluative language, visual language (Exley, 2016) and as point of view (Unsworth, 2013a) in the strands of Literature and Literacy in the ACE. This examination of the curriculum documents enables an understanding of how the curriculum supports a critical interpretative appreciation of values in action-adventure videogames and support the investigation into how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meaning about game characters.

1.10 Research problem

This thesis is concerned with how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Previous research analysing evaluative language and the attitudinal meanings conveyed by images have informed discussions about the values portrayed in texts, such as newspaper articles and animated films (Economou, 2009, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). This research literature found intermodal connections between evaluative meaning in language and image meaning systems contributed to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values. This literature will be further discussed in Chapter Two to demonstrate that this research approach has not previously been undertaken with videogames. Therefore, the evaluative meaning resources and intermodal connections between language and image meaning systems offer available semiotic tools for the analysis of communicated evaluative meanings about game characters in the narratives of action-adventure videogames. However, action-adventure videogames are substantially different from newspaper articles and animated films in which evaluative meaning resources have been previously applied because the actions included in videogames convey values as do the narrative storylines of games (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014). Therefore, further investigation is required into how the ludic gameplay operations of action-adventure videogames shape the conveyed values through their communication of evaluative meaning about game characters. It will be argued that the co-patterning between the playable ludic operations and evaluative meaning resources about game characters form an axiological pattern that conveys values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences.

1.11 Research questions

In order to address how the narrative storylines and playability of action-adventure videogames utilise evaluative meaning resources to convey values through their communication about game characters, this thesis is asking the overarching research question:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

In answering the overarching research question, the following sub-questions will be investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?

2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?
3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

1.12 Research approach

This thesis is situated in an interpretivist paradigm and employs a qualitative methodology of multimodal critical discourse analysis (Basit, 2010; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Walter, 2010) to investigate the conveyed values in action-adventure videogames through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The approach involves a separate analysis of the language, images and ludic gameplay operations for communicating evaluative meanings about the characters represented in the action-adventure games. A corroborative counting method (Hannah & Lautsch, 2011) utilising both a qualitative and quantitative method was used to corroborate the analysed multimodal data. The communication of evaluative meanings about characters in the narrative representation of action-adventure videogames was analysed using English linguistic descriptions for the communication of evaluative language (Martin & White, 2005) represented in character dialogue. First, the character's dialogue was analysed to demonstrate patterns of evaluative meaning concerning feelings (e.g., un/happiness, in/security and dis/satisfaction), judgements of esteem (e.g., physical, cognitive, social), judgements of social sanction (e.g., ethics and truth) and appreciative assessment of events and objects (e.g., reactions, significant or composition of phenomena). Examples of these types of evaluations were given at the beginning of this chapter and involved the Joker's dialogue inferring his immorality, which was engaging for players as it presented the Joker as clever and as having a dark sense of humour, while Batman's dialogue was inferring a moral, earnest, concerned and physically capable value position, which focused on his ability and determination to fight and capture the supervillains. The analysed language evaluative meaning data was then quantified using a pivot table in Excel, which counted the frequency of identified evaluative meanings about characters. The pivot table was then used to sort the language evaluative meanings about each character and these evaluative meanings were then summarised. Next, the pivot table was also used to identified coupled simultaneous evaluative meanings within the expressed attitudinal language resources of a character and any similar evaluative meanings expressed between characters. These data were used to address Research Sub-Question One.

Second, the visual attitudinal meanings about characters involving their visual expression and depicted behaviours were analysed. The visual attitude analysis was achieved

by taking a screen capture of each camera shot within the game scene. A camera shot was defined as an uninterrupted segment filmed by one camera (Iedema, 2001). Each camera shot was numbered. For example, the Joker's and Batman's evaluative positions were enhanced by visual depictions of evaluative meaning, such as the Joker being depicted as being happy through his facial expression and body language. Visually Batman was depicted as being able to smash through glass windows when pursuing the Joker. The analysed visual evaluative meaning data was then quantified through the use of a pivot table, which counted the frequency of identified visual evaluative meanings about characters. The pivot tables were then used to sort the visual evaluative meanings about each character and these evaluative meanings were summarised. Then, the pivot table was used to identify the coupled simultaneous evaluative meanings within the depicted attitudinal resources of a character and any similar evaluative meanings depicted between characters. These data were used to address Research Sub-Question One.

Third, the semiotic resources of interactive meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and focalisation resources (Painter et al., 2013) were utilised to explicate the camera angles illustrating a character's point of view and player-character affiliation in the simulated game world. Camera angles were used to create affiliation between the characters and the players, for example, a medium camera distance was used to create a social connection between players and Batman. At times, the camera was placed to look over Batman's shoulder to enable players to see along with him and perceive the world along with his perspective. These camera angles created an affiliation between the games' characters and players. The numbered camera shots from the visual evaluative meaning analysis were used for the analysis. The analysed interactive meanings and focalisation data were then quantified using a pivot table, which calculated the frequency of identified player-character affiliation resources. A pivot table was then used to sort the affiliation resources to identify the frequency in which players were affiliated along with or as a character. The pivot table was then used to identify the coupled and similar affiliations about and between characters. These data were used to address the second research sub-question.

Fourth, the ludic gameplay operations of the games' design were investigated by identifying the playable and non-playable characters, the playable actions of the characters and the interactive narrative and gameplay segments of the game scenes. For example, the game scene from *Arkham Asylum* involves the playable character Batman, who is afforded playable actions such as punching, kicking and ducking when fighting inmates during the gameplay segment. Players are not able to control Batman during the narrative segments of the game. The numbered camera shots from the visual evaluative meaning analysis were used

for the ludic operation analysis. The ludic operations analysis data was then quantified using a pivot table, which counted the frequency of identified ludic operation resources. A pivot table was then used to sort the ludic operation resources and to identify the frequency of their occurrence. The pivot table was then used to identify the coupled and similar ludic operation resources about and between characters. Also, how the ludic operation resources co-patterned with the visual evaluative meanings about characters was examined. These data were used to address the third research sub-question.

The language and image evaluative meanings, player-game character affiliation and ludic operations of characters were then used to explicate axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames. For example, Batman's dialogue may infer a moral, concerned and physically capable evaluative position, which infers a value of justice but not the lawfulness. This evaluative position is further enhanced by depictions of Batman smashing through glass windows to pursue the Joker. Also, players are aligned with Batman during playable game segments enabling them to see along with him in the simulated game world. During these playable game segments, players are afforded actions that involve them pressing buttons on the controller to instruct Batman to fight asylum inmates and the super-criminals. Therefore, the multimodal critical discourse analysis (Ledin & Machin, 2018) of the evaluative meaning resources, player-game character affiliation and ludic gameplay operations enable the conveyed values of action-adventure videogames to be investigated. These data were used to address the overarching research question.

1.13 Research data

The research data examined to address the research questions consisted of two action-adventure videogames. As discussed earlier, action-adventure videogames are often designed to include FPS and fighting game formats. They also contain storylines that contextualise the social concerns of violence, gender depictions, racial stereotyping and sexualised violence, however, further research into how these games convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters is required. The two games selected for analyses are considered typical samples (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990) of games in the action-adventure format. The popularity of the games was considered as well as the classification ratings of the games. A brief introduction to the games will be given, which will be expanded in Chapter Four. The first game selected was *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016). The game has a classification rating of M for its violent content. The game has many fighting episodes in which Batman uses physical violence to defeat inmates and supervillains in the asylum. *Arkham Asylum* is the first game in a Batman game franchise. It was first released in 2009 and

re-released in 2016 for the PS4 and Xbox One platforms. The narrative of the game involves Batman pursuing the Joker, who has escaped within *Arkham Asylum*. The second game selected was *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). The game has a classification rating of R18+ for its references to sexual violence and sex scenes. The game contains many FPS gameplay episodes in which players are positioned as the game's protagonist and are required to shoot other characters using a range of guns. *Watch Dogs* is the first game in a franchise developed by the Ubisoft company. The game's narrative involves a hacker Aiden Pearce taking on the role of a vigilante to take down a Chicago gang due to his niece's death caused by the gang. From the two identified action-adventure videogames, two scenes from each game were identified as typical (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990) of the types of game scenes common to the action-adventure game format. These game scenes will be elaborated further in Chapter Four. It should also be noted that the games have been selected due to what they will reveal about how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) would not be a game selected by teachers for use in their classrooms due to its R18+ classification. Alternatively, *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) is a commercial off-the-shelf videogame that is readily available to educators (Van Eck, 2006, 2015). *Batman Arkham Asylum* could be used by teachers in Australian senior classes (year 10-12) due to its M classification rating. An M classification is recommended with parent guidance or for mature audiences of 15 years. Therefore, the game could be used by educators with sufficient ethical considerations being made, such as parental permission and students being 15 years of age.

1.14 Chapters

Chapter One first defined action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences and examined the ubiquity and popularity of videogames. Second, the definition of moral, social and political values was described. Third, the identities that players utilise when gaming were described as well as the study of videogames as an academic discipline. Fourth, the moral concerns and problematic nature of videogames for education settings and curriculum considerations were examined. Fifth, the research problem, questions, approach and data for the thesis were discussed. Finally, an overview of the chapters in the thesis was provided.

Chapter Two examines the extent to which conceptual models used to analyse videogames address how the evaluative meanings and ludic operations about characters of action-adventure videogames convey values. The models that will be reviewed include the *Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Nissenbaum, 2014), *Games as Action-Games as Text*

Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2011), *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) and *a social semiotic approach to analysing videogames* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017). From this review, it will be argued the *social semiotic approach to analysing videogames* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) is the most apt for orientating the study and addressing the research questions in the study. A social semiotic conceptual framework for the thesis will be described utilising a range of SFS evaluative meaning, affiliation and ludic operation resources that were utilised to answer the research questions of the thesis.

Chapter Three describes a social semiotic conceptual framework for the study. The framework consists of the identified social semiotic resources for the explication of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The overarching philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the conceptual framework will be discussed for its relevance in answering how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The framework includes the interpersonal evaluative meaning resources (Martin & White, 2005), interactive meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and focalisation (Painter et al., 2013). The ludic gameplay operations concerning the representation of playable and non-playable characters and the playable actions of characters and the interactive narrative and gameplay (Sylvester, 2013) composition of videogames.

Chapter Four describes the multimodal critical discourse analysis (Basit, 2010; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Walter, 2010) research design and methodological approach using the proposed social semiotic conceptual framework will be described. The sampling process of the game scenes selected for the thesis are described. The systematic qualitative and quantitative methodological process for the analysis of the game scenes and how this data will be used to address the research questions will be described.

Chapter Five reports the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses from *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016). First, the results of the frequency of the different types of language and image evaluative meanings within and between characters in the game scene will be reported. Second, the results concerning the extent the game scene constructs player affiliation with characters will be examined. Third, the results of how the ludic operations of the game scene communicates evaluative meaning about characters in *Arkham Asylum* will be reported.

Chapter Six reports the results of the qualitative and quantitative analyses from *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). First, the results of the frequency of the different types of language and visual evaluative meanings within and between characters in the game scene will be discussed. Second, the results concerning the extent the game scene constructs player-game

character affiliation will be reported. Third, the results of how the ludic operations of the game scene communicates evaluative meaning about characters in *Watch Dogs* will be reported.

Chapter Seven will revisit the research problem of the thesis. Then, each research sub-question will be answered through a cross-analysis of the results of both game scenes as reported in Chapters Five and Six. The findings of the research sub-questions will then be synthesised in relation to their position within the field of research reviewed in Chapter Two. Finally, the overarching research questions will be answered to identify the values conveyed in the selected action-adventure videogames. The findings of the overarching question will be synthesised in relation to their position within the field of previous research.

Chapter Eight discusses the contributions to intermodal accounts of how evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images portray values in videogames. The contributions to intermodal knowledge, theory, conceptual understandings and methodology will be described concerning how the ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources about game characters formed axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. Finally, implications for classroom teaching practice concerning a pedagogy for the critical interpretive appreciation of videogames will be explored and opportunities for further research will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW – THE GAME ARENA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature concerned with the extent to which conceptual models used in analysing videogames address how the ludic game operations and communicated evaluative meanings about game characters convey values in action-adventure videogames. These conceptual models include *the Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b), *the Games as Action-Games as Text Framework* (Apperley & Beavis, 2011) and *a social semiotic approach to analysing videogames* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017). From the models examined, apposite SFS theoretical tools are identified and incorporated into a derived conceptual framework for addressing the research questions in this study. The derived conceptual framework is elaborated in further detail during Chapter Three of the thesis.

This chapter first reviews *the Values at Play* heuristics in Section 2.2. Second, *the Ludic Framework* is examined in Section 2.3. Third, *the Games as Action-Games as Text Framework* is investigated in Section 2.4. Fourth, *the social semiotic approach to analysing videogames* is inspected in Section 2.5. Fifth, SFS literature is reviewed to identify apposite theoretical tools that can be used to explicate the conveyed values in action-adventure videogames in Section 2.6. Finally, Section 2.7 describes a conceptual framework for the explication of values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences.

2.2 The *Values at Play* heuristic

The Values at Play heuristic (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) is intended for use by game designers. The heuristic represented in Figure 2.1 offers understandings concerned with the ludic design of games, which can be used to answer how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. The importance of consciously considering values in the design of videogames through three iterative stages of discovery, implementation and verification is articulated in *the Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The discovery stage involves identifying the desirable values and defining the values concerning the context of the game. Four sources are described as assisting in identifying and defining such values. These sources include the various life experiences of the group of people involved in designing the game, the explicit

descriptions of the game, input from social and cultural contexts, and the technical constraints of the game software (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The implementation stage involves translating the identified and desirable values into the narrative and ludic gameplay segments. This stage requires thinking about and designing the specifications, graphics, camera angles, and procedural coding and algorithms of the ludic operations required for the game. The heuristic does not specify a step-by-step method or analysis process for thinking about implementing the design specifications, but it acknowledges that these components can contribute to the portrayal of values in videogames (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The verification stage involves validating how designers have implemented the values during the second stage. This stage may involve test playing the game with different audiences and receiving feedback as to how the identified and desirable values have been realised in the game’s design. The heuristic is depicted as a cyclical process representing the iterative practice in which games are designed using these stages.

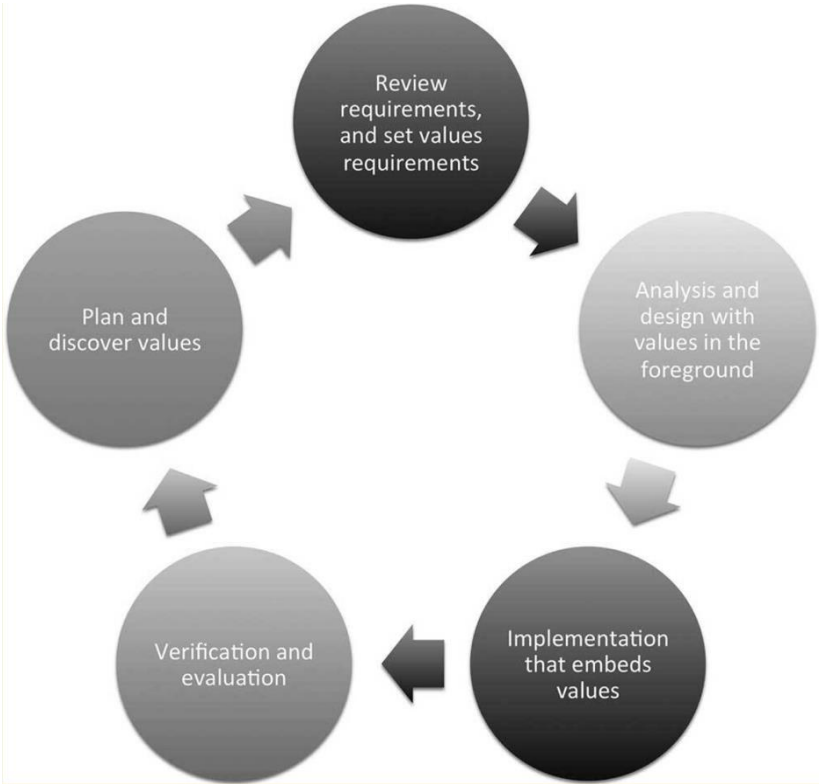


Figure 2.1: The *Values at Play* development cycle (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014, p. 78)

Progressing through the model’s stages requires game designers to think consciously about how videogames communicate values. Essentially, this design process acknowledges that values can be represented through a game’s narrative and ludic dimensions. For example, values can be represented in a game’s narrative, such as Batman’s origin story in which he

witnessed the death of his parents and the failure of the law enforcement and legal systems to bring the criminal to justice. This failure led Batman to become a vigilante and to operate outside the law to bring criminals to justice. Additionally, values can be represented through a game's ludic design. The game *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) depicts mentally ill patients as being criminally insane. The game is programmed for the patients to leap onto Batman's shoulders and attack him if he walks too closely to them. This act by the patients reduces Batman's health points, leaving him weaker. Batman is required to subdue the patients by knocking them unconscious. The ludic game design depicts the patients as dangerous criminals and not as people who are ill and require medical treatment. It is unclear if this depiction of mental illness were intended or unintended by the game designers, but it does indicate that further examination of the values represented in the ludic design of games is required.

In summary, *the Values at Play* research (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) does offer insights into how action-adventure videogames display values in their narrative and ludic gameplay segments. However, the approach does not provide theoretical or methodological insights into how language and image resources communicate evaluative meaning about characters, nor how camera angles construct relationships between players and game characters. Also, the approach does not theorise how the actions of playable characters align with the different types of evaluative meanings and player-game character affiliations communicated in videogames. Therefore, *the Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) did not facilitate addressing the overarching aim of this study to investigate how the ludic operations and communicated evaluative meanings about characters convey values in action-adventure videogames.

2.3 The Ludic Framework

Similarly to *the Values at Play* research (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) is intended for use by game designers, and considers how the ludic design in videogames influences the values portrayed in the narrative or gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames. *The Ludic Framework* offers a deeper understanding of the initiated ludic actions in interactive game segments than that afforded by *the Values at Play* approach. A game's *Ludics* can be sub-divided into three categories depending on whether a player initiates an interaction or the game has been programmed to initiate the interaction (Seraphine, 2016b), as represented in Figure 2.2. An interaction initiated by a player's input, such as pressing a button on a controller, is described as an actum; for example, players may press the square button on a controller to instruct the Batman

avatar to strike an inmate. An interaction triggered by the game’s programming is referred to as being a *factum*. A factum interaction would involve a game’s programming initiating a conversation between Batman and the Police Commissioner as they walk down a corridor. This interaction between the characters has no input from players or other game objects. An interaction between two game objects, even if a player has triggered the interaction with one object or between both objects, is referred to as a *tactum*. A tactum interaction would involve the asylum inmates initiating a fight with Batman by punching, kicking or chasing him, or players may initiate this fighting interaction with the inmates by instructing Batman to fight. Therefore, it is important to consider a game’s ludic actions and how these actions convey values. For example, *Arkham Asylum* requires Batman to use physical violence to subdue the super criminals and asylum inmates, implying justice through the use of brute force.

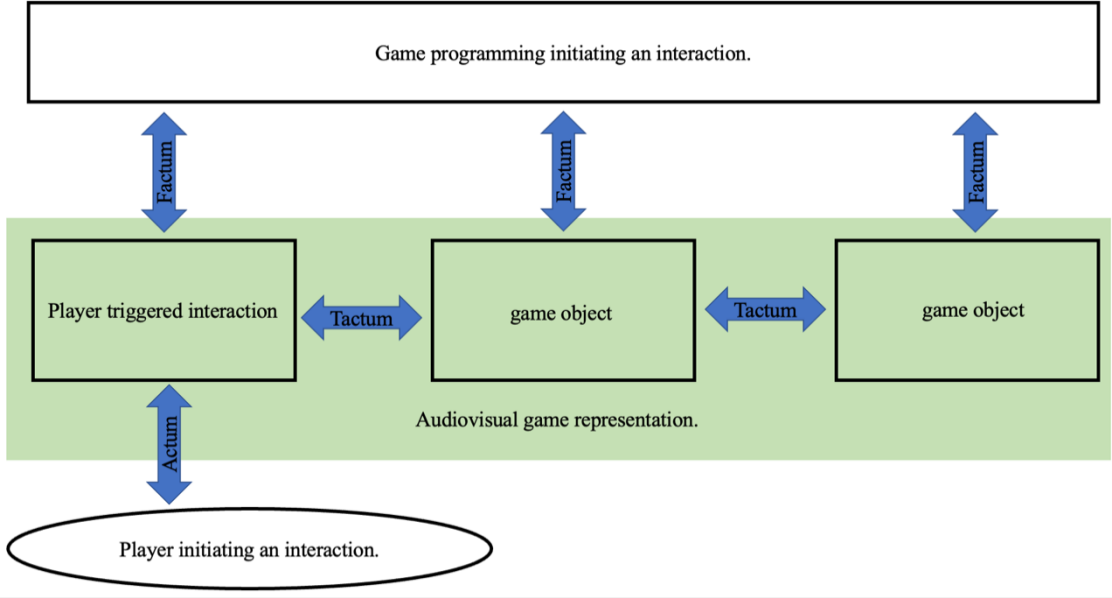


Figure 2.2: Different ludics operating in the game context (adapted from Aristov, 2017, p. 12)

The Values at Play research (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) has described that it is difficult to predict how adding actions to a game will influence the values represented in that game. Seraphine (2016a) argued that videogames need to find a harmony between the values represented in their narrative and gameplay segments to avoid players experiencing a disconnect from the immersive game world. An example of harmony between the values represented in the narrative and gameplay segments of *Arkham Asylum* would involve players drawing on their prior knowledge of Batman’s origin story, in which Bruce Wayne witnessed his parents’ murder and the failure of the police to bring the criminal to justice; as a result, Bruce decided to become Batman, a vigilante crime fighter, to bring criminals to justice. The

understanding of Batman bringing criminals to justice is represented through Batman's actum fighting actions when fighting the inmates. The use of brute force by players to instruct Batman to fight the inmates implies his vigilante role, as the police or guards in the game have not been afforded the same abilities, therefore implying that Batman is different from the legal authorities.

The ludic initiated actions of factum, tactum and actum offer insights into how actions in videogames can convey values; however, these actions can occur during different narrative and gameplay interactive segments. Sylvester (2013) described the different interactivity that game designers use during the narrative and gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames. The narrative storylines in action-adventure games can be delivered through the use of *scripted* game segments similar to a film like cut scene and afford no interactivity to players. By contrast, *soft-scripted* segments would enable a narrative storyline to be delivered but also afford players some interactivity, while *emergent narrative* segments would afford players full interactivity within the simulated game world (Sylvester, 2013). Understandings of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactivity, combined with knowledge of the ludic initiated actions of factum, tactum and actum about characters, provide useful theoretical tools for further investigating how ludic actions and interactive segments combine to convey evaluative meaning about characters during the narrative and gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames.

In summary, *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016a) does offer theoretical tools for investigating how ludic actions and interactivity combine to communicate ludic evaluative meanings about characters in action-adventure videogames. These ludic theoretical tools have been incorporated into the conceptual framework, research design and methodology adopted for this study. However, the *Ludic Framework* does not describe any theoretical tools or methodological processes to explain how language and image resources communicate evaluative meanings about characters, nor how camera angles can construct relationships between players and game characters. Therefore, *the Ludic Framework* did not facilitate addressing the overarching aim of the thesis to investigate how the ludic operations and communicated evaluative meaning resources about characters convey values in action-adventure videogames.

2.4 The Games as Action-Games as Text Framework

The Games as Action: Games as Text Framework is intended for educators. The model comprises two layers, *Games as Action* and *Games as Text* (Apperley & Beavis, 2013; Beavis, 2014), as represented in Figure 2.3. *The Games as Action* layer focuses on the

processes involved in the design and playing of games (Beavis, 2014). *The Games as Texts* layer focuses on the textual literacy practices and learning opportunities involved when engaging with games (Apperley & Beavis, 2013). Ideologies and values are addressed in the *Knowledge about games* and “*Me*” as game player dimensions from the *Games as Texts* layer. The *Design* dimension from the *Games as Action* layer addresses the ludic operations involved when playing games. Literature concerning these dimensions of the model was reviewed for possible theoretical tools and methodological processes that could be used to investigate how communicated evaluative meanings about game characters convey values in action-adventure videogames.

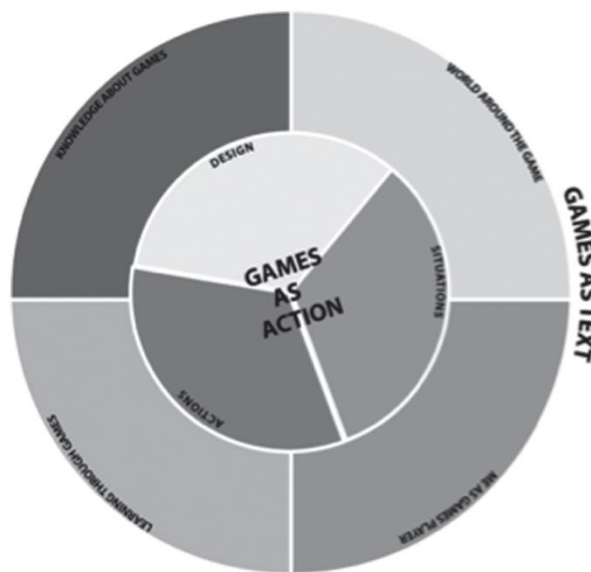


Figure 2.3: The *Games as Action-Games as Text Framework* (Apperley & Beavis, 2013, p. 9)

Educators can use the *Knowledge about games* dimension to plan literacy learning experiences in which students respond to videogames as they would to other forms of literature. The dimension involves examining narrative and game events, ideologies, intertextuality, and the knowledge and participation structures of games (Apperley & Beavis, 2013). Beavis et al. (2012) described several classroom examples using the *Knowledge about games* dimension, which engaged students in critical literacy activities requiring them to respond to videogames through activities such as peer discussion, drama activities, game reviews and game design. On the whole, the learning activities focused on students responding to and creating texts or games rather than the textual compositions of the language, images and gameplay features of ludonarratives such as action-adventure videogames. Therefore, further research into the textual composition of ludonarratives is

warranted to reveal wider literacy learning opportunities for students. Given that the *Knowledge about games* dimension focuses on supporting students to respond to texts and to create texts, no theoretical tools and methodological processes were found that could support the textual investigation of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. For understanding how the *Games as Text* layer can offer further insights into the evaluative meanings represented in action-adventure games, the “*Me*” as game player dimension was examined.

The player-game character connection and affiliation in action-adventure videogames were investigated using the ‘*Me*’ as game player dimension. The dimension considers how players are positioned during gameplay, and the outside game knowledge and the prior experiences and values on which players draw to imply meaning when playing games (Apperley & Beavis, 2013). Bradford (2010) described how player-game character affiliations are created in games through the use of camera angles that enable players to take on the visual perspective of their game characters. This is achieved by the game camera being placed behind a game avatar, thereby enabling players to look at the back of the avatar as it is navigated through the simulated game world. This understanding of camera placement to affiliate players and game characters described by Bradford (2010) offers a useful theoretical tool for understanding the extent to which videogames construct player affiliation with different characters, and was incorporated into the research conceptual framework and methodology for this thesis.

Another aspect of the player-game character positioning was the interactivity of the character and the types of ludic actions required by players to instruct a game character through the use of a controller (Bradford, 2010). Similarly to *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016a), the playability and ludic actions of characters were addressed by the *Design* dimension from the *Games as Action* layer (Apperley & Beavis, 2013). The *Design* dimension addressed whether a game character is playable or non-playable in a videogame and the possible actions of playable characters; for example, on the game controller, players would have to press the square button to instruct Batman to strike an inmate, or to navigate Batman through the game world players would need to use the left gear stick on the game controller. The understanding of character playability and ludic actions was used by Bradford (2010) to examine the player-game character positions in the action-adventure game *Bully*, which was discussed briefly in Chapter One. It was found that players were still required to draw on their prior game world knowledge and prior experiences and values to comprehend the narrative and gameplay representations, ideologies and cultural values within the fictive game world of *Bully* (Bradford, 2010), despite players being positioned to view the game

world along with a character through the use of camera positions and through having the ability to instruct the characters in the simulated world. Bradford (2010, p. 63) acknowledged that further research is required to examine how videogames position players in simulations similarly to authentic real-world exchanges, and how players negotiate or are subjugated by conveyed values and ideological meanings in videogames. A broader range of narratology and game study concepts and methodologies would be useful to explore how videogames position players using language and visual resources and narrative strategies such as focalising a character's point of view. Overall, the theoretical tools of camera positioning to enable players to be aligned with game characters, the distinction between playable and non-playable characters, and the theorisation of the possible actions of playable characters offer useful tools for examining how action-adventure videogames construct player affiliation with characters and how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters. These tools were used in the conceptual framework, research design and methodology of this thesis.

2.5 A social semiotic approach to videogame design

Similarly to *the Values at Play* and *the Ludic Framework* research, *the social semiotics* approach to understanding videogames is used by game designers. This approach considers how playable and non-playable characters and their ludic actions can influence the conveyed values communicated by the characters in action-adventure videogames. Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) analysed the videogame *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2014) from this perspective. *The Last of Us* is an action-adventure videogame that tells the story of Joel, a smuggler, and Ellie, a teenage girl, who journey across the post-apocalyptic United States. During their journey, they have to avoid unwanted attention from antagonistic humans and zombies. Pérez-Latorre et al.'s (2017) analysis focused on how the ludonarrative and ludic operations of the characters and collectable game equipment implied values. For example, during the game, Joel is the playable character and has been programmed with actum ludic actions in which players press buttons to instruct Joel to complete tasks such as fighting zombies. Ellie is a non-playable character. Ellie has been programmed to use tactum ludic actions to support Joel in completing tasks such as fighting the zombies. Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) argued that the ludic design of the game supports values such as collaboration and solidarity between the two characters. During Joel and Ellie's journey through the post-apocalyptic world, they can collect items such as duct tape, bottles of alcohol, sticks and scissors, which can be used to create objects such as tools and weapons or used as medical

supplies. These items can be used up, leaving their collection empty, which suggests that the game design implies values such as austerity (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017).

Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) also found that, at times during the gameplay segments, players felt a disconnect from the immersive game world. This was also described in Seraphine's (2016a) research from *the Ludic Framework*. The disconnect was due to Ellie's programming, which involved her supporting Joel in fighting zombies; however, if she were defeated, the game was programmed to end and players would be prompted to re-play. This forced players controlling Joel to look out for Ellie and to protect her if required. Despite this ludic action aligning with the values of collaboration and solidarity, it was in contrast to Ellie's strong personality and fierce independence represented in the narrative storyline of the game. Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) argued that this contrast in values between Ellie's strong personality in the game's narrative and her need for protection in the gameplay segments created a feeling of burden for players. Game studies describe this experience as ludonarrative dissonance, which interrupts a player's immersive flow with a game owing to incoherent values being represented in the narrative and gameplay segments (Hawking, 2007; Seraphine, 2016a). Games studies seek to maximise a player's immersion in game worlds to prolong their engagement with the game platform (McGonigal, 2011). Similarly, game designers attempt to design games that limit the ludonarrative dissonance experienced by players. Therefore, examining how action-adventure videogames represent evaluative meanings about characters during narrative and gameplay segments is crucial to answering how these videogames convey values that naturalise character value positions or represent divergent character value positions. The theoretical tools of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* game segments (Sylvester, 2013) discussed in *the Ludic Framework* are useful tools for identifying the narrative and gameplay segments. The narrative segments would be realised by *scripted* segments, while the gameplay segments would be realised by the *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. These theoretical tools were used in the conceptual framework, research design and methodology of the thesis.

Up to this point, the reviewed literature has identified theoretical tools that can be used to investigate how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters. *The Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) identified that action-adventure videogames represent values in their narrative and ludic gameplay segments. *The Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) offered apposite tools for identifying the ludic actions of factum, tactum and actum that occurred in games and the varying degree of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactivity (Sylvester, 2013) that can be used to identify

narrative and gameplay segments. *The Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) and the *social semiotic approach to videogame design* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) offered an understanding of the concept of ludonarrative dissonance in which players may experience a disconnect from the simulated game environment owing to the incoherence in values represented in the narrative and gameplay segments of ludonarratives (Hawking, 2007; Seraphine, 2016a).

The *Design dimension* from *the Games as Action: Games as Text* Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2013) and the *social semiotic approach to videogame design* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) presented theoretical understanding for identifying the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of playable characters in videogames. The “*Me*” as *game player* dimension from *the Games as Action: Games as Text* Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2013) offered theoretical understandings of the types of camera angles used to align players with game characters in action-adventure videogames, and how players are required to draw on their prior knowledge of a game’s ludonarrative to infer a game’s ideologies and values. The reviewed literature from *the Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b), *the Games as Action: Games as Text* Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2013) and the *social semiotic approach to videogame design* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) has identified theoretical tools that can be used to investigate how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meanings about characters. Next, relevant SFS literature is reviewed to identify appropriate language and image semiotic resources that can address the research aim of investigating how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters and the extent to which videogames construct player affiliation with different characters through the co-patterning of language and image meaning resources.

2.6 SFS approaches to explicating values

Relevant SFS literature is now reviewed to identify appropriate language and image semiotic resources that were utilised to address the research aims of the thesis. First, SFS literature concerned with expressing language and image evaluative meanings that can be used to infer values is reviewed. Second, literature concerned with player-game characters’ affiliation is examined to identify semiotic resources that can be used to observe the extent to which videogames construct player-game character affiliations. Third, SFS research into intermodality is reviewed to identify theoretical understandings of how different modalities commitment meaning and couple to create patterns of meaning across a text.

2.6.1 Expressing evaluative meanings in language

Over the past decade, SFS research has reflected a growing interest in identifying the values represented in a text through linguistic research methodologies. Social semiotic research has used the metaphor of a cosmology to describe values as being a constellation of hot and not so hot ideologies (Maton, 2014). Ideologies that are viewed as being popular by a community are represented as constellations of hot ideologies, and ideologies that are unpopular are considered not so hot constellations. These ideologies are communicated through semiotic meanings representing a community's values. Therefore, SFS research considers ideology and values as permeating the whole ensemble of semiotic meaning and culture (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 16). Central to this research into values is the SFS description of the evaluative language resources of attitude (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Within the Martin and White (2005) framework, attitude is concerned with evaluating feelings, judgements and assessments of events and objects. Feelings can be realised through the use of words to indicate affective expressions of un/happiness (e.g., *laughed, cried*), security and its lack (e.g., *asserted, anxious*), and satisfaction and its lack (e.g., *attentive, yawned*). Positive or negative judgements can be realised through words describing a character's normality (e.g., *charmed, peculiar*), capacity (e.g., *clever, insane*) and tenacity (e.g., *heroic, cowardly*). Positive and negative judgements can also be realised through words indicating a social sanction by describing a character's propriety (e.g., *moral, corrupt*) and veracity (e.g., *truthful, dishonest*). Positive and negative assessments of events and objects can be realised by words of appreciation, which describe a reaction (e.g., *captivating, dull*), composition (e.g., *harmonious, discordant*) and valuation (e.g., *profound, insignificant*). Examples of these evaluative attitudes in the game *Arkham Asylum* were described at the beginning of Chapter One. The evaluative resources of attitude have been used in SFS research to indicate patterns of evaluation that are communicated in texts more generally; however, there has been limited research conducted on evaluative meaning use in action-adventure videogames.

Relevant SFS research that has utilised the evaluative resources of attitude has been conducted with texts such as hortatory and analytical expositions, historical recounts and factual explanations, conversations between friends, newspaper articles and narratives (Doran, 2019; Knight, 2010; Macken-Horarik, 2003b; Martin, 1985, 1995). The use of the evaluative resources of attitude in hortatory and analytical expositions was examined by Martin (1985) to profile the interaction amongst different ideological and value perspectives in social and political debates. It was concluded that hortatory expositions expressed more evaluative

meanings than analytical expositions. The higher frequency of evaluative expressions in hortatory texts was attributed to their social purpose being to persuade people to do something or that a socially just change was needed. The lower frequency of evaluative expressions in analytical expositions was attributed to their social purpose being to persuade people that the status quo was acceptable and was therefore more orientated to communicating facts. Martin's (1995) research emphasised understanding the social purpose of expositions and how evaluative meaning resources could be used in the texts to persuade audiences to align with a value and ideological perspective.

The alignment of an audience member with the value and ideological perspective of a text was explored by Martin (1995) when examining the use of evaluative meanings in historical recounts and factual explanations used in classroom settings. The article focused on how evaluative meanings concerning ideologies and values were represented and implied a compliant reading position for the text. However, it was concluded that students might not have a compliant reading position if their inferred prior experiences and personal values conflicted with the compliant reading position. In these cases, students may draw on their prior experiences to establish a critical tactical reading of a text, or disengage from the text with a resistant reading position. Martin's (1995) research was significant in understanding how readers can draw on their prior experiences to infer values that may align with or diverge from a text's naturalised evaluative meaning position.

SFS research has also examined how friendship groups are affiliated through the expression of shared social values. Knight (2010) used the evaluative resources of attitude to infer shared values during conversations by highlighting the evaluative patterns of the positive and negative feelings, judgements and assessments about discussed topics during a conversation between friends. It examined how similar evaluative patterns between the friends implied similar evaluative meanings about a topic. Knight (2010) reasoned that the friends drew on their prior knowledge of values and ideologies influenced by their age, ethnicity, social class, abilities and gender experiences to express shared values when conversing. Therefore, similar negative evaluations about a character's propriety by the friends indicated a shared value of the character's immorality as the friends were drawing on similar prior knowledge to align with the evaluation and to imply the shared value. Knight (2010) used an evaluative meaning analysis to describe a theory of affiliation in which participants create a shared identity through the negotiation of shared values.

SFS research has also investigated how divergent values are expressed between social groups. Doran (2019) used the attitude resources to identify the evaluative patterns present in a newspaper article and a university handbook about the Australian social debate of invasion

versus settlement regarding the European arrival in Australia. The attitude meaning-making resources were utilised to identify evaluation patterns regarding terminology such as “invasion” and “settlement”. The positive and negative evaluative patterns regarding the terminology in the texts were used to identify how the two texts represented different naturalised reading positions despite the use of similar terminology. It was concluded that the evaluative meanings in the university handbook represented a naturalised reading position that viewed the European settlement of Australia as an invasion, while the newspaper article represented a resistant reading position towards the view that the settlement was an invasion. Doran (2019) reasoned that, despite the similar terminology used by both texts, readers were able to use the evaluative meaning patterns about the terminology and their prior knowledge to infer their value position in relation to, and their alignment with, a text’s naturalised reading position. It was explained that readers make this inference using the same process described by Knight (2010). Doran (2019) used the analytical process of his research to describe a linguistic methodology for revealing naturalised value positions in non-fiction texts.

Divergent value positions between characters in narrative texts have also been explored by SFS research. Macken-Horarik (2003b) investigated how narrative texts are constructed to communicate an ideal reading position. The ideal reading position is defined as being:

positions from which characters and events become intelligible, values shareable and the narrative itself coherent. ... the “ideal reader” cannot be identified with any of the individual voices articulated within the text nor with the vagaries of real readers as they interact with the text. ... It is the narrative text that mediates the significance of different evaluative voices contained within and creates an identifiable space from which the reader can appraise these. (Macken-Horarik, 2003b, p. 287)

The identified space created in the ideal reading position of narratives goes some way to explaining the conflict between players’ *virtual* and *projective identities* when playing games (Gee, 2003). As discussed in Chapter One, players may desire their game character to reflect their real-world personal values, such as justice; however, when playing *Arkham Asylum*, players discover that the game has interpreted justice as Batman knocking asylum inmates unconscious. This discovery can cause conflict between different interpretations of justice concerning the *real world* and *the virtual and projective identity* of gamers and require them to sanction ethical or unethical actions to complete game tasks to progress the game’s narrative and to proceed to new game levels. Furthermore, Macken-Horarik (2003b) demonstrated how the ideal reading position invited by narratives and the evaluative meaning

patterns confirm or disconfirm the value position of particular characters within the narrative's fictive story world. For example, players of *Arkham Asylum* may be entertained by the narrative complications introduced by the Joker's humorous and immoral behaviour, but view it as divergent owing to the game being designed to naturalise Batman as the superhero and protagonist of the narrative.

The evaluative meaning patterns of in-game narratives were investigated from an SFS perspective. Lowien (2016) analysed the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) using the evaluative meaning resources of attitude to identify patterns of evaluation in character dialogue to infer a character's evaluative stance. The patterns of character evaluative meanings and prior knowledge of the game's narrative and characters were used to infer the protagonist character's evaluative stance represented in the game. However, further research is required using character dialogue to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meaning about characters. The reviewed SFS literature has identified useful theoretical understanding and tools that can be used to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values. Central to SFS research is the understanding that values permeate the whole ensemble of semiotic meaning and culture (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 16). SFS theoretical tools that can be used to investigate values include the possibility of ideal or divergent reading positions of narrative texts, and the evaluative meaning resources of attitude that can be used to identify evaluative patterns in texts and combined with a reader's prior knowledge to infer alignment with a value position. These theoretical understandings and tools were incorporated into the conceptual framework, research design and methodology. However, videogames also comprise images that communicate evaluative meanings about characters. SFS research that has investigated visual evaluative meaning is now reviewed for theoretical tools that can be used to address the research questions of the thesis.

2.6.2 Image evaluative meaning

SFS research has also investigated the visual representation of character attitudes in multimodal texts, although the research in this area has not been conclusive. Painter et al. (2013) suggested that visual affective attitude can be realised through an illustrated character's expression. However, Martin (2008a) argued that visual meaning cannot represent attitudes such as judgements. This work was broadened by Economou (2009) in a doctoral thesis concerning the verbal-visual intersemiosis in newspaper articles and their images. Economou (2009) applied the appraisal framework to news images, concluding that images could not inscribe judgements. This conclusion contrasted with Unsworth's (2014) work,




which suggested that picturebooks and animated movies could inscribe judgements through visual metaphors and symbols. Also, White (2014) examined images taken by photojournalists that accompanied news articles and investigated how these images could invoke attitudinal responses and position readers to take on negative and positive attitudes towards the portrayed news events. The article did not elaborate whether images could represent attitudes of judgement but implied that viewers of images need to draw on their prior knowledge of a context to infer visual evaluative meanings. While the SFS literature is still inconclusive as to which types of attitudes can be represented visually, there is a consensus that the visual modality does represent attitudes, and that the varying degrees of these attitudes can be analysed. The visual meaning system is similar to the language system in that patterns of evaluative meanings and a viewer's prior knowledge of a context can be used to infer alignment with a value position. Therefore, the evaluative meaning resources of attitude were a useful tool to include in the thesis's conceptual framework, research design and methodology to explicate how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters.

2.6.3 Player-game character affiliation: Interactive meaning and focalisation resources

Videogames use camera angles to create affiliations between game characters and players. For example, at times players may be visually positioned as a character, or at other times the game camera can be placed to look over the character's shoulder, enabling players to see along with the character, while at other times players may be watching characters from an outside perspective. The interactive meaning between players and game characters was described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) as consisting of three variables: contact, distance and camera placement. The contact variable examines if a character is making eye contact with the gamer or looking away from the gamer. The distance variable examines whether a close, medium or long-distance camera frame has been used to capture an image. A close frame creates an intimate connection, a medium frame creates a social connection and a long-distance frame creates an impersonal connection between the represented game characters and players. The vertical and horizontal camera placement can also be considered. For example, images using a low camera angle would represent a game character as being powerful; if an eye-level angle is used, it would represent an equal power relationship between the game character and the player; and, if a high angle is used, it would represent the game character as being powerless. Also, if a frontal camera placement is used, a sense of involvement is created between the game character and players; however, if an oblique angle is used, a sense of detachment is created between the game character and players.

Building on these camera angle descriptions, Painter et al. (2013) described how camera angles could represent a character’s focalised point of view within images. Two variables dealing with contact and mediation were defined. Contact images in which characters were not making positive eye contact with the viewer were described as observed images, while images in which characters were making direct eye contact were described as direct if a frontal gaze were used and invited if the character’s head or eyes were turned to the side. Images were described as unmediated if viewers looked upon the characters from an outside perspective. Images were described as mediated if viewers were positioned as the character or if the camera were placed over a character’s shoulder to enable her or him to see along with the character. Examples of the affiliation resources of focalisation and interactive meaning from the game *Arkham Asylum* have been represented in Table 2.1. Image 1 represents unmediated focalisation, in which players look upon Batman and the Commissioner from an outside perspective. The image utilises a medium, frontal, eye-level camera frame to create an involved, social and equal affiliation with players. Image 2 represents how players have been focalised to see along with Batman, as the camera angle has been placed behind his shoulder. A social, involved and equal camera framing has been used to create an involved, social and equal affiliation with players. Image 3 represents players being focalised as the character Harley Quinn. Players are positioned to be looking down at the screen with her right arm coming in from the side of the image. A medium, frontal, eye-level camera framing has been used to create an involved, social and equal affiliation with players. SFS research has used these resources to demonstrate viewer and character affiliation in multimodal picturebooks and films.

Table 2.1: Examples of affiliation resources – *Arkham Asylum*

Image	Focalisation			Interactive Meaning		
	Eye contact	Mediation	Contact	Social distance	Horizontal angle	Vertical angle
1 	Direct	Unmediated	Demand	Social	Involvement	Equality
2 	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
3 	Observe	As character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

Seminal SFS research examining the interactive use of camera angles to create solidarity and involvement between the participants represented in images and the viewers of images was conducted by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) on a large variety of images spanning children's drawings, textbook illustrations, photographs, art and sculptures. Building on this research were studies that examined picturebooks (Painter, 2009; Painter et al., 2013) and animation films (Barton & Unsworth, 2014; Unsworth, 2013a, 2013b; Unsworth & Thomas, 2014). Similar research involving interactive meaning and focalisation was completed by Burn (2003, 2005, 2006), who examined different media such as books, films and videogames of Harry Potter and found differences in the emphasised interpersonal meanings represented across these media platforms. The affiliations meaning resources of interactive meaning and focalisation are apposite theoretical tools for examining how action-adventure videogames create affiliation between game characters and players. Accordingly, these resources were incorporated into the conceptual framework, research design and methodology for the thesis.

2.6.4 Intermodality: Instantiation, commitment and coupling

SFS research has also investigated how multimodal texts present unified meaning. SFS research has explored the connections between different modalities in multimodal texts by making comparisons with language meaning resources (Painter & Martin, 2011). For example, the cohesive ties between image and language were examined by Royce (1998); logico-semantic expansion and project were used by Martinec and Salway (2005) to explore how image-text relations elaborate, extend or enhance represented meaning in multimodal texts; rhetorical structure theory and conjunctive relations were used to explore the gap between narrative structure and finely grained technical details in the film *Memento* (Bateman, 2008; Tseng & Bateman, 2012); information structure was used by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to describe a visual design grammar; and relational transitivity was used by Unsworth and Cleirigh (2008) to explore the image-text relations in a standardised assessment. Moreover, Painter et al. (2013) described a novel approach to theorising intermodality by drawing on the SFS dimension of instantiation.

The SFS notion of instantiation can be used to explicate the possible meaning potential of the semiotic systems down to the afforded meaning realised in each semiotic system (Painter & Martin, 2011; Painter et al., 2013). Instantiation is concerned with tracing the meaning potential of all semiotic resources to the afforded meaning of a particular instance of text (Martin, 2010). Instantiation involves two perspectives: a close inspection of a semiotic resource and the meaning potential that has been realised in an instance of text; or a

distance perspective in which we can describe the general operation of a system and the meaning potential of that system (Martin & White, 2005). These two perspectives of the one concept or object have been compared with the weather and climate (Halliday, 1992; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The weather is the close perspective, such as the actual temperature of the day, and the climate is the distant perspective, such as the possible range of temperature within a particular climate (Halliday, 1992; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Painter and Martin (2011) argued that the complexity of multimodal texts requires mapping the meanings afforded in each mode and tracking how each meaning is instantiated in a text. Comparisons can then be made in relation to how each meaning system contributes to the overall meaning of a multimodal text by using the concepts of *commitment* and *coupling*.

Commitment is concerned with the amount of meaning potential enlisted from any semiotic meaning system (Martin, 2008b; Painter & Martin, 2011). The amount of meaning committed in this process depends on whether a meaning system is enacted and to what extent the enacted system has been deployed (Painter et al., 2013). For example, the Joker may not be committing meaning verbally when not talking, but his face and body language express an attitude of happiness. *Coupling* is concerned with the recurrent co-patterning of realised meaning in a text (Martin, 2008b; Painter & Martin, 2011). This patterning may occur within the different dimensions of semiotic resources, and across different semiotic meaning resources, metafunctions and modalities (Painter et al., 2013). The intermodal coupling can be called *convergent* (Painter & Martin, 2011; Painter et al., 2013) when similar attitudes are expressed in the language and visual meaning systems – for example, the Joker pronouncing a positive evaluative meaning of happiness to state that he is happy to be back at the asylum, while he is visually represented as being happy through a cheerful simile. Alternatively, *divergent* coupling occurs when two modalities differ in their realised meaning, such as the Joker appraising Batman with a negative judgement concerning his physical weakness while Batman is using his physical strength to knock inmates unconscious. The intermodal concepts of *commitment* and *coupling* can be used to examine the repeated co-patterning of language and image evaluative meaning, affiliation and ludic operation resources throughout the unfolding of the action-adventure game scenes. This process is referred to formally as “logogenetic synergy” (Painter & Martin, 2011, p. 152; Unsworth, 2013b, p. 21): “logogenetic” as it refers to the SFS concept of logogenesis or the unfolding of meaning throughout a text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Martin, 2010); and “synergy” to highlight the coupling of complementary semiotic systems that combine to encompass the entire meaning of the text. Painter et al.'s (2013) approach to understanding how modalities such as language and image co-pattern to represent the unified meaning of multimodal texts through

the concepts of *commitment* and *coupling* includes apposite theoretical tools that were included in the conceptual framework, research design and methodology for the thesis.

2.7 A conceptual framework for the explication of values in action-adventure videogames

From the examined models, apposite theoretical understandings and tools were identified and synthesised into the following conceptual framework for addressing the research questions in this study. Before the conceptual framework is described, the research questions for this thesis are reviewed. The overarching research question for the study asked:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

In order to answer this overarching research question, the following research sub-questions were investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?
2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?
3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

The conceptual framework used to answer the research questions is represented in Figure 2.4. First, how the conceptual framework and its comprised theoretical tools were used to answer the research sub-questions is addressed. Second, how the conceptual framework is used to answer the overarching research question is addressed. The investigation of how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames required the conceptual framework to consider how values are represented in the narrative and ludic gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017; Seraphine, 2016b). Therefore, the conceptual framework comprises the narrative and the ludic dimensions. The narrative dimension represents the language and visual narrative of the game, which includes the dialogue of the characters and the accompanying visual images of the game. The narrative dimension encompasses the representational and compositional meanings and the interpersonal meanings. Only the interpersonal meanings were investigated because this is how communicated evaluative meanings about characters were identified in the language and visual modalities using the evaluative meaning resources of attitude (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Also, the interpersonal meaning enacting the player-

game character affiliation were investigated through the coupling of the visual focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The conceptual framework's narrative dimension interpersonal evaluative meaning resources of attitude and the player-game character affiliation resources of visual focalisation and interactive meaning were used to address Research Sub-Questions One and Two.

The ludic dimension extends over the entire narrative and gameplay segments of the game. The ludic dimension encompasses the representational, interpersonal and compositional meanings. However, only the representational and compositional meanings were investigated to identify how evaluative meanings are conveyed by the utilised ludic operations of action-adventure videogames. The ludic-representational meaning was investigated because this identified the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of the playable characters (Apperley & Beavis, 2013; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017). The ludic-compositional meaning was investigated to identify the narrative and gameplay segments of the game through the use of the interactivity resources of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* (Sylvester, 2013). The coupling between the ludic-representational and the ludic-compositional resources in the ludic dimension was used to investigate the ludic operations in action-adventure videogames. Then, to answer Research Sub-Question Three, how the ludic operations co-pattern with the interpersonal meaning resource of the narrative dimension were considered to indicate how the ludic operations of action-adventure games communicate evaluative meanings about characters.

The overarching research question could be addressed after the committed evaluative meanings in the narrative and ludic dimensions of the framework were investigated. In order to address how action-adventure videogames convey values, the framework utilises Painter et al.'s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling to make inferential links between the moral, social and political values described in Chapter One and the evaluative meanings communicated about characters during the narrative and gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). Therefore, inferred prior knowledge encompasses the narrative and ludic dimensions of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework also utilised the SFS theoretical understanding that values permeate each semiotic choice in the narrative and ludic dimensions of the framework, and therefore values did not receive a separate stratum or dimension in the framework (Martin & Rose, 2007).

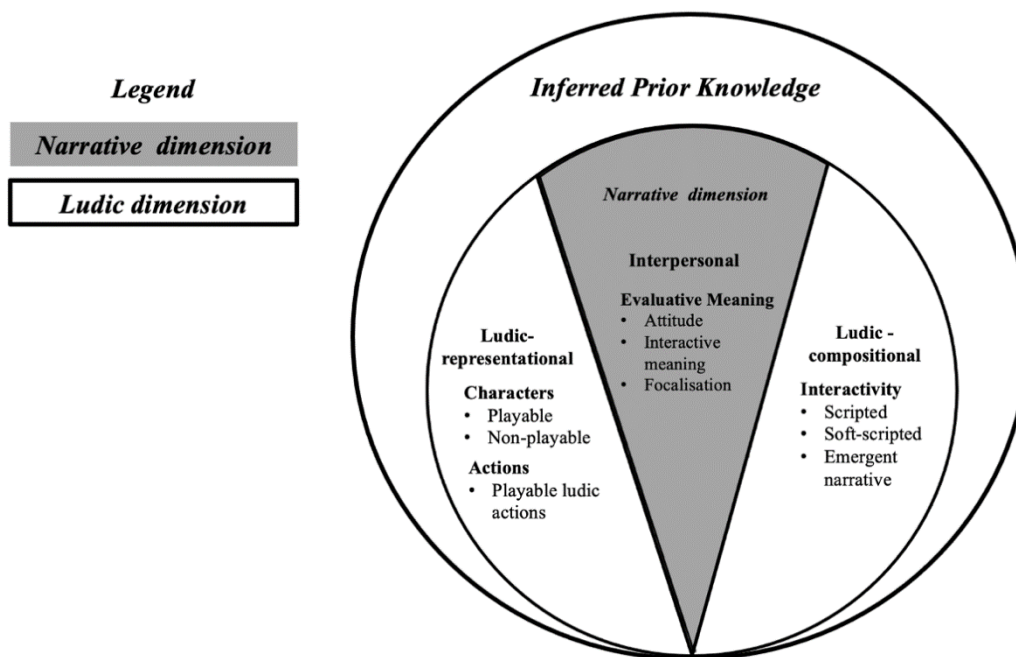


Figure 2.4: The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework

2.8 Summary

This chapter has examined the extent to which conceptual models used in analysing videogames have addressed how the ludic operations and evaluative meanings about characters in action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meaning about game characters. The conceptual models reviewed included *the Values at Play heuristic* (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), *the Games as Action-Games as Texts* framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2011), *the Ludic Framework* (Seraphine, 2016b) and *a social semiotic approach to analysing videogames* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017). Theoretical understandings and tools from these models were synthesised to develop a conceptual framework to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through the communication of evaluative meanings about characters. Chapter Three describes this conceptual frame and the semiotic resources needed to address the study’s research question and research sub-questions.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – GAME EQUIPMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the conceptual framework introduced at the end of Chapter Two in Section 2.7. The semiotic tools in the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions of the framework are represented in Figure 3.1 and are described throughout this chapter. The conceptual framework informed the research design for the investigation of how action-adventure videogames convey values through the communication of evaluative meanings about characters. First, the social semiotic philosophical understanding underpinning the conceptual framework and research design is explored in Section 3.2. The SFS representation of meaning through the use of system networks is described in Section 3.3. Second, the *interpersonal* semiotic resources in the *narrative dimension* are examined in Section 3.4. These resources include the language evaluative meaning resources of attitude introduced in Section 3.5. The evaluative meaning of affect is described in Section 3.6, judgement in Section 3.7 and appreciation in Section 3.8. Invoked attitudes are explained in Section 3.8. Examples of language evaluative meaning from the games are described in Section 3.10. The visual evaluative meaning resources of attitude are explored in Section 3.11 and examples of visual evaluative meaning from the games are described in Section 3.12. Third, the player affiliation resources of interactive meaning and focalisation are introduced in Section 3.13. Section 3.14 examines Interactive meaning and Section 3.15 describes Interactive meaning examples from the games. Section 3.16 examines Focalisation and Sections 3.17 describes Focalisation examples from the games. Four, the *representational* and *compositional* resources in the *ludic dimension* are introduced in Section 3.18. The *representational* resources involved in identifying the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of characters are explored in Section 3.19. Section 3.20 describes examples of playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions from the games. The *compositional* resources of interactivity used to identify the playable and non-playable segments are explained in Section 3.21 and examples of interactivity are described in Section 3.22. Third, the framework is underpinned by the SFS theoretical understanding that values permeate each semiotic choice in the narrative and ludic dimension, and therefore values are not represented as a different stratum of the framework (Martin & Rose, 2007). The framework addresses values through utilising Painter et al.'s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling to make inferential links between the *narrative* and

ludic dimension semiotic tools and the moral, social and political values described in Chapter One (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014) in Section 3.23. A summary of the chapter is described in Section 3.24. Before the semiotic resources utilised in the conceptual framework can be described, it is essential to understand the social semiotic philosophical understandings underpinning the conceptual framework and research design.

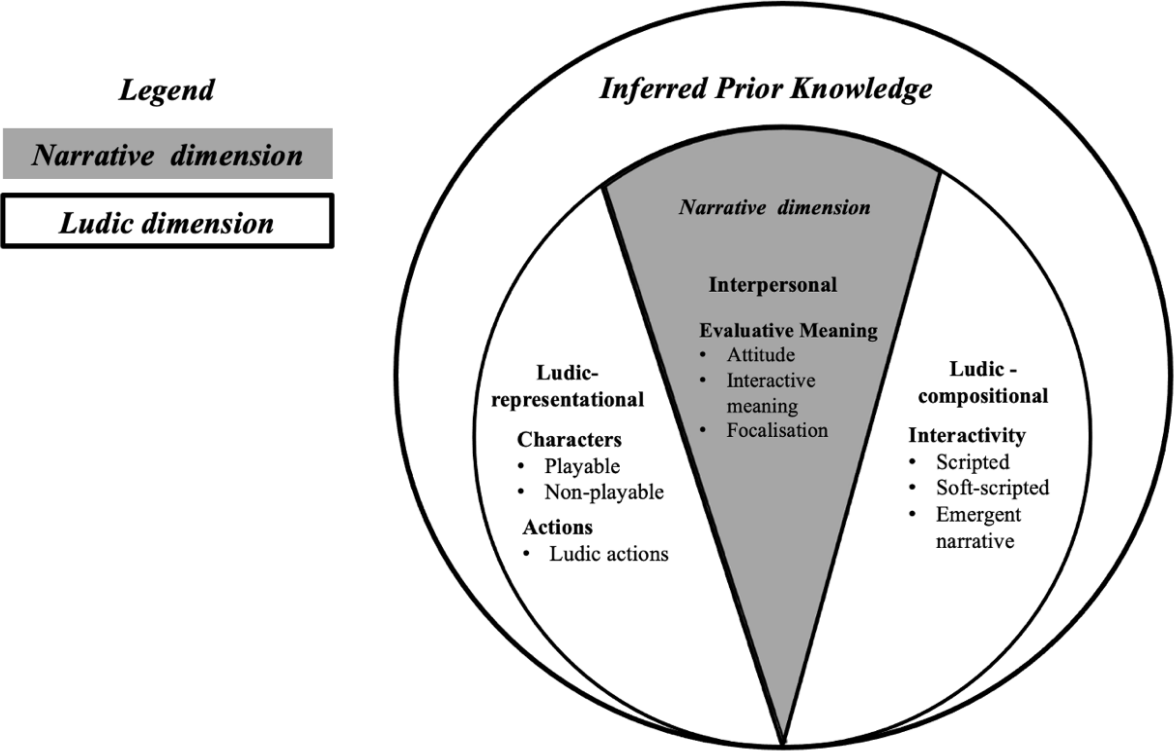


Figure 3.1: The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework

3.2 Social semiotic philosophical orientations

The conceptual framework represented in Figure 6 is situated within the field of social semiotics and is orientated in relation to Halliday’s (1978) systemic functional theory of language. Halliday’s theory does not perceive language as a collection of rules and grammatical categories, but instead theorises language as being epistemologically and ontologically orientated towards understanding how meaning is made within social contexts, and therefore views language as a resource for meaning-making to help to interpret the world (Derewianka, 2012). A central understanding of the systemic functional theory is that every text realises three simultaneously occurring meanings referred to as “metafunctions”: the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual* (Martin, 2010; Martin & White, 2005). The *ideational* metafunction is concerned with how people represent the world or experiences

using grammar meaning-making resources that describe who is involved, what happened, any circumstantial information about the participants involved in a situation and the logical connections of these resources. The *interpersonal* metafunction is concerned with interacting participants and the meaning-making resources that realise differences in social roles, status and power. The *textual* metafunction is concerned with the composition, organisation and presentation of information in meaningful ways. Since the late 20th century, there has been a growing interest in adapting Halliday’s metafunctions to different semiotic modalities such as visual images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Many researchers working in the domain of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Jewitt, 2014) from an SFS perspective during this time have used slightly different terminology, as represented in Table 3.1 (Painter et al., 2013).

Table 3.1 Terminology for the three metafunctions adapted from Painter et al. (2013)

Author	Analysed Data Set	Metafunction		
Halliday and Matthiessen (2014)	Language	<i>Ideational</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>	<i>Textual</i>
Kress and van Leeuwen (2006)	All image types	<i>Ideational (representation)</i>	Interpersonal (interaction and modality)	<i>Textual (composition)</i>
Lemke (1998)	Website	Presentational	Orientalional	Organisational
O’Toole (2011)	Fine art paintings and sculptures	<i>Representational</i>	<i>Modal</i>	<i>Compositional</i>
Painter et al. (2013)	Children’s picturebooks	<i>Ideational</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>	<i>Textual</i>
Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017)	Videogames	<i>Representational</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>	<i>Compositional</i>

The conceptual framework for this thesis foregrounded Halliday’s (1978) metafunctions across the narrative and ludic dimensions as represented in Figure 3.1. However, this thesis investigated only the *interpersonal* meaning occurring in the narrative dimension and the *ideational* and *textual* meaning occurring in the ludic dimension. Also, the metafunctional terms *representational*, *interpersonal* and *compositional* were used in the conceptual framework. The use of these terms aligned the conceptual framework with the previous SFS research involving videogames (Buckingham & Burn, 2007; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) and images (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) reviewed in Chapter Two. The term *representational* referred to the *ideational* metafunction describing who was involved and what happened, such as the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of the characters. The term *compositional* referred to the *textual* metafunction to describe the interactive organisation of the game scenes into *scripted* non-playable segments and *soft-*

scripted and *emergent narrative* playable segments. The term *interpersonal* was kept in line with Halliday’s *interpersonal* metafunction to describe the evaluative meanings of characters and their affiliations with players.

3.3 Systems

System networks can represent the type of semiotic meaning potential available in a semiotic system, such as language or image. These system networks described resources of meaning occurring in each of the metafunctions. Figure 3.2 exemplifies a basic network found within the appraisal attitude system. The networks start with small capital letters written above a lead in arrow – in this case, JUDGEMENT. Next, the system consists of square brackets, which pose a choice between two poles of meaning – in this case, between social sanction and social esteem. When selected, these choices present further meaning options as in the case of Figure 3.2, where another subsystem is utilised, thereby giving the option of veracity or propriety in the social sanction pole of Figure 3.2.

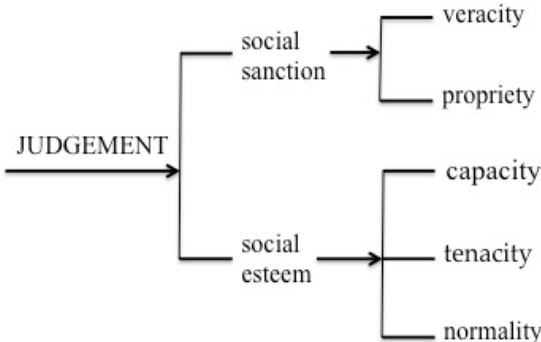


Figure 3.2 Judgement appraisal system (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 38)

Figure 3.3 represents a simultaneous network variable from the visual interactive meaning system. Simultaneous networks are represented by the use of curved brackets. These networks are used when two or more systems are occurring at the same time in a text. A simultaneous network is exemplified in Figure 3.3, where a choice has to be made between the *involvement* or the *detachment* system as well as the *viewer power, equality* or *representation power* system. When a network has been followed to an endpoint, as is the case with involvement in Figure 3.3, an arrow and text are located underneath to represent which semiotic expression has been used to realise the meaning – in this case, the use of a *frontal angle*.

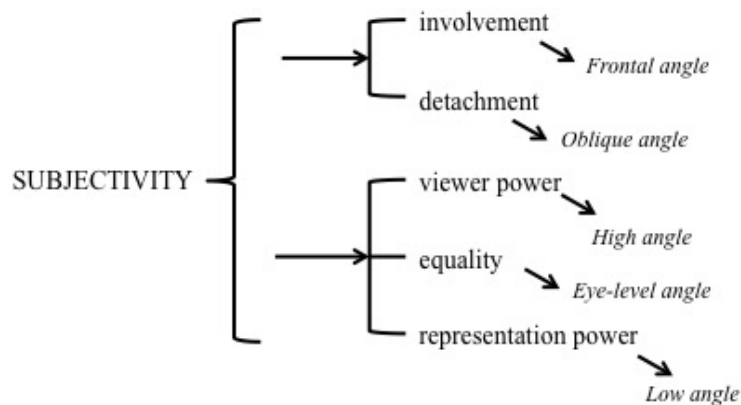


Figure 3.3 Simultaneous visual subjectivity system (adapted from Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 149)

System networks are used to describe the meaning resources occurring in the narrative and ludic dimensions of the conceptual framework. First, in the *interpersonal* metafunction at the narrative dimension, this chapter uses a system network to describe the evaluative meaning resources of attitude, which are used to analyse the language and visual evaluative meanings communicated about characters. Second, the resources for player-game character affiliation are described through the focalisation system network and the interactive meaning system network. Third, in the *representational* metafunction in the ludic dimension, developed system networks for representing the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of characters are described. Also, in the *compositional* metafunction at the ludic dimensions, the interactivity system network used to represent the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the game scenes are described. Each system network represents the possible and actual meaning that can be committed during a game scene. The networks represent the committed meaning realised in a text through their various pathways and how these committed meanings couple within the branches of a system or across a metafunction. The system networks enable the committed meaning of the game scenes to be tracked to identify patterns of evaluative meaning communicated about characters in action-adventure games.

3.4 The narrative dimension

The *interpersonal* semiotic resources of the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework in Figure 3.4 are now described. These resources include the evaluative meaning resources of attitude and the player affiliation resources of focalisation and interactive meaning. These meaning resources explicate the communicated evaluative meaning about

characters and the extent to which action-adventure videogames construct player affiliation with different characters. The evaluative meaning resources of attitude in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework were used to address Research Sub-Question One:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?

The player affiliation resources of focalisation and interactive meanings in the narrative dimension of the conceptual framework were used to address Research Sub-Question Two:

2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

The conceptual framework is underpinned by the SFS understanding that values permeate every semiotic choice in the *narrative* dimension (Martin & Rose, 2007). Painter et al.'s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling has been used by the conceptual framework to make inferential links between the *narrative* dimension semiotic tools and the moral, social and political values described in Chapter One (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). The evaluative meaning resources of attitude (Martin & White, 2005) are now described.

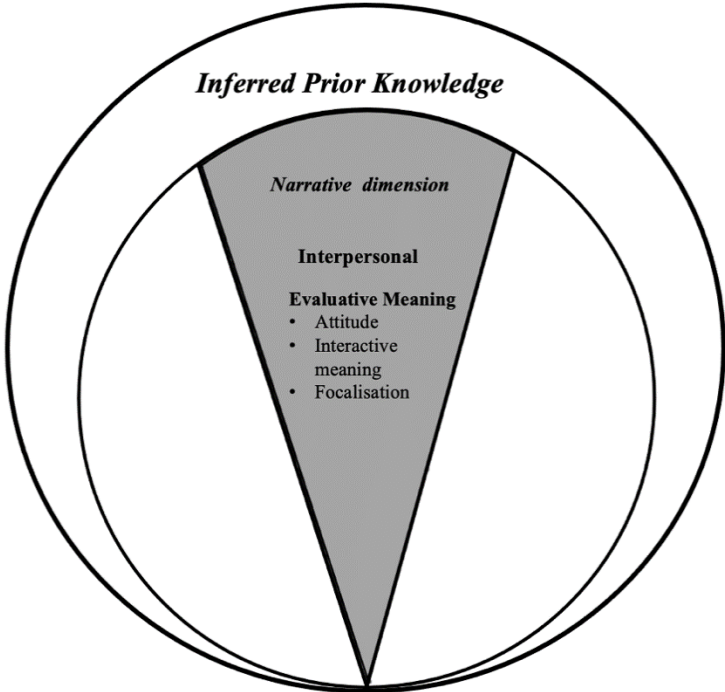


Figure 3.4 Conceptual framework: Narrative dimension

3.5 Research Sub-Question One: The evaluative meaning resources of attitude

The first research sub-question required using the evaluative meaning resources of attitude. The evaluative resources enable the frequency of different types of evaluative meaning about character and how the meanings vary within and between characters to be examined. First, the attitude resources are explained. Attitude is concerned with expressing positive and negative affect, judgements of social esteem and social sanction, and assessments of appreciation (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The attitude system network is represented in Figure 3.5. Affect is concerned with the emotions represented in a text. Judgement addresses character evaluations of social esteem and social sanction. Appreciation is concerned with the assessment of phenomena. The evaluative meaning resources of attitude were further refined by Folkeryd (2006), who examined the evaluative language in texts written by Grades 5, 8 and 11 students in Sweden. The attitudinal categories of affect, judgements of social esteem and social sanction, and assessments of appreciation were retained; however, these categories were further sub-categorised into more delicate classifications of evaluative meaning. The delicate classifications of Folkeryd's (2006) are discussed in further detail below. Attitude can be inscribed explicitly or can be invoked implicitly in a text. Inscribed attitude is described first, and then invoked attitude.

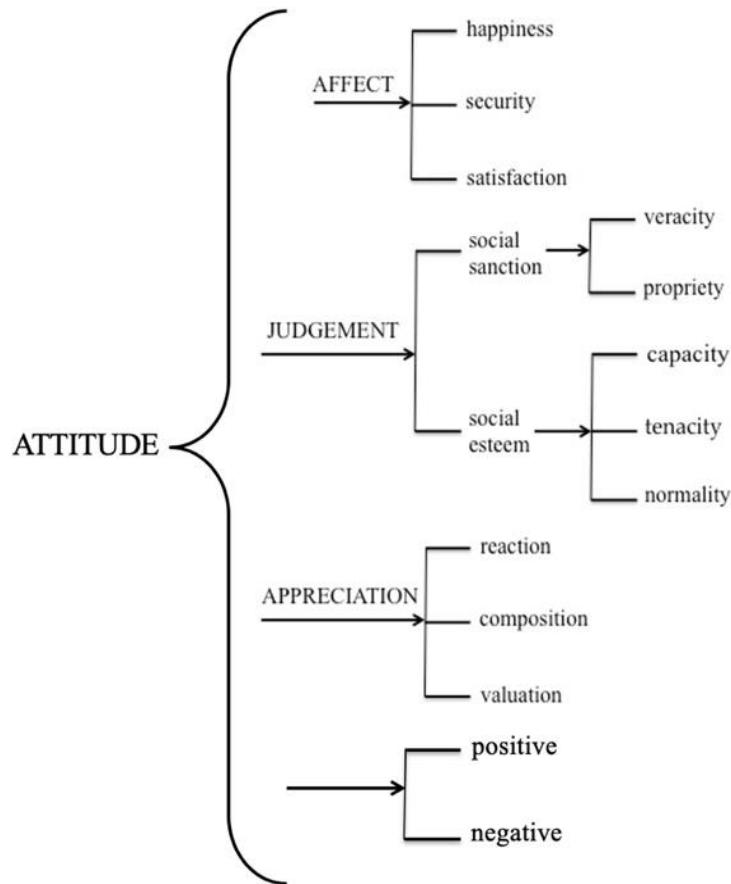


Figure 3.5 Attitude system network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 38)

3.6 Affect

Affect refers to the positive or negative emotions represented in a text. These emotions include the feelings of desire, fear, happiness, security and satisfaction (Martin, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). These emotions can be further sub-divided for a more delicate analysis, as represented in Figure 3.6 (Folkeryd, 2006). The affective emotions are now explored in further detail.

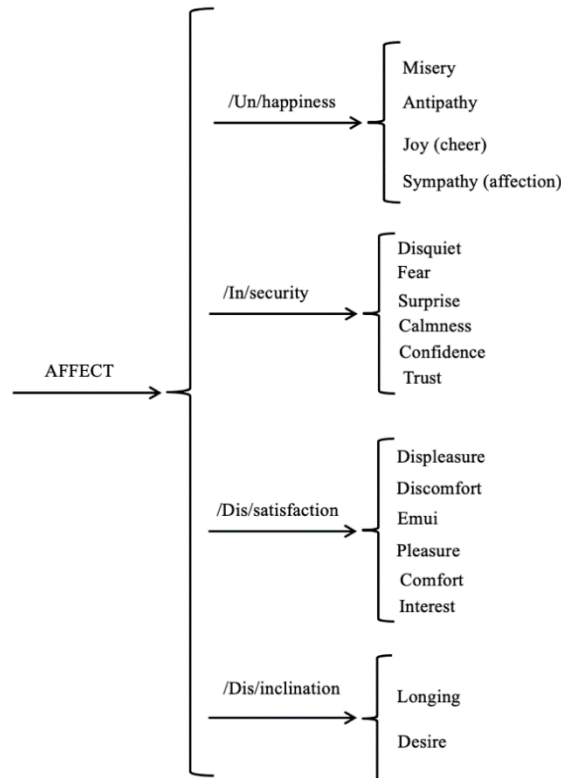


Figure 3.6 Sub-categories of affect (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 69)

3.6.1 Happiness

Happiness is concerned with the positive and negative expression of emotion. It can be identified by the probe question: Am I happy or unhappy? (Humphrey et al., 2012).

Happiness can be realised through the inscription of words such as *chuckle, cheerful, laugh, rejoice, jubilant, shake hands, fond, loving, hug* and *adoring* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of happiness can be further divided into the sub-categories of Joy (cheer) and Sympathy (affection). Examples of Joy include, “The family was *happy* together”, “I felt the *joy* spreading in my body” and “Jeanette *smiled*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 64). Examples of Sympathy (affection) include, “The king *liked* his food” and “I *love* dy[e]ing my hair” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 64).

Unhappiness can be realised by inscribing words such as *whimper, down, cry, sad, wail, miserable, dislike, abuse, hate, revile* and *abhor* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of unhappiness can be further divided into the sub-categories of misery and antipathy (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of misery include, “The king was *devastated*” and “Then Kalla *started to cry*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 64). Examples of antipathy include, “She doesn’t *like* the place they moved to” and “Lisa *hated* Sofia” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 64).

3.6.2 Security

Security is concerned with a participant's comfort and level of anxiety. It can be identified by the probe question: Am I secure or insecure? (Humphrey et al., 2012). Security can be realised through the inscription of words such as *declare, confident, assert, assured, proclaim, boastful, delegate, comfortable with, confident in, entrust* and *trusting* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of security can be further divided into the sub-categories of calmness, confidence and trust (Folkeryd, 2006; Martin & White, 2005). Examples of calmness include, "after a while, she *calmed down*" and "Karin felt *calm*" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 66). Example words that would inscribe confidence include *assert, assured* and *confident* (Martin & White, 2005). Example words that would inscribe trust include *commit* and *comfortable with* (Martin & White, 2005).

Insecurity can be realised through the inscription of words such as *restless, uneasy, twitching, anxious, shaking, freaked out, taken aback, cry out, surprised, faint* and *astonished* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of insecurity can be further divided into the sub-categories of disquiet, fear and surprise (Folkeryd, 2006; Martin & White, 2005). Examples of disquiet include, "This made the king very *worried*" and "'No, it's Solero', Anna said despairingly" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 66). Examples of fear include, "She was *frightened*", "Karin was *scared*" and "They wanted to go, but they didn't *dare*" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 66). An example of surprise would include, "She was completely *shocked*" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 66).

3.6.3 Satisfaction

Satisfaction refers to the emotion expressed in the achievement of an objective. It can be identified by the probe question: Am I satisfied or dissatisfied? (Humphrey et al., 2012). Satisfaction can be realised through the inscription of words such as *attentive, curious, busy, absorbed, flat out, engrossed, pat on the back, satisfied, compliment, impressed, reward* and *proud* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of satisfaction can be further divided into pleasure and comfort (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). An example of pleasure would include, "Åke was *satisfied* in the little village" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). An example of comfort would include, "Then she was *full*" (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67).

Dissatisfaction can be realised by inscribing words such as *fidget, bored, yawn, fed up, tune out, exasperated, caution, cross, scold, angry, castigated* and *furious* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The category of dissatisfaction can be sub-divided into displeasure, discomfort and ennui (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of displeasure include, "Dad

was *angry* with me” and “Mother *sighed*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). Examples of discomfort include, “He *was in a lot of pain*” and “Father who is *starving*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). Examples of ennui include, “He thought it was *boring*” and “But in the middle of my *boredom*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67).

3.6.4 Inclination

Inclination and disinclination are irrealis evaluative meanings that indicate an affective emotion for a situation to be different from the reality of the current situation. The inclination of emotions can be inscribed in a text through words indicating a longing or desire such as *miss*, *long for* and *yearn for* (Martin & White, 2005). An example of longing includes, “I really *long for* Putte” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). An example of desire includes, “He *wished* there would be no recess” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 67). Disinclination of emotions can be inscribed through the use of words such as *wary*, *fearful* and *terrorised* (Martin & White, 2005).

3.7 Judgement

Judgement refers to the assessment of behaviour according to one’s principles (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Judgements can be positive or negative and are categorised into social esteem or social sanction (Martin & White, 2005). Social esteem judgements concern normality, capacity and tenacity, while social sanction judgements concern veracity and propriety. Judgements of social esteem and social sanction can be further sub-divided for a more delicate analysis, as represented in Figure 3.7 (Folkeryd, 2006). The judgements of social esteem are explored first, followed by judgements of social sanction.

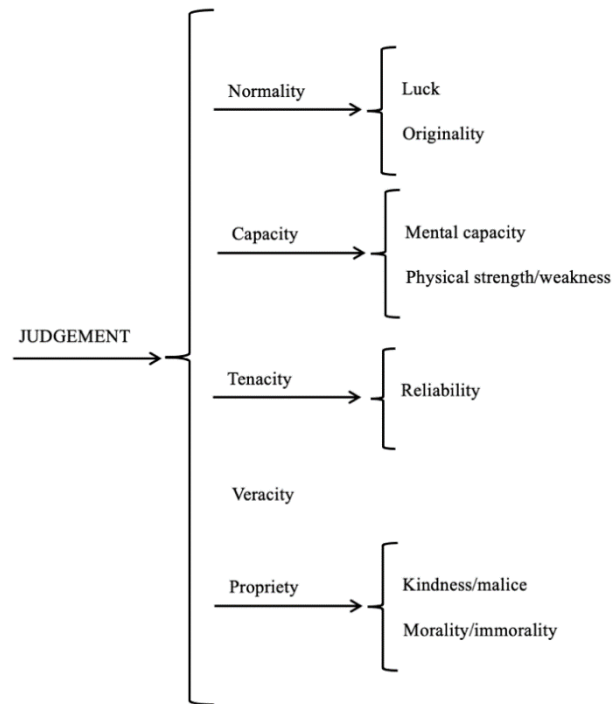


Figure 3.7 Sub-categories of judgement (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 74)

3.7.1 Judgements of social esteem

Judgements of social esteem are concerned with a character’s normality, capacity and tenacity. Judgements of social esteem can be identified through the probe question: Is the character capable and socially competent? (Humphrey et al., 2012). These judgements can be either positive or negative.

3.7.2 Normality

Normality refers to the usuality of a participant. Normality can be realised by inscribing words such as *lucky, fortunate, charmed, normal, average, everyday, fashionable* and *avant-garde* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Judgements of normality can be further sub-divided into categories of luck and originality (Folkeryd, 2006). An example of luck includes, “You are *lucky*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72). Examples of originality include, “In any case [the] internet *rocks, just like me*” and “People there were *not so different*, I thought” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72). Negative normality can be realised by inscribing words such as *unfortunate, pitiful, tragic, odd, peculiar, eccentric, dated, daggy* and *retrograde* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005).

3.7.3 Capacity

Capacity refers to judgements about the capability of a participant. Capacity can be realised by inscribing words such as *powerful, vigorous, robust, insightful, clever, gifted, balanced, together* and *sane* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Judgements of capacity can be further sub-divided into categories of mental capacity and physical strength (Folkeryd, 2006). Positive examples of mental capacity include, “They learned everything about the skeleton and he became *good*” and “The world’s *smartest* blonde” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72). A positive example of physical strength includes, “There I won in a *superior* way” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72).

Negative capacity can be realised through the inscription of words such as *mild, weak, wimpy, slow, stupid, thick, flaky, neurotic* and *insane* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Negative judgements of capacity can be further sub-divided into categories of mental capacity and physical weakness (Folkeryd, 2006). A negative example of mental capacity includes, “Now we are rid of our teacher for a while, said *stupid* Jonas” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72). Negative examples of physical weakness include, “We are *too tired* for that”, “He didn’t have the *strength* to pull in the fish” and “They *couldn’t play*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 72).

3.7.4 Tenacity

Tenacity refers to judgements about the determination of a participant. Tenacity can be realised by inscribing words such as *brave, heroic, reliable, dependable, tireless, persevering* and *resolute* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Positive judgements of tenacity can also be sub-categories to reflect the reliability of a participant (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of positive reliability include, “Martin[,] you are a bloody good friend that a guy can *trust*” and “Laura has always *been there* for me” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73).

Negative tenacity can be realised by inscribing words such as *rash, cowardly, despondent, unreliable, undependable, weak, distracted* and *dissolute* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Negative judgements of tenacity can also be sub-categorised to reflect a participant’s reliability (Folkeryd, 2006). An example of negative reliability includes, “He *hadn’t done* his job” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73).

3.7.5 Judgement of social sanction

Judgements of social sanction are concerned with the veracity of a claim and the propriety of a participant’s character. Judgements of social sanction can be identified through

the probe questions: Is the character morally sound? or Is the character legally sound? (Humphrey et al., 2012). These judgements can be either positive or negative.

3.7.6 Veracity

Veracity refers to judgements of social sanction concerning the truthfulness of a participant or a claim. Veracity can be realised through the inscription of words such as *truthful, honest, credible, sincere, genuine, frank* and *direct* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Negative veracity can be realised by inscribing words such as *dishonest, deceitful, insincere, fake, deceptive* and *manipulative* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005).

3.7.7 Propriety

Propriety refers to judgements of social sanction concerning ethical behaviour. Propriety can be realised by inscribing words such as *good, moral, ethical, law-abiding, fair, just, sensitive, kind* and *caring* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Positive judgements of propriety can be sub-categorised as kindness and morality (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of kindness include, “John received her *kindly*” and “There was a *good* friend” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73). Examples of morality include, “She was so *understanding*” and “She proved herself *worthy*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73).

Negative propriety can be realised by inscribing words such as *bad, immoral, evil, corrupt, unfair, unjust, insensitive, mean* and *cruel* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Negative judgements of propriety can be sub-categorised as malice and immorality (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of malice include, “The cold and *hard* robbers” and “How *mean* my parents are” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73). Examples of immorality include, “Some *rowdy* boys”, “This evening the *hooligans* would learn” and “She had done something *stupid*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 73).

3.8 Appreciation

Appreciation is concerned with the positive and negative assessment of phenomena. Appreciation is divided into the three categories of reaction, composition and valuation (Martin & White, 2005). Appreciation can also be considered through the semiotic metafunctions. The *interpersonal* function would relate to reaction, the *textual* function would align with composition and the *ideational* function would be associated with valuation (Martin & White, 2005). Appreciation can be further sub-categorised for a more delicate

analysis, as represented in Figure 3.8 (Folkeryd, 2006). The appreciation categories and sub-categories are now explored in further detail.

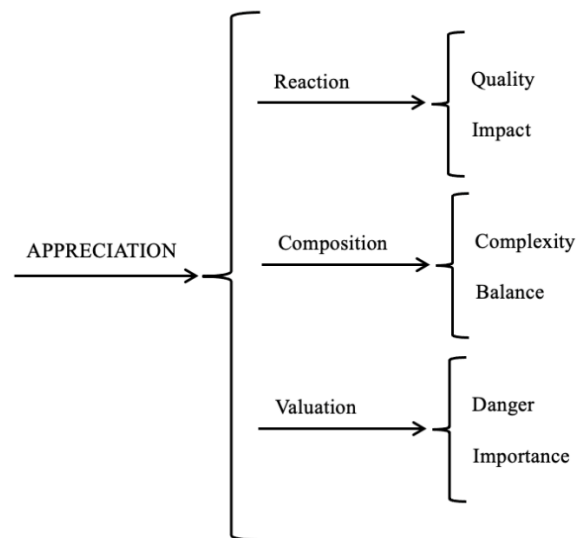


Figure 3.8 Sub-categories of appreciation (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 78)

3.8.1 Reaction

Reaction refers to whether the phenomenon captures the viewer’s attention, and to whether it is liked or disliked (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Reaction is concerned with the phenomenon that produced the feeling and should not be confused with affect, which is concerned with a participant’s emotional response (Derewianka, 2011; Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005). It can be identified by using the probing question: Did it grab me? or Does it indicate a particular standard? (Ngo, 2013, p. 32). Reaction can be realised by inscribing words such as *captivating*, *involving*, *engaging*, *absorbing*, *striking*, *fascinating*, *exciting*, *compelling*, *lovely*, *beautiful*, *splendid*, *enchanting* and *delightful* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Reaction can be further sub-categorised into quality and impact (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of positive quality include, “A very *pretty* girl had started in his class”, “a very *nice* view”, “He stayed in a *luxury house*”, “The *best* disco” and “Internet *rocks*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 76). An example of positive impact includes, “It was great *fun*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 76).

A negative reaction can be realised through the inscription of words such as *dull*, *boring*, *tedious*, *staid*, *dry*, *uninviting*, *unremarkable*, *predictable*, *plain*, *ugly*, *repulsive* and *irritating* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). An example of negative quality includes, “A *crappy* booze” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 76). Examples of negative impact include, “It

was a *horrible* dream”, “Moments in that small *suffocating* room” and “He heard Bengt’s *strong and cruel* voice” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 76).

3.8.2 Composition

Composition refers to the arrangement of different parts that comprise an object. It correlates with the *textual* metafunction (Martin & White, 2005). It can be identified by using the probing question: Was it well constructed? (Humphrey et al., 2012). Composition can be realised by inscribing words such as *balanced, harmonious, unified, simple, elegant, intricate, detailed* and *precise* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Composition can be sub-categorised into complexity and balance (Folkeryd, 2006). An example of complexity includes, “A funny, *complex* description” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 77). An example of balance includes, “It was an *even* game” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 77).

A negative composition can be realised by inscribing words such as *unbalanced, discordant, incomplete, over-complicated, extravagant, puzzling* and *simplistic* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). An example of negative complexity includes, “The road was long and *troublesome*” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 77). An example of negative balance includes, “My incredibly *messy* room” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 77).

3.8.3 Valuation

Valuation refers to the significance of a phenomenon. It aligns with the ideational metafunction as it describes the world in an experiential manner (Martin & White, 2005). It can be identified by using the probing questions: Was it worthwhile? Was it significant? (Humphrey et al., 2012). Valuation is concerned with evaluating phenomena and should not be confused with “judgements of capacity” (Derewianka, 2011; Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005). Valuation can be realised through the inscription of words such as *challenging, significant, profound, provocative, innovative, unique, enduring* and *illuminating* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Valuation can be sub-categorised into importance (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of importance include, “But it was *worth* it!”, “The *greatest* event” and “I have to make an *important* phone call” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 78).

A negative valuation can be realised by inscribing words such as *shallow, insignificant, unsatisfying, sentimental, conservative, reactionary, unmemorable* and *forgettable* (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Negative valuation can be sub-categorised into danger and importance (Folkeryd, 2006). Examples of danger include, “Something *terrible* would happen”, “There was still a *problem*”, “It is too *dangerous*” and

“Have you seen anything *suspicious*?” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 78). An example of importance includes, “Maybe you don’t think it sounds *remarkable*?” (Folkeryd, 2006, p. 78).

3.9 Invoked attitude

Attitude can also be invoked in a text through inference. Invoked attitudes can be realised in various ways that can be described using a system ranging from inscribed to afforded attitude (Martin & White, 2005). The network for invoking attitude is presented in Figure 3.9. The network commences with the inscribed attitude that is written into the text, as described previously. Provoked attitude utilises literary language devices such as similes or metaphors to provoke an attitudinal response. An example of provoked negative capacity was realised in *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016, Scarecrow Encounter 1), with the Joker describing Batman as trapped in an elevator tenuously hanging at a great height. The Joker describes Batman’s situation by using figurative language to provoke a response regarding Batman’s limited capacity – for example, “I’ve got you trapped in a little metal box, hanging precariously over a deadly drop”. Flagged attitude requires less inferential work for a reader and can include non-core vocabulary to intensify an event (Martin & White, 2005). An example of flagged negative capacity from *Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016, Scarecrow Encounter 3) occurs when the super criminals have captured Batman, and Harley Quinn describes Batman’s lack of ability by stating, “He don’t look so big and scary now, does he, Mr J?”. Afforded attitude occurs when the experiential meaning is announced with no explicit or implicit connection to a view, and therefore requires more inferential work to be performed by the reader to make connections with the intended attitude. An example of afforded negative security occurs in *Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016, Scarecrow Encounter 1) when the Joker threatens to blow up an elevator in which Batman is trapped.

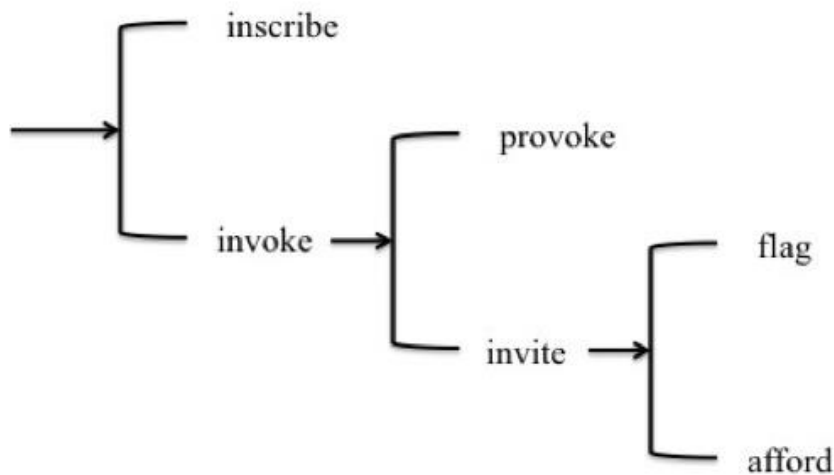


Figure 3.9 Invoked attitude system network (adapted from Martin & White, 2005, p. 67)

3.10 Language evaluative meaning example

A further explanation of how the language attitude resources represent the evaluative meaning choices of characters can be illustrated using the following line of dialogue by the Joker in the videogame *Batman Arkham Asylum*, “Up until a few seconds ago, I was **going to kill** everyone in the room” (Rocksteady, 2016, the Joker escape scene). In this line of dialogue, the Joker inscribes a negative judgement of impropriety concerning the act of killing. The inscribed words have been highlighted in bold in the above line of dialogue. Figure 3.10 represents how the evaluative meaning resources in the judgement system network were applied. The “morality/immorality” attitude was selected, indicated by the red circle along with the negative and inscribed options. The arrow coming down from the “morality/immorality” attitude points to the line of dialogue, with the words inscribing the attitude highlighted in **blue** font.

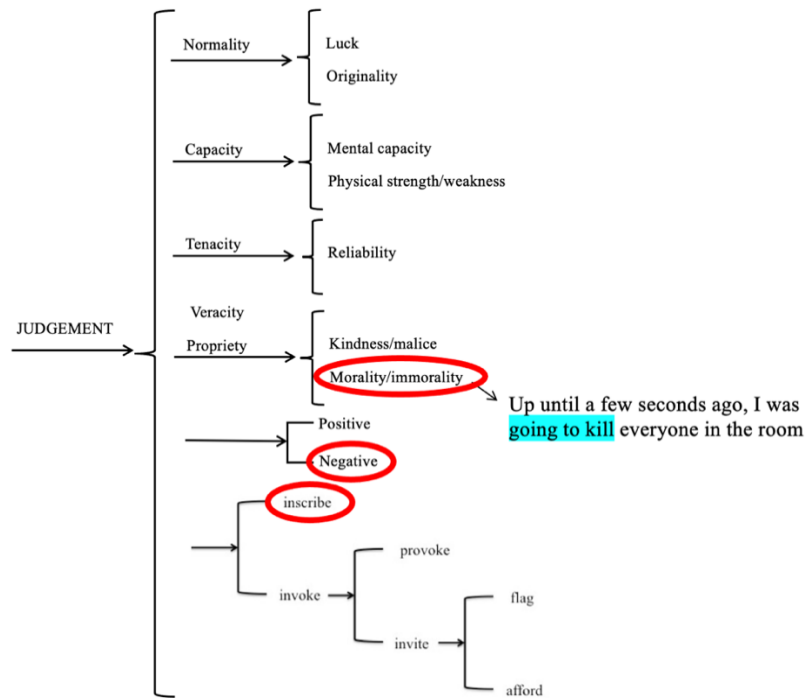


Figure 3.10 Example application of inscribed judgement

The judgement system network is a simultaneous system network in which the different kinds of judgements can be deployed at the same time. In this case, the line of dialogue also invokes a positive judgement of capacity concerning the Joker’s physical strength to carry out his immoral acts. Figure 3.11 illustrates how the invoked evaluative meaning resources in the judgement system network can be used. The “physical strength/weakness” attitude was selected, along with the positive and afford options indicated by the red circles. The arrow coming down from the “physical strength/weakness” attitude points to the line of dialogue, with the words affording the attitude highlighted in blue font. The afforded judgement of weakness has been selected as players are required to draw on their prior knowledge of the Joker being a super-villain to invoke this attitudinal response.

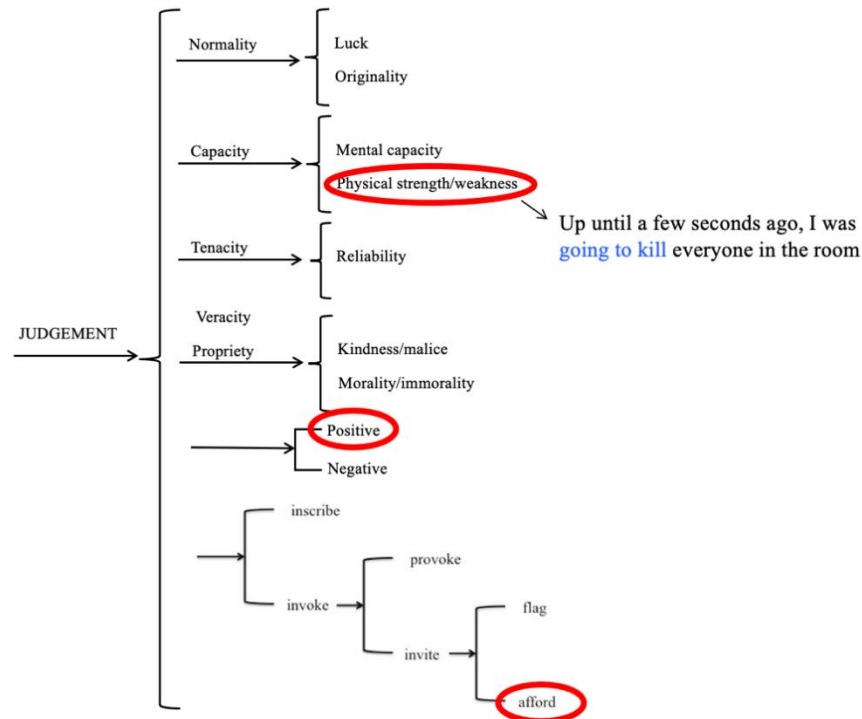


Figure 3.11 Example application of invoked judgement

Players can use the identified patterns of evaluative meaning in the character’s dialogue and combine this with their prior knowledge of social and political values to synthesise an implied value in the game. For example, the Joker’s inscribed judgement of immorality and afforded judgement of his physical capacity to carry out murder imply that he does not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian Values in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

3.11 Research Sub-Question One: Visual attitude

The first research sub-question also requires applying the evaluative meaning resources of attitude to images from the games. The evaluative resources enable the frequency of different types of visual evaluative meaning about characters and how the depicted meanings vary within and between characters to be examined. First, the earlier described categories of attitudes are used to analyse the visual depictions of character attitudes from the game. Chapter Two reviewed literature involving the application of the categories of attitude to images (Economou, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). Unsworth (2014) described how images could inscribe attitude through the use of visual metaphors, and White (2014) charted images along a cline from inscribed to invoked attitudes, including *provoked*, *flagged* and *afforded* viewer responses. An inscribed visual attitude involves the author designing an attitudinal position in an image, which can be

recognised in different contextual situations. An inscribed visual attitude requires no inferencing from the viewer of the image. Also, an inscribed visual attitude uses a visual metaphor such as the drawn horns and tail in Figure 3.12.



Figure 3.12 Inscribed attitude – use of visual metaphor (White, 2014, p. 38)

Images that invoke require a viewer to utilise their prior knowledge of a context to infer an attitudinal response. Images that *provoke* an attitude require viewers to draw on some of their prior knowledge, while the illustrator provides most of the contextual information as represented in Figure 3.13. The contextual information can be explicated through visual ideational meaning resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Painter et al., 2013).



Figure 3.13 Provoked attitude (White, 2014, p. 38)

Images that *flag* an attitude require a shared responsibility between the viewer and the illustrator, as represented in Figure 3.14.



Figure 3.14 Flagged attitude (White, 2014, p. 39)

Images that *afford* attitudes require the viewer to draw on their prior knowledge for attitudinal responses, as represented in Figure 3.15.



Figure 3.15 Afforded attitude (White, 2014, p. 39)

3.12 Visual evaluative meaning example

A further example of how the attitude resources represent visual evaluative meaning can be illustrated using an image of the Joker strangling the asylum guard before escaping (Rocksteady, 2016, the Joker escape scene). The image is represented in Figure 3.16. The image portrays a judgement of capacity concerning the Joker's physical strength when choking the guard. The image has been classified as provoked owing to the game designer representing the Joker's capacity, while gamers are required to draw on their prior knowledge of the Joker being a super-criminal to invoke the judgement. This portrayed meaning is represented on the system network by selecting the "physical strength/weakness" option of the capacity system, along with the positive and provoked options indicated by the red circle. The arrow coming down from the "physical strength/weakness" attitude points to a

description of the image. Gamers can use the identified patterns of evaluative meaning in the attitude system network and combine this with their prior knowledge of social and political values to synthesise an implied value in the game world. For example, the Joker’s portrayed physical capacity to strangle the guard implies that he does not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the social and political Australian Values in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

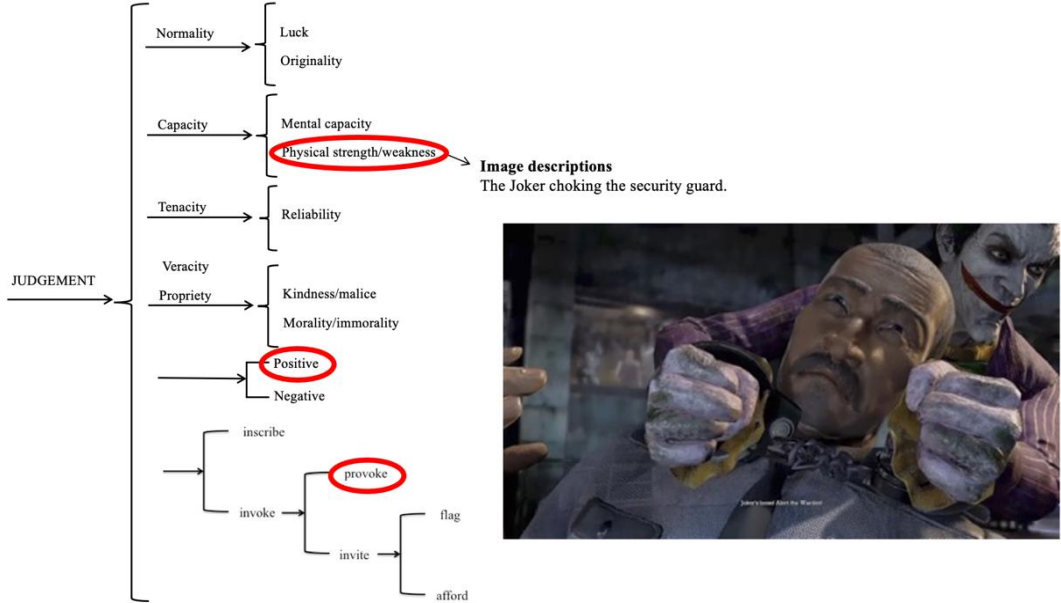


Figure 3.16 Example application of visual judgement

3.13 Research Sub-Question Two: Player-game character affiliation

The second research sub-question required the use of visual affiliation resources. The narrative dimension’s *interpersonal* metafunctional resources, interactive meaning and focalisation were used to analyse the game scenes to derive data to answer Research Sub-Question Two:

- To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in videogames?

The affiliation resources include the interactive meaning resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), which describe how camera angles used in images can create solidarity and involvement with viewers. Also, focalisation resources (Painter et al., 2013) describe how players are positioned to look upon or to see as or along with characters. The affiliation resources allowed the extent to which the videogames construct player affiliation with

different characters in the selected videogames to be analysed. First, the interactive meaning resources are described. Second, the focalisation resources are explored.

3.14 Interactive meaning

The interactive meaning resources described camera angles used in images that create solidarity and involvement with viewers. Figure 3.17 represents a system network of the available interactive meaning choice described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The interactive meaning system consists of three variables. The first variable is concerned with the type of eye-contact used by a character; for example, if a character is directly looking at a viewer, it can be described as the character demanding the viewer's attention. However, if the character is looking away, it can be described as the character offering the viewer information. The second variable is concerned with the distance between the character and the viewer. A close frame of a character conveys a personal connection between a character and a viewer, a medium frame conveys a social connection and a long frame conveys an impersonal connection. The third variable considers the horizontal and vertical placement of a camera. The horizontal placement of the camera involves using a frontal angle to involve the viewer in the world of the represented characters. The use of an oblique angle indicates a degree of detachment between the represented character and the viewer. The vertical placement of the camera creates a sense of power between the viewer and the represented character; for example, if the camera is placed low, the characters are represented as being powerful. The camera placed at an eye-level angle represents that the character and the viewer have an equal relationship. The camera placed at a high angle represents the character as small and places the viewer in a position of power.

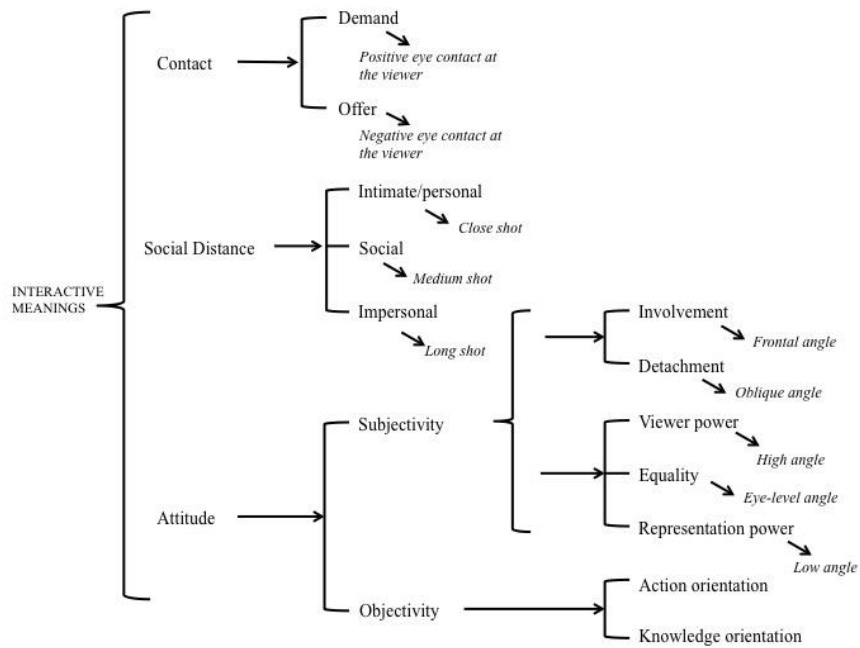


Figure 3.17 Interactive meaning system network (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 149)

3.15 Interactive meaning example

A further example of how the interactive meaning resources represent affiliation can be illustrated using the image of the Joker strangling the asylum guard before escaping (Rocksteady, 2016, the Joker escape scene). The image is represented in Figure 3.18. The image portrays the guard making eye contact with the viewer as he is strangled. A close, frontal and eye-level camera has been used to create an intimate, involved and equal relationship between the characters and gamers. The portrayed meaning is represented on the system network by selecting the contact “demand” option, “the intimate/personal” social distance option, and the “involvement” and “equality” options indicated by the red circles. The arrows coming down from each selected option describe the camera angles that have been used to represent the realised meaning in the game image. A further understanding of how the camera angles were used in the game images to create an affiliation between players and game characters required the investigation of how characters’ perspectives and points of view are created in the visual images.

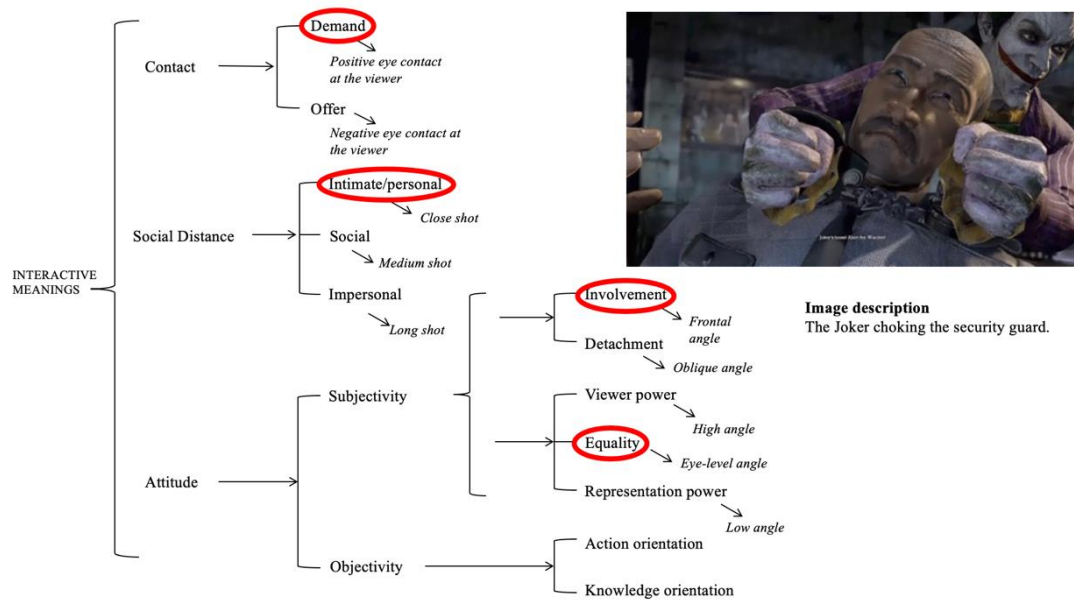


Figure 3.18 Example application of interactive meaning

3.16 Focalisation

The research concerning the interactive meaning between represented characters and a viewer was extended to consider how a viewer was positioned either to look upon, or to see along with, a character. Figure 3.19 represents the focalisation meaning system described by Painter et al. (2013). Focalisation describes how a viewer can look upon or see along with a character. The system consists of two variables. The first variable described demanding images as being contact images, and images representing an offer as being observed images. Contact images are further categorised according to the representation of a direct frontal gaze or an invited gaze in which a character’s eyes or head is turned to the side. The second variable describes how images can be unmediated and position a viewer to look upon a character from an outside perspective, or can be mediated to see along with the character or as the character. Mediated images can imply that a character is looking at another character during a sequence of images. Analysing the game scene for focalisation can indicate how players are aligned visually with a character.

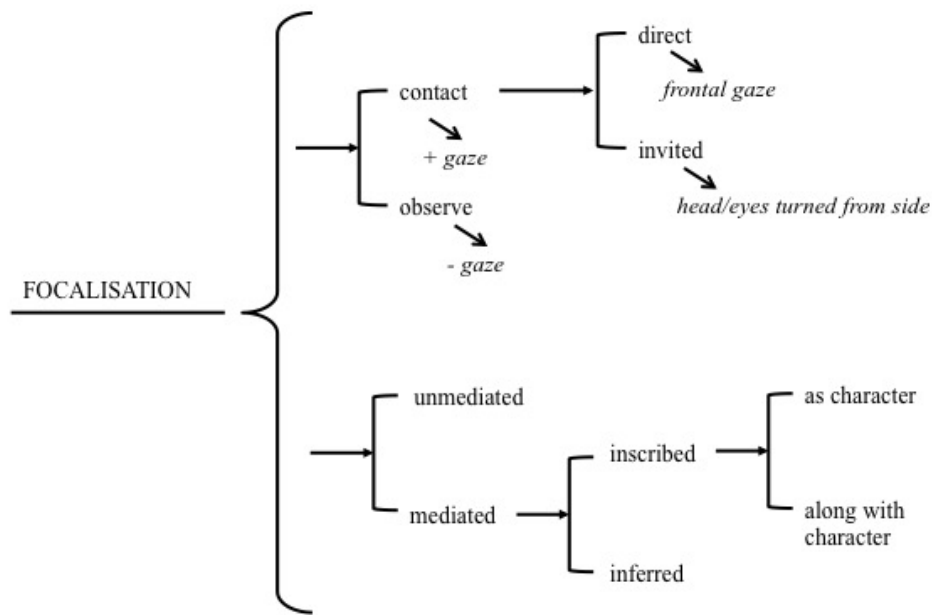


Figure 3.19 Focalisation system network (Painter et al., 2013, p. 21)

3.17 Focalisation example

A further example of how the focalisation resources represent affiliation can be illustrated using an image depicting the protagonist Aiden shooting the Hitmen in the videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014, Clara Lille’s Death), as represented in Figure 3.20. The portrayed meaning is represented on the focalisation system network by selecting the “observed” and the “along with character” options indicated by the red circles. The “observed” option has been selected as the image depicts negative eye-contact between himself and players. Also, the “along with character” option has been selected as the image positions players to see along with Aiden within the simulated game world. This positioning is achieved by the game camera being placed behind the right shoulder of Aiden, allowing players to view the world along with him. The back of Aiden’s head and the upper section of his right shoulder are represented in the foreground of the image, while Hitmen are represented in the background of the image.

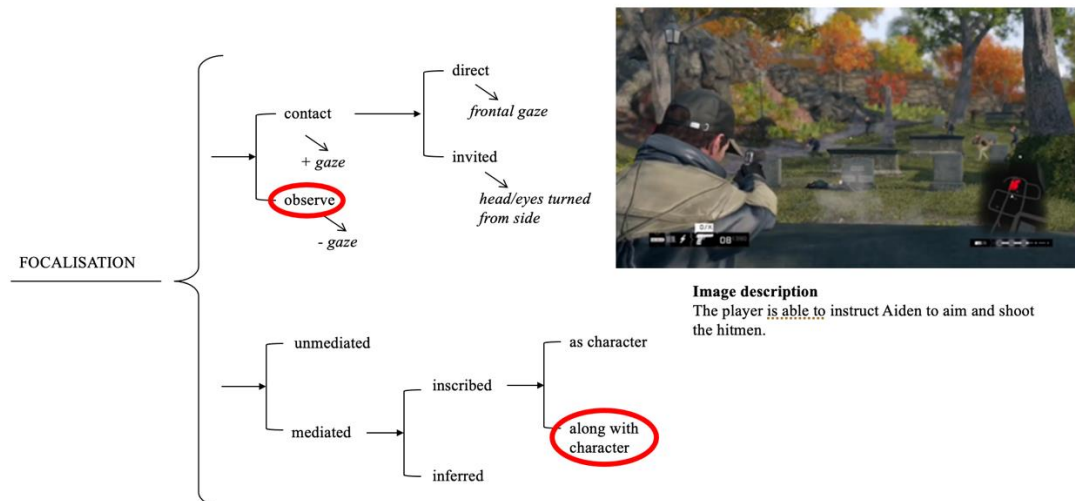


Figure 3.20 Example application of focalisation meaning

The camera angles used in game scenes can be identified through the use of the interactive meaning and focalisation system networks. The knowledge of the utilised camera angles in the game images illustrate the extent to which videogames construct player affiliations with different characters in the game scenes. For example, during the game scene, if players are frequently positioned to see as or along with Aiden instead of other characters, it can be inferred that Aiden’s perspective of the game world is privileged compared with that of other characters. Next, attention is turned to the ludic operations and to how a game’s dynamic action influences the conveyed values.

3.18 Research Sub-Question Three: The ludic dimension

The *representational* and *compositional* metafunctional semiotic resources of the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework in Figure 3.21 are now described. First, the *representational* metafunctional resources involving the identification of the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of characters are explained. Second, the *compositional* metafunctional resources of interactivity concerning the playable and non-playable segments are discussed. The *representational* and *compositional* metafunctional resources of the conceptual framework explicate the ludic operations of actions-adventure videogames. Moreover, the conceptual framework is underpinned by the SFS understanding that values permeate every semiotic choice in the *ludic* dimension (Martin & Rose, 2007). Painter et al.’s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling was used by the framework to make inferential links (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014) between the *ludic* dimension tools and the moral, social and political values described in Chapter One. The

ludic operation resources in the *ludic* dimension and their coupling with the evaluative resources of attitude in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework were used to address Research Sub-Question Three:

1. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

The *representational* and *compositional* resources of the conceptual framework are now described.

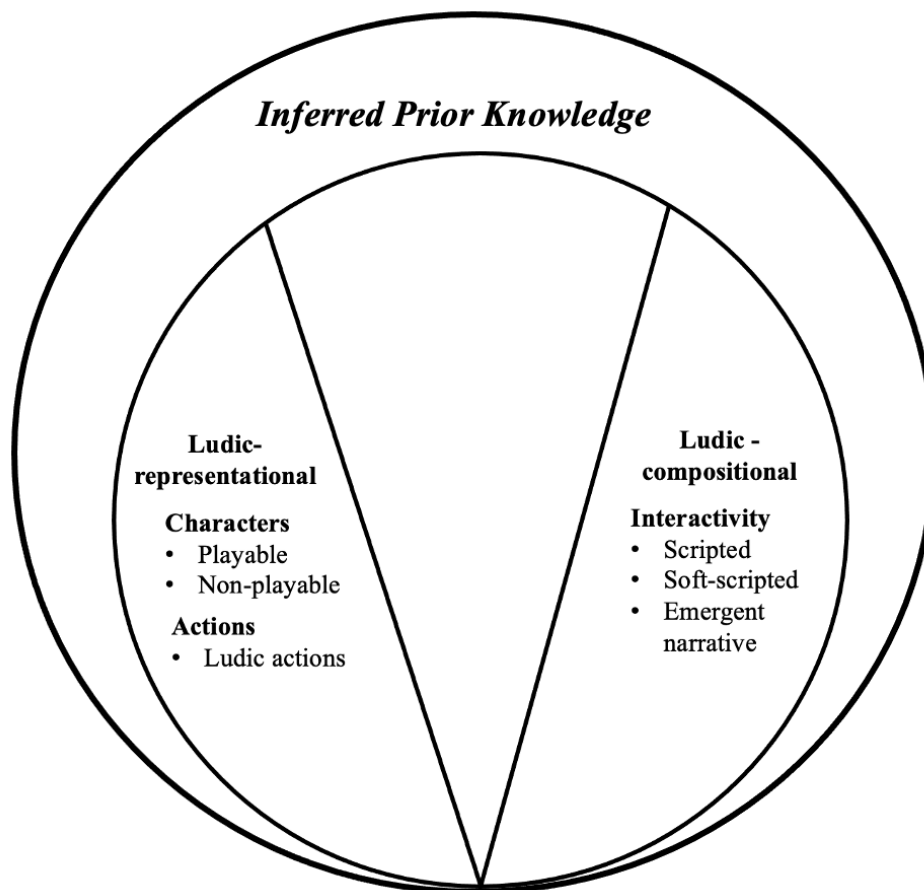


Figure 3.21 Conceptual framework: Ludic dimension

3.19 Ludic-representational meaning

The *ludic-representational* meanings in videogames are realised through the identification of the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of the characters. First, the playable and non-playable characters from *Arkham Asylum* are examined in Section 3.19.1. Second, the ludic actions of characters from *Arkham Asylum* are explained in Section 3.19.2. Third, the playable and non-playable characters from *Watch Dogs* are

discussed in Section 3.19.3. Fourth, the ludic actions of character from *Watch Dogs* are described in Section 3.19.4.

3.19.1 *The Arkham Asylum* character system network

Game design literature reviewed in Chapter Two refers to characters as playable and non-playable (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017; Sylvester, 2013). Figure 3.22 represents a system network for the playable and non-playable characters in *Arkham Asylum*. The system network also indicates the depicted protagonist and antagonist characters in the selected game scene. Playable characters can be controlled by gamers. The two playable characters in *Arkham Asylum* are Batman and the Joker. The non-playable characters are either supporting protagonist characters or supporting antagonist characters. Supporting protagonist characters are Commissioner Gordon, the asylum guard and the doctor. The supporting antagonist characters are Harley Quinn and the asylum inmates.

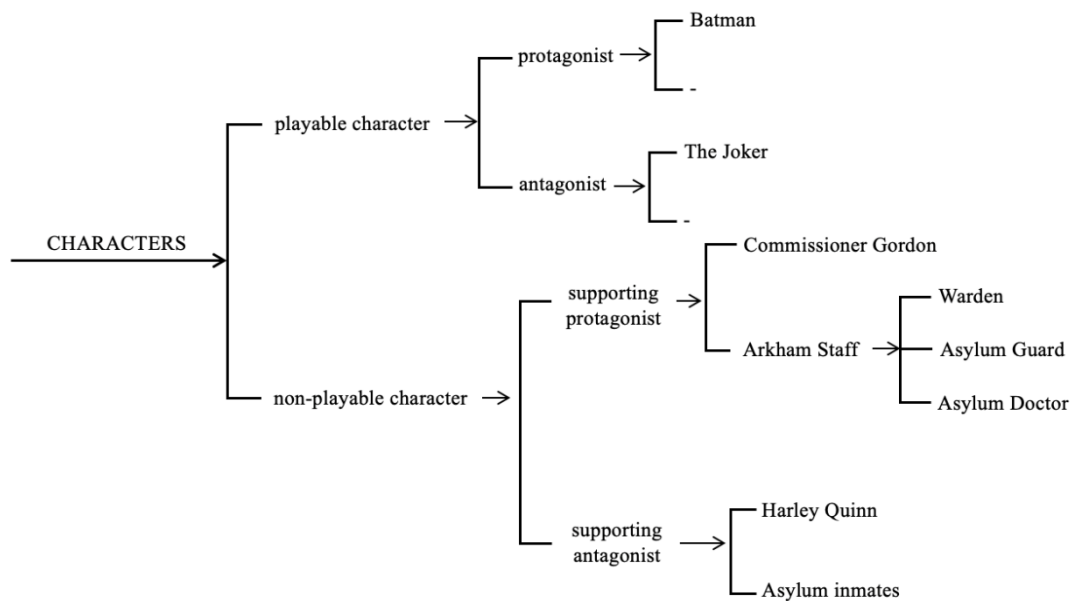


Figure 3.22 *The Arkham Asylum* characters system network

3.19.2 *The Arkham Asylum* ludic character actions

After the playable and non-playable characters have been identified, the possible ludic actions of the characters can be examined. A system network of the possible *factum*, *tactum* and *actum* character actions is represented in Figure 3.23. The system begins with simultaneous choices across the three variables of *actum*: player-initiated actions; *tactum*: game object interactions; and *factum*: game initiated actions. The *actum* system begins with

the choice of a character avatar taking action or not taking action. Instructing the avatar to take action requires players to operate the avatar either to use gadgets such as detective vision, allowing the avatar to scan the environment for clues, or to use the tools from Batman’s utility belt such as a grapple to swing and climb up to high platforms. Players may have to instruct the avatar to move by using the left stick on the controller while also instructing the avatar to fight characters by pressing a combination of buttons and triggers. Players can use the right stick on the controller to move the game camera from its default setting so they can better investigate the game environment. Players can also instruct the avatar to investigate the game environment through the use of several non-fighting actions such as grappling to a ceiling vent, gliding down from a higher level of the asylum or running along a corridor. The *tactum* system network represents the game objects, such as the asylum inmates who can punch/hit, kick and chase Batman. The *factum* system network includes character actions generated by the game system.

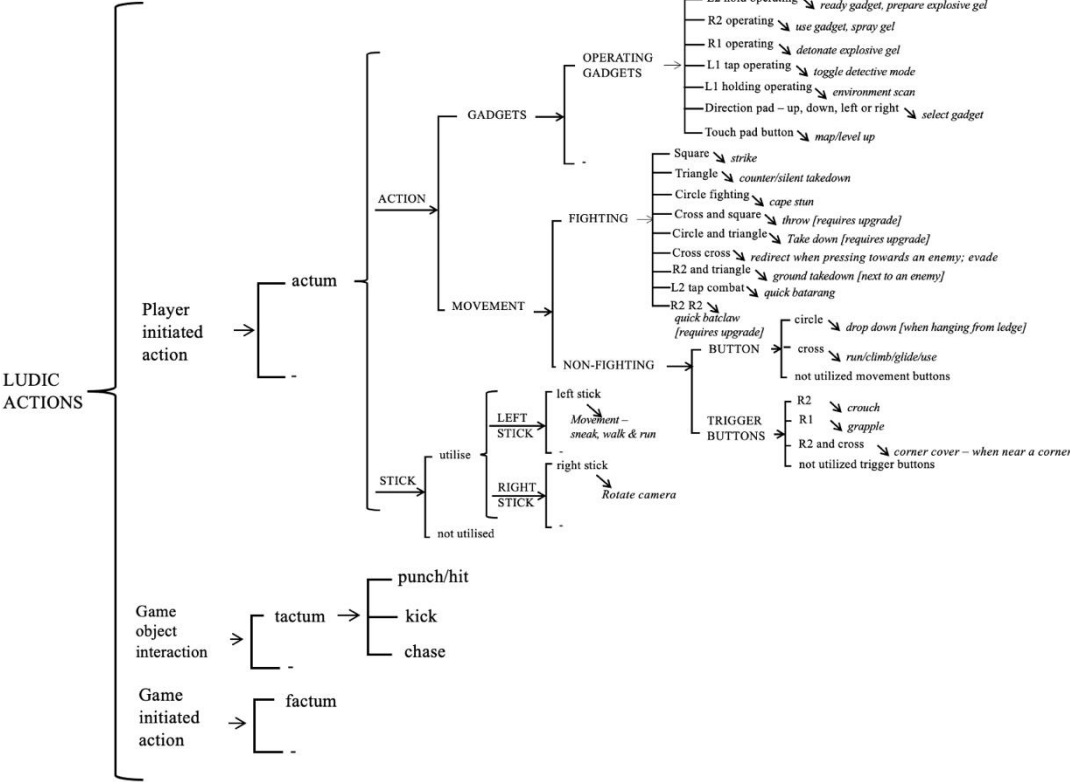


Figure 3.23 The Arkham Asylum ludic character actions

3.19.3 The Watch Dogs characters system network

A system network of the playable and non-playable characters in the videogame Watch Dogs (Ubisoft, 2014) is represented in Figure 3.24. The system network represents the

depicted protagonist and antagonist characters in the selected game scene. The protagonist Aiden Pearce is the playable character and is controlled by gamers. The non-playable characters are not controlled by the gamer and can be broken into two groups. The supporting protagonist characters consist of Aiden’s sister Nicky Pearce, her son Jackson Pearce and also Aiden Pearce’s hacking allies, T-Bone and Clara Lille. The antagonist characters consist of a crank caller, Damien Breaks (Aiden’s former hacking partner) and the South Chicago Club Hitmen.

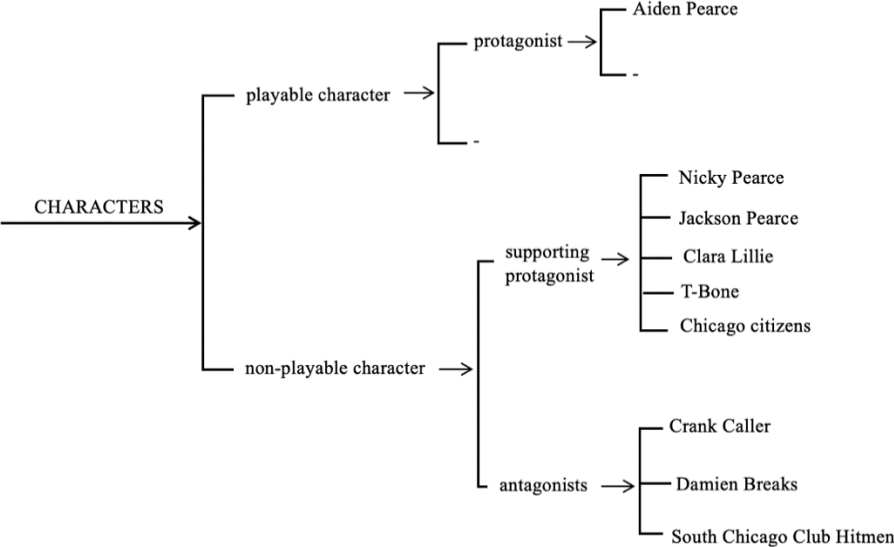


Figure 3.24 *The Watch Dogs* characters system network

3.19.4 *The Watch Dogs* ludic character actions

Once the playable and non-playable characters have been identified, the possible ludic actions of the characters can be examined. A system network of the possible *factum*, *tactum* and *actum* character actions for the game *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) is represented in Figure 3.25. The system begins with a simultaneous choice concerning the three variables of *actum*: player-initiated actions; *tactum*: game object interactions; and *factum*: game-initiated actions. The *actum* system begins with players making a choice between the protagonist character Aiden taking action and not taking action. Taking action would involve players pressing buttons on the controller to instruct Aiden to operate his gadgets such as his smartphone, gun and baton. Players could also instruct Aiden to move and investigate the simulated game environment by using the left stick on the controller and pressing the circle button to vault or climb over obstacles. Players can instruct Aiden to fight by pressing the trigger buttons on the

controller to have him draw, aim or fire his guns. The right stick on the controller can be used by gamers to move the game camera from its default position to enable them to investigate better the game environment. The *tactum* system network represents the game objects, such as the Hitmen, who can shoot or chase Aiden. The *factum* system network includes character actions generated by the game system.



Figure 3.25 The Watch Dogs ludic character actions

3.20 Character and ludic action example

A further example of how the character and ludic action resources can be illustrated using the image depicting the protagonist Aiden shooting the Hitmen in *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014, Clara Lille’s Death) is represented in Figure 3.26. Aiden Pearce is the playable character and is therefore selected in the character system network indicated by the red circle.

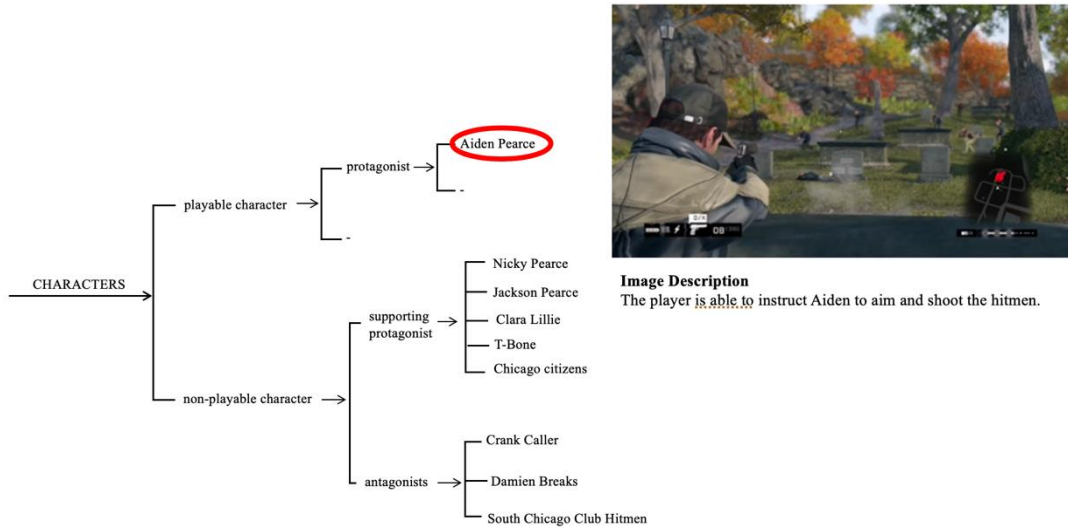


Figure 3.26 Example application of a playable character system network

The possible playable actions of Aiden are represented in the ludic action system network. Similarly, Figure 3.27 represents Aiden shooting the Hitmen during the gunfight scene in the videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014, Clara Lille’s Death). In the ludic action system network, the “fighting trigger” actions have been circled in red, indicating that Aiden’s actions are initiated by the player and can be considered *actum* ludic actions. Also, the image depicts Aiden looking straight ahead, indicating that players have not utilised the gear stick to navigate Aiden in the simulated game world. The image also represents the Hitmen targeting Aiden.

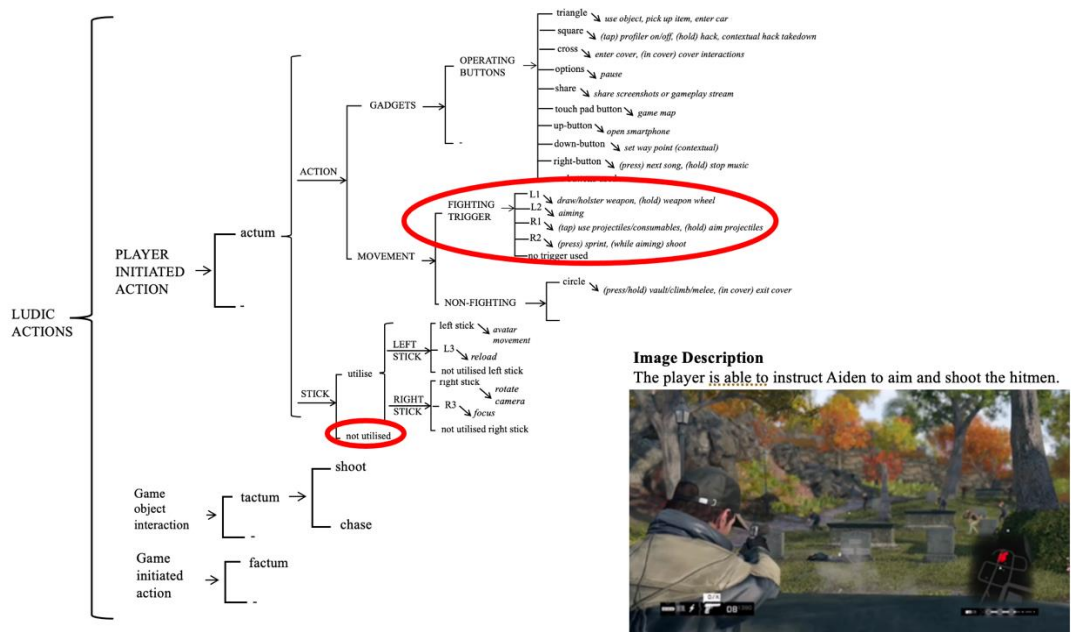


Figure 3.27 Example application of a ludic action system network

Figure 3.28 represents the Hitmen targeting Aiden, and therefore the South Chicago Club Hitmen in the character system network can be selected indicated by the red circle. The Hitmen have been circled in red in the depicted image in Figure 3.28. Likewise, the actions of the Hitmen in the simulated game world can be considered through the use of the ludic action system network.

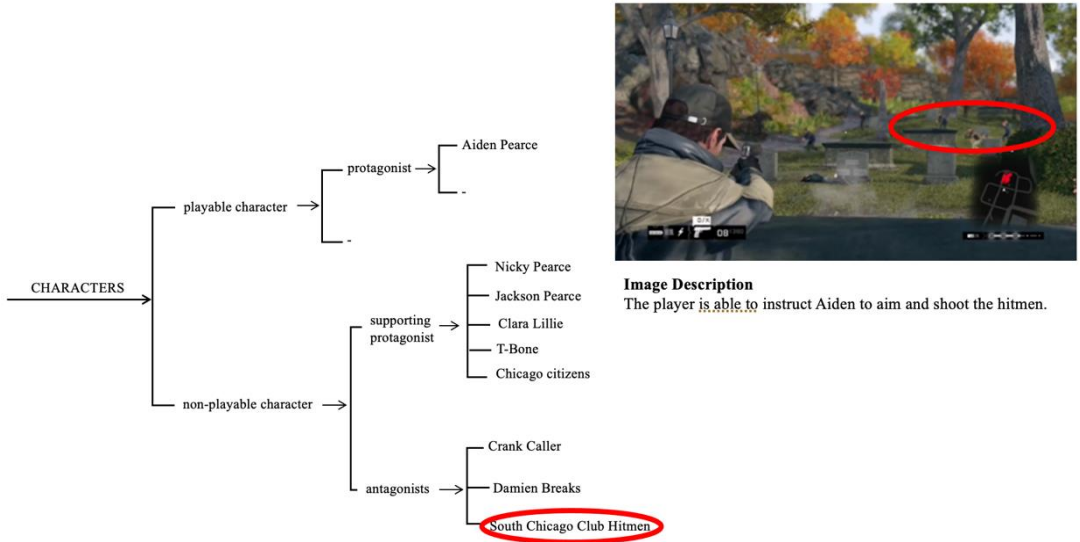


Figure 3.28 Example application of a non-playable character system network

Figure 3.29 represents the ludic action of the Hitmen. The Hitmen are afforded the actions of either shooting or chasing Aiden. Therefore, the Hitmen are an interaction between the game system and players, and can be considered a *tactum* action. In the ludic action system network, the shooting and chasing actions are circled in red in the *tactum* – game object interaction system.

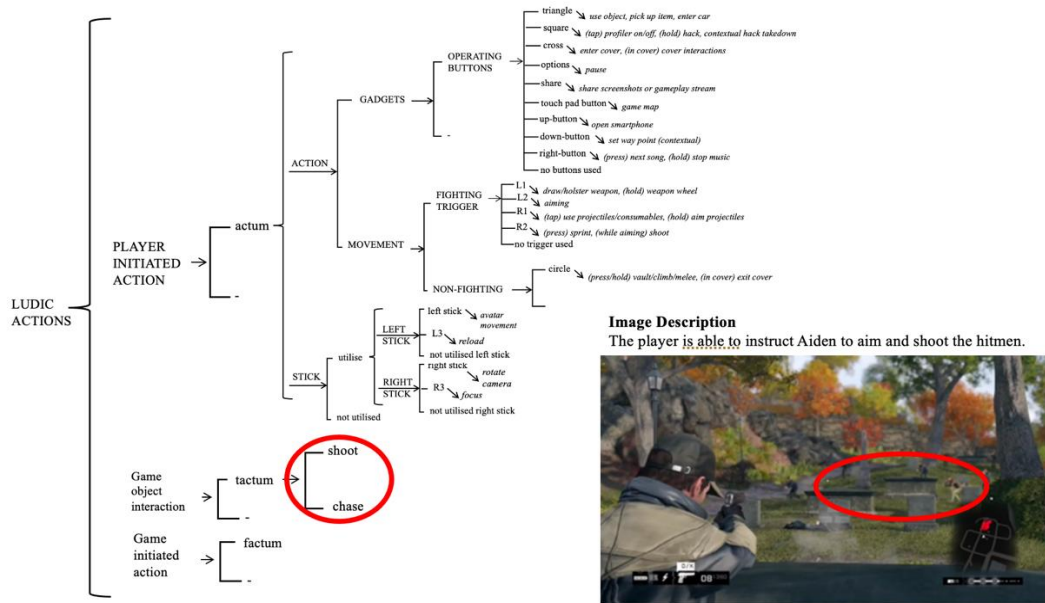


Figure 3.29 Example application of a non-playable character action system network

The examples of the playable and non-playable characters and their actions offers an understanding of how the *ludic-representational* meaning resources contribute to the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames. Further, understanding of the ludic operations involved in the conceptual framework requires the *ludic-compositional* meaning resources to be examined.

3.21 Ludic-compositional meaning

Answering the third research sub-question also involves identifying the non-playable narrative and playable game-play segments of the videogames. These segments can be identified through the kinds of interactivity utilised in videogames. Sylvester (2013) described the kinds of interactivity utilised in action-adventure videogames as *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative*, as represented in Figure 3.30. Identifying the playable and non-playable segments of the game enables the ludic actions and the characters performing these actions during each segment to be examined. How these ludic operations combine with the communicated evaluative meanings about characters realised in the *interpersonal* metafunction of the *narrative dimension* can then be explored using the SFS intermodal theoretical understandings of commitment and coupling (Painter et al., 2013), as identified in Chapter Two. The kinds of communicated evaluative meanings occurring in each game segment can then be explicated and compared for similar or different evaluative meanings about characters. First, the system options of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* are discussed.

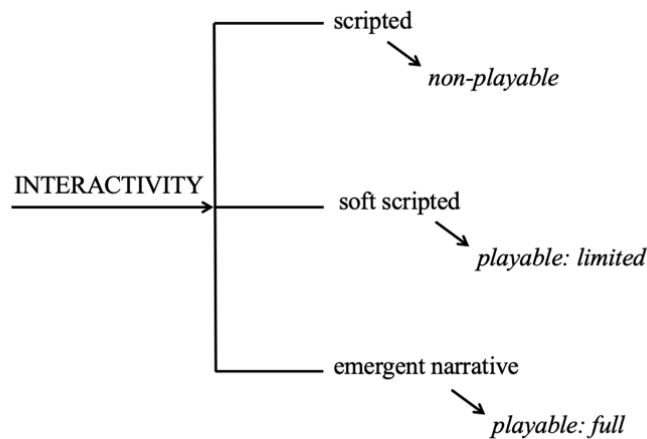


Figure 3.30 Interactivity

3.21.1 Scripted

Scripted segments are similar to film cut scenes, in which players have no interactive control over the simulated game environment (Sylvester, 2013). These segments are often a micro-narrative similar to film cut scenes, which create emotional experiences within narrative sequences of videogames (Jenkins, 2004). An example of a *scripted* segment occurs in the opening of *Batman Arkham Asylum*, where players watch several film scenes in which the Bat Car is racing through the streets of Gotham City. It is revealed that Batman is driving and is accompanied by a restrained Joker. During this segment, narrative content is delivered by suspending the interactivity of players.

3.21.2 Soft-scripted

Soft-scripted segments allow game designers to engineer players' interactions within the simulated game world by giving players some control over the environment's interactive capabilities while still allowing narrative storylines to be delivered (Sylvester, 2013). This type of segment is exemplified once again in the opening of *Arkham Asylum* after Batman has arrived at the asylum and is escorting the Joker back to the holding cells. During this segment, significant characters are introduced, and the Joker is talking to Batman and the accompanying guards. The scene commences with the Joker being escorted in a vertical stretcher. However, Batman remains still until players use the gear stick on the controller to move the avatar forwards. If Batman falls behind, the Joker's speech is replayed in a loop fashion until Batman rejoins the escort party. As players are in control of the Batman avatar,

they can explore the simulated environment of the asylum. However, players do not have control over Batman's combat skills or his utility belt tools. These skills and abilities are restricted during the *soft-scripted* segment.

3.21.3 Emergent narratives

Emergent narratives allow players complete control over the character's skills and abilities within the simulated environment (Sylvester, 2013). *Emergent narratives* often occur in action-adventure games during fight scenes, or when the character is required to interact with the simulated environment (Sylvester, 2013). For example, during the Joker's escape, Batman is required to fight the prisoners before being able to follow the Joker into the asylum. During this fight episode, players have full control over Batman's combat abilities and utility tools. Players can choose the order in which Batman will fight the prisoners and in which fight combinations will be enacted. Similarly, after Batman has defeated the prisoners, players can instruct Batman to search the environment by pulling off the grates covering the air conditioning vents and to crawl inside these vents to explore the environment. At times, players may find game economies such as trophies or patient records. Players can instruct Batman to pick these items up, which unlocks further details that about the game's narrative.

3.22 Interactivity example

A further example of how the interactivity resources represent the playable and non-playable game segments of the game sense can be illustrated by images from the videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014, Clara Lille's Death), as represented in Figure 3.31. The first image occurs during a *scripted*, film like, cut scene after the gunfight. Aiden is mourning the death of Clara and looking down at her lifeless body. A blue filter has been added to the images in this segment, and the vibrancy of the images has been reduced. During this segment, players are not afforded interactivity with the simulated game world. The second image occurs during the *soft-scripted* playable segment of the game scene. This segment occurs immediately after the *scripted* segment in which Aiden is mourning Clara. During the *soft-scripted* segment, players have some afforded interactivity with the game environment, which enables them to navigate Aiden around the environment, move the game camera and access Aiden's weapon wheel. During the *soft-scripted* segment, the game environment is more vibrant and the blue filter has been removed. Clara's body can still be seen lying on the ground. Given the limited interactivity and the vibrant environment, players can largely overlook Clara's body, which suggests that Aiden did not have a close relationship with

Clara. This depiction contradicts the game’s narrative storyline, which conveys Aiden and Clara as friends and allies. Therefore, a feeling of ludonarrative descendants is produced owing to the contradiction between the representation of Aiden’s relationship with Clara in the narrative and the *soft-scripted* gameplay segments of the game scene. The third image depicts Aiden engaging in the gunfight with the Hitmen and is representative of an *emergent narrative* gameplay segment in which players are afforded full interactivity within the simulated game environment. The illustration of the playable and non-playable segments offers an understanding of how the *ludic-compositional* meaning resources contribute to the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames.

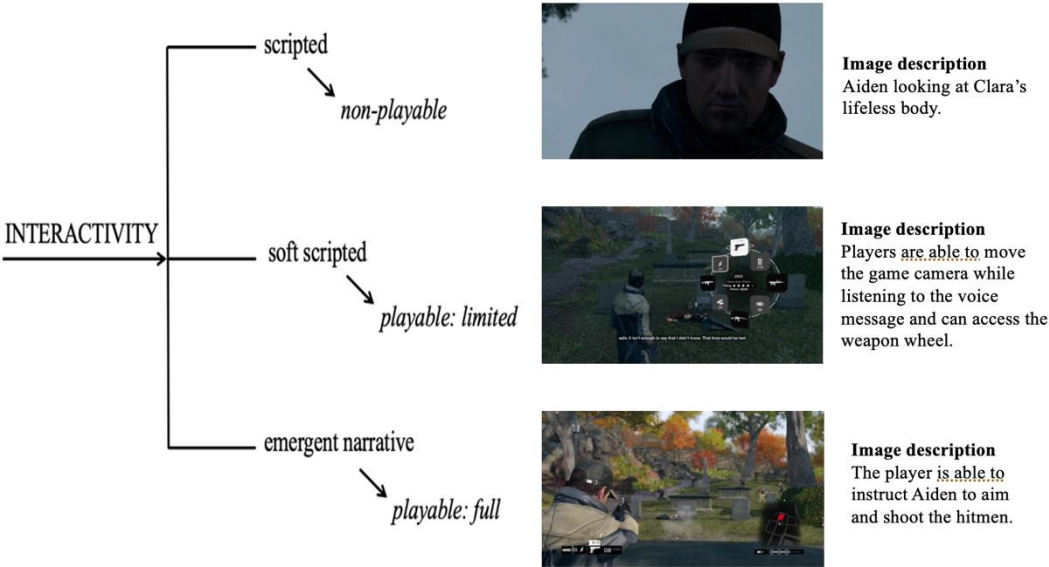


Figure 3.31 An example application of interactivity meaning resources

In summary, the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* metafunctional resources of the conceptual framework explicate the ludic operations of actions-adventure videogames. The conceptual framework of the thesis is underpinned by the SFS understanding that values permeate every semiotic choice in the *ludic* dimension (Martin & Rose, 2007). Painter et al.’s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling is now examined to illustrate how the committed meaning of each system network in the *ludic* and *narrative* dimensions of the conceptual framework couple to create axiological patterns between the ludic operations and evaluative meanings about game characters, on which players can draw to make inferential links (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014) with moral, social and political values as described in Chapter One.

3.23 Overarching Research Question: Intermodality: Commitment and coupling

SFS theorises meaning potential is about choice. The potential of a meaning system is represented through a system network, which represents the meaning choices available to a semiotic resource. Therefore, the system networks can track the selection of meaning choices that occur throughout a network to the realised meaning committed in a text. Furthermore, SFS understands that values permeate every semiotic choice committed in a text (Martin & Rose, 2007). The conceptual framework of this thesis enabled the meaning choices in each of the described system networks to be examined for their committed meaning represented in the action-adventure videogames. The SFS intermodal theoretical understandings of *commitment* and *coupling* (Painter & Martin, 2011) introduced in Chapter Two can be used to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through the communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The use of the system networks enables the instantiated meaning of the game scene to be mapped from the possible meaning potential of the semiotic system through to the afforded meaning realised by each system network used in a text (Martin, 2010; Painter et al., 2013). Therefore, each system network and metafunction of the conceptual framework instantiates the realised meaning with the game scenes, as represented in Figure 3.32. For example, the *narrative* dimension's *interpersonal* metafunction is made up of the attitude, interactive meaning and focalisation system networks. These *interpersonal* system networks realise the committed evaluative meaning occurring in the game scenes. The process of meaning travelling through the systems to the realised meaning in the texts is represented in Figure 3.32 by the red arrow emanating from the *narrative* dimension's *interpersonal* metafunction of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework also represents a similar process occurring in the *ludic* dimension with the *representational* and *compositional* metafunctions. The *representational* metafunction is made up of the character and ludic action system networks. The *representational* system networks realise the committed meaning of characters and their actions in the games scenes. The process of meaning travelling through the networks to the realised meaning in the texts is represented in Figure 3.32 by the red arrow emanating from the *ludic-representation* metafunction of the conceptual framework. Furthermore, the *compositional* metafunction is made up of the interactivity system network. The interactivity system networks realises the committed compositional meaning in the game scenes. The process of the meaning travelling through the network to the realised meaning in the text is represented in Figure 3.32 by the red arrow emanating from the *ludic-composition* metafunction of the conceptual framework. An

explanation of how the committed instantiated meaning couples within and across the system networks and metafunctions of the conceptual framework to form patterns is now addressed.

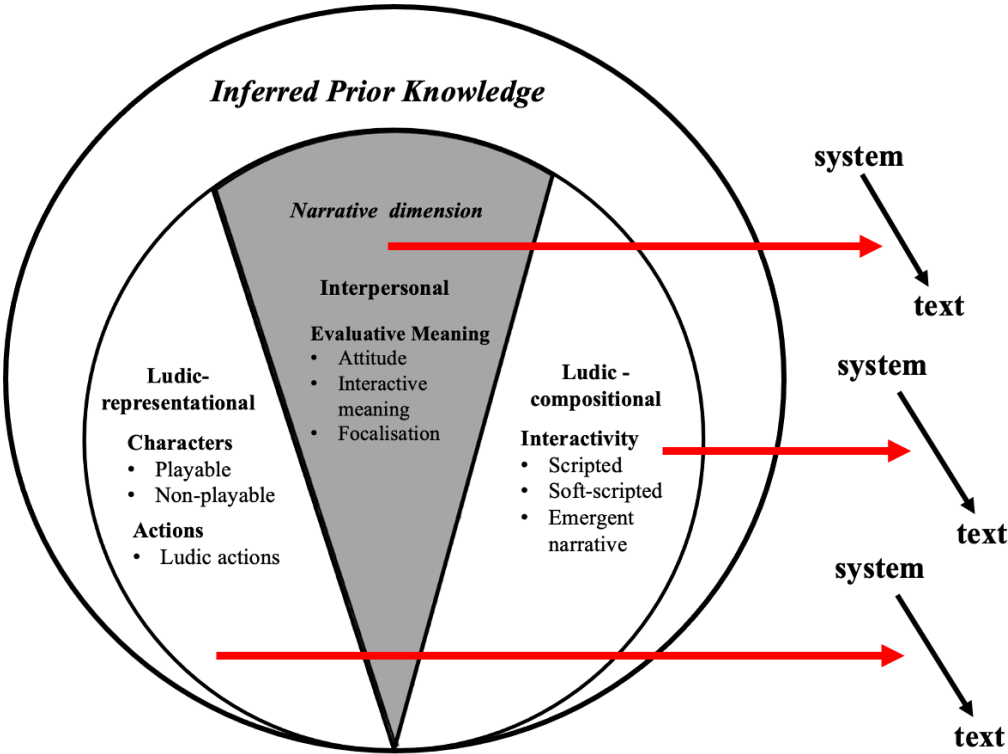


Figure 3.32 The conceptual framework’s instantiated system and metafunctional meaning

3.23.1 Commitment

The meaning potential of each system network throughout the chapter has been described with an accompanying example to explain the committed meaning made by each system in the conceptual framework. The committed meanings in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework were illustrated in the following sections. Section 3.10 represented the committed language evaluative meaning example. Section 3.15 represented the interactive meaning example. Section 3.17 represented the focalisation meaning example. The committed meanings in the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework were illustrated in the following sections. Section 3.20 represented the character and ludic action example. Section 3.22 represented the interactivity example. The committed meaning in the examples of the system networks were circled in red. It is now explained how the committed meanings form patterns of meaning through the use of the SFS theoretical understanding of coupling (Martin, 2008b; Painter & Martin, 2011). The committed meanings of the system networks couple

within and across networks and across metafunctions in the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions of the conceptual framework. Understanding how the committed meanings repeatedly couple across the conceptual framework enables the overarching research questions to be addressed:

How do actions-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

3.23.2 Coupling within system networks

Coupling is concerned with the repeated co-patterning of realised meaning in a text (Martin, 2008b; Painter & Martin, 2011). Therefore, coupling initially occurs within a system network, as represented by the interactive meaning system network in Figure 3.33. The image depicts Aiden Pearce shooting the Hitmen in the game *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014, Clara Lille's Death). Negative eye contact has been used with a close, frontal, eye-level camera angle to create an involved, intimate social connection with equal power relations between Aiden and the players. The committed meaning in the system network has been circled. The lines connecting the circles represent the coupling of this meaning within the system network.

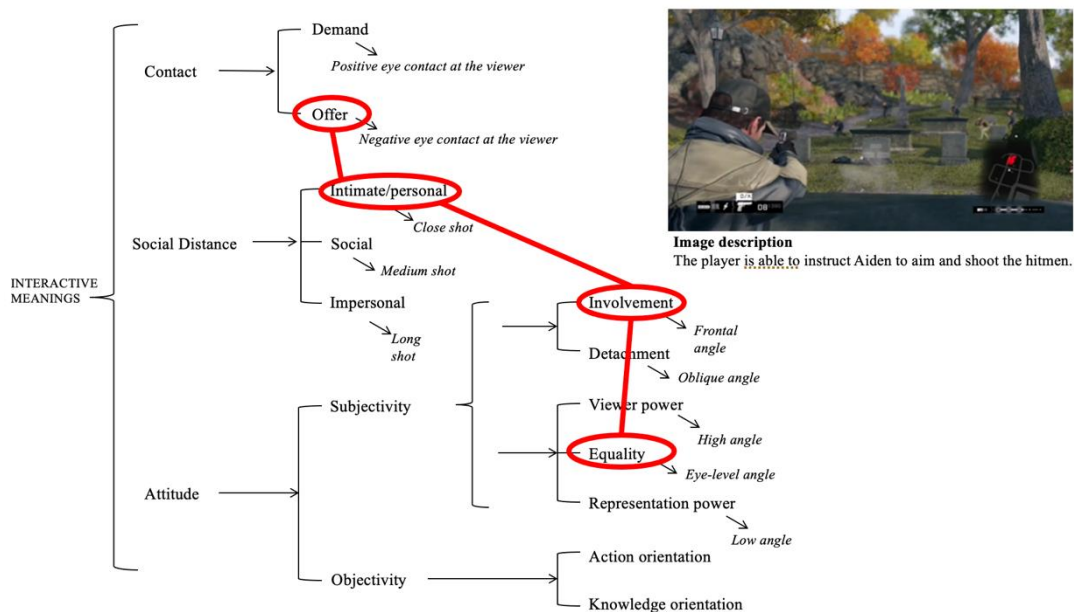


Figure 3.33 Coupling within a system network

3.23.3 Coupling between system networks

Coupling can also occur between system networks. Figure 3.34 represents the coupling among the visual *interpersonal* meaning resources of focalisation, interactive meaning and visual attitude for the image in which Aiden is shooting at the Hitmen. The

image in Figure 3.34 depicts players mediated to see along with Aiden and a negative eye gaze is used as Aiden is not making eye contact with players. Therefore, in the focalisation system network, the committed realised meaning in the image is classified as “observed” and “along with character”. The committed meanings have been circled in red and the coupling between these meanings is represented using a line connecting the circles. The image in Figure 3.34 also depicts a negative eye gaze between Aiden and players, a close camera frame with a frontal and eye-level angle. In the interactive meaning system network, the committed realised meaning in the image is classified as “offer”, “intimate/personal”, “involvement” and “equality”. The committed meanings have been circled in red and the coupling between the meanings is represented using a line connecting the circles. The image in Figure 3.34 also depicts Aiden shooting the Hitmen portraying a provoked positive judgement of his physical capacity. In the Judgement system network, the committed realised meaning in the image is classified as “physical strength/weakness”, “positive” and “provoked”. The committed meanings have been circled in red and the coupling between the meanings is represented using a line connecting the circles.

In summary, the coupling between the visual *interpersonal* meaning resources affiliates players with Aiden by enabling them to focalise the simulated game world along with him and creates an involved intimate and equal power relationship between the players and Aiden. Players are also affiliated with Aiden to enact his positive judgement of physical capacity when targeting the Hitmen. The committed meaning in the *interpersonal* meaning resources of focalisation, interactive meaning and visual attitude of the image depicting Aiden shooting have been circled in red. The lines connecting the circles represent the coupling of the meaning within the networks. The coupling of the committed meaning between the system networks communicates a pattern of meaning occurring in the *interpersonal* metafunction of the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework. These *interpersonal* metafunctional patterns of meaning can be drawn on by players and combined with their prior knowledge of moral, social and political values described in Chapter One to infer the values conveyed in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). For example, the players’ affiliation with Aiden and his positive judgement of physical capacity in targeting the Hitmen implies a disobedience of the social and political Australian value of having a commitment to the rule of law (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). However, action-adventure games also involve ludic operations that convey values (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Addressing the overarching research question also required an understanding of the coupling of meaning across metafunctions and the *ludic* and *narrative* dimensions of the conceptual framework.



Image description

The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the hitmen.

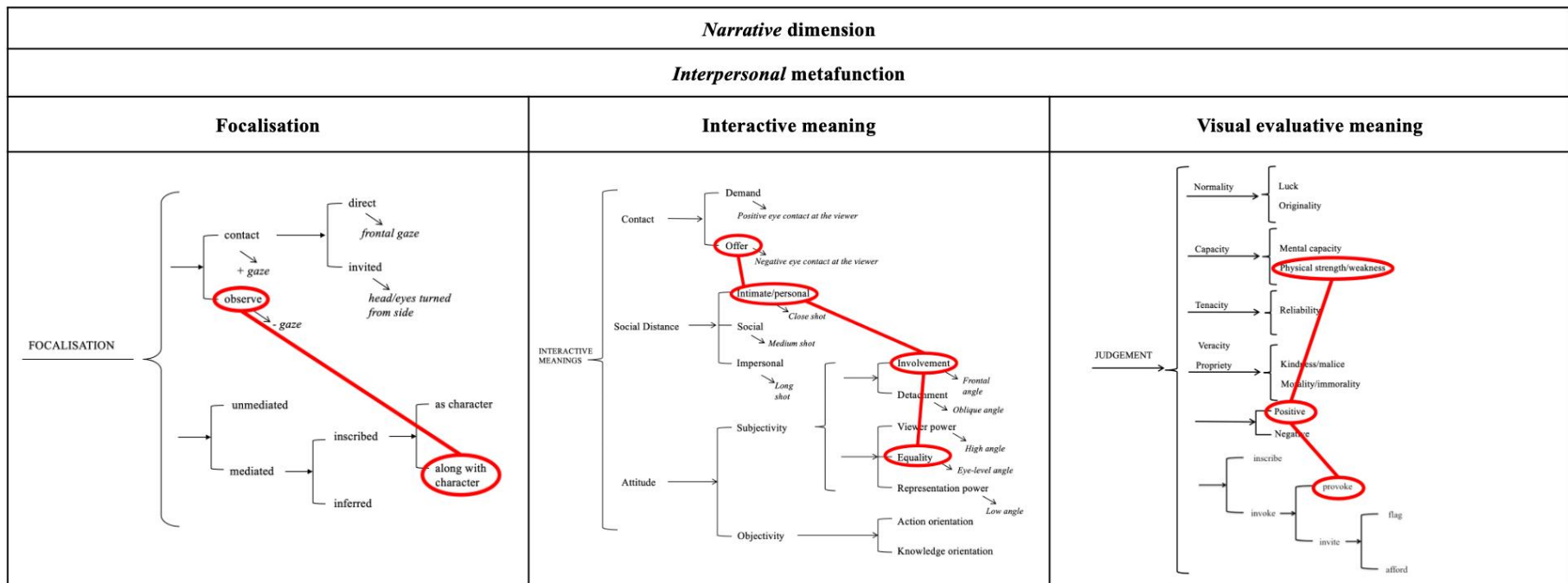


Figure 3.34 A coupling pattern between interpersonal systems in the narrative dimension of the conceptual framework

3.23.4 Coupling across metafunctions

Consideration of how the committed meaning couplings together across the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* metafunctions is required to understand how ludic operations are instantiated within action-adventure videogames. Focusing only on the protagonist character Aiden, Figure 3.35 represents how the *ludic-representational* character and ludic action system networks couple across metafunctions with the interactivity system network in the *ludic-compositional* metafunction. The example depicts the image of Aiden Pearce during the gunfight with the Hitmen. The image in Figure 3.35 depicts the playable protagonist character Aiden Pearce. Therefore, in the character system network, Aiden has been circled red to represent the committed meaning. Figure 3.35 also depicts Aiden's actions of reloading his gun, and targeting and shooting the Hitmen. In the ludic action system network, the committed realised meaning is described as involving the fighting trigger buttons and the gear stick on the controller not being used. These actions are *actum* ludic actions as they require input from players pressing buttons on the controller. The committed meanings in the ludic system network have been circled in red and the coupling between these meanings is represented using a line connecting the circles. Figure 3.35 depicts Aiden's *actum* actions occurring during a gameplay segment that affords players with full interactivity within the simulated environment. In the interactivity system network, the committed realised meaning in the image is classified as "emergent narrative". The committed meaning has been circled in red.

In summary, the coupling between the visual *ludic-representational* meaning resources represents the playable or non-playable character of the game scene and the ludic actions afforded the character. The *ludic-compositional* meaning resources described the interactive playable and non-playable game segments occurring during a game scene. The committed meaning in the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* metafunctional resources of the image depicting Aiden shooting have been circled in red. The lines connecting the circles represent the coupling of the meaning within the networks. The coupling of the committed meaning between the system networks communicates a pattern of meaning that instantiates the ludic operations occurring in action-adventure videogames. The ludic operation patterns of meaning can be drawn on by players and combined with their prior knowledge of moral, social and political values described in Chapter One to infer the values conveyed in the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). For example, the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* meanings afforded to players enable them to engage Aiden in combat during the emergent narrative segment of the

game, therefore implying a disobedience to the commitment to the law as described by the social and political Australian values described in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). Addressing Research Sub-Question Three requires an understanding of how the ludic operations in the ludic dimension of the framework couple with the *interpersonal* metafunctional meanings in the narrative dimension of the framework.



Image description

The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the hitmen.

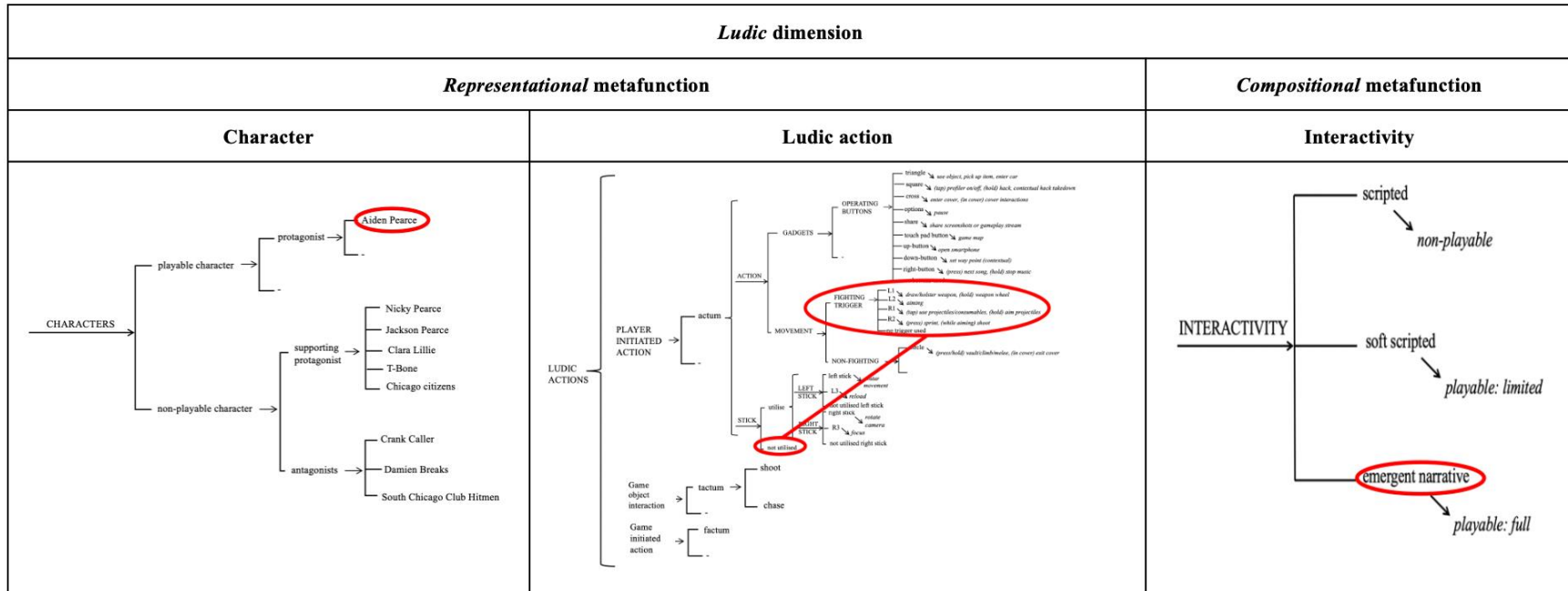


Figure 3.35 Coupling across metafunctions

3.23.5 Coupling across dimensions

Consideration of how the committed meaning in the *ludic* dimension couples with the committed meaning in the *narrative* dimension is required to understand how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters. Figure 3.35 represents the coupling of committed *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* resources in an image depicting Aiden Pearce engaging in a gunfight with the Hitmen after Clara Lille's murder. The coupling across the metafunctions signifies the ludic operations occurring in the image. The conceptual framework also represents an understanding of the coupling between the committed meaning in the *ludic* dimension and the committed meaning in the *narrative* dimension. Figure 3.35 represents the coupling of the committed meaning among the focalisation, interactive meaning and visual attitude resources of the *interpersonal* metafunction in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework represents how the ludic operations commit meaning in the *ludic* dimension, through describing how players can engage in combat with the Hitmen during the *emergent narrative* segment of the game. The committed meaning in the *ludic* dimension couples with the *interpersonal* meaning that affiliates players to perceive the game world along with the protagonist character Aiden Pearce, who is represented through positive judgements of his physical capacity when targeting the Hitmen. The coupling of committed meaning in the *ludic* and *narrative* dimensions can be combined with prior knowledge of social and political values to infer the conveyed values in the game scene (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). For example, using the committed semiotic meaning choices from the conceptual framework, players can infer that the protagonist character Aiden and the antagonist Hitmen have a disposition to disobey the commitment of law, as described by the social and political Australian values examined in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020), as the characters are targeting to murder each other. Lastly, addressing the overarching research question requires a consideration of how the language and visual meaning resources converge with or diverge from their committed meaning in the selected game scenes.

3.23.6 Intermodal co-patterning: Converging and diverging

An understanding of the intermodal meaning committed by the language and visual modalities in the narrative dimension is required to address the research questions. This enables an understanding of how the language and image evaluative meaning resources of attitude are arranged to contribute to the unified meaning of the game scenes. For example, the characters' dialogue can be examined for the committed evaluative meanings about

characters and how these couple across the unfolding of the game scenes. Similarly, the committed visual evaluative meanings about characters and how these couple across the unfolding of the game scenes can be examined. Then the convergence or divergence in meaning between the language and image modality can be considered. For example, the language and image modality can be described as having converging meaning when similar evaluative meanings are expressed at the same time during the unfolding of the game scenes. Figure 3.36 represents converging meanings between the language and image modalities in the Joker’s Escape scene from the videogame *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016). The image depicts the Joker standing over the asylum guard after choking him. The Joker uses an afforded affective attitude of satisfaction concerning his pleasure at killing the guard by stating, “The choke’s on you”. This afforded attitude has been underlined. The image also depicts a provoked affective attitude of satisfaction concerning the Joker’s pleasure. The image has been classified as provoked owing to the game designer representing the Joker’s pleasure by portraying him with a wide red smile while he stands over the guard. Also, players have to draw on their prior knowledge about the Joker to realise the evaluative response.

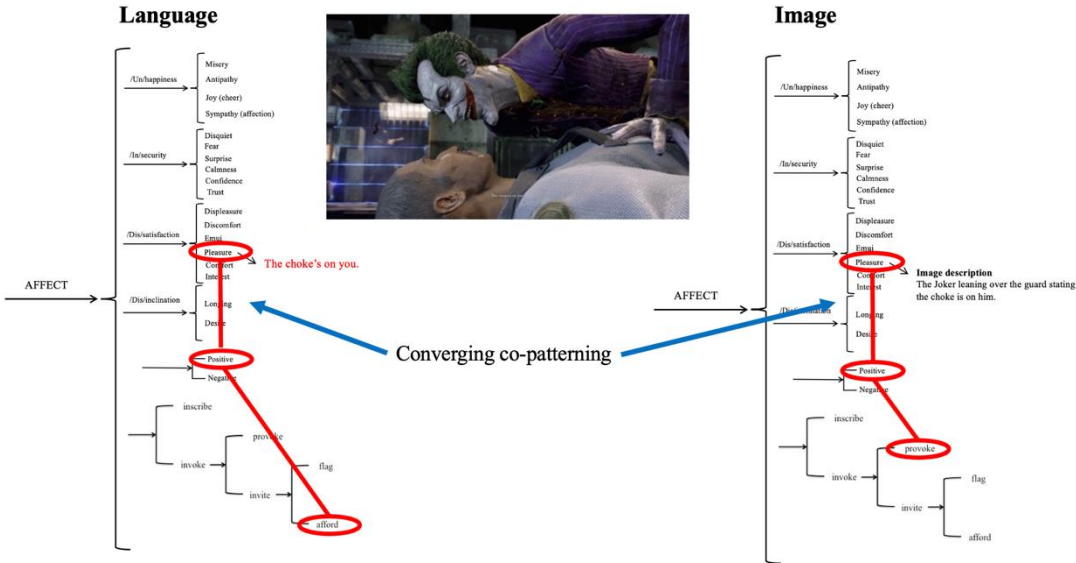


Figure 3.36 An example of converging co-patterning between language and image

A diverging meaning can occur between the language and visual meaning systems when the two modalities differ in their committed meaning. For example, Figure 3.37 represents a diverging meaning when the Joker is choking the guard and calling out to the doctor, “We’re losing him, Doc!”. The Joker affords a negative judgement of capacity concerning the doctor’s physical weakness in not being able to save the guard. The afforded

attitude has been underlined in the above example. Alternatively, the visual modality provokes a judgement of the Joker’s physical strength in murdering the guard. A provoked classification has been utilised owing to the illustrated depiction of the Joker choking the guard provided by the game designer, while players are still required to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the Joker and the game’s narrative to infer the evaluative meaning. Consideration of how the language and visual modalities co-pattern to contribute to converging or diverging meaning during the unfolding of the game scenes helps to address how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters.

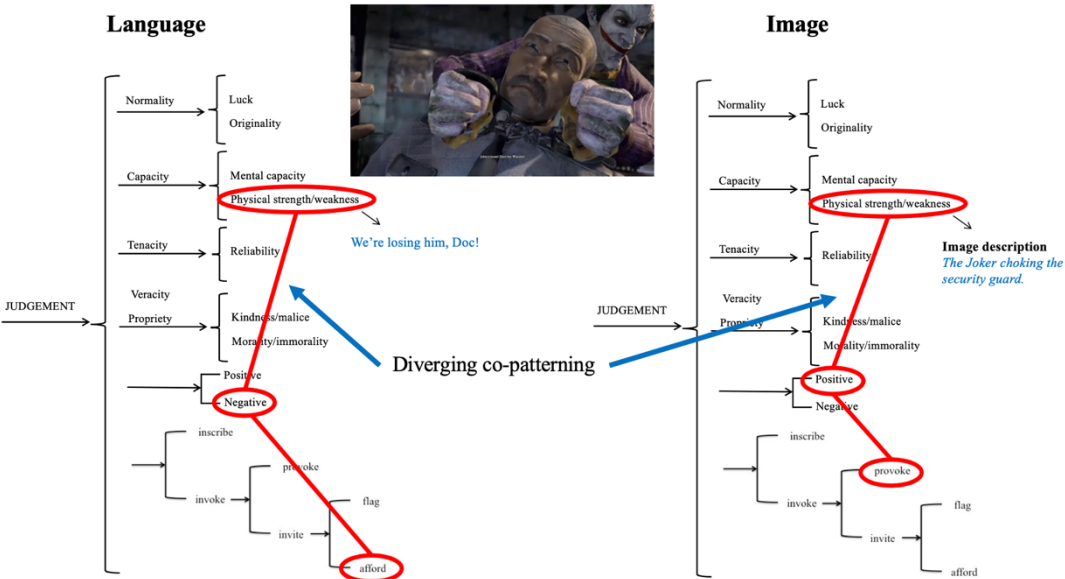


Figure 3.37 An example of divergent co-patterning between language and image

3.24 Summary

This chapter has described the conceptual framework utilised to address the research questions. The conceptual framework is underpinned by SFS philosophical understandings, which are orientated towards describing how language and image are resources for meaning-making that can be used to convey meaning within social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The language and image meaning resources are represented through system networks, which can be used to map the afforded meaning realised in action-adventure videogame scenes. The relevant system networks required to address the research questions have been described throughout the chapter with examples of how the networks illustrate the evaluative meanings about characters, player-gamer affiliation and ludic operations realised in selected

action-adventure game scenes. The arrangement of these system networks within the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions of the conceptual framework has been discussed to demonstrate how the conceptual framework can be used to support the research design and address the research questions.

First, in Section 3.1 this chapter examined the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter Two. Second, Section 3.2 examined the social semiotic philosophical understanding underpinning the conceptual framework and research design. Third, Section 3.3 described the SFS representation of meaning using system networks. Fourth, Section 3.4 examined the *interpersonal* semiotic resources in the *narrative* dimension. These resources included the language evaluative meaning resource of attitude explained in Section 3.5 and the visual attitudinal meaning described in Section 3.11. Fifth, Section 3.13 examined the player affiliation resources of interactive meaning and focalisation. Sixth, Section 3.18 described the *representational* and *compositional* resources in the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework. Section 3.19 explored the *representational* resources involved in identifying the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of characters. Section 3.21 described the *compositional* resources of interactivity used to identify the playable and non-playable segments. Finally, Section 3.23 explored how values could be addressed through utilising Painter et al.'s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling to make inferential links between the *narrative* and *ludic* dimension semiotic tools and the moral, social and political values described in Chapter One (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). Chapter Four explains the research design and methodology involved in the study to address how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY – INSTRUCTIONS AND HOW TO PLAY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the conceptual framework and system networks utilised for the study were described. This chapter explains the research design and methodological approach used in the study to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. First, an overview of the research design and methodology is explained in Section 4.2. Second, the sampling process used for the study is discussed in Section 4.2. Third, the systematic method utilised to analyse the narrative dimension of the conceptual framework and to collate the data used to address Research Sub-Questions One and Two is described in Section 4.4. Fourth, the systematic method used to analyse the ludic dimension of the conceptual framework and to gather the data utilised to address Research Sub-Question Three is explained in Section 4.5. Fifth, Section 4.6 presents a summary of the methodological and analytical approaches utilised by the thesis. Sixth, the validity and reliability of the study are explored in Section 4.7. Section 4.8 addresses the assumptions and limitations of the study, and Section 4.9 discusses the ethical and political considerations of the thesis. Before the research design and methodology of the thesis are examined, the overarching research question and sub-questions are revisited. The overarching research question of the thesis was:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

In answering this overarching research question, the following sub-questions were investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?

Research Sub-Question One utilised the language and visual attitudinal evaluative meaning resources situated in the *narrative dimension* of the conceptual framework.

2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

Research Sub-Question Two utilised the focalisation and interactive meaning resources situated in the *narrative dimension* of the conceptual framework.

3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

Research Sub-Question Three utilised the character and character actions *representational* system networks and interactivity *compositional* system network situated in the *ludic dimension* of the conceptual framework. The research design and methodology utilised for the study are now discussed.

4.2 Research design and methodology

This study was situated in an interpretivist paradigm utilising a multimodal critical discourse analysis methodology (Basit, 2010; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Walter, 2010) to investigate the conveyed values in action-adventure videogames through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse and corroborate the game scene data according to the described system networks of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three. Hannah and Lautsch (2011) described corroborative counting as:

typically associated with a conventional triangulation approach involving a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (Jick, 1979). In such an approach, counting is used to verify the conclusions reached by a purely qualitative analysis of the data. The logic underlying triangulation is that one can be more certain of a result if the same findings occur in two separate processes. (p. 16)

The corroboration of the qualitative and quantitative methods thus supported the rigour of the multimodal critical discourse analysis methodology. The qualitative method involved analysing the identified game scenes for their realised SFS language, image and ludic operation meaning resources described in Chapter Three. The quantitative method involved calculating the frequency of the realised meaning resources in the selected game scenes. A summary of the research process for collecting the qualitative and quantitative data to address the research sub-questions is now described. Research Sub-Question One asked:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?

Addressing this research sub-question involved collecting qualitative data by using the evaluative resources of language and image (Martin & White, 2005) to analyse the patterns of evaluative meaning about characters. The inscribed and invoked evaluative meaning resources of attitude were described in Chapter Three, and included evaluations of affect, judgement and appreciation (Martin & Rose, 2007). The character dialogue from the game scenes was used to analyse the language evaluative meanings about characters. The accompanying visual images were used to analyse the character expressions of evaluative meaning portrayed in images. The quantitative method corroborated the data by calculating the frequency of

inscribed and invoked language and visual attitudes within and between characters during the game scenes. The coupling between evaluative attitudes about characters and the similarities of evaluative meaning between characters were described. The co-patterning between the language and image meaning systems was examined. The analysed data were then used to address Research Sub-Question One.

Research Sub-Question Two asked:

2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

Addressing the second research sub-question involved the collection of qualitative data by analysing the accompanying visual images of the game scene for their use of camera angles and player-game character affiliation through the use of the interactive meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and focalisation resources (Painter et al., 2013). The quantitative data included corroborating the data by calculating the frequency of “as character” and “along with character” focalisation and accompanying interactive meaning resources. The coupling between focalisation and interactive meaning resources and the similarities between characters were described. The analysed data were then used to address Research Sub-Question Two.

Research Sub-Question Three asked:

3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

Addressing the third research sub-question involved the collection of qualitative data by analysing the accompanying ludic operations of the game scenes for their represented playable and non-playable characters, the ludic actions of characters, and the interactive *scripted* non-playable segments and *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* playable segments (Aristov, 2017; Sylvester, 2013). The quantitative data involved corroborating the data by calculating the frequency of interactivity and of ludic initiated actions of characters represented in the accompanying images of the game scenes. The coupling between the ludic operation meaning resources was examined. Also, the co-patterning between the ludic operations and the visual evaluative meaning resources was discussed to explicate how the ludic operations communicated evaluative meanings about characters. The similarities between the characters’ ludic operation and evaluative meanings were described. The analysed data were then used to address Research Sub-Question Three. The qualitative and quantitative data from each research sub-question were used to answer the overarching research question involving how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Before a detailed explanation

of the methodological process undertaken to complete the multimodal critical discourse analysis (Ledin & Machin, 2018) is described, the sampling process for selecting the action-adventure games and scenes is examined.

4.3 The sampling of the games

An initial step in answering the research sub-questions involved identifying two action-adventure videogames. First, the criteria for selecting the games involved a typical sampling of action-adventure videogames. A typical sampling involves selecting games that do not vary in any substantial or atypical way (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990) from the action-adventure videogame genre. Prevalent action-adventure game franchises typical of the genre include the *Batman Arkham series* (Rocksteady, 2011, 2015, 2016) and the *Watch Dogs series* (Ubisoft, 2014, 2016, 2020). From these game franchises, the videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) were selected.

Second, the games' narratives required characters to be in conflict. Ideological values are easier to identify during moments of crisis (Martin, 1985); therefore, the conflicting position between characters assisted in explicating value perspectives. *Arkham Asylum* was a fitting choice as the game involved numerous skirmishes between the superhero Batman and the super-villain the Joker throughout crucial narrative stages. Two of these crucial narrative stages were selected and analysed because of Batman and the Joker's conflict. Each of the two scenes represented the typical narrative and gameplay design throughout the videogame *Arkham Asylum*. *Watch Dogs* was a fitting choice as well because the game engages the protagonist Aiden Pearce in several iniquitous activities, such as using hidden cameras to spy on his family or using physical combat and guns to kill or pacify opponents. Furthermore, the protagonists from both games did not have a moral code made explicit in the game worlds. In fact, both Batman and Aiden Pearce were viewed as vigilantes and were required to break the law to seek vengeance on past grievances.

Third, the games' popularity and ubiquity were considered. *Arkham Asylum* is a popular game that has been well regarded in the industry. *Batman Arkham Asylum* is the first game in the popular Arkham series (Rocksteady, 2011, 2015, 2016), which was awarded over 70 Game Industry Awards throughout 2009 and 2010 (Rocksteady, 2014). Also, it was awarded the 2009 Game of the Year by various organisations such as "Gamebrit", "Xbox" and "ING" (Rocksteady, 2014). *Arkham Asylum* was re-released in 2016 for the new generation of gaming consoles. The game has a 9.2/10 rating on the entertainment site IMDb (IMDb, 2009). *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) was the first game in a franchise developed by the entertainment company Ubisoft. *Watch Dogs* was released in 2014 and has sold 11 million

copies (Ubisoft Entertainment Inc, 2016). The game received a 7.4/10 rating on the entertainment site IMDb (IMDb, 2014). *Watch Dogs* was awarded Game of the Year, Best Console Game and Best Technology in 2014 (IMDb, 2014). Reviews of the game critiqued its stereotypical racial depictions of characters (Gies, 2014). The subsequent popular sequel games, *Watch Dogs 2* (Ubisoft, 2016) and *Watch Dogs: Legion* (Ubisoft, 2020), were released in 2016 and 2020 respectively. A brief overview of the videogames and selected scenes is now provided.

4.3.1 *Batman Arkham Asylum*

Arkham Asylum (Rocksteady, 2016) explores the failure of governments and judicial and law-enforcement systems to deal with crime effectively. Bruce Wayne is an orphan of a wealthy Gotham family who as a child witnessed the murder of his parents and the failure of the Gotham judicial and law enforcement systems to deal with the criminal responsible. Bruce rationalises that it is better to deal with crime by working outside the law. In order to protect Gotham, Bruce decides to take the law into his own hands and to become a vigilante to guard Gotham City against the criminality of the super-villains such as the Joker. The orientation to the game begins at night with the apprehension of the super-villain the Joker. Batman escorts the Joker to Gotham City's asylum located on Arkham Island.

Scene One: The Joker's Escape

Upon returning to the asylum, Batman senses that the Joker has given up too easily. Batman and a security team accompany the Joker on a vertical stretcher into the intensive treatment centre. During this journey, a psychologist assesses the Joker at the end of a corridor. Many characters are also introduced, such as the Police Commissioner, Jim Gordon, who stops Batman to talk with him. Complications arise when the Joker escapes, killing the asylum guard accompanying him and freeing other insane inmates and super-criminals such as the Scarecrow. Batman is then compelled to pursue the super-criminals and to secure the island.

4.3.2 *Watch Dogs*

In 2003, the Northeast of the United States of America experienced a power outage. A power outage is commonly referred to as a power blackout. In the fictive world of *Watch Dogs*, the 2003 Northeast American power blackout was caused by a hacker unleashing a computer virus. After this incident, a company named *Blum* created a Central Operating System (ctOS) to protect citizens. The ctOS is an overarching computer system that controls the city's technology, such as its banks, security cameras, traffic lights and the

communications of the city's citizens. The ctOS also collects a large amount of personal information about Chicago residents, such as their locations, employment and leisure activities. The orientation to the game involves the protagonist Aiden and his crime partner Damien attempting to hack one of Lucky Quinn's hotels. Lucky Quinn is the head of an organised crime gang. This operation does not go to plan, and Aiden closes it down, upsetting Damien. Lucky Quinn hires a hacker known as Badboy17 or Clara Lillie to track down Aiden and Damien to send a message to future hackers. Consequently, Aiden flees with his sister and her two children. While they are escaping, an assassination attempt is made on their lives and Aiden's niece subsequently dies. Finding out about the death of Aiden's niece leaves Clara Lillie disillusioned with her employment as a hacker for Lucky Quinn. Narrative complications arise as Aiden begins a path of revenge that brings him in contact with his former crime partner Damien, who coerces Aiden into again working with him.

Scene Two: Clara's Death

During the events of the game, Clara Lillie decides to help Aiden to make up for her part in his niece's death. Clara does not tell Aiden of her involvement in his failed attempt at hacking Lucky Quinn's hotel. Eventually, Aiden discovers that Clara had a part in the death of his niece and the two part ways. This narrative complication is resolved when Aiden finds out that Clara has refused to work for Lucky Quinn and has been marked for assassination. He rushes to her aid and engages in a shootout. However, he fails in his attempt to save Clara.

Next, the methodological steps followed to analyse and collate the data for the research project are described. These steps are aligned with the narrative and ludic dimensions of the conceptual framework and the SFS meaning resources as described in Chapter Three to address the overarching research question of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters.

4.4 Method for the narrative dimension

4.4.1 Language: Attitude analysis and coding

Answering Research Sub-Question One involved investigating how the different types of evaluative meaning about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames. Addressing this sub-question required the evaluative language resources of attitude (Martin & White, 2005) to analyse the different types of evaluative meaning about characters. The evaluative resources of attitude were introduced in Chapter Three, and the different categories of affect, judgement and appreciation were used to code

the data in a table in a Microsoft Word document. These codes were attributed to the represented inscribed and invoked attitudes within the character dialogue, as represented in Table 4.1. Initially, each line of dialogue was assigned a sequential number, starting at one. Then the character dialogue was placed in the appraising item column. The appraiser column referred to the character making the appraisal. The appraised column related to the character to whom the appraisal was directed. The appropriate attitude codes that best described the appraising item were placed in either the inscribed or the invoked attitude column. The attitude codes were assigned a colour: red for affect, blue for judgement and green for appreciation. The assigned colour was used to highlight the words that realised the inscribed or invoked attitude in the appraised item column and the code entered into the inscribed or invoked attitude columns. The inscribed attitude was **highlighted in a block**, while the invoked attitude used **highlighted font**.

Table 4.1 Different evaluative meanings communicated about characters

	Text	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
1	Long night, Jim?	Batman	The night		-ve Reaction: Impact: Afford
2	Joker invades City Hall	The Commissioner	The Joker	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
2	Joker invades City Hall	The Commissioner	The Joker	-ve Propriety: Immorality	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	The Commissioner	The Joker	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	The Commissioner	The Joker	-ve Propriety: Immorality	
4	leaving it to me	The Commissioner	The Commissioner		+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	The Commissioner	The Commissioner		+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	The Commissioner	Batman		-ve Normality: Afford

4.4.2 Language: Attitude analysis and summary

After the attitude analysis was conducted, a summary was created describing the evaluative meanings within and between the characters to answer the first research sub-question. First, this summary was created by calculating the frequency of evaluative meanings used by characters by copying the attitude analysis (Table 4.1) from the Microsoft Word document and pasting it into Excel. Once it was in Excel, pivot tables were created to represent character evaluative meanings, as exemplified in Figure 4.1. One table was for inscribed character attitude, whilst a second table was for invoked character attitude. The row label consisted of the inscribed or the invoked attitude. The column label consisted of the appraiser. The blank category in the row label and the column label was not included. Excel was used to count the identified inscribed or invoked evaluative meanings to indicate the frequency of characters' attitudes.

Count of Appraising item	Column Labels				
Row Labels	Batman	Commissioner	Guard	Joker	Grand Total
-ve Capacity: Physical weakness	1				1
-ve Composition: Balance		1			1
-ve Composition: Complexity				1	1
-ve Happiness: Misery				2	2
-ve Normality				1	1
-ve Propriety: Immorality		2		1	3
-ve Reaction: Impact				1	1
-ve Reaction: Quality		1			1
-ve Security: Disquiet			1		1
-ve Valuation: Danger			1		1
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity		1			1
+ve Capacity: Physical strength		3		1	4
+ve Composition: Complexity				2	2
+ve Happiness: Joy				1	1
+ve Happiness: Sympathy				1	1
+ve Normality: Originality		1			1
+ve Reaction: Impact			1		1
+ve Reaction: Quality				1	1
+ve Valuation: Importance		1		1	2
Grand Total	1	10	3	13	27

Figure 4.1 Incribed attitudes between characters – the Joker’s Escape

The pivot table was also used to identify how the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters varied within characters in the game scenes. Figure 4.2 represents the inscribed evaluative meanings expressed by the Joker during his escape scene. The frequency represents how the attitudes varied within the communicated evaluative meanings of the Joker.

Count of Appraising item	Column Labels				
Row Labels	Batman	Commissioner	Guard	Joker	Grand Total
-ve Capacity: Physical weakness	1				1
-ve Composition: Balance		1			1
-ve Composition: Complexity				1	1
-ve Happiness: Misery				2	2
-ve Normality				1	1
-ve Propriety: Immorality		2		1	3
-ve Reaction: Impact				1	1
-ve Reaction: Quality		1			1
-ve Security: Disquiet			1		1
-ve Valuation: Danger			1		1
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity		1			1
+ve Capacity: Physical strength		3		1	4
+ve Composition: Complexity				2	2
+ve Happiness: Joy				1	1
+ve Happiness: Sympathy				1	1
+ve Normality: Originality		1			1
+ve Reaction: Impact			1		1
+ve Reaction: Quality				1	1
+ve Valuation: Importance		1		1	2
Grand Total	1	10	3	13	27

How attitudes vary within the communicated evaluative meanings of characters.

Figure 4.2 Example of how the frequency of attitudes varied within characters

Second, the pivot tables were then used to conduct another sort of the data by operating the row label to list the appraiser, the inscribed or invoked attitude and the appraised item. This sort provided a list of the characters in the game scenes, their expressed

attitudes and the dialogue line containing the appraised item from the game scene, as represented in Figure 4.3.

Row Labels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] Batman [-ve Capacity: Physical weakness He surrendered almost without a fight.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] Commissioner [-ve Composition: Balance The system's jammed! [-ve Propriety: Immorality and holds the Mayor hostage Joker invades City Hall [-ve Reaction: Quality Yeah, it's been a helluva night. [+ve Capacity: Mental capacity I assure you [+ve Capacity: Physical strength and holds the Mayor hostage Joker invades City Hall to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you. [+ve Normality: Originality if anyone's qualified, it's... [+ve Valuation: Importance Joker's in full control of the security gates.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] Guard [-ve Security: Disquiet but he'll unsettle the more violent inmates. [-ve Valuation: Danger but he'll unsettle the more violent inmates. [+ve Reaction: Impact Listen, I appreciate the assistance,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] Joker [-ve Composition: Complexity Welcome to the mad house, Batman! [-ve Happiness: Misery Ladies and maniacs, I apologise Sorry. Bats, gotta run. [-ve Normality Don't be a stranger.

Figure 4.3 Example of sub-sort: Character, inscribed attitudes and appraised items – the Joker’s Escape

Third, the quantitative data about character evaluative meanings were corroborated with the qualitative patterns of inscribed and invoked attitudes about characters to produce an evaluative meaning summary of each character. Next, the coupling of inscribed and invoked attitudes expressed by the characters was discussed. The coupled evaluative meanings within the characters were identified by referring to the attitude analysis in the Microsoft Word document as represented in Table 4.1. A coupling between the attitudes within the identified evaluative meanings about the characters occurred when a line of dialogue was repeated by an appraising character owing to the multiple coding of attitudes as represented in Figure 4.4.

	Text	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
1	Long night Jim?	Batman	The night		-ve Reaction: Impact: Afford
2	Joker invades City Hall	Commissioner	Joker	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
2	Joker invades City Hall	Commissioner	Joker	-ve Propriety: Immorality	

Coupling of inscribed judgements of social esteem and social sanction.

Figure 4.4 Example of coupling of inscribed attitudes of judgement

Then the similar inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings between characters were examined. Similar evaluative meanings between characters were identified using the pivot table representing the count of evaluative meanings about characters as represented in Figure 4.5. Similar evaluative meanings between characters were identified by characters expressing similar attitudes. Figure 4.5 represents similar attitudes expressed by the Commissioner and the Joker. The data were then used to address the first research sub-question.

Similarities between characters

Count of Appraising item	Column Labels	Batman	Commissioner	Guard	Joker	Grand Total
-ve Capacity: Physical weaknes		1				1
-ve Composition: Balance			1			1
-ve Composition: Complexity					1	1
-ve Happiness: Misery					2	2
-ve Normality					1	1
-ve Propriety: Immorality			2		1	3
-ve Reaction: Impact					1	1
-ve Reaction: Quality			1			1
-ve Security: Disquiet				1		1
-ve Valuation: Danger				1		1
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity			1			1
+ve Capacity: Physical strength			3		1	4
+ve Composition: Complexity					2	2
+ve Happiness: Joy					1	1
+ve Happiness: Sympathy					1	1
+ve Normality: Originality			1			1
+ve Reaction: Impact				1		1
+ve Reaction: Quality					1	1
+ve Valuation: Importance			1		1	2
Grand Total		1	10	3	13	27

Figure 4.5 Example of similar evaluative meanings between characters

4.4.3 Multiple coding of attitudinal evaluative meanings

It is important to note that more than one attitude may have been assigned to each line of character dialogue. This multiple coding is particularly relevant for invoked attitudes

concerning affect and judgements of social esteem relating to a character's tenacity (determination) and capacity (capability). In these cases, a double or multiple coding was needed to account for the represented attitude meaning within the character dialogue. In instances where this occurred, the line of dialogue was repeated for subsequent coding to occur. The multiple coding of attitude is represented in lines 2, 3 and 5 of Table 4.1.

4.4.4 Coding of attitudes of humour and sarcasm

The use of humour and sarcasm in dialogue presented a challenge when performing the attitude analysis. For example, how do we know that a character intended to mean something different from what she or he said. This difference in intended meaning often occurred when a character was being humorous or sarcastic. Martin (2000, pp. 163–164) suggested that this occurs when the ideational meaning in a text expresses a different meaning from the represented attitudes. In short, humour and sarcasm have a diverging coupling of expressed ideas and intended *interpersonal* meaning. An example from *Arkham Asylum* included the Joker using sarcasm and humour to make fun of Batman being at *Arkham Asylum* with the super-criminals whom he has previously captured: “Don't be a stranger. You're always welcome here”. In this example, the Joker was polite and expressed the idea that Batman was welcome at the asylum with the criminally insane patients. An attitude analysis suggests that this was not what was intended. The Joker's utterance afforded a negative judgement of normality owing to Batman being a stranger. The Joker's use of the word “stranger” to appraise Batman was a meaning choice because he was suggesting that Batman was a stranger as he was not criminally insane, but in an asylum with insane criminals. Moreover, the utterances also suggested that Batman could be admitted to the asylum owing to him dressing like a bat to fight crime. Also, the Joker afforded Batman with an attitude of security of trust, as the Joker knew that the asylum may not be the safest place for Batman, given that he had apprehended several of the patients housed in the asylum. In summary, the use of humour and sarcasm by the characters presented a challenge when conducting the attitude analysis and were not marked differently in the analysis. However, in addressing Research Sub-Question One, the humour and sarcasm of characters were discussed when meaningful to the investigation of how the communicated evaluative meanings about characters inferred a moral, social or political value about characters.

4.4.5 Image: Attitude analysis and coding

Answering Research Sub-Question One also involved analysing the image depictions in the game scene for how the different types of evaluative meaning about characters were

represented. First, the analysis involved collecting a video recording of the selected game scenes. The recording involved a successful completion of the game scene’s task, in which players were not defeated and not required to complete the task another time. From the recording, a screen capture of each camera shot was captured. A camera shot was defined as an uninterrupted segment filmed by one camera (Iedema, 2001). Each shot was numbered. Multiple images were captured when a shot involved ludic operations. These images retained the shot number and an alphabetic letter was assigned to the image; for example, Shot 20 was labelled as 20a, 20b or 20c, as represented in Table 4.2. The first column contained the dialogue and line number from the attitude language analysis occurring during the camera shot. The second column contained the captured camera shot. The third column represented a verbal description of the camera shot. The fourth column listed the character expressing the evaluative meaning. The fifth column listed the visual attitude analysis coding or was left empty for images that did not depict an attitude. The images that depicted an attitude were coded using the attitude codes previously discussed in Chapter Three. These attitude codes were placed in the fifth column in line with the relevant image. Multiple coding was used to analyse depicted visual attitudes. The row containing an image that required multiple coding was copied as a subsequent row in the table, and the allocated image number and verbal description were retained. The new code was then written in the visual attitude column. Row 20a of Table 4 represents how multiple coding was used to analyse an image as provoked judgements of capacity and impropriety.

Table 4.2 Coding of visual attitude

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	The hit-man/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden to shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden to shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	The hit-man/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden to shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		20c Aiden reloading his gun.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20c Aiden reloading his gun.	The hit-man/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20c Aiden reloading his gun.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

4.4.6 Image: Attitude analysis and summary

After the visual attitude analysis was conducted, a summary was created describing the visual evaluative meanings within and between the characters to answer the first research sub-question. First, this summary was created by calculating the frequency of evaluative meanings expressed by the characters by copying the visual attitude analysis (Table 4.2) from the Microsoft Word document and pasting it into Excel. Once it was in Excel, pivot tables were created to present the character use of visual attitude, as exemplified in Figure 4.6. The row label consisted of the visual attitude, and the column label consisted of the character. The blank categories in the row and column labels were excluded. Then Excel was operated to count the different attitudes of each verbal description.

Count of Verbal Description	Column Label					
Row Labels	Asylum inmates	Batman	Guard Harley Quinn	Joker	Grand Total	
Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flags		1			1	
Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Afforded				1	1	
Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Provoke				3	3	
Affect: +ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Provoke				2	2	
Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Flag		1			1	
Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Provoke		1			1	
Affect: +ve Security: Trust: Afford			2		2	
Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Flag				1	1	
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke		16		2	19	
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke	6	18		4	28	
Grand Total	6	37	2	2	59	

Figure 4.6 Example of the expressed visual attitude of the characters in the Joker's Escape

Second, the pivot table was then used to conduct another sort of the visual attitude data by using the row label to list the appraiser, the visual attitude and the verbal description. This sort provided a list of the characters in the game scene, their expressed attitudes, and the sequential image number and verbal description from the game scene, as represented in Figure 4.7. Then the quantitative data about character visual evaluative meanings were corroborated with the qualitative patterns of visual attitudes about the characters to produce a visual evaluative meaning summary for each character. The coupling between the visual attitudes expressed by the characters was then discussed. Next the similar inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings between characters were examined. The process for identifying and analysing the coupled and similar evaluative meanings about and between characters was outlined in Section 4.4.2 of this chapter. These data were then used to address the first research sub-question.



Row Labels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Asylum inmates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35a Batman preparing to fight Blackgate prisoners. 35b Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen. 35c Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. 35d Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. 35g Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. 35h Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. ▣ Batman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▣ Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flags <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35a Batman preparing to fight Blackgate prisoners. ▣ Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Flag <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Batman and the Arkham guards escorting Joker in the in the Intensive Treatment Facility. The Joker is restrained in a vertical stretcher. ▣ Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Provoke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 An Arkham security guard and doctor talking to Batman and the Commissioner. ▣ Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 Batman watching the Joker choke the security guard. 22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker. 31 Batman landing after jumping through the window. 34 Batman preparing to fight Blackgate prisoners. 35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight. 35i Batman finishing the fight with the Blackgate prisoners. 35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight. 35k The Commissioner advising Batman the Joker is in control of the asylum and they are trapped. 35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room. 35m The Joker Counselling Batman for making promissous he may not be able to keep. The Joker advises Batman he will not be going anywhere in the Asylum the Joker does not want him to go. 35n Batman advising the Joker he won't let him run away. 35o The Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum. 37a The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker's invite is a trap. 37b Commissioner Gordan's character biography being unlocked. 37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker. 4 Commissioner talking to Batman. ▣ Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker. 30 Batman breaking through the glass window to chase after the Joker. 35b Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.

Figure 4.7 Example of sub-sort: Character expressed attitudes and verbal description – the Joker’s Escape

4.4.7 Player affiliation: Focalisation and interactive meaning analysis and coding

Answering the second research sub-question involved identifying the player-game character affiliation by examining how players are visually positioned with game characters through the use of camera angles. Determining how the visual resources were used to affiliate players a character required a focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) analysis of the selected game scenes. The process followed to analyse and sort the data is now explained. First, the same process for capturing the images outlined in Section 4.4.5 was followed. Each image retained its assigned number. The image and the number were placed in a table, as represented in Table 4.3. The first column recorded the dialogue and line number from the language evaluative meaning analysis. The second column represented the image. The third column represented the same verbal description of the image as utilised in the visual evaluative meaning analysis. The fourth column listed the character being affiliated with players in the image. The fifth and sixth columns listed the focalisation resources of eye contact and mediation utilised by the image. The seventh to tenth columns represented the interactive meaning resources of contact, social distance, and horizontal and vertical camera angles used in the image.

Table 4.3 The qualitative interactive meaning analysis table

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Focalisation			Interactive Meaning		
				Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
2 The Joker invades City Hall 3 and holds the Mayor hostage 4 leaving it to me 5 to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you. 6 Yeah, it's been a helluva night.		4 Commissioner talking to Batman.	Batman	Direct	Along with character	Demand	Social	Involvement	Equality
7 Hopefully, the last one we'll ever have with him. 8 Yeah, right.		8 Harley Quinn looking upon Batman and the Commissioner as the Joker is escorted.	Harley Quinn	Observe	As character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

4.4.8 Player affiliation: Analysis and summary

After conducting the focalisation and interactive meaning analysis, a summary was created describing the extent to which videogames construct player affiliation with different characters to answer the second research sub-question. First, this summary was created by calculating the frequency of focalised “as character” or “along with characters” and accompanying interactive meaning resources by copying the affiliation analysis (Table 4.3) from the Microsoft Word document and pasting it into Excel. Once it was in Excel, pivot tables were created to present the character affiliation, as exemplified in Figure 4.8. The row label consisted of “as character” and “along with character” focalisation and accompanying interactive meaning resources. The column label consisted of the characters. The blank categories in the row and column labels were excluded. Then Excel was used to count the different affiliations for each verbal description.

Count of Verbal Description	Column Label			
Row Labels	Batman	Harley Quinn	Joker	Grand Total
Along with character	16		1	17
Direct	1			1
Demand	1			1
Social	1			1
Involvement	1			1
Equality	1			1
Observe	15		1	16
Offer	15		1	16
Social	15		1	16
Detachment	8			8
Equality	2			2
Representation power	5			5
Viewer power	1			1
Involvement	7		1	8
Equality	3		1	4
Representation power	4			4
As character			2	2
Observe			2	2
Offer			2	2
Social			2	2
Involvement			2	2
Equality			2	2
Grand Total	16		2	19

Figure 4.8 Example of player-character affiliations in the Joker’s Escape

Second, the pivot table was used to conduct a sort of the different kinds of focalisation “as character” and “along with character” and accompanying interactive meaning resources. The row-column was used to sort the data into the following: contact, social distance, horizontal and vertical angles, and verbal description, as represented in Figure 4.9. Then the quantitative data about character and player affiliation were corroborated with the qualitative patterns of the player-game character affiliation to produce a summary for each character. The

coupling of the relevant focalisation and interactive meaning resources about characters was discussed. Next similar relevant focalisation and interactive meaning resources about characters were examined. A comparable process for identifying and analysing the coupled and similar evaluative meanings about and between the characters was outlined in Section 4.4.4 of this chapter. These data were used to address the second research sub-question.

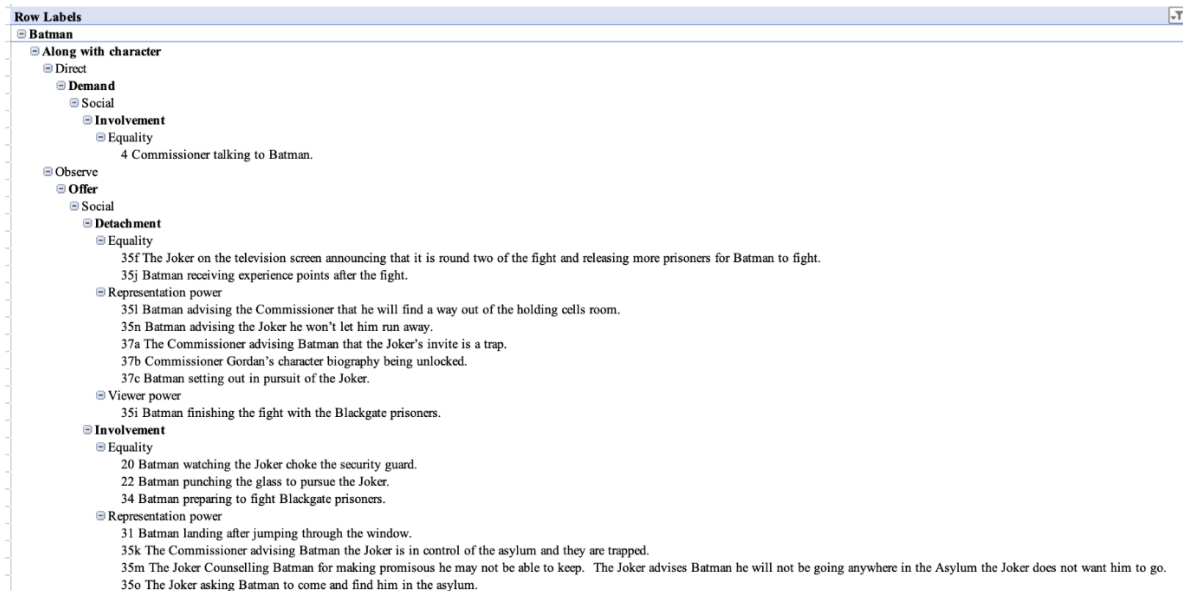


Figure 4.9 Example of sub-sort: Focalisation and interactive meaning in the Joker's Escape

4.5 Method for the ludic dimension


Addressing the third research sub-question involved analysing and coding the game scenes for their ludic operation. Section 4.5.1 examines how the game scenes were analysed and coded for their ludic operations. Section 4.5.1 describes how the ludic operation analysis was summarised.


4.5.1 Ludic operation analysis and coding


Answering the third research sub-question involved analysing the game scenes for how their ludic operations communicated evaluative meanings about characters. Determining how the ludic operations were used in the game scenes required identifying the playable and non-playable characters, the possible ludic actions of characters, and the interactive playable and non-playable segments (Sylvester, 2013). The process followed to analyse and sort the data is now explained. First, the same process for capturing the images explained in Section

4.4.5 was followed. Each image retained its assigned number. The images and numbers were placed in a table, as represented in Table 4.4. The first column represented the dialogue and line number from the language evaluative meaning analysis. The second column depicted the image. The third column represented the same verbal description of the image as utilised in the visual evaluative meanings analysis. The fourth column listed the relevant interactivity resource of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative*. The fifth and sixth columns listed the playable and non-playable characters. The seventh column represented the initiated actions of *factum*, *tactum* and *actum*. The eighth column listed the input buttons required by players to instruct the playable characters to operate gadgets. The ninth column listed the input buttons required for players to instruct the playable characters to fight and the possible non-playable character *tactum* actions. The 10th column listed the input buttons required for players to instruct the playable characters to complete non-fighting actions. The 11th column listed the trigger input buttons required for players to instruct playable characters to complete non-fighting moves. The 12th column listed the afforded input for the left controller gear stick. The 13th column listed the afforded input for the right controller gear stick.

Table 4.4 Example of ludic operations analysis in the Joker's Escape

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Inter-activity	Playable	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Operating Gadgets	Fighting	Non-Fighting Buttons	Non-Fighting Trigger Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick
37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room 38 and then watch cartoons, 39 but then... well... you know 40 how I do love a captive audience.		35b Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	Emergent Narrative	Batman		Actum		Fighting Square – <i>strike</i> Triangle - <i>counter/silent takedown</i> Circle fighting - <i>cape stun</i> Cross and square - <i>throw [requires upgrade]</i> Circle and triangle - <i>takedown [requires upgrade]</i> Cross Cross - <i>redirect when pressing towards an enemy</i> R2 and triangle - <i>ground takedown [next to an enemy]</i>	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons		Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Inter-activity	Playable	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Operating Gadgets	Fighting	Non-Fighting Buttons	Non-Fighting Trigger Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick
								L2 tap combat - <i>quick</i> <i>batarang</i> R2 R2 - <i>quick</i> <i>batclaw</i> <i>[requires upgrade]</i>				
37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room		35b Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	Emergent Narrative	Joker		Factum						
38 and then watch cartoons,												
39 but then... well... you know												
40 how I do love a captive audience.												

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Inter-activity	Playable	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Operating Gadgets	Fighting	Non-Fighting Buttons	Non-Fighting Trigger Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick
37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room 38 and then watch cartoons, 39 but then... well... you know 40 how I do love a captive audience.		35b Batman fighting Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	Emergent Narrative		Asylum inmate	Tactum		Punch/hit Kick Chase				

4.5.2 Ludic operation analysis and summary

After the ludic operation analysis was conducted, a summary was created describing the interactivity and initiated actions about characters to answer the third research sub-question. First, this summary was created by calculating the frequency of interactivity and initiated actions about playable and non-playable characters by copying the ludic operation analysis (Table 4.4) from the Microsoft Word document and pasting it into Excel. Once it was in Excel, two pivot tables were created. The first pivot table presented the interactivity and initiated actions about playable characters, as represented in Figure 4.10. A second pivot table presented the interactivity and initiated actions about non-playable characters. The row label consisted of the types of interactivity such as *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative*. The column label consisted of the characters. The blank categories and the row and column labels were excluded. Then Excel was used to count the frequency of interactivity and initiated action of the characters for each verbal description.

Count of Verbal Description	Column Label		
Row Labels	Batman	Joker	Grand Total
Emergent Narrative	18	5	23
Actum	18		18
Factum		5	5
Scripted	19	21	40
Factum	19	21	40
Grand Total	37	26	63

Figure 4.10 Example of interactivity and initiated actions count in the Joker’s Escape

Second, the pivot tables were used to conduct a sub-sort of the different types of interactivity and accompanying initiated actions about characters. One table was created for the playable characters and another for the non-playable characters. The row-column function was used to sort the data into the following arrangement, which listed the character, interactivity, initiated action, operating gadgets, fighting buttons, non-fighting buttons, non-fighting triggers, and utilised left and right gear stick with the aligned verbal description, as represented in Figure 4.11. These data represented the ludic operations of each camera shot of the game scene. The quantitative interactivity and initiated actions data about characters were corroborated with the qualitative patterns of the interactivity and initiated actions to produce a summary for each character. Next the accompanying verbal description of the sub-sorted ludic operation data was co-patterned with the identified visual evaluative meaning data to ascertain

how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters. Then the similarities between the ludic operations of the characters were examined. A comparable process for identifying and analysing the coupled and similar evaluative meanings about and between characters was outlined in Section 4.4.4 of this chapter. These data were used to address the third research sub-question.

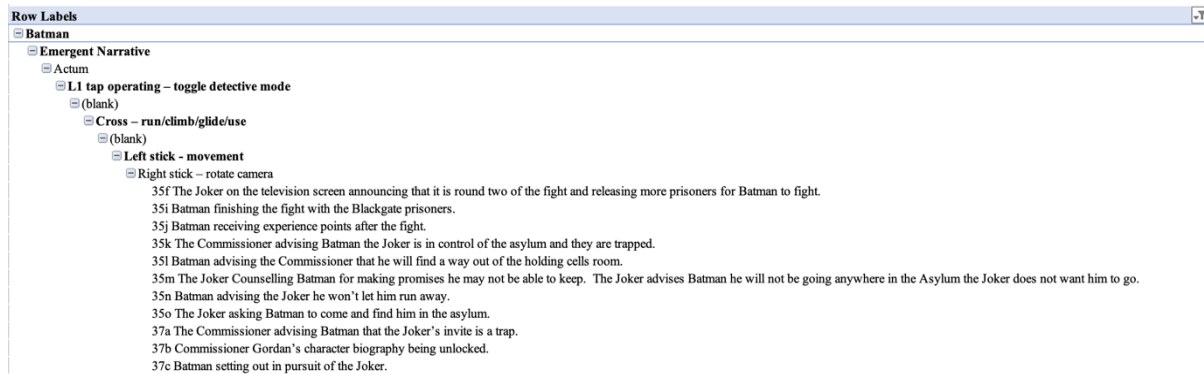


Figure 4.11 Example of sub-sort: Interactivity and initiated action in the Joker's Escape

4.6 Summary of the methodological and analytical approaches

The research design and methodology for the thesis were orientated towards addressing how action-adventure videogames convey values through communicating evaluative meanings about characters. A summary of the research questions, the method and the qualitative and quantitative data has been presented in Table 4.5. The research design enabled the overarching research question to be addressed by investigating the committed evaluative meaning in the narrative and ludic dimensions of the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter Three. The described method explained how the qualitative and quantitative data were collected and organised so that the intermodal commitment and coupling between the *interpersonal* narrative dimension meaning resources and the *representational* and *compositional* ludic dimension meaning resources could be examined for their communicated evaluative meaning patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames.

Table 4.5 Analytical approach table

Overarching Research Question				
How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?				
Research Sub-Questions	Method	Qualitative data	Quantitative data	
Narrative dimension	<p>1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meaning about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?</p>	<p>Analyse character dialogue from the game scenes using the attitude system network.</p> <p>Create two Pivot tables in Excel: One table for inscribed attitude, and the other table for invoked attitude.</p> <p>Use the pivot tables to calculate the frequency of inscribed and invoked attitudes within and between characters.</p> <p>Describe the frequency of inscribed attitudes within characters.</p> <p>Describe the coupling of inscribed attitudes within characters.</p> <p>Describe the similar inscribed attitudes between characters.</p> <p>Repeat steps 4-6 for invoked attitudes within characters.</p>	<p>Attitude resources</p> <p>Inscribed</p> <p>Invoked</p>	<p>Frequency of inscribed attitudes within and between characters</p> <p>Frequency of invoked attitudes within and between characters</p>
		<p>Analyse images from game scenes using the attitude system network.</p> <p>Create a pivot table in Excel.</p> <p>Use the pivot tables to calculate the frequency of visual attitudes within and between characters.</p> <p>Describe the frequency of visual attitudes within characters.</p> <p>Describe the coupling of visual attitudes within characters.</p>	<p>Visual attitude resources</p>	<p>Frequency of visual attitude about characters</p>

Overarching Research Question			
How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?			
Research Sub-Questions	Method	Qualitative data	Quantitative data
	Describe the similar visual attitudes between characters.		
2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?	<p>Analyse the game scene for the use of focalisation and interactive meaning resources.</p> <p>Create a pivot table in Excel.</p> <p>Use the pivot table to calculate the frequency of “as character” and “along with character” focalisation with the interactive meaning resources.</p> <p>Describe the frequency of the relevant focalisation and interactive meaning resources about characters.</p> <p>Describe the coupling of the relevant focalisation and interactive meaning resources about characters.</p> <p>Describe the similar relevant focalisation and interactive meaning resources about characters.</p>	<p>Visual affiliation resources</p> <p>Focalisation: “as character” and “along with character”</p> <p>Interactive meaning resources</p> <p>Coupling of focalisation and interactive meaning resources</p>	Frequency of focalised “as character” or “along with characters” and interactive meaning resources

Overarching Research Question				
How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?				
Research Sub-Questions	Method	Qualitative data	Quantitative data	
Ludic dimension	<p>3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?</p>	<p>Analyse the game scene for the interactivity, non/playable characters and ludic actions.</p> <p>Create a pivot table in Excel to sort data.</p> <p>Sort game scenes for playable and non-playable characters separately.</p> <p>Calculate the frequency of playable characters, interactivity and initiated actions about characters.</p> <p>Sort game scenes for playable characters, interactivity, initiated actions, associated actions and visual evaluative meaning.</p> <p>Describe the results.</p> <p>Repeat steps 4 – 6 for non-playable characters.</p> <p>Describe the coupling of relevant ludic operation resources and visual evaluative meaning resources about playable and non-playable characters.</p> <p>Describe the similar ludic operations resources about characters.</p>	<p>Interactivity system network</p> <p>Character system network</p> <p>Ludic action system network</p> <p>Visual attitude resources</p>	<p>Frequency of non/playable characters, interactivity and initiated actions about characters</p>

4.7 The validity and reliability of the study

The validity and reliability of the thesis are concerned with the sampling of the games, the qualitative and quantitative methods and the systematic methodological steps followed to examine how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of

evaluative meanings about characters. First, the selection of the action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) for this thesis employed a typical sampling method. The typical sampling involved the selection of games that did not vary in any substantial or atypical way (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990) from the action-adventure videogame format traditionally designed for male audiences. Furthermore, one scene from each of the two selected action-adventure videogames was analysed and each scene was identified as typical (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990) of the types of game scenes common to the action-adventure format. Second, a corroborative counting method (Hannah & Lautsch, 2011) involving the triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative data from each game scene was utilised for the thesis. The methodological triangulation of the data further supported the validity of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters (Basit, 2010; Walter, 2010). The qualitative and quantitative methods enabled the results from each game scene to be cross analysed to check the validity of the results from the investigation. Third, the reliability of the study has been increased through the descriptions of the systematic methodological steps taken to analyse the game data (Basit, 2010; Walter, 2010). The systematic method can be replicated across other action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences to investigate how they convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. The assumptions and limitations of the thesis's research design and methodology are now discussed.

4.8 Assumptions and limitations

The conceptual and methodological design of this thesis was based on the following assumptions and on acknowledging and ameliorating the limitations. Painter et al.'s (2013) novel approach to theorising intermodality using the SFS understandings of *commitment* and *coupling* assumes that the total meaning expressed by action-adventure videogames can be understood by investigating the meaning committed by each meaning system such as language and image or by each dimension such as the narrative and the ludic dimensions. Therefore, *logogenetic synergy* was assumed in which the synergy of expressed multimodal meaning in videogames can be explored by understanding how each meaning system contributes to and complements the overall meaning represented in the game (Painter & Martin, 2011, p. 152; Painter et al., 2013). The *logogenetic synergy* utilised in this thesis is different from SFS research that has investigated intermodality through cohesive ties between image and language (Royce, 1998); the logico-semantic expansion and project that explored how image-text relations elaborate, extend or enhance represented meaning in multimodal

texts (Martinec & Salway, 2005); rhetorical structure theory and conjunctive relations that explored the gap between narrative structure and finely grained technical details in film (Bateman, 2008; Tseng & Bateman, 2012); information structure that described a visual design grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006); and relational transitivity that explored the image-text relations in a standardised assessment (Unsworth & Cleirigh, 2008).

The research design had two limitations. The first was the investigation of only two scenes from two action-adventure videogames, *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). This limitation narrowed the generalisations that can be made from the study to other action-adventure videogames and to different videogame genres. Despite this limitation, the data yielded from the study provided a comprehensive analysis of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The second limitation involved restricting the analysis to the language, visual and ludic operation meaning systems realised in the selected videogame scenes. Research considering other modalities such as gesture, space, sound and computer code may further enhance understanding of how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames through the communication of evaluative meanings about characters.

4.9 Ethical and political considerations

This thesis's ethical and political considerations involved the social concerns about action-adventure videogames. Chapter One Section 1.6 discussed the concerns about mature themes, gender, race and violent representation in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences (Alexander, 2014; Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Blackburn & Scharrer, 2019; Kowert et al., 2015; Todd, 2015; Tomkinson & Harper, 2015). The literature argued that gaming communities are becoming more diverse, with females now comprising almost half of the gaming community. The literature also advocated inclusive values and socially just representations of violence, gender and race by game designers of action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. Also recounted in Chapter One were my experience playing *Arkham Asylum* and the questions with which I was left about action-adventure videogames, such as: Were the values represented in these games problematic for educators owing to their representation of violence, race and gender depictions? Were these games problematic because they naturalised and provoked empathy with characters like Batman despite his ambiguous value position? How did players' values align or conflict with a character's represented values? I considered how educators could use these games with their students to learn about character values by analysing dialogue, images and ludic operations. I reasoned that such an analysis could form the basis of a critical

interpretive appreciation of values communicated in videogames for students. Finally, the study received Human Research Ethics approval (see Appendix A). The research study was considered low risk as the videogame data were publicly available. All data collected and analysed for the study were stored in password-protected devices in separate locations. The data were accessible by my supervisors and myself.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has explained the research design and methodological approach involving a multimodal critical discourse analysis (Basil, 2010; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Walter, 2010) utilised by the study to investigate how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. First, Section 4.2 explained an overview of the research design and methodology of the study. Second, Section 4.3 discussed the sampling process used for the study. Third, Section 4.4 described the systematic method utilised to analyse the narrative dimension of the conceptual framework and the collected data that was used to address Research Sub-Questions One and Two. Fourth, Section 4.5 explained the systematic method used to analyse the ludic dimension of the conceptual framework and to gather data that was used to address Research Sub-Question Three. Fifth, Section 4.6 summarised the methodological and analytical approaches utilised by the thesis. Sixth, Section 4.7 explored the validity and reliability of the study. Section 4.8 addressed the assumptions and limitations of the study, and Section 4.9 explored the ethical and political considerations of the thesis. Next, Chapters Five and Six report the results of the critical multimodal discourse analysis of each game scene.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS – HERO VERSUS VILLAINS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from the data analysis of the Joker's escape scene from *Arkham Asylum*. The data from the game scene were investigated according to the process described in Chapter Four to answer the overarching research question and the research sub-questions. First, the results of the inscribed language evaluative meanings about characters are reported in Section 5.3. The coupling of the inscribed evaluative meanings is conveyed in Section 5.4 and the similarities between the inscribed evaluative meanings about characters are described in Section 5.5. Second, the results of the invoked language evaluative meanings about characters are reported in Section 5.6. The coupling of the invoked evaluative meanings is conveyed in Section 5.7 and the similarities between the invoked evaluative meanings about the characters are described in Section 5.8. The coupling between inscribed and invoked evaluative meaning about the characters is reported in Section 5.9. A summary of the language evaluative meaning about the characters is reported in Section 5.10. Third, the analysis of the visual evaluative meanings about the characters is described in Section 5.11. The coupling of the visual evaluative meanings is reported in Section 5.12 and the similarities between the visual evaluative meaning about the characters are described in Section 5.13. A summary of the visual evaluative meaning about the characters is reported in Section 5.14. Fourth, the results of the player-game characters' affiliation are presented in Section 5.15. The similarities between the player-game characters' affiliation are described in Section 5.16. A summary of the player-game character affiliation is reported in Section 5.17. Fifth, the results of the ludic operations are introduced in Section 5.18. The results of the playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions are discussed in Section 5.19. The playable characters scripted factum interactions are reported in Section 5.20. Sixth, the results of the non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions are presented in Section 5.21. The results of the playable characters scripted factum interactions are described in Section 5.22 and the emergent narrative tactum interactions of the non-playable characters are presented in Section 5.23. The coupling and similarities between the playable and non-playable characters are reported in Section 5.24. A ludic operation summary is presented in Section 5.25. However, before the results of the analysis of *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) are reported, the research questions for the thesis are revisited. This thesis asked the overarching Research Question:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

In answering the overarching research question, the following sub-questions were investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meaning about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?
2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?
3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters?

5.2 Narrative dimension

The results from the analysis of the evaluative meaning and player affiliation resources of the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework are initially reported. First, the results of the inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings about characters are presented. The results of the inscribed evaluative meanings about characters are presented in Section 5.3 and of the invoked evaluative meanings about characters in Section 5.7. Second, the results of the visual evaluative meanings are described in Section 5.11. Third, the results of the player-game character affiliation are reported in Section 5.15.

5.3 Research Sub-Question One: Inscribed language evaluative meaning

The frequency of the different types of inscribed evaluative meaning about characters from the Joker Escape scene in *Arkham Asylum* is represented in Table 5.1. How the frequency of the different types of inscribed evaluative meaning about characters vary within and between characters during the scene is now reported. A total of 27 inscribed evaluative meanings about characters was identified in the game scene. Thirteen inscribed evaluative meanings were communicated by the Joker, 10 by the Commissioner, three by the asylum Guard and one by Batman.

Table 5.1 Quantitative inscribed evaluative meaning about characters – the Joker’s Escape

Characters					
Inscribed Attitudes	Batman	The Commissioner	The Guard	The Joker	Grand Total
Affect					

Characters					
Inscribed Attitudes	Batman	The Commissioner	The Guard	The Joker	Grand Total
+ve Happiness: Joy				1	1
+ve Happiness: Sympathy				1	1
-ve Happiness: Misery				2	2
-ve Security: Disquiet			1		1
Judgement of Social Esteem					
-ve Normality				1	1
+ve Normality: Originality		1			1
-ve Capacity: Physical weakness	1				1
+ve Capacity: Physical strength		3		1	4
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity		1			1
Judgement of Social Sanction					
-ve Propriety: Immorality		2		1	3
Appreciation					
-ve Reaction: Impact				1	1
-ve Reaction: Quality		1			1
+ve Reaction: Impact			1		1
+ve Reaction: Quality				1	1
-ve Composition: Balance		1			1
-ve Composition: Complexity				1	1
+ve Composition: Complexity				2	2
-ve Valuation: Danger			1		1
+ve Valuation: Importance		1		1	2
Grand Total	1	10	3	13	27

5.3.1 The Commissioner

The qualitative inscribed evaluative meanings about characters from the scene are now reported. The Commissioner communicated 10 inscribed attitudes as represented in Table 2 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The Commissioner inscribed two negative judgements of social sanction and five judgements of social esteem. The Commissioner utilised inscribed negative judgements of impropriety to describe the Joker’s immorality in invading City Hall and capturing the mayor – for example, “Joker **invades** City Hall and holds the Mayor Hostage”. The Commissioner also coupled these negative judgements of the Joker’s

immorality with an inscribed positive judgement of the Joker's physical strength as the Joker was able to invade City Hall and hold the mayor captive. Also, inscribed positive judgements of social esteem were made by the Commissioner regarding Batman and himself. The Commissioner inscribed a positive judgement of Batman's normality to describe Batman's originality in being able to deal with Gotham's criminals – for example, “if **anyone's qualified**, it's...”. The Commissioner inscribed positive judgements of his mental capacity when reassuring the Guard of Batman's abilities – for example, “**I assure** you”. Inscribed positive judgements of capacity were communicated by the Commissioner regarding Batman's strength in dealing with the pressure of juggling multiple tasks – for example, “... **to juggle** SWAT teams, the media and you”.

The Commissioner communicated three inscribed negative assessments of appreciation during the Joker's escape scene. The Commissioner utilised a negative reaction to the night's events involving the Joker: “Yeah, it's been **a helluva night**”. After the Joker had escaped, the Commissioner inscribed a positive valuation to emphasise the importance of the Joker's control over the asylum's security system, such as “Joker's **in full control of the security gates**”. An attitude of inscribed negative appreciation regarding the composition of the asylum's security system was made by the Commissioner after the Joker had taken control – for example, “**The system's jammed!**” The inscribed evaluative meaning about the Commissioner was indicative of how he considered the Joker a capable super-criminal who carried out immoral acts. The Commissioner also revealed that he was capable of managing the SWAT teams and media but implied Batman's originality in being able to apprehend the Joker and other criminals. From the inscribed evaluative meanings about the Commissioner, it could be inferred that he has a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) regarding his alliance with Batman. Also, the Commissioner's inscribed evaluative meanings implied his social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

5.3.2 The Guard

The asylum Guard communicated three inscribed attitudes comprising one attitude of affect and two attitudes of appreciation, as represented in Table 3 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The asylum Guard utilised attitudes of affect and appreciation regarding Batman's presence at the asylum and the dangerous nature of the asylum inmates. An inscribed attitude of positive appreciation was utilised by the Guard to describe the impact of his reaction to the assistance provided by

Batman and the Commissioner in dealing with the Joker – for example, “Listen, I **appreciate** the assistance”. However, the Guard also inscribed an affective attitude of insecurity to express his disquiet regarding Batman’s presence at the asylum – for example, “but he’ll **unsettle** the more violent inmates”. Also, a negative inscribed attitude of appreciation was used by the Guard to describe the dangerous violent nature of the asylum inmates, such as “but he’ll unsettle **the more violent inmates**”. The inscribed evaluative meaning about the Guard acknowledged Batman’s support in resolving the issues created by the antagonist characters, but implied that the Guard was anxious about the dangerous inmates within the asylum. It can be inferred that the Guard’s inscribed evaluative meanings were underpinned by the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his security role within the asylum.

5.3.3 Batman

The inscribed attitudes of Batman have been represented in Table 1 of the supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The one inscribed evaluative meaning communicated by Batman during the scene involved his appraisal of the Joker through the use of an inscribed judgement of social esteem. Batman communicated a negative judgement of capacity regarding the Joker’s physical weakness in surrendering easily – for example, “He **surrendered** almost without a fight”. This inscribed evaluative meaning was indicative of how Batman contested the behaviour of the super-criminals and attempted to resolve issues created by the antagonist characters. From the inscribed evaluative meanings about Batman, it can be inferred that he emphasised the social and political values of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but did not commit to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One. The inscribed evaluative meanings of the Commissioner and the Guard legitimised Batman’s contest with the super-criminals and indicated this as a naturalised position for Batman within the game.

5.3.4 The Joker

The Joker communicated 13 inscribed evaluative meanings during the scene, as represented in Table 4 of the supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Four attitudes of affect were spoken. The Joker expressed affective attitudes of unhappiness through inscribed misery – for example, “Ladies and maniac, I **apologise**...” and “**Sorry**, Bats, gotta run”. Also, inscribed attitudes of happiness were used by the Joker to express joy, “Gotta say it’s **good** to be back” and sympathy, “How I do **love** a captive audience”. The Joker used sarcasm in his expressions of affective happiness

as there was discord between the misery, joy and sympathy that he was expressing and his behaviour. In actuality, the Joker was not apologising or showing sympathy to his audience. He was also not sorry for escaping and running away from Batman, nor was he happy to be back at the asylum. The use of humorous sarcasm by the Joker indicated how he manipulated situations to distract attention from his actual behaviour.

Six inscribed attitudes of appreciation were also used by the Joker to describe the complex composition of the asylum. A negative appreciation of composition was used by the Joker to describe the asylum as a madhouse: “Welcome to **the madhouse**, Batman!” The Joker also used positive appreciations of composition to appraise people in the asylum. For example, “Fresh from **Blackgate Correctional Facility**” was used to introduce the inmates whom Batman was required to fight in the scene, while the Joker also described the people in the asylum as a captive audience: “How I do love **a captive audience**”. The Joker used negative attitudes of appreciation to react to the impact and quality of events during the game scene. An attitude of inscribed negative reaction was used by the Joker to describe the impact of him watching Batman try to escape his trap, “I’m getting **bored** of watching you”, while a positive attitude of inscribed reaction was used by the Joker to describe the quality of the inmates from the Blackgate facility, “**Fresh** from Blackgate Correctional Facility”. The Joker used an expression of positive valuation to emphasise the importance of Batman being a hero, “Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with **the hero speak**”.

Two judgements of social esteem and social sanction were used by the Joker. The Joker inscribed a negative judgement of normality to describe Batman as a stranger: “Don’t be **a stranger**”, but negated this evaluation by using the contraction “Don’t”, as Batman was not a stranger to the criminals whom he had locked away in the asylum. Inscribed judgements of positive capacity were used by the Joker to describe his physical strength in being able to control the asylum: “I’m in **control** of the asylum”. One judgement of social sanction was used by the Joker to describe his impropriety regarding the immoral act of killing – for example, “Up until a few seconds ago, I was **going to kill** everyone in the room”. The evaluative meanings about the Joker indicated a divergent positioning compared with Batman. The Joker created issues such as escaping and contested the legitimacy of the protagonist characters through the use of sarcastic humour, negative and positive appreciations, and judgements of social esteem and sanction. It can be inferred from the Joker’s inscribed evaluative meanings that he did not emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), and did not hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One. A deeper understanding of the communicated evaluative meanings about characters

requires the examination of how inscribed evaluative meanings were coupled together during the scene.

5.4 Inscribed evaluative meaning coupling

During the scene, the Joker expressed the highest frequency of inscribed evaluative meanings about the characters at 12, and Batman the least with one. However, a more balanced assessment of the frequency of evaluative meanings communicated in the scene can be captured by grouping the protagonist characters of Batman, the Commissioner and the Guard, together contributing to a total of 14 expressed attitudes. This was one higher than the 13 evaluative meanings inscribed by the Joker. The close equivalence between the communication of evaluative meanings between the protagonist and antagonist characters was indicative of the contested nature of their evaluative meaning positions. The contested nature of the evaluative meanings between the protagonist and antagonist characters can be examined further by investigating the varying frequency within and between the characters in the scene. For example, Table 5.2 represents how the Commissioner appraised the Joker by coupling inscribed judgements of social esteem and social sanction. The Commissioner coupled an inscribed judgement of capacity with a judgement of impropriety concerning the Joker’s immorality – for example, “Joker **invades** City Hall” and “**holds the Mayor hostage**”. The game scene can also be analysed for similar communicated evaluative meanings between the characters.

Table 5.2 The Commissioner’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and social sanction

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
2	Joker invades City Hall	The Commissioner	The Joker	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
2	Joker invades City Hall	The Commissioner	The Joker	-ve Propriety: Immorality	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	The Commissioner	The Joker	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	The Commissioner	The Joker	-ve Propriety: Immorality	

5.5 Inscribed evaluative meaning similarities

The game scene contained similar communicated inscribed evaluative meanings between the Commissioner and the Joker, as represented in Table 5.1. Both characters expressed judgements of capacity concerning physical strength, with the Commissioner communicating three and the Joker one. Also, judgements of impropriety were expressed by both characters, with the Commissioner communicating two and the Joker one. The Commissioner and the Joker each expressed one attitude of valuation concerning importance. A further nuanced understanding of the patterns of evaluative meanings occurring in the game scene required the invoked evaluative meanings about characters to be investigated.

5.6 Research Sub-Question One: Invoked language evaluative meaning

The frequency of the different types of invoked evaluative meaning about characters from the Joker Escape scene in *Arkham Asylum* is represented in Table 5.3. How the frequency of the different types of invoked evaluative meaning about the characters varied within and between characters during the scene is now reported. A total of 64 invoked evaluative meanings about characters was identified in the game scene. 35 were communicated by the Joker, 17 by Batman, seven by the Commissioner, four by the Guard and one by Harley Quinn.

Table 5.3 Quantitative invoked evaluative meaning about characters – the Joker’s Escape

Invoked Attitude	Characters					Grand Total
	Batman	The Commissioner	The Guard	Harley Quinn	The Joker	
Affect						
+ve Happiness: Joy: Afford					1	1
+ve Happiness: Joy: Provoke					1	1
+ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Afford					4	4
-ve Satisfaction: Displeasure: Afford			1		1	2
+ve Security: Confidence: Afford		1				1
+ve Security: Trust: Afford					1	1
-ve Security: Disquiet: Afford	2	1	1		1	5
-ve Security: Surprise: Afford	1					1
Judgement of social esteem						

Invoked Attitude	Characters					Grand Total
	Batman	The Commissioner	The Guard	Harley Quinn	The Joker	
-ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Afford		1			5	6
+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford	5	1	1		7	14
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford	3				3	6
-ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford	1	1			1	3
+ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford	2					2
-ve Normality: Afford		1			2	3
Judgement of social sanction						
+ve Propriety: Morality: Afford					1	1
-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford			1		5	6
Neg +ve Veracity: Afford					1	1
Appreciation						
-ve Reaction: Impact: Afford	2			1		3
-ve Reaction: Quality: Afford		1			1	2
+ve Reaction: Quality: Afford	1					1
Grand Total	17	7	4	1	35	64

5.6.1 Batman

The qualitative invoked evaluative meanings about the characters from the scene are now discussed. Batman communicated 17 invoked attitudes, as represented in Table 5 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Three evaluative meanings of affect were communicated by Batman. Two of these afforded an attitude of insecurity indicating Batman's disquiet at the Joker's easy surrender, "I don't like it", and the command to alert the Warden after the Joker had escaped, "Alert the Warden". An afforded attitude of insecurity was used to indicate Batman's surprise at the Joker's escape, "Joker's loose".

Eleven judgements of social esteem were communicated by Batman. Five of these afforded a positive judgement of capacity concerning physical strength. Batman appraised the Commissioner's physical strength to be able to contact the Warden: "Gordon try and contact the Warden". Judgements of capacity were afforded to Batman's physical strength when

finding a way out of the Joker's trap: "I'll be back" and "I'll find a way out!". Batman also used a positive judgement of capacity to describe the Joker's physical ability to escape and run – for example, "if you think I'll let you run..." and "Joker's loose!". Three afforded positive judgements of mental capacity were communicated by Batman. One was afforded to the Commissioner: "Let him know what's happened". Another was afforded to the Joker: "If you think I'll let you run...". Batman also afforded himself a positive judgement of mental capacity: "If you think I'll let you run...". Two afforded positive judgements of tenacity were afforded by Batman to indicate his reliability – for example, "I'll be back" and "I'll find a way out". One negative judgement of tenacity was used by Batman to describe the Joker – for example, "He surrendered almost without a fight".

Three evaluative meanings of appreciation were communicated by Batman. One of these afforded a positive reaction to this being the last time that Batman would have to capture the Joker: "Hopefully, the last one we'll ever have with him". Two afforded negative reactions were made by Batman when talking with the Commissioner. The first afforded a negative reaction to the night's event involving the Joker: "Long night Jim". The second afforded a negative reaction to the trap that the Joker had set for Batman at the end of the scene – for example, "Of course it is". Overall, Batman expressed less affective attitude and more judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength and mental capacity. Batman's emphasis on judgements of social esteem was indictive of the conflict with the antagonist characters such as the Joker and Harley Quinn and the struggle for legitimacy amongst the different character evaluative meanings. From the invoked evaluative meanings about Batman, it can be inferred that he held to the social and political values of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but that he did not commit to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) outlined in Chapter One.

5.6.2 The Commissioner

The Commissioner communicated seven invoked evaluative meanings, as represented in Table 6 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Two were afforded attitudes of affect. A negative attitude of afforded insecurity was utilised by the Commissioner when questioning Batman's disquiet about the Joker's return to the asylum: "You okay?". A positive attitude of afforded security was used by the Commissioner to express his confidence about the Joker's return to the asylum: "At least he's back where he belongs". Four judgements of social esteem were communicated by the Commissioner. One of these involved an afforded positive judgement concerning the Commissioner's physical capacity in being the person required to manage the

Joker's invasion: "leaving it to me...". The Commissioner used an afforded negative judgement of capacity regarding the Commissioner and Batman being trapped by the Joker: "We're stuck in here". The Commissioner afforded Batman with a negative judgement of normality, inferring his role as a vigilante "to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you". Also, an afforded negative attitude of tenacity was used by the Commissioner to describe the unreliability of the asylum's system after being shut out by the Joker: "The system's jammed!". The Commissioner afforded one attitude of negative appreciation to evaluate his reaction to the Joker's trap: "You know it's a trap". Overall, the Commissioner's invoked evaluative meanings were indicative of how he perceived the Joker as being an immoral capable criminal who belongs in an asylum. The Commissioner inferred a difference between himself and Batman when inferring Batman's negative normality. Perhaps this was because Batman was a vigilante. However, the Commission also indicated that he had a closer relationship with Batman as he could sense Batman's disquiet about the Joker's surrender. From the invoked evaluative meanings about the Commissioner, it can be inferred that he conveyed a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his friendship with Batman. Also, the evaluative meanings of the Commissioner inferred his social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), and a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) discussed in Chapter One.

5.6.3 The Guard

The Guard communicated four invoked evaluative meanings, as represented in Table 7 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Two were afforded attitudes of affect. An attitude of insecurity was afforded by the Guard when asking Batman to stop escorting the Joker in the asylum: "Sorry, Batman, Arkham Staff only!". An attitude of negative afforded satisfaction was utilised by the Guard to communicate his displeasure with the Joker falling over: "Get up!". One positive judgement of physical strength was made by the Guard to describe the capability of the violent inmates: "but he'll unsettle the more violent inmates". One judgement of social sanction was used by the Guard to afford an attitude of impropriety regarding the immorality of the violent inmates: "but he'll unsettle the more violent inmates". Overall, the Guard's invoked evaluative meanings expressed an anxiety about the capability of the asylum inmates and the Joker, and indicated his anxiety at having to ask Batman to stop escorting the Joker. From the Guard's invoked evaluative meanings, it can be inferred that he

had a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his role as a security guard.

5.6.4 Harley Quinn

Harley Quinn communicated one invoked attitude, as represented in Table 8 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). A negative attitude of appreciation was utilised by Harley Quinn to react to Batman's statement that this would be the last night that he had to deal with the Joker – for example, “Yeah, right”. The invoked evaluative meaning was indicative of how Harley Quinn contested the legitimised evaluative meaning of the protagonist characters by assisting the Joker to create issues that the protagonist characters had to resolve. The invoked evaluative meanings about Harley Quinn inferred that she shared a moral value of collaboration with the Joker (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Furthermore, it can be inferred that Harley Quinn did not hold to a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values discussed in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to her relationship with the Joker.

5.6.5 The Joker

The Joker communicated 35 invoked evaluative meanings during the game scene, as represented in Table 9 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The Joker invoked nine affective attitudes. Four of these attitudes afforded a positive satisfaction of pleasure; some examples included “and you sprang it gloriously!”, “The choke's on you” and “how I do love a captive audience”. The Joker afforded a positive affective attitude of happiness when calling out to Harley Quinn, “Honey, I'm home”, and provoked a positive affective attitude when releasing the inmates to fight Batman, “Now let's get this party started!”. An afforded attitude of dissatisfaction was used by the Joker to describe his displeasure at Batman defeating the first round of inmates, “I'm just warming you up, Bats”. An attitude of insecurity concerning disquiet was afforded by the Joker when strangling the Guard and advising the Asylum Doctor to be quick to help to save the Guard: “Hurry”. The Joker afforded an attitude of trusting security to advise Batman that he was welcome at the asylum: “You're always welcome here”. This afforded attitude of trusting security was another example of how the Joker used sarcasm as there was a discord between the attitude of security that the Joker utilised and the reality that the asylum may not have been a welcoming place for Batman owing to his having apprehended several of the super-criminals housed at the asylum.

The Joker invoked 18 judgements of social esteem during the scene. Seven of these were affordances of positive physical strength. The Joker afforded himself with six out of the seven positive judgements of physical strength; some examples included “I set a trap”, “... I was going to kill everyone in the room” and “I’ve got places to go, people to slay”. The Joker afforded Batman with one positive judgement of physical strength when tempting Batman to chase after him: “Why don’t you just come find me...”. The Joker afforded five judgements of physical weakness. Three of the judgements of physical weakness were afforded to Batman – for example, “and you sprang it gloriously!”, “Don’t make promises you can’t keep, Bats” and “You’re not going anywhere”. The Joker afforded to the Asylum Doctor a judgement of negative capacity regarding the doctor’s physical weakness in being able to stop him from killing the Guard: “We’re losing him, Doc!”. Also, the Joker afforded the Guard with a negative judgement of capacity as he could not stop the Joker from killing him: “The choke’s on you”.

The Joker afforded three judgements of mental capacity. The Joker afforded himself with a positive judgement of mental capacity after escaping and trapping Batman: “You’re not going anywhere I don’t want you to”. The Joker followed this with an afforded positive judgement of mental capacity attributed to Batman: “Understand?”. During the scene, the Joker also attributed the people in the asylum with a positive judgement of mental capacity: “but then... well... you know...”.

The Joker afforded two negative judgements of normality. Batman was afforded a negative judgement of normality by the Joker: “I think he’s talking about you, Bats”. This evaluation of Batman by the Joker indicated that it was strange that Batman dressed as a Bat and was a vigilante. The second negative judgement of normality was attributed to the Blackgate prisoner inmates by the Joker, and indicated that it was not normal for inmates to have a sentence of 752 years: “with a combined sentence of 752 years”. The Joker afforded one negative judgement of tenacity relating to the change in routine at the asylum owing to his escape: “for this interruption to your regular entertainment”.

The Joker invoked seven judgements of social sanction. Five of these evaluations were affordances of impropriety. The Joker was attributed two judgements concerning his immorality at setting the trap for Batman, “I set a trap”, and murdering the guard, “The choke’s on you”. Two more judgements of immorality were afforded to the Blackgate prison inmates by the Joker – for example, “Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility” and “... with a combined sentence of 752 years”. One judgement of immorality was afforded to Arkham Asylum by the Joker, “Welcome to the madhouse, Batman!”. The Joker afforded one positive judgement of propriety to Batman by describing him as a hero: “Blah, Blah, Blah.

Always with the hero speak". This judgement indicated Batman's morality as a superhero. The Joker afforded one positive judgement of veracity regarding Batman's making promises to escape his trap. The Joker negated the positive judgement of veracity with the word "don't" – for example, "Don't make promises". The Joker invoked one attitude of appreciation to convey his negative reaction to Batman's advising that he would chase after the Joker: "Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak". Overall, the invoked evaluative meanings about the Joker further indicated a divergent evaluative position compared with Batman. The Joker created issues such as escaping and releasing inmates to fight Batman, and subverted the legitimacy of the protagonist characters through the use of sarcastic humour, positive and negative judgements of social esteem and sanction, and assessments of appreciation. From the Joker's invoked evaluative meanings, it can be inferred that he did not have a commitment to the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), or have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values discussed in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

5.7 Invoked evaluative meaning coupling

A broader assessment of the frequency of evaluative meanings communicated in the game scene can be understood by grouping the protagonist and antagonist characters. The sum of the protagonist characters of Batman, the Commissioner and the Guard together equals 28 invoked evaluative meanings. The sum of the antagonist characters of Harley Quinn and the Joker equals 36 invoked evaluative meanings. Therefore, the antagonist characters have communicated eight more evaluative meanings than the protagonist characters. The higher evaluative meanings attributed to the antagonist characters indicated a contested subversion of the evaluative meaning positions of the protagonist characters.

5.7.1 Batman

A more nuanced understanding of the patterning of evaluative meanings about characters and of the contested nature of the invoked evaluative meanings between the protagonist and antagonist characters can be uncovered by examining the coupling of evaluative meanings within each character during the scene. Table 5.4 represents how Batman coupled an afforded judgement of physical capacity with an affective attitude of insecurity when announcing the Joker's escape, "Joker's loose!"

Table 5.4 Batman’s coupling of invoked judgements of capacity and insecurity

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
24	Joker’s loose!	Batman	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
24	Joker’s loose!	Batman	Batman		-ve Security: Surprise: Afford

During the scene, Batman coupled judgements of tenacity and physical and mental capacity, which indicated how he attempted to resolve the problems created by the super-villains, as represented in Table 5.5. Batman coupled invoked judgements of physical capacity and tenacity to indicate his determination and strength to escape the Joker’s trap: “I’ll find a way out” and “I’ll be back”. Batman also coupled judgements of mental capacity with physical capacity to demonstrate his determination in capturing the Joker: “If you think I’ll let you run...”.

Table 5.5 Batman’s coupling of invoked judgments of tenacity and physical and mental capacity

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
50	I’ll find a way out!	Batman	Batman		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
50	I’ll find a way out!	Batman	Batman		+ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford
53	I’ll be back.	Batman	Batman		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
53	I’ll be back.	Batman	Batman		+ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford
59	If you think I’ll let you run...	Batman	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford
59	If you think I’ll let you run...	Batman	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
59	If you think I’ll let you run...	Batman	Batman		+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford

5.7.2 The Joker

During the scene, the Joker coupled judgements of social esteem, social sanction and affect to subvert the legitimacy of protagonist characters' evaluative position, as represented in Table 5.6. The Joker coupled affective attitudes of satisfaction and judgements of physical capacity and impropriety when standing over the Guard and stating, "the choke's on you". This statement by the Joker also afforded to the Guard a negative judgement of physical weakness. The Joker afforded judgements of physical strength, impropriety and an affective attitude of satisfaction concerning his successful planning and immoral behaviour to kill the Guard to escape and set a trap for Batman: "I set a trap and you sprang it gloriously!". The Joker coupled a judgement of his physical capacity and dissatisfaction after Batman had defeated the first round of inmates during the game scene: "I'm just warming you up, Bats".

Table 5.6 The Joker's coupling of invoked judgements of social esteem, sanction and affect

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
28	The choke's on you.	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
28	The choke's on you.	The Joker	The Joker		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford
28	The choke's on you.	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Afford
28	The choke's on you.	The Joker	Guard		-ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Afford
32	I set a trap,	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
32	I set a trap,	The Joker	The Joker		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford
33	and you sprang it gloriously!	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Afford
33	and you sprang it gloriously!	The Joker	Batman		-ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Afford
41	I'm just warming you up, Bats.	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
41	I'm just warming you up, Bats.	The Joker	The Joker		-ve Satisfaction: Displeasure: Afford

The Joker coupled invoked judgements of social esteem and social sanction to contest Batman’s evaluative position during the game scene, as represented in Table 5.7. The Joker coupled a judgement of negative normality and impropriety concerning the combined jail sentences of the inmates: “with a combined sentence of 752 years”. The Joker also coupled afforded judgement of veracity and negative capacity concerning Batman’s keeping his promises: “Don’t make promises you can’t keep, Bats”. The game scene can also be analysed for similar communicated evaluative meanings between characters.

Table 5.7 The Joker’s coupling of invoked judgements of social esteem and sanction

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
43	<u>with a combined sentence of 752 years</u> . Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding!	The Joker	Inmates		-ve Normality: Afford
43	<u>with a combined sentence of 752 years</u> . Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding!	The Joker	Inmates		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford
54	<u>Don’t make promises you can’t keep, Bats</u> .	The Joker	Batman		Neg +ve Veracity: Afford
54	<u>Don’t make promises you can’t keep, Bats</u> .	The Joker	Batman		-ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Afford

5.8 Invoked evaluative meaning similarities

The game scene represented similar communicated evaluative meanings invoked between characters, as displayed in Table 5.3. Similar affective meanings were communicated by the Guard and the Joker, who both expressed affective attitudes of dissatisfaction affording displeasure. Also, Batman, the Commissioner, the Guard and the Joker all communicated affective attitudes of insecurity affording disquiet. The characters expressed similar judgements of social esteem, with the Commissioner and the Joker both affording negative judgements of capacity concerning physical weakness. This was in contrast to Batman and the Joker, who both afforded positive judgements of mental capacity. The Joker and the Commissioner also afforded negative judgements of normality regarding Batman and the inmates. Batman, the Commissioner, the Guard and the Joker all afforded judgements of physical strength. Additionally, the Joker, Batman and the Commissioner all afforded negative judgements of tenacity concerning reliability during the scene. Judgements of social

sanction concerning impropriety affording immorality were expressed by the Commissioner and the Joker in the scene. Similar attitudes of appreciation concerning negative reactions were expressed by the characters. Batman and Harley Quinn both afforded negative reactions concerning impact, while the Commissioner and the Joker afforded negative reactions concerning quality. A further nuanced understanding of the patterns of evaluative meanings occurring in the game scene required the coupling of inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings to be examined.

5.9 Inscribed and invoked evaluative meaning coupling

5.9.1 The Commissioner

The contested nature between the protagonist and antagonist characters was also realised by the coupling of invoked and inscribed evaluative meanings within each character. Table 5.8 represents how the Commissioner coupled an inscribed judgement of his capacity to juggle multiple tasks with a negative judgement of Batman’s normality, “to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you”. The invoked negative judgement of Batman’s normality inferred that there was a difference between the Commissioner, who had legal authority, and Batman, who was a vigilante. The Commissioner also coupled an inscribed attitude of negative compositions and afforded negative tenacity to describe the asylum’s unreliable communication and security system: “The system’s jammed!”.

Table 5.8 The Commissioner’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and appreciation

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	The Commissioner	The Commissioner	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	The Commissioner	Batman		-ve Normality: Afford
47	<u>The system’s jammed!</u>	The Commissioner	The system	-ve Composition: Balance	
47	The system’s jammed!	The Commissioner	The system		-ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford

5.9.2 The Guard

The Guard coupled inscribed attitudes of affect and appreciation with judgements of social esteem and social sanction. Table 5.9 represents the Guard’s coupling of inscribed attitudes of insecurity and negative valuation with afforded judgements of physical strength and impropriety concerning Batman and the asylum inmates – for example “but he’ll **unsettle the more violent inmates**”. This evaluative coupling suggested that Batman being a vigilante made the Guard feel anxious, but the Guard also perceived the criminals to be capable, dangerous and immoral.

Table 5.9 The Guard’s coupling of affect, appreciation and judgements of social esteem and sanction

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
14	but he’ll unsettle the more violent inmates.	The Guard	Batman	-ve Security: Disquiet	
14	but he’ll unsettle the more violent inmates .	The Guard	Inmates		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
14	but he’ll unsettle the more violent inmates .	The Guard	Inmates	-ve Valuation: Danger	
14	but he’ll unsettle the more violent inmates .	The Guard	Inmates		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford

5.9.3 Batman

Batman coupled negative judgement of capacity and tenacity, which implied that he felt that the Joker’s easy surrender at the Mayor’s office earlier in the evening was strange. Table 5.10 represents Batman’s coupling of inscribed judgements of physical weakness with a negative judgement of tenacity concerning the Joker’s surrender: “**He surrendered almost without a fight**”.

Table 5.10 Batman’s coupling of judgements of social esteem

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
20	He surrendered almost without a fight.	Batman	The Joker	-ve Capacity: Physical weakness	
20	He surrendered almost without a fight .	Batman	The Joker		-ve Tenacity: Reliability: Afford

5.9.4 The Joker

During the game scene, the Joker contested the evaluative position of the protagonist characters through coupling inscribed attitudes of appreciation with afforded judgements of impropriety. Table 5.11 represents the Joker’s coupling of an inscribed attitude of negative appreciation concerning Arkham Asylum with an afforded judgement of impropriety concerning the immorality of the asylum: “Welcome to the madhouse Batman!”

Table 5.11 The Joker’s coupling of attitudes of appreciation and judgements of impropriety

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
31	Welcome to <u>the madhouse</u> , Batman!	The Joker	Arkham Asylum	<u>-ve Composition: Complexity</u>	
31	Welcome to <u>the madhouse</u> , Batman!	The Joker	Arkham Asylum		<u>-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford</u>

The Joker also subverted the evaluative position of the protagonist characters by coupling judgements of social esteem and sanction, as represented in Table 5.12. The Joker coupled an inscribed judgement of impropriety with an afforded judgement of his physical capacity: “Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room”.

Table 5.12 The Joker’s coupling of judgements of social esteem and sanction

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
37	Up until a few seconds ago, I was <u>going to kill</u> everyone in the room	The Joker	The Joker		<u>+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford</u>
37	Up until a few seconds ago, I was <u>going to kill</u> everyone in the room	The Joker	The Joker	<u>-ve Propriety: Immorality</u>	

Also, the Joker used sarcastic humour by coupling evaluative meanings of affect and judgements of social esteem, as represented in Table 5.13. The Joker coupled an inscribed attitude of unhappiness with an afforded judgement of his physical strength, which implied that he was not sad, but capable of carrying out his plans – for example, “Sorry. Bats, gotta run”.

Table 5.13 The Joker’s coupling of affect and judgements of social esteem

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
45	Sorry. Bats, gotta run.	The Joker	The Joker	-ve Happiness: Misery	
45	Sorry. Bats, gotta run.	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford

Another example of how the Joker’s humour was realised by the coupling of inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings of affect and appreciation is represented in Table 5.14. During the Joker’s announcement on the asylum speaker system, he coupled an inscribed appreciation of the audience’s composition with inscribed and afforded affective attitudes of happiness and satisfaction: “how I do love a captive audience”.

Table 5.14 The Joker’s coupling of affect and appreciation

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
40	how I do love a captive audience.	The Joker	The Joker		+ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Afford
40	how I do love a captive audience.	The Joker	The Joker	+ve Happiness: Sympathy	
40	how I do love a captive audience.	The Joker	Audience	+ve Composition: Complexity	

The Joker challenged the legitimacy of the protagonist characters’ evaluative position by coupling attitudes of appreciation and judgements of social sanction, as represented in Table 5.15. The Joker coupled inscribed attitudes of positive reaction and composition with afforded judgements of impropriety concerning the inmates – for example, “**Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility**”. Also, the Joker coupled an attitude of inscribed positive valuation with an afforded judgement of propriety concerning Batman’s role as a hero – for example, “Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with **the hero speak**”. Furthermore, this statement was coupled with an attitude of negative reaction from the Joker.

Table 5.15 The Joker’s coupling of attitudes of appreciation and judgements of social sanction

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
42	Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility,	The Joker	Inmates	+ve Reaction: Quality	
42	Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility,	The Joker	Blackgate Correctional Facility	+ve Composition: Complexity	
42	Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility,	The Joker	Blackgate Correctional Facility		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford
60	Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak.	The Joker	The hero speak	+ve Valuation: Importance	
60	Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak.	The Joker	Batman		+ve Propriety: Morality: Afford
60	Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak.	The Joker	The Joker		-ve Reaction: Quality: Afford

5.10 Language evaluative meaning summary

In summary, Batman’s language evaluative meanings included one inscribed judgement of social esteem, 17 invoked evaluative meanings comprising three affective meanings, 11 judgements of social esteem and three attitudes of appreciation. Batman coupled invoked judgements of capacity and insecurity, invoked judgements of tenacity, physical and mental capacity, and inscribed and invoked judgements of social esteem. The Commissioner’s language evaluative meanings included 10 inscribed language evaluative meanings, including five judgements of social esteem, two judgements of social sanction and three attitudes of appreciation; and seven invoked evaluative meanings, including two attitudes of affect, four judgements of social esteem and one attitude of appreciation. The Commissioner coupled inscribed and invoked attitudes of social esteem and appreciation. The Guard’s language evaluative meanings included three inscribed evaluative meanings, one attitude of affect and two attitudes of appreciation; and four invoked evaluative meanings, including two attitudes of affect, one judgement of social esteem and one judgement of social sanction. The Guard coupled inscribed and invoked attitudes of affect, appreciation and judgements of social esteem and sanction. Overall, the protagonist characters communicated eight affective inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings. Six of these meanings focused on insecurity indicating the protagonist characters’ concern regarding the easy surrender of the Joker. Twenty-two inscribed and invoked judgements of social esteem were communicated by the

protagonist characters, indicating their struggle with the super villains. The protagonists inscribed and invoked a total of three judgements of social sanction that appraised the impropriety of the protagonist characters. Nine inscribed and invoked assessments of appreciation were made by the protagonist characters. The evaluative meanings about the protagonist characters inferred a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The Commissioner and the Guard upheld a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) in Chapter One. It can be inferred that Batman did not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to his role as a vigilante. The evaluative meanings about the Commissioner and Batman inferred a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) regarding their alliance in fighting the super-criminals.

Harley Quinn's language evaluative meanings included one invoked attitude of appreciation. Harley Quinn did not couple any evaluative meanings during the scene. The Joker's language evaluative meanings included 13 inscribed attitudes, four attitudes of affect, two judgements of social esteem, one judgement of social sanction and six attitudes of appreciation. The Joker invoked 35 evaluative meanings, including nine affective attitudes, 18 judgements of social esteem, seven judgements of social sanction and one attitude of appreciation. The Joker coupled invoked judgements of social esteem, sanction and affect, and invoked judgements of social esteem and sanction. Also, the Joker coupled inscribed and invoked attitudes of appreciation and judgements of impropriety; judgements of social esteem and sanction; attitudes of affect and judgements of social esteem; attitudes of affect and appreciation; and appreciation and judgements of social sanction. Overall, the antagonist characters communicated a total of 13 inscribed and invoked affective evaluative meanings. All the affective meanings were communicated by the Joker. Twenty judgements of social esteem were communicated by the Joker, which was indicative of his struggle to subvert the legitimacy of the protagonist characters. The Joker also expressed eight judgements of social sanction. Six of these were inscribed and invoked judgements of impropriety communicated by the Joker. Three assessments of appreciation were communicated by the Joker. The language evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters had diverging patterns of meaning. The inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings about the Joker and Harley Quinn inferred that the antagonist characters did not convey a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) discussed in Chapter One. Furthermore, it can be inferred that the Joker and Harley Quinn conveyed a moral value

of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) as antagonist characters who challenged the legitimacy of the protagonist character. A deeper understanding of how videogames communicate evaluative meanings about game characters requires the examination of how characters visually represent evaluative meanings during the game scene.

5.11 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning

The frequency of the different types of visual evaluative meaning about the characters from the Joker's escape scene is represented in Table 5.16. How the frequency of the different types of visual evaluative meaning about the characters varied within and between the characters during the scene is now reported. A total of 40 visual evaluative meanings was identified. Twenty-four related to Batman, 12 related to the Joker, two related to the Guard and two related to Harley Quinn.

Table 5.16 Visual evaluative meanings represented in the Joker’s Escape

Visual Attitude	Character					Grand Total
	Asylum inmates	Batman	The Guard	Harley Quinn	The Joker	
Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Afforded					1	1
Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Provoke					3	3
Affect: +ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Provoke					2	2
Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flags		1				1
Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Flag		1				1
Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Provoke		1				1
Affect: +ve Security: Trust: Afford			2			2
Judgements of social esteem						
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke		16		2	1	19
Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Flag					1	1
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke	6	18			4	27
Grand Total	6	37	2	2	12	59

5.11.1 Batman

The qualitative visual evaluative meanings about characters from the game scene are now reported. The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving Batman have been represented in Table 1 of visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). An affective attitude of security flagging Batman’s confidence is denoted in Image 2 representing Batman and the Arkham guards escorting the Joker into the Intensive Treatment Facility. The image was coded as flagged as the attitude of confidence was created through the ideational representation of security depicted by the guards and Batman. Therefore, the viewer and the game designer had a shared responsibility to invoke this attitude. Another affective attitude of security provoking Batman’s confidence is depicted in Image 10 where an Arkham security Guard and a doctor talked with Batman and the Commissioner. A provoking coding was

assigned as the context of confidence had already been established by the game designer and therefore, players could draw on some of their prior knowledge. One affective attitude of insecurity flagging Batman's disquiet is depicted in Image 35a as he prepared to fight the asylum inmates. A flagged coding was assigned as players were required to draw on their prior knowledge to invoke the attitude of disquiet.

Thirty-four visual judgements of social esteem concerning Batman's mental and physical capacity were identified during the game scene. A full list of the visual judgements is presented in Table 1 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Sixteen of these 34 judgements were coded as provoked judgements of mental capacity. Some examples of the provoked judgements of mental capacity included Image 20 depicting Batman watching the Joker choke the security guard, Image 35i depicting Batman looking at the inmates after he has finished fighting and Image 35l depicted Batman looking towards a television screen and advising the Commissioner that he would find a way out of the holding cells. A provoked code was assigned to all the visual judgements of mental capacity as the images depicted Batman looking, which indicated his visual mental perception of the events. Five of the 34 visual judgements of social esteem identified in the game scene provoked a judgement of Batman's physical strength. Some examples of the provoked judgements of capacity concerning Batman's physical strength were Images 22 and 30, which depict Batman smashing and jumping through a glass window in pursuit of the Joker, and Images 35b, 35c and 35d, which depicted Batman fighting the inmates. A provoked code was assigned to all the visual judgements of physical capacity because the images represented Batman's physical strength in fighting the super-criminals, and players were required to draw on some of their prior knowledge of Batman. In summary, the visual evaluative meanings about Batman represented security and positive judgements of his perception of the game world and his physical capacity to deal with the super-criminals. The visual evaluative meanings were indicative of Batman's struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative position over the super-criminals. From the visual evaluative meanings about Batman, it can be inferred that he conveyed a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but not a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One. The inscribed evaluative meanings of the Commissioner and the Guard legitimised Batman's contest with the super-criminals, and indicated this as a naturalised position for Batman within the game.

5.11.2 The Guard

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving the Guard are represented in Table 2 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The Guard was depicted with two afforded visual affective attitudes of security. Examples included Image 9, which depicts the security Guard waiting with the Asylum Doctor as the Joker was escorted towards the Intensive Treatment Facility, and Image 11, in which the Guard was talking to Batman and the Commissioner. The visual attitude was represented through ideational means and required players to draw on their prior game knowledge to make the attitudinal response. Therefore, the visual evaluative meanings about the Guard represented security regarding the management of the super-criminals. From the visual evaluative meanings about the Guard, it can be inferred that he conveyed a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his role involving security at the asylum.

5.11.3 Harley Quinn

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving Harley Quinn are represented in Table 3 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Harley Quinn is depicted with two provoked judgements of mental capacity during the game scene. For example, Image 8 depicts Harley Quinn looking upon Batman and the Commissioner, and Image 27 represents Harley Quinn looking at the Joker to let him inside the Intensive Treatment Facility. A provoked coding was assigned to all the visual judgements of mental capacity as the image depicts Harley looking, which indicated her visual mental perception of the events and required players to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the game to invoke the attitudinal response. Harley Quinn's visual evaluative meaning implied her capacity and involvement in the Joker's plan to challenge the evaluative position of the protagonist characters of Batman and the Guard. From Harley Quinn's visual evaluative meanings it can be inferred that she conveyed a moral value of collaboration with the Joker (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014).

5.11.4 Asylum inmates

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving the inmates were represented in Table 5 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Five visual judgements of

capacity concerning the inmates' capacity were provoked during the scene. Images 35b, 35c, 35d, 35g and 35h depict the inmates fighting Batman. The images were classified as provoking judgements of capacity concerning the Hitmen's strength as the game designers enabled the inmates to punch, kick and chase after Batman, while players have to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the game's storyline to realise the attitudinal response. In summary, the visual evaluative meanings about the inmates implied their physical capacity to implement the Joker's plan's for challenging the evaluative position of Batman. For the visual evaluative meanings about the inmates, it can be inferred that they conveyed a moral value of collaboration with the Joker (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014).

5.11.5 The Joker

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving the Joker were represented in Table 4 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Twelve evaluative meanings about the Joker were identified during the game scene. Six of the 12 evaluative meanings were coded as depictions of affect. Three visual evaluative meanings of provoking happiness depicting the Joker's joy were identified; for example, Image 14 depicts the Joker's joy when talking with Batman and being escorted into the holding cells of the Intensive Treatment Facility. Also, Images 32 and 33 depict the Joker's joy at pronouncing that Batman fell for his trap after escaping. The images have been coded as provoked as the game designer drew Joker with a large red smile on his face, and players were required to draw on some of their prior knowledge about the Joker to infer the evaluative meaning. Another affective attitude of afforded happiness was identified in Image 35b, which depicts Batman fighting inmates, and the Joker was using exaggerated body language as he watched the fight. The image has been described as afforded as players were required to draw on their prior knowledge of the Joker to be able to invoke this attitudinal response. Two attitudes of provoked satisfaction about the Joker were identified in the game scene; for example, Image 25 depicts the Joker with a large smile leaning over a deceased Guard, and Image 29 depicts the Joker boasting after he had escaped, and the asylum security door was unlocked. The images have been coded as provoked as the game designer provided contextual information about the Joker through his smile and boasting body language, and players were required to use some prior knowledge of the Joker to make the attitudinal connection.







Seven of the 12 evaluative meanings were coded as depictions of judgements of social esteem. Four judgements of capacity concerning the Joker's physical strength were identified; examples included Image 19, which depicted the Joker head butting the Guard; Images 21 and








23 depicted the Joker choking the security Guard; and Image 24 depicted the Joker kicking the doctor. These images have been described as provoking as the game designer represented the Joker's capacity, and players were required to draw on some of their prior knowledge to invoke this judgement. One judgement of provoked mental capacity concerning the Joker was identified; for example, Image 26 depicted the Joker looking and pointing behind him as Harley Quinn opened the security door to let him inside the Intensive Treatment Facility. The image has been classified as provoking a visual judgement of mental capacity, with the Joker depicted looking towards the security door, which indicated his visual mental perception and required players to use some of their prior knowledge to make the evaluative response. One negative judgement of the Joker's capacity concerning his physical weakness was flagged in Image 6, with the Joker depicted as being restrained in a vertical stretcher and being wheeled into the Intensive Treatment Facility while the Commission is talking to Batman. The image has been coded as flagged as a shared responsibility between the game designer and players were required to make the judgement of physical weakness concerning the Joker. To conclude, the visual evaluative meanings about the Joker further indicated a divergent evaluative position that challenged the legitimacy of Batman and the other protagonist characters through utilising affective attitudes of happiness and satisfaction and judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength, physical weakness and mental capacity. From the evaluative meanings about the Joker, it can be inferred that he did not convey a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or hold to a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One.

5.12 Visual evaluative meaning coupling




A deeper assessment of the frequency of the evaluative meanings communicated in the scene can be understood by examining the coupling of visual evaluative meanings about the characters communicated in the game scene. There were two kinds of coupling of visual evaluative meanings about the characters occurring during the game scene. First, there was a coupling between judgement of Batman's physical strength and his mental capacity during the game scene, as represented in Table 5.17. For example, Image 22 depicted Batman punching the glass window to pursue the Joker. There was a coupling between the visual judgement of Batman's physical strength and his mental capacity as he looked at the Joker through the glass. Images 35f, 35i, 35j, 35k, 35l, 35m, 35n, 35o, 37a, 37b and 37c also represented a coupling between Batman's physical capacity to explore the simulated environment of the game and his perception of the simulated game world.

Table 5.17 Coupling of Batman's visual judgements of capacity during the Joker's Escape

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
26 Hurry! 27 We're losing him, Doc		22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
26 Hurry! 27 We're losing him, Doc.		22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
41 I'm just warning you up, Bats. 42 Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility, 43 with a combined sentence of 752 years. Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding, 44 It's round 2!		35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
41 I'm just warning you up, Bats. 42 Fresh from Blackgate Correctional Facility, 43 with a combined sentence of 752 years. Ding, Ding, Ding, Ding, 44 It's round 2!		35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
45 Sorry. Bats, gotta run. 46 I've got places to go, people to slay.		35i Batman finishing the fight with the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
45 Sorry. Bats, gotta run. 46 I've got places to go, people to slay.		35i Batman finishing the fight with the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
47 The system's jammed! 48 We're stuck in here. 49 Joker's in full control of the security gates.		35k The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker is in control of the asylum and they are trapped.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
47 The system's jammed! 48 We're stuck in here. 49 Joker's in full control of the security gates.		35k The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker is in control of the asylum and they are trapped.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
50 I'll find a way out! 51 Gordon, try and contact the Warden. 52 Let him know what's happened. 53 I'll be back.		35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he is finding a way out of the holding cells room.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
50 I'll find a way out! 51 Gordon, try and contact the Warden. 52 Let him know what's happened. 53 I'll be back.		35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he is finding a way out of the holding cells room.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
54 Don't make promises you can't keep, Bats.		35m The Joker counselling Batman for making promises that he may not be able to keep. The Joker advises Batman that he is not be going anywhere in the asylum where the Joker does not want him to go.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
54 Don't make promises you can't keep, Bats.		35m The Joker counselling Batman for making promises that he may not be able to keep. The Joker advises Batman that he is not be going anywhere in the asylum where the	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke



Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		Joker does not want him to go.		
55 I'm in control of the asylum. 56 You're not going anywhere 57 I don't want you to. 58 Understand?		35n Batman advising the Joker that he won't let him run away.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
55 I'm in control of the asylum. 56 You're not going anywhere 57 I don't want you to. 58 Understand?		35n Batman advising the Joker that he won't let him run away.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
59 If you think I'll let you run... 60 Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak. 61 I'm getting bored of watching you. 62 Why don't you just come find me...?		35o The Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
59 If you think I'll let you run... 60 Blah, Blah, Blah. Always with the hero speak. 61 I'm getting bored of watching you. 62 Why don't you just come find me...?		35o The Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
63 You know it's a trap. 64 Of course it is.		37a The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker's invitation is a trap.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
63 You know it's a trap. 64 Of course it is.		37a The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker's invitation is a trap.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		37b Commissioner Gordan's character biography being unlocked.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental







Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
				capacity: Provoke
		37b Commissioner Gordan's character biography being unlocked.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

Second, there was a coupling between two affective attitudes and judgements of physical strength among Batman, the inmates and the Joker, as represented in Table 5.18. Image 35a depicts Batman and the inmates at the beginning of the fight. There is a coupling between a flagged visual affective attitude of insecurity concerning Batman with a judgement of capacity concerning the physical strength of the inmates. Image 35b depicts Batman and the inmates fighting. The image coupled visual judgements of Batman and the inmates' physical capacity to fight each other with an affective attitude of happiness expressed by the Joker's body language while watching the fight. Images 35c, 35d, 35g and 35h depict the coupling between judgements of Batman's and the inmates' physical capacity while they are fighting. The game scene can also be analysed for similar depicted visual evaluative meanings between the characters.

Table 5.18 Coupling of visual affect and judgements of physical strength during the Joker's Escape

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
35 Ladies and maniacs, I apologise 36 for this interruption to your regular entertainment.		35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flags

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
<p>35 Ladies and maniacs, I apologise</p> <p>36 for this interruption to your regular entertainment.</p>		35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	The asylum inmates	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>
<p>37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room</p> <p>38 and then watch cartoons,</p> <p>39 but then... well... you know</p> <p>40 how I do love a captive audience.</p>		35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	Batman	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>
<p>37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room</p> <p>38 and then watch cartoons,</p> <p>39 but then... well... you know</p> <p>40 how I do love a captive audience.</p>		35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	The asylum inmates	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>
<p>37 Up until a few seconds ago, I was going to kill everyone in the room</p> <p>38 and then watch cartoons,</p> <p>39 but then... well... you know</p> <p>40 how I do love a captive audience.</p>		35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	The Joker	<p>Affect: +ve</p> <p>Happiness: Joy: Afforded</p>
		35c Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>
		35c Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	The asylum inmates	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		35d Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35d Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	The asylum inmates	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35g Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35g Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	The asylum inmates	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35h Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		35h Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	The asylum inmates	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

5.13 Visual evaluative meaning similarities

The characters also depicted similar judgements of social esteem during the game scene. Batman, the inmates and the Joker all depicted provoked judgements of physical strength, with Batman representing 18, the inmates five and the Joker depicting four. Also, Batman, Harley Quinn and the Joker all depicted judgements of mental capacity during the scene, with Batman representing 16, Harley Quinn two and the Joker one. Batman represented 34 of the 47 visual judgements of social esteem during the scene. In comparison, the antagonist characters represented 13 of the 47 visual judgements of social esteem. The higher

frequency of Batman's judgements of social esteem was indicative of how he was asserting the legitimacy of this role as a superhero over the villains during the game scene.

5.14 Visual evaluative meaning summary

In summary, Batman represented visual evaluative meanings of security and positive judgements of his capacity to fight the super-villains. Batman represented a coupling of judgements of physical strength and mental capacity. The Joker represented visual evaluative meanings of affect concerning happiness and satisfaction and judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength, physical weakness and mental capacity. Harley Quinn depicted visual evaluative meanings provoking judgements of mental capacity, indicating her evaluative position of challenging the protagonist characters. The Guard represented visual evaluative meanings of affective security. The inmates represented visual judgements of capacity concerning their physical strength to chase, punch and kick Batman. The Joker inmates and Batman depicted a coupling of physical strength and affective happiness concerning joy during the scene. Batman represented a large frequency of judgements of social esteem during the scene, which was indicative of him struggling to assert his legitimacy over the antagonist characters. Also, the larger frequency of Batman's judgements of mental capacity was indicative of how players were positioned to perceive the simulated game world. Therefore, further examination of between players and game character affiliations is required. It can be inferred that the evaluative meanings of the protagonist characters, Batman and the Guard, were underpinned by a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), although Batman differed from the Guard, as Batman did not commit to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

5.15 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation

How players were positioned to perceive the simulated game world as or along with a character by using camera angles is now examined. The data to investigate the perception of a character through the use of focalisation and interactive meanings resources were produced by the process described in Chapter Four. The extent to which *Arkham Asylum* constructed player affiliation with different characters in the Joker's escape scene is represented in Table 5.19. During the game scene, players were positioned as or along with the characters 19 times. Players were positioned to perceive the game world along with Batman 16 times and the Joker once. Players were positioned as Harley Quinn twice during the game scene.

Table 5.19 Player affiliation with characters during the Joker’s Escape


Focalisation and Interactive Meaning	Characters			Grand Total
	Batman	Harley Quinn	Joker	
Along with character	16		1	17
Direct	1			1
Demand	1			1
Social	1			1
Involvement	1			1
Equality	1			1
Observe	15		1	16
Offer	15		1	16
Social	15		1	16
Detachment	8			8
Equality	2			2
Representation power	5			5
Viewer power	1			1
Involvement	7		1	8
Equality	3		1	4
Representation power	4			4
As character		2		2
Observe		2		2
Offer		2		2
Social		2		2
Involvement		2		2
Equality		2		2
Grand Total	16	2	1	19

5.15.1 Batman

Players were affiliated to perceive the game world along with Batman 16 times during the game scene, as represented in Table 1 of the affiliation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The affiliation was designed by coupling focalisation and interactive meaning resources, which are now reported. Image 4 depicts the Commissioner looking at Batman as the characters talked, as represented in Table 5.20. Players are affiliated to see along with Batman by the game camera being placed over Batman’s right shoulder, enabling players to perceive the game world with him. A medium camera angle was used to


create a social connection between players and Batman. Also, a frontal and eye-level angle was used to create an involved and equal relationship between players and Batman.


Table 5.20 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Image 4

Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	4 Commissioner talking to Batman.	Batman	Direct	Along with character	Demand	Social	Involvement	Equality

Images 35f and 35j of Table 5.21 affiliate players to see along with Batman by placing the game camera behind Batman, enabling players to perceive the game world with him. Image 35f depicts the Joker watching Batman from a television screen and announcing that he would release a second round of inmates to fight Batman. Image 35j represents Batman receiving experience points after fighting the second round of inmates. These images utilise a medium camera frame to create a social connection between players and Batman. An oblique eye-level camera angle has created a detached but equal relationship between players and Batman in the simulated game world. Table 5.21 represents Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 35f and 35j.

Table 5.21 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 35f and 35j

Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Equality

	<p>of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.</p> <p>35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight.</p>	<p>Batman</p>	<p>Observe</p>	<p>Along with character</p> <p>The player is still to move the game camera around behind the avatar.</p>	<p>Offer</p>	<p>Social</p>	<p>Detachment</p>	<p>Equality</p>
---	--	---------------	----------------	--	--------------	---------------	-------------------	-----------------

Images 35l, 35n, 37a, 37b and 37c of Table 5.22 affiliate players to see along with Batman by placing the game camera behind Batman, enabling players to perceive the game world with him. Image 35l represents Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells. Image 35n depicts Batman advising the Joker that he won't let the Joker run away. Image 37a depicts the Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker's invitation to follow him is a trap. Image 37b represents the game reward of unlocking the Commissioner's biography. Image 37c depicts Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker. These images utilise a medium camera frame to create a social connection between players and Batman. Also, a low-level angle represents Batman in a position of power in the game world. However, using an oblique camera angle creates a sense of detachment between Batman in the simulated world and the players. Table 5.22 represents Batman's coupling of affiliation resources Images 35l, 35n, 37a, 37b and 37c.

Table 5.22 Batman's coupling of affiliation resources Images 35l, 35n, 37a, 37b and 37c

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
-------	--------------------	-------------------------	-------------	-----------	---------	-----------------	------------------	----------------





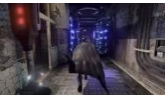

	35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Representation power
	35n Batman advising the Joker that he won't let him run away.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Representation power
	37a The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker's invitation is a trap.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Representation power
	37b Commissioner Gordan's character biography being unlocked.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Representation power
	37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Representation power

Image 35i of Table 5.23 affiliates players to see along with Batman, with the game camera placed behind him to enable players to perceive the world with Batman. The image depicts Batman as he finishes fighting the inmates. The image uses a medium camera frame with a high angle to create a social connection in which players have a position of power. Also, an oblique camera angle has been utilised to create a detachment between Batman in the simulated world and players.



Table 5.23 Batman's coupling of affiliation resources Images 35i

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
-------	--------------------	-------------------------	-------------	-----------	---------	-----------------	------------------	----------------

	35i Batman finishing the fight with the Blackgate prisoners.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Detachment	Viewer power
---	--	--------	---------	----------------------	-------	--------	------------	--------------

Images 20, 22 and 34 of Table 5.24 also affiliate players to see along with Batman by positioning the camera behind Batman to enable players to perceive the world with Batman. Image 20 depicts Batman watching the Joker choke the Guard. Image 22 represents Batman punching the glass window to pursue the Joker. Image 34 depicts Batman preparing to fight the inmates. The images use medium camera frames to create a social connection between Batman and players. A frontal, eye-level camera angle has been used to create an involved and equal relationship between players and Batman.

Table 5.24 Batman’s coupling of affiliation resources Images 20, 22 and 34

Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	20 Batman watching the Joker choke the security guard.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality



34 Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.

Batman

Observe

Along with character

Offer

Social

Involvement

Equality

Images 31, 35k, 35m and 35o affiliate the players to see along with Batman by placing the camera behind Batman, as represented in Table 5.25. This camera placement enables players to perceive the game world along with Batman. Image 31 represents Batman landing after jumping through the window to pursue the Joker. Image 35k depicts the Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker is in control of the asylum and they are trapped. Image 35m portrays the Joker counselling Batman for making promises that he may not be able to keep. Image 35o depicts the Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum. All the images utilise a medium camera frame to create a social connection between Batman and players. A frontal, low-level camera angle has been used to involve players in Batman's world and to present Batman as having a position of power in the simulated game world. The high frequency with which players are positioned as or along with Batman in the simulated game world is indicative of how the game affiliates players with the communicated evaluative meanings about Batman. The ubiquitous frequency of players' alignment with Batman further establishes his naturalised and legitimate evaluative positions within the *Arkham Asylum* videogame.

Table 5.25 Batman's coupling of affiliation resources Images 31, 35k, 35m and 35o






Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	31 Batman landing after jumping through the window.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Representation power

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	35k The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker is in control of the asylum and they are trapped.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Representation power
	35m The Joker counselling Batman for making promises that he may not be able to keep. The Joker advises Batman that he will not be going anywhere in the asylum where the Joker does not want him to go.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Representation power
	35o The Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum.	Batman	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Representation power

5.15.2 The Joker

Players are affiliated to perceive the game world along with the Joker once during the game scene, as represented in Table 3 of the affiliation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The affiliation was designed by coupling focalisation and interactive meaning resources, as represented in Table 5.26. Image 26 depicts the Joker calling out to Harley Quinn, indicating for her to open the security door to let him inside the Intensive Treatment Facility. A medium camera frame was used to create a social connection between the player and the Joker. Also, a frontal, eye-level angle was used to create an involved equal relationship between the players and the Joker. The other antagonist characters with whom players were positioned was Harley Quinn.

Table 5.26 Joker’s coupling of affiliation resources Image 26



Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	26 The Joker calling out to Harley Quinn, indicating for her to open the security door to let him inside the Intensive Treatment Facility.	Joker	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

5.15.3 Harley Quinn

Players were affiliated to perceive the game world along with Harley Quinn twice during the game scene, as represented in Table 2 of the affiliation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The affiliation was designed by coupling focalisation and interactive meaning resources, as represented in Table 5.27. Images 8 and 27 affiliate players as Harley Quinn. This affiliation was achieved in Image 8 by depicting Harley Quinn’s legs being raised and stretched out on a desk. Her body, arms and face were left out of the frame. However, the camera frame is positioned as if her eyes are looking down at a television on a desk. The television has security camera footage of Batman and the Commissioner. Image 27 depicts Harley Quinn’s arm using the asylum’s controls to let the Joker into the Intensive Treatment Facility. The Joker’s face is depicted on security footage beside the controls. Once again, her body and head are not depicted, and the camera is framed as if

Harley is looking down at the controls. Both images use a medium camera frame to create a social connection between players and Harley. A frontal, eye-level angle was used to create an involved equal relationship between players and Harley. The low frequency with which players are positioned as or along with the antagonist characters of the Joker and Harley Quinn was indicative of how players were rarely affiliated with the antagonist characters. Additionally, the rare frequency of players' alignment with the Joker or Harley Quinn represented the antagonist characters as divergent and illegitimate evaluative positions within the game *Arkham Asylum*. By contrast, the high frequency of language evaluative meanings about the antagonist characters was indicative of the contested subversion of Batman's legitimised evaluative position in the game.

Table 5.27 Harley Quinn coupling of affiliation resources Images 8 and 27

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	8 Harley Quinn looking upon Batman and the Commissioner as the Joker is escorted.	Harley Quinn	Observe	As character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	27 Harley Quinn letting the Joker inside the Intensive Treatment Facility.	Harley Quinn	Observe	As character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

5.16 Player affiliation similarities

During the Joker's escape, players were affiliated along with Batman 16 times and the Joker once. Players were also affiliated with Harley Quinn twice. It can be concluded that players were predominantly affiliated with Batman during the scene and not with the antagonist characters of the Joker and Harley Quinn. Despite the prominent affiliation with Batman, there were similarities between Batman and the Joker's interactive meaning depictions. Both characters were depicted with medium camera frames to create a social connection with players. Batman is represented with 15 medium frames and the Joker one. Batman and the Joker also similarly use frontal camera angles to involve players, with Batman depicting seven and the Joker depicting one. Both characters also create an equal power relationship with players through eye-level camera angles, with Batman portraying three and the Joker one. Also, most images in which players are affiliated with Batman and the Joker do not depict eye contact and are therefore described as observed images.

5.17 Player affiliation summary

In summary, players are affiliated as or along with both protagonist and antagonist characters in the simulated game world. Players are positioned as or along with Batman 16 times, Harley Quinn twice and the Joker once during the game scene. The high frequency in which players are affiliated with Batman further establishes evidence of how the game naturalises and legitimatises the evaluative meanings communicated about Batman. The low frequency with which players are affiliated as or along with the antagonist characters of the Joker and Harley Quinn further establishes evidence of how the game represents antagonist characters with divergent and illegitimate evaluative positions within the game world. Alternatively, the higher frequency of communicated language evaluative meanings about the antagonist characters is indicative of the contested subversion of Batman's legitimised visual evaluative position in the game world. A deeper understanding of how *Arkham Asylum* communicates evaluative meanings about characters requires the ludic operations of the protagonist and antagonist characters to be examined.

5.18 Research Sub-Question Three: Ludic operations

Next, the results from the analysis of the ludic operations of the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework are reported. First, the results of the playable characters' interactivity

and initiated actions are reported in Section 5.19. Second, the results of the non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions are reported in Section 5.21.

5.19 Playable characters

The variation on the ludic operations within and between playable characters in the Joker Escape scene is represented in Table 5.28. The data investigating the ludic operations about characters utilised the interactivity, character, ludic action system networks and visual evaluative meaning resources. The frequency of the interactivity and initiated actions of the playable characters occurring in the scenes is now described. *Arkham Asylum* has two playable characters, Batman and the Joker. Batman and the Joker cannot be played together simultaneously. Batman is the only playable character during the Joker's escape scene. Batman has instantiated 37 interactive and initiated actions, while the Joker has represented 26.

Table 5.28 Playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions – the Joker's Escape

Interactivity and initiated actions	Playable Characters		
	Batman	The Joker	Grand Total
Emergent Narrative	18	5	23
Actum	18		18
Factum		5	5
Scripted	19	21	40
Factum	19	21	40
Grand Total	37	26	63

5.20 Scripted factum interactions

The scripted factum interactions of Batman are reported in Section 5.20.1. The Joker's scripted factum interactions are described in Section 5.20.2. Batman's emergent narrative and actum interactions are examined in Section 5.20.3. Section 5.20.4 discusses Batman's actum fighting interactions, and Batman's actum exploring interactions are reported in Section 5.20.5. The Joker's emergent narrative factum interactions are discussed in Section 5.20.6.

5.20.1 Batman

The scene can be divided into two interactive segments: the *scripted* game segment; and the *emergent narrative* segment. The *scripted* segment is realised by a film like cut scene coupled with factum interactions, which are actions triggered by the game’s programming. During the *scripted* segments, the players are not afforded interactivity with the simulated game environment. Batman is identified as having 19 factum interactions during the *scripted* segment, as represented in Table 1 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.29 represents some examples of factum interactions involving Batman. Image 2 depicts Batman escorting the Joker into the Intensive Treatment Facility, and flags an evaluative meaning of security concerning Batman’s confidence. Image 7 portrays Batman talking with the Commissioner. Image 14 represents the Joker talking to Batman. Image 22 depicts Batman punching the glass window to pursue the Joker. Image 22 provokes a judgement of capacity concerning Batman’s physical strength and mental capacity. All the actions represented by Batman during these images are factum interactions initiated by the game’s programming during the *scripted* film-like segment of the game scene.

Table 5.29 Batman’s scripted factum interactions -the Joker’s Escape








Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	2 Batman and the asylum Guards escorting the Joker into the Intensive Treatment Facility. The Joker is restrained in a vertical stretcher.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman	Factum	Affect: +ve Security: Confidence: Flag
	7 The Commissioner talking to Batman.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman	Factum	
	14 The Joker talking to Batman as he is escorted into the holding cells in the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman	Factum	
	22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
					capacity: Provoke

5.20.2 The Joker

During the *scripted* segment, the Joker is identified as having 21 factum interactions, as represented Table 2 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.30 represents some examples of factum interactions involving the Joker. Image 6 depicts the Joker being escorted by guards as Batman talks with the Commissioner. The image flags the Joker with a judgement of negative capacity concerning physical weakness. Image 14 portrays the Joker talking with Batman as he is escorted through the corridor before the Intensive Treatment Facility and provokes the Joker’s happiness. Image 19 provokes a judgement of capacity concerning the Joker’s physical strength as he head butts the security Guards before escaping. Image 23 also depicts a positive judgement of the Joker’s physical strength when choking the Guard. Image 25 represents the Joker standing over the Guard’s body, and provokes an affective attitude of satisfaction concerning his pleasure. Images 29 and 33 represent the Joker boasting after he has escaped. Image 29 provokes an affective attitude of satisfaction, while Image 33 depicts the Joker’s happiness. The actions represented by the Joker during these images are a part of the *scripted* film like segment, which is initiated by the game's programming.

Table 5.30 The Joker’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape







Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	6 The Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Flag
	14 The Joker talking to Batman as he is escorted into the holding cells in the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Provoke
	19 The Joker head butting the security Guard in the holding cells of the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	23 The Joker choking the security Guard.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	25 The Joker leaning over the Guard stating that the choke is on him.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Affect: +ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Provoke
	29 The Joker boasting as the security door is unlocked.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Affect: +ve Satisfaction: Pleasure: Provoke
	33 The Joker welcoming Batman to the Madhouse, implying the asylum.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker	Factum	Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Provoke

5.20.3 Batman’s emergent narrative actum interactions

The *emergent narrative* segment is realised by players being afforded full interactivity within the game environment. During the game scene, Batman is identified as having 18 actum interactions, as represented in Table 1 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.31 represents some examples of actum

interactions involving Batman. Image 35a depicts Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate inmates. Image 35d represents Batman fighting the inmates. 35f portrays the Joker on a television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight with Batman. The Joker then releases more inmates for Batman to fight. Image 35h depicts Batman fighting the second round of inmates. Image 35l represents Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells. Image 37 depicts Batman running in pursuit of the Joker. The actions represented by Batman during these images are part of the actum gameplay within the *emergent narrative* segment. Actum interactions are triggered by a player’s input, such as pressing buttons on the controller. The different actum interactions triggered by players during the *emergent narrative* segment are now examined.

Table 5.31 Batman’s emergent narrative actum interactions – the Joker’s Escape

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Initiated Action
	35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum
	35d Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum
	35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum
	35h Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum
	35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum
	37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Actum

5.20.4 Batman’s actum fighting interactions

Batman represented 18 actum interactions triggered by the players during the *emergent narrative* segment. The actum interactions involved Batman fighting the inmates or exploring the simulated environment. Table 5.32 represents the actum interactions afforded to

players while Batman is fighting the inmates. Players can press buttons on the control to instruct Batman to carry out particular actions during the fight. Some examples of the buttons that players can press include pressing the square button to strike and the triangle button to counter or silently to take down inmates. The circle button enables Batman to stun inmates with his cape. During the fight segment, players can also press the cross button to instruct Batman to run, climb, glide or use an object. Batman can be moved around the simulated environment by players pressing the left gear stick on the controller. The game camera can be rotated around the Batman avatar by pressing the right gear stick on the controller. Image 35a depicts Batman preparing to fight the inmates, and flags an affective attitude of insecurity concerning Batman's disquiet. Images 35d and 35h depict Batman fighting the inmates and provoke a positive judgement of Batman's physical strength. Batman's actum fighting interactions represent his use of brute force to deal with the antagonist characters. Further actum interactions involve players instructing Batman to explore the simulated game environment.

Table 5.32 Batman’s emergent narrative – actum fighting interactions – the Joker’s Escape




Image	Verbal Description	Fighting	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	<p>Fighting</p> <p>Square – <i>strike</i></p> <p>Triangle - <i>counter/silent takedown</i></p> <p>Circle fighting - <i>cape stun</i></p> <p>Cross and square - <i>throw [requires upgrade]</i></p> <p>Circle and triangle – <i>takedown [requires upgrade]</i></p> <p>Cross - <i>redirect when pressing towards an enemy</i></p> <p>R2 and triangle - <i>ground takedown [next to an enemy]</i></p> <p>L2 tap combat - <i>quick batarang</i></p> <p>R2 R2 - <i>quick batclaw [requires upgrade]</i></p>	<p>Cross – run/climb/glide/use</p> <p>Not utilised movement buttons</p>	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	<p>Affect: -ve</p> <p>Security: Disquiet: Flags</p>
	35d Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	<p>Fighting</p> <p>Square – <i>strike</i></p> <p>Triangle - <i>counter/silent takedown</i></p> <p>Circle fighting - <i>cape stun</i></p> <p>Cross and square - <i>throw [requires upgrade]</i></p> <p>Circle and triangle – <i>takedown [requires upgrade]</i></p> <p>Cross Cross - <i>redirect when pressing towards an enemy</i></p>	<p>Cross – run/climb/glide/use</p> <p>Not utilised movement buttons</p>	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>

Image	Verbal Description	Fighting	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		R2 and triangle - <i>ground takedown [next to an enemy]</i> L2 tap combat - <i>quick batarang</i> R2 R2 - <i>quick batclaw [requires upgrade]</i>				
	35h Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	Fighting Square – <i>strike</i> Triangle - <i>counter/silent takedown</i> Circle fighting - <i>cape stun</i> Cross and square - <i>throw [requires upgrade]</i> Circle and triangle – <i>takedown [requires upgrade]</i> Cross Cross - <i>redirect when pressing towards an enemy</i> R2 and triangle - <i>ground takedown [next to an enemy]</i> L2 tap combat - <i>quick batarang</i> R2 R2 - <i>quick batclaw [requires upgrade]</i>	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

5.20.5 Batman's actum exploring interactions

Players are also afforded actum interactions to instruct Batman to explore the simulated game environment. Table 5.33 represents a sample of the actum interactions afforded to players while instructing Batman to explore the simulated environment. Images 35f, 35l and 37c represent Batman exploring the simulated game environment after fighting the inmates and co-patterning with provoked positive judgements of physical strength and mental capacity. Image 35f represents the Joker on the television screen announcing that he will release a second round of inmates for Batman to fight. Images 35l and 37c represent Batman after fighting the second round of inmates. During all the images, players can instruct Batman to explore the simulated environment by tapping the L1 button on the controller to enable the detective mode, in which Batman can scan the environment for a possible way to escape through an air conditioner vent to chase after the Joker. L1 can also be pressed by players when Batman finds an Arkham symbol imprinted on a wall. Once the symbol is scanned, an event from the life of *Arkham Asylum's* founder is recounted. Players can also press the direction pad up, down, left or right to select a gadget from Batman's utility belt. During the Joker's escape scene, players have access only to batarangs (a throwing weapon shaped as a bat). Players can press the touchpad on the controller to view a map to help them to navigate the asylum. The actum interaction afforded to players enable them to explore the simulated game environment to complete tasks relevant to the game's narrative storyline. In summary, Batman's actum interactions during the *emergent narrative* segment enables players to instruct him to fight inmates and to explore the simulated game environment.

Table 5.33 Batman’s emergent narrative – actum exploring interactions – the Joker’s Escape



Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	<p>35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.</p>	<p>L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode</p> <p>L1 holding operating – environment scan = <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u></p> <p>Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget</p> <p>Touch pad button – map level up</p>	<p>Cross – run/climb/glide/use</p> <p>Not utilised movement buttons</p>	<p>Left stick - movement</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke</p>
	<p>35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.</p>	<p>L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode</p> <p>L1 holding operating – environment scan = <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u></p> <p>Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget</p> <p>Touch pad button – map level up</p>	<p>Cross – run/climb/glide/use</p> <p>Not utilised movement buttons</p>	<p>Left stick - movement</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>








Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room.	L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode L1 holding operating – environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u> Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget Touch pad button – map level up	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room.	L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode L1 holding operating – environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u> Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget Touch pad button – map level up	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode L1 holding operating –	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	37c Batman setting out in pursuit of the Joker.	<p>environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u></p> <p>Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget</p> <p>Touch pad button – map level up</p>	<p>Cross – run/climb/glide/use</p> <p>Not utilised movement buttons</p>	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>
		<p>L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode</p> <p>L1 holding operating – environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u></p> <p>Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget</p> <p>Touch pad button – map level up</p>				

5.20.6 The Joker’s emergent narrative factum interactions

During the *emergent narrative* segment of the game scene, the Joker was identified as having five factum interactions, as represented in Table 2 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.34 represents some examples of the Joker’s factum interactions during the segment. Image 35b depicts the Joker watching Batman fight the inmates from a television screen. The image of the Joker affords his happiness. Image 35m portrays the Joker counselling Batman for making promises from a television screen. Image 35o represents the Joker inviting Batman to come and find him in the asylum. The Joker is not playable during his escape scene and therefore his factum actions are generated by the videogame’s programming.

Table 5.34 The Joker’s emergent narrative - actum fighting interactions – the Joker’s Escape

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Joker	Factum	Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Afforded
	35m The Joker counselling Batman for making promises that he may not be able to keep. The Joker advises Batman that he will not be going anywhere in the asylum that the Joker does not want him to go.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Joker	Factum	
	35o The Joker asking Batman to come and find him in the asylum.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Joker	Factum	

5.21 Non-playable characters

The ludic operations about non-playable characters are now reported. Table 5.35 represents how the ludic operations about non-playable characters varied within and between the characters. The frequency of the interactivity and initiated actions of the non-playable characters occurring in the scenes is now reported. The Joker Escape scene has five non-

playable characters: the inmates, the Asylum Doctor, the Guard, the Commissioner and Harley Quinn. During the scene, the Commissioner represents 17 interactive and initiated actions, the Guard 15, the doctor eight, the inmates seven and Harley Quinn two.

Table 5.35 Non-playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions – the Joker’s Escape

Non-Playable Characters						
Interactivity and Initiated Actions	The Asylum Doctor	The Asylum Guard	Asylum Inmates	Commissioner Gordon	Harley Quinn	Grand Total
Emergent Narrative			6	5		11
Factum				5		5
Tactum			6			6
Scripted	8	15	1	12	2	38
Factum	8	15	1	12	2	38
Grand Total	8	15	7	17	2	49





5.22 Scripted factum interactions

The scripted factum interactions of the Commissioner are described in Section 5.22.1. Section 5.22.2 explains the scripted factum interactions of the Guard. Then, the Asylum Doctor’s scripted factum interactions are reported in Section 5.22.3. Next, the antagonist Harley Quinn’s scripted factum interactions are examined in Section 5.22.4.

5.22.1 The Commissioner

The Commissioner represented 17 interactive and initiated actions, as portrayed in Table 6 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.36 represents some examples of the *scripted* factum interactions involving the Commissioner. Image 1 depicts the Commissioner waiting at the entrance to the Intensive Treatment Facility. Image 7 portrays the Commissioner talking to Batman. Image 16 represents the Commissioner asking if Batman is okay. Image 17 represents Batman and the Commissioner watching the Joker being escorted by the security Guard and the doctor through the holding cells to the Intensive Treatment Facility. The Commissioner has not depicted any visual evaluative meaning in the images. All actions represented by the Commissioner in the images are initiated by the game’s programming and occur during the *scripted* game segment.






Table 5.36 The Commissioner’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	1 Commissioner Gordon waiting in the Intensive Treatment Facility	<i>Scripted</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	7 The Commissioner talking to Batman.	<i>Scripted</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	16 The Commissioner asking Batman if he is okay.	<i>Scripted</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	17 Batman and the Commissioner watching the Joker escorted by the security Guard and the doctor through the holding cells to the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	

5.22.2 The Guard

The Guard represents 15 interactive and initiated actions, as listed in Table 4 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.37 represents some examples of the *scripted* factum interactions involving the asylum Guard. Image 9 depicts the security Guard beginning to talk with the Commissioner and Batman. The image affords an evaluative meaning of security concerning the trust of the Guard. Image 19 represents the Joker head butting the guards. Image 21 and 23 depicts the Guard being strangled by the Joker. Image 25 portrays the Joker learning over the strangled Guard. All the images depicting the Guard’s actions are initiated by the game’s programming during the *scripted* game segment.


Table 5.37 The asylum guard’s scripted factum interactions



Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	9 An Arkham Asylum Guard and doctor waiting for the Joker. The Security Guard begins talking to Batman and the Commissioner.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Guard	Factum	Affect: +ve Security: Trust: Afford
	19 The Joker head butting the security Guard in the holding cells of the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Guard	Factum	
	21 The Joker choking the Asylum guard.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Guard	Factum	
	23 The Joker choking the security guard.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Guard	Factum	
	25 The Joker leaning over the Guard stating that the choke is on him.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Guard	Factum	

5.22.3 The Asylum Doctor

The Asylum Doctor represents eight interactive and initiated actions, as listed in Table 3 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.38 represents some examples of the *scripted* factum interactions involving the Asylum Doctor. Image 11 depicts the Doctor waiting as the Guard talks with Batman and the Commissioner. Image 23 represents the Doctor witnessing the Joker strangling the Guard. Image 23 depicts the Joker kicking the doctor. The images of the Doctor did not depict any evaluative meanings. All the discussed images are from the *scripted* game segment, and portray the actions by the Doctor that are initiated by the game’s programming.

Table 5.38 The Asylum Doctor’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape



Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	11 An Arkham security Guard and doctor talking to Batman and the Commissioner.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Doctor	Factum	

	23 The Joker choking the security guard.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Doctor	Factum
	24 The Joker kicking the Doctor.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Asylum Doctor	Factum

5.22.4 Harley Quinn

Harley Quinn represents two interactive and initiated actions, as listed in Table 7 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.39 represents some examples of the *scripted* factum interactions involving Harley Quinn. Image 8 represents Harley looking at Batman and the Commissioner on a security screen. Image 27 depicts Harley letting the Joker inside the Intensive Treatment Facility after he had escaped. Images 8 and 27 provoke a positive judgement of Harley’s mental capacity. Both images are from the *scripted* game segment and depict Harley’s actions initiated by the game’s programming.

Table 5.39 Harley Quinn’s scripted factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	8 Harley Quinn looking at Batman and the Commissioner as the Joker is escorted.	<i>Scripted</i>	Harley Quinn	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	27 Harley Quinn letting the Joker inside the Intensive Treatment Facility.	<i>Scripted</i>	Harley Quinn	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

The asylum inmates represent one *scripted* factum interactions during the scene. This interaction occurs at the changeover from scripted to emergent narrative segments. The asylum inmates appear in the background of Image 34 as Batman prepares to fight them as represented in Table 5 of the ludic operation supplementary materials (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>).





5.23 Emergent narrative tactum interactions

The emergent narrative tactum interactions of the inmates are described in Section 5.23.1. Section 5.23.2 describes the Commissioner's emergent narrative tactum interactions.

5.23.1 The inmates

The non-playable characters also represent action during the *emergent narrative* segment of the Joker escape scene. Eleven instances of non-playable characters' actions were identified during the *emergent narrative* segment. The inmates required to fight Batman accounted for six of the 11 identified actions, as represented in Table 5 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The inmates' actions can be described as a tactum, which involves interactions between two or more game objects in the simulated game world. The tactum interactions afforded to the inmates included punching, hitting, kicking and chasing Batman. These tactum interactions are represented in Images 35a, 35b, 35d and 35h of Table 5.40 and co-pattern with positive judgements of physical capacity. The inmates' tactum interactions represent their use of physical force to confront Batman.

Table 5.40 The inmates’ emergent narrative tactum interactions – the Joker’s Escape





Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Fighting	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Asylum inmate	Tactum	Punch/hit Kick Chase	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight from a television screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Asylum inmate	Tactum	Punch/hit Kick Chase	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	35d Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Asylum inmate	Tactum	Punch/hit Kick Chase	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	35h Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Asylum inmate	Tactum	Punch/hit Kick Chase	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

5.23.2 The Commissioner

Five of the 11 instances of non-playable characters’ actions were depicted by Commissioner Gordon, as represented in Table 6 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 5.41 represents some of the Commissioner’s *emergent narrative* factum interactions. Image 35j depicts Commissioner Gordon looking at Batman on a television screen. Image 35l portrays the Commissioner on a television screen while Batman advises that he will find a way out after being trapped by the Joker. Image 37a represents the Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker’s invitation to come to find him in the asylum is a trap. The images of the Commissioner in Table 5.41 do

not represent visual evaluative meaning. The Commissioner’s actions can be described as factum interactions as the actions are triggered by the game’s programming.

Table 5.41 Commissioner Gordon’s emergent narrative factum interactions – the Joker’s Escape

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable Character	Initiated action	Visual evaluative meaning
	35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	35j Batman receiving experience points after the fight.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	35l Batman advising the Commissioner that he will find a way out of the holding cells room.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	37a The Commissioner advising Batman that the Joker’s invitation is a trap.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Commissioner Gordon	Factum	

5.24 Coupling and similarities

A deeper assessment of the ludic operations about the characters realised in the game scene can be understood by examining the coupling amongst interactivity, character and ludic action resources occurring during the *scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. Coupling occurs when two or more characters are represented in an image. Table 5.42 represents a sample of the coupling amongst the playable and non-playable characters, the interactivity and the initiated action during the *scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. Image 6 depicts the Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is restrained and escorted down the corridor in a vertical stretcher. The image represents a coupling among the *scripted* interactivity, the playable and non-playable characters, and factum initiated actions. The coupling co-patterns with the visual depiction of negative judgement of the Joker’s capacity. Image 35a portrays Batman preparing to fight the inmates. The image represents a coupling among the *emergent narrative* interactivity, playable characters and actum initiated actions, and non-playable characters and the tactum initiated actions. The coupling co-patterns with the visual judgements of the inmates’ judgements of physical capacity and Batman’s affective

evaluative meaning of insecurity. Image 35b represents Batman fighting the inmates during the *emergent narrative* segment. The image portrays a coupling among the ludic operations of *emergent narrative* interactivity, the playable and non-playable characters, and the actum initiated actions of Batman, the tactum initiated actions of the inmates and the factum initiated actions of the Joker. The coupling of the ludic operations co-pattern with the visual judgements of Batman, the inmates' physical strength and the Joker's visual affective happiness at watching Batman fight the inmates. The analysis reveals a strong converging coupling between the *scripted* interactivity and game-initiated factum interactions. This similarity in coupling can be found across playable and non-playable characters, as represented in Tables 5.28 and 5.35 respectively. There is also a converging co-patterning between *emergent narrative* interactivity and evaluative meanings concerning judgements of capacity. The coupling and similarities between the playable and non-playable characters during the *scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the escape scene realise the interaction of each character's evaluative position and their struggle for legitimacy within the game's fictive world.

Table 5.42 Example of coupling of ludic operations during the scripted and emergent narrative segments – the Joker’s Escape










Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable Character	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	6 The Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	<i>Scripted</i>	Batman		Factum	
	6 The Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	<i>Scripted</i>		Commissioner Gordon	Factum	
	6 The Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	<i>Scripted</i>		The Asylum Guard	Factum	
	6 The Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	<i>Scripted</i>	Joker		Factum	Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Flag
	35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Batman		Actum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flags
	35a Batman preparing to fight the Blackgate prisoners.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>		The Asylum inmates	Tactum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight on a television screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Batman		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable Character	Non-Playable Character	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight on a television screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Joker		Factum	<i>Affect: +ve Happiness: Joy: Afforded</i>
	35b Batman fighting the Blackgate prisoners. The Joker is represented as watching the fight on a television screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>		The Asylum inmates	Tactum	<i>Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</i>

5.25 Ludic operation summary

In summary, the game scene can be divided into a *scripted* film-like segment and an *emergent narrative* interactive gameplay segment. During the film-like *scripted* segments, Batman and the Joker utilise factum interactions that are initiated by the game's programming. The *scripted* factum interaction concerning Batman co-pattern with visual evaluative meanings of security concerning Batman's confidence and positive judgements of his physical capacity and mental capacity. The *scripted* factum interactions concerning the Joker co-pattern with visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of his physical strength and weakness. Also, the Joker depicts affective evaluative meanings of happiness and satisfaction.

During the *emergent narrative* segment, Batman is afforded actum interactions triggered by a player's input through pressing buttons on the game controller. Players can engage Batman in fighting the inmates through pressing buttons that instruct Batman to use actum fighting interactions such as punching, kicking and stunning. Batman's *emergent narrative* actum fighting segment co-patterns with the visual evaluative meaning of insecurity concerning his disquiet at the start of the fight and positive judgements of capacity concerning his physical strength while fighting. Players are also able to instruct Batman to explore the simulated game environment by pressing buttons that instruct Batman to investigate the game world and to complete tasks relevant to the game's storyline. The *emergent narrative* actum segment co-patterns with visual evaluative meanings depicting Batman's physical and mental capacity, which helps players to perceive and explore the game world. The Joker uses factum interactions, generated by the game's programming during the *emergent narrative* segment of the game, and co-patterns with visual evaluative meanings of happiness.

During the scene, non-playable characters such as the Guard, the Doctor and Harley Quinn are represented. The actions of these characters are represented during the *scripted* film-like segment and utilise factum interactions that are generated by the game's programming. The representation of the Guard co-patterns with visual affective evaluative meanings of security, while the depictions of Harley Quinn co-pattern with positive judgements of mental capacity. The Commissioner is represented in both the *scripted* and the *emergent narrative* segments of the game. The Commissioner utilises factum interactions that are generated by the game's programming during the *scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. The asylum inmates are represented during the *emergent narrative* segment of the scene. The inmates use tactum interactions to initiate a physical fight with Batman. The inmates use actions, such as punching, hitting, kicking and chasing Batman. The *emergent*

narrative tactum segment involving the inmates co-pattern with visual judgements of capacity concerning their actions when fighting Batman. There is a converging coupling amongst the interactivity, character and ludic action resources occurring in the *scripted* factum interactions of the game scene. The values conveyed in the game scene can then be inferred by examining the synergetic copatterning among the ludic operations, player affiliation and communicated evaluative meanings about characters.

5.26 Summary

This chapter reported the results from the data analysis of the Joker's Escape scene from *Arkham Asylum*. First, Section 5.3 reported the results of the inscribed language evaluative meanings about the characters. Second, Section 5.6 discussed the results of the invoked language evaluative meaning about the characters. Third, Section 5.11 presented the results of the visual evaluative meanings about the characters. Fourth, Section 5.15 reported the results of the player-game characters' affiliation. Fifth, Section 5.19 presented the results of the playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions. Sixth, the results of the non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions were reported. The reported data from the analysis of the Joker's Escape scene in *Arkham Asylum* were utilised to address the overarching Research Question and Research Sub-Questions in Chapter Seven. Next, Chapter Six reports the results of the analysis of Clara Lillie's death scene in the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs*.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS – PROTAGONIST VERSUS ANTAGONISTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from the data analysis of the *Watch Dogs* scene in which Clara Lille is murdered. The data from the game scene were investigated according to the process described in Chapter Four to answer the research questions. First, the results of the inscribed language evaluative meanings about characters are reported in Section 6.3. Second, the results of the invoked language evaluative meanings about the characters are examined in Section 6.4. The coupling of the invoked evaluative meanings about the characters are described in Section 6.5. The coupling of the inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings about characters are reported in Section 6.6. The similarities of evaluative meanings between characters are examined in Section 6.7. The language evaluative meanings are summarised in Section 6.8. Third, the analysis of the visual evaluative meanings about the characters are described in Section 6.9. The coupling of the visual evaluative meanings about characters are reported in Section 6.10. The similar visual evaluative meanings about characters are examined in Section 6.11. The visual evaluative meanings are summarised in Section 6.12. Fourth, the results of the player-game characters' affiliation are presented in Section 6.13. The similarities between characters and player affiliation are summarised in Section 6.14. Fifth, the results from the ludic dimension are reported in Section 6.15. The results of the playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions are discussed in Section 6.16. Sixth, the results of the non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions are presented in Section 6.17. The ludic operation coupling and similarities between characters are discussed in Section 6.18. The ludic operations are summarised in Section 6.19. An initial step before reporting the results of *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) involves revisiting the research questions of the study. This thesis posed the overarching Research Question:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

In answering the overarching research question, the following sub-questions were investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meaning about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?
2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

- How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters?

6.2 Narrative dimension

The results from the analysis of the evaluative meaning and player affiliation resources of the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework are initially reported. First, the results of the inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings about characters are discussed. Section 6.3 reports the results for the inscribed evaluative meanings about characters, and Section 6.4 reports the results of the invoked evaluative meanings. Second, Section 6.9 presents the results of the visual evaluative meanings. Third, Section 6.13 reports the results of the player-game character affiliation.

6.3 Research Sub-Question One: Inscribed language evaluative meaning

The frequency of the different types of inscribed evaluative meanings about characters during the game scene in which Clara Lille is murdered is represented in Table 6.1. Clara Lille was the only character to contribute inscribed evaluative meanings during the scene. It was identified that Clara made 13 inscribed evaluative meanings. The frequency of the different types of inscribed evaluative meanings made by Clara is now reported.

Table 6.1 Quantitative inscribed evaluative meanings about Clara Lille

Inscribed Attitudes		
Attitude	Clara Lille	Grand Total
Affect		
-ve Happiness: Misery	1	1
+ve Security: Trust	2	2
Judgements of Social Esteem		
-ve Normality	2	2
+ve Capacity: Physical strength	4	4
-ve Capacity: Physical weakness	1	1
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity	1	1
+ve Tenacity: Reliability	1	1
Grand Total	12	12

Clara Lille inscribed attitudes of affect and judgements of social esteem. The inscribed attitude was represented in Table 1 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Clara inscribed three attitudes of affect. Two

attitudes of security are inscribed by Clara. One was used to describe how Aiden made his nephew, Jackson, feel safe: “I could see how you made him **feel safe**”. Another attitude of security is used by Clara to describe how hackers feel safe only behind their computers: “That’s the only place we **feel safe**”. Clara uses an attitude of unhappiness to describe Aiden and Jackson’s misery after the funeral of Aiden's niece, Lana: “Both of you **still very sad** from the funeral”.

Clara inscribes nine judgements of social esteem during the scene. Four judgements of physical strength are used by Clara. Two of these judgements focus on her capacity to act to help Aiden: for example, “I thought if I **could help** you”, and “Or if not at least I **can disappear**”. One judgement of capacity has been used by Clara regarding Aiden’s ability to play chess with Jackson: “You were **playing** chess with Jackson in the park”. Clara also evaluates Aiden’s and her ability as hackers to hide: “In our world we **hide** in the dark”. Clara utilises one judgement of physical weakness to express her realisation that she cannot help Aiden: “But I **can’t**”. Two attitudes of negative normality are inscribed by Clara that describe her and Aiden as needing to be healed: “I thought if I could help you **heal**”, and “- maybe I could **heal** myself”. One attitude of mental capacity is used by Clara to express her wish to talk to Aiden about what had happened: “**I hope we can at least talk**”. Also, one attitude of tenacity has been inscribed by Clara to express her reliability at being about to disappear if Aiden does not want to talk to her: “That’s something I’m **good** at”.

During the scene, Clara does not couple any inscribed evaluative meanings. The highest category of inscribed evaluative meaning expressed by Clara is concerned with judgements of physical strength. The second highest categories of inscribed evaluative meanings are attitudes of security: trust and negative normality. Clara describes Aiden as being trusting and capable through the patterning of inscribed judgements of Aiden’s capacity and affective attitudes of trust, as represented in Table 6.2. Aiden is inscribed as a capable and trusting uncle by Clara when stating, “You **were playing** chess with Jackson in the park”, and “I could see how you made him **feel safe**”. Clara uses a similar patterning to describe Aiden and herself as capable hackers: “In our world we **hide** in the dark, behind monitors”, and “That’s the only place we **feel safe**”. Overall, Clara uses affective evaluative meanings of unhappiness and security and judgements of social sanction. It can be inferred from the inscribed evaluative meanings about Clara that she conveys the social and political values of justice and accountability (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to her decision to help Aiden to make amends for her involvement in the events that had led to the death of Aiden’s niece. Also, Clara conveys values of morality such as friendship and collaboration owing to her support for and work with Aiden during the game. It can be inferred that Clara does not

hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values discussed in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) because of her work as a hacker and her involvement in the events that had led to Aiden’s niece’s murder. A further nuanced understanding of the patterns of evaluative meanings occurring in the game scene requires the invoked evaluative meanings about the characters to be investigated.

Table 6.2 Clara Lille’s pattern of inscribed judgements of capacity and trust

	Appraising Item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
7	You were playing chess with Jackson in the park.	Clara	Aiden	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
9	I could see how you made him feel safe .	Clara	Jackson	+ve Security: Trust	
10	In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors.	Clara	Clara and Aiden	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
11	That’s the only place we feel safe .	Clara	Aiden and Clara	+ve Security: Trust	

6.4 Research Sub-Question One: Invoked language evaluative meanings

The frequency of the different types of invoked meaning about characters from the scene in which Clara Lille is murdered in *Watch Dogs* is represented in Table 6.3. How the frequency of the different types of invoked evaluative meaning about characters varies within and between the characters during the scene is now reported. A total of 21 invoked evaluative meanings about characters was identified in the game scene. Sixteen were communicated by Clara, three by T-Bone and two by Aiden.

Table 6.3 Quantitative invoked evaluative meanings about characters – Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Invoked Attitude	Characters			
	Aiden	Clara Lille	T-Bone	Grand Total
Affect				
-ve Security: Disquiet: Afford			1	1
Judgement of Social Esteem				
+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford		1		1
Neg +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford		1		1
+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford	1	1	2	4
Judgement of Social Sanction				

-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford	1	1		2
+ve Propriety: Kindness: Afford		2		2
+ve Propriety: Morality: Afford		1		1
Neg +ve Propriety: Morality: Afford		1		1
Neg +ve Veracity: Afford		1		1
+ve Veracity: Afford		1		1
<hr/>				
Appreciation				
+ve Composition: Complexity: Afford		1		1
-ve Valuation: Danger: Afford		1		1
+ve Valuation: Importance: Afford		4		4
<hr/>				
Grand Total	2	16	3	21

6.4.1 Clara Lille

The qualitative invoked evaluative meanings about characters from the scene are now discussed. The invoked attitudes of Clara Lille were represented in Table 2 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Clara Lille communicated 16 invoked evaluative meanings during the game scene. Clara afforded three judgements of social esteem. Two afforded judgements of mental capacity were made by Clara regarding her thoughts while explaining her story to Aiden – for example, “I can’t decide where to begin”, and “I thought if I could help you heal”. Clara affords one judgement of physical strength regarding the assistance that she can provide to Aiden: “help you find answers”. Seven judgements of social sanction were afforded by Clara during the scene. Two judgements of propriety concerning kindness are afforded by Clara. The first represents her kindness directed towards helping Aiden to heal: “I thought if I could help you heal”. The second affordance is concerned with the hope that Aiden and she can talk: “I hope we can at least talk”. One judgement of impropriety was afforded by Clara regarding the immorality of her work hacking for the gangster Lucky Quinn and the South Chicago Gang: “That lives would be lost or that it was only a job”. Clara also expresses a positive judgement of propriety to describe a moral act of her disappearing if Aiden and her are not able to talk: “Or if not... at least I can disappear”. Two attitudes of veracity were afforded by Clara concerning the reality of her work and how it placed people in danger, such as Aiden’s niece: “It isn’t enough to say that I didn’t know”, and “That lives would be lost or that it was only a job”. Clara afforded six attitudes of appreciation. Four attitudes of valuation were afforded by Clara to emphasise the importance of events; some examples include “The first time I saw you”, and

“In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors”. An attitude of negative valuation is utilised by Clara to afford the secluded nature of a hacker’s world: “In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors”. Also, Clara affords a positive appreciation of the composition of the world of hackers: “In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors”. In summary, Clara expresses the highest frequency of invoked evaluative meanings about characters at 16. Clara utilises judgements of social esteem to think that she can help Aiden after her actions resulted in the death of his niece. Judgements of social sanction are used by Clara to reflect on her previous work with the South Chicago Club. Also, attitudes of appreciation are used by Clara to describe the secluded world of hackers. Clara’s evaluative meanings infer her reconsidering her work as a hacker. It can be inferred from Clara’s invoked evaluative meanings that she conveys the social and political values of justice and accountability (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) because of her decision to grant assistance to Aiden to make up for her involvement in the lead up to the death of Aiden’s niece. Clara also conveys the moral values of friendship and collaboration owing to her alliance with Aiden. It can be inferred that Clara does not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One owing to her work as a hacker.

6.4.2 T-Bone

T-Bone is a hacker similar to Aiden and Clara. T-Bone affords attitudes of affect and judgement of social esteem, as represented in Table 3 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). An afforded attitude of insecurity is used by T-Bone to express his disquiet at the Club cars heading towards Aiden and Clara: “Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way”. This statement by T-Bone also affords a judgement of the Club cars’ physical capacity. An afforded positive judgement of capacity is used by T-Bone to describe his ability to track the club cars: “Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way”. From the invoked evaluative meanings about T-Bone, it can be seen that he conveys the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) because of his concern with the actions of the antagonist characters. T-Bone also conveys a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his alliance with Aiden during the game.

6.4.3 Aiden

Aiden affords a judgement of impropriety and capacity during the game scene, as represented in Table 4 of the language evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). A judgement of impropriety is afforded to Aiden’s old

hacking partner, Damien, who is now trying to manipulate Aiden into helping him – for example, “Damien... what did you do?”. Aiden also affords a judgement of capacity to Damien regarding his behaviour: “Damien... what did you do?”. On the whole, Aiden and T-Bone communicated two evaluative meanings each. Table 6.3 expresses meanings of insecurity about the Club cars and T-Bone’s capacity to track the cars, while Aiden questions the impropriety and capacity of Damien by inferring that Damien has let the South Chicago Club know Clara’s location. The conflict among Aiden, T-Bone, Damien and the South Chicago Club infers a struggle for legitimacy concerning different evaluative positions between the protagonist characters Aiden and T-Bone and the antagonist characters Damien and the South Chicago Club. From Aiden’s invoked evaluative meanings, it can be inferred that he conveys the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) because of his concerns about Damien’s actions.

6.5 Invoked coupling

Reported below are the results of the invoked coupling analysis about the characters. First, Section 6.5.1 discusses the coupled evaluative meaning about Aiden. Second, T-Bone’s coupled evaluative meanings are described in Section 6.5.2. Third, Section 6.5.3 describes Clara’s coupled evaluative meaning.

6.5.1 Aiden

During the scene, Aiden couples evaluative meanings concerning physical strength and immorality regarding the antagonist Damien. The coupling of Aiden’s communicated evaluative meanings is represented in Table 6.4. An example from the scene includes, “Damien ... what did you do?”

Table 6.4 Aiden’s coupling between physical capacity and immorality

	Appraising Item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
2	Damien ... what did you do?	Aiden	Damien		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
2	Damien ... what did you do?	Aiden	Damien		-ve Propriety: Immorality: Afford

6.5.2 T-Bone

Table 6.5 represents the evaluative meanings communicated by T-Bone, and indicates a coupling between judgements of physical capacity regarding himself and affective attitudes of insecurity concerning his disquiet for Aiden regarding the capability of the South Chicago Club – for example, “Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way”. Once again, the coupling of the protagonist characters Aiden and T-Bone’s evaluative meanings of physical capacity, immorality and disquiet is indicative of their struggle for legitimacy against the antagonist characters during the game scene.

Table 6.5 T-Bone’s coupling between physical capacity and disquiet

	Appraising Item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
1	Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way.	T-Bone	T-Bone		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
1	Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way.	T-Bone	The Club Cars		+ve Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
1	Aiden, I’m tracking a number of Club cars heading your way.	T-Bone	Aiden		-ve Security: Disquiet: Afford

6.5.3 Clara

Table 6.6 represents the evaluative meanings communicated by Clara, and indicates a coupling between judgements of social sanction concerning the veracity and immorality of her previous work. Examples from the scene include, “It isn’t enough to say that I didn’t know”, and “That lives would be lost or that it was only a job”. In the first example, the word “isn’t” has been used to negate the positive judgement of morality and veracity afforded by Clara. Couplings between inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings are also expressed by Clara.

Table 6.6 Clara’s coupling between judgements of veracity and propriety

	Appraising Item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
12	It isn’t enough to say that I didn’t know.	Clara	Clara		Neg +ve Veracity: Afford
12	It isn’t enough to say that I didn’t know.	Clara	Clara		Neg +ve Propriety: Morality: Afford
13	That lives would be lost or that it was only a job.	Clara	Clara		+ve Veracity: Afford

6.6 Invoked and inscribed evaluative meaning coupling

6.6.1 Clara

Clara’s communicates evaluative meanings indicating a coupling amongst judgements of social esteem and social sanction, as represented in Table 6.7. An invoked judgement of mental capacity is afforded by Clara to represent her wish to help Aiden. The invoked judgements of mental capacity are also coupled with an inscribed judgement of physical strength by Clara and a judgement of propriety, which indicates her kindness towards Aiden – for example, “**I thought if I could help you heal**”. A negative judgement of Aiden’s normality is inscribed to indicate that he requires healing. Further interactions between Clara and Aiden indicate a similar coupling. Examples from the scene include a positive judgement of mental capacity coupling with a judgement of propriety concerning her hope to talk with Aiden, “**I hope we can at least talk**”, and a positive judgement of physical capacity coupling with a positive judgement of propriety regarding her decision to disappear if Aiden and she cannot talk, “**Or if not ... at least I can disappear**”. The coupling amongst attitudes of veracity and propriety is indicative of Clara coming to terms with the truth and immorality of her previous tasks as a hacker. The coupling amongst attitudes of capacity and propriety is indicative of how Clara is trying to help Aiden owing to her actions in the death of his niece. Therefore, in the context of the game storyline, Clara is acknowledging the impropriety of her behaviour and changing her behaviour to be more morally responsible; however, as a result of this change in behaviour, Clara is murdered.

Table 6.7 Clara’s coupling between judgements of social esteem and propriety

	Appraising Item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
14	I thought if I could help you heal,	Clara	Clara		+ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Afford
14	I thought if I could help you heal,	Clara	Clara	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
14	I thought if I could help you heal,	Clara	Clara		+ve Propriety: Kindness: Afford

14	I thought if I could help you heal,	Clara	Aiden	-ve Normality	
19	I hope we can at least talk.	Clara	Aiden and Clara	+ve Capacity: Mental capacity	
19	I hope we can at least talk.	Clara	Aiden and Clara		+ve Propriety: Kindness: Afford
20	Or if not ... at least I can disappear.	Clara	Clara	+ve Capacity: Physical strength	
20	Or if not ... at least I can disappear.	Clara	Aiden and Clara		+ve Propriety: Morality: Afford

6.7 Evaluative meaning similarities

The game scene represents similar communicated evaluative meanings invoked between characters, as represented in Table 6.3. Aiden, T-Bone and Clara all afford judgements of capacity concerning physical strength; however, Aiden and T-Bone focus on the capacity of the antagonist characters. Also, T-Bone invokes his capacity to track the Club cars. Clara focuses on Aiden's capacity as a protagonist. Aiden and Clara also afford similar judgements of impropriety concerning immorality. Once again, Aiden's judgement of impropriety focuses on the immorality of the antagonist character, Damien. Clara's judgement of impropriety focuses on her previous work as a hacker for the South Chicago Club. Despite the similarly expressed evaluative meanings between the protagonist characters, Aiden and T-Bone's evaluations are focused on their struggle with the antagonists, while Clara's evaluations imply her reflection on her previous behaviour.

6.8 Language evaluative meaning summary

In summary, Aiden communicated two invoked evaluative meanings: one judgement of physical strength and another judgement of impropriety. Aiden coupled together invoked evaluative meanings of physical capacity and immorality regarding his former hacking partner, Damien. Damien is now trying to manipulate Aiden into helping him. T-Bone communicates three invoked evaluative meanings: one affective attitude of insecurity and two judgements of capacity. These evaluative meanings are coupled by T-Bone regarding the Club cars heading towards Aiden and Clara and his ability to track the Club cars. Aiden and T-Bone's evaluations imply a struggle to assert the legitimacy of different evaluative positions between the protagonist and antagonist characters within the game's narrative world. During the scene, Clara communicates 12 inscribed evaluative meanings: three evaluative meanings

of affect, and nine judgements of social esteem. Clara invokes 16 evaluative meanings: three judgements of social esteem, seven judgements of social sanction and six appreciations. Clara couples invoked evaluative meanings of veracity and propriety, and inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings of social esteem and propriety. These evaluative meanings imply her reflection about her previous work as a hacker for the South Chicago Club, and her actions that had led to the death of Aiden’s niece. Clara reflects on the impropriety of her behaviour and how she can change to be more ethically responsible within the game’s fictive narrative; however, the change in Clara’s behaviour leads to her murder. From the evaluative meanings about the protagonist characters, it can be inferred that they convey the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to their concern with the actions of the antagonist characters. Aiden, Clara and T-Bone represent a moral value of collaboration and friendship (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to their alliance against the antagonist characters. An understanding of how the game scene communicates evaluative meanings about characters also requires an examination of how characters visually represent evaluative meanings.

6.9 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning

The frequency of the different types of visual evaluative meaning about characters from the game scene in which Clara Lille was murdered is represented in Table 6.8. How the frequency of the different types of visual evaluative meanings about the characters varied within and between the characters during the scene are now reported. A total of 73 visual evaluative meanings were identified during the game scene. 45 evaluative meanings were identified for Aiden, 11 for Clara and 17 for the Hitmen.

Table 6.8 Visual evaluative meanings represented in Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Visual Attitudes	Characters			Grand Total
	Aiden	Clara	The Hit-man/men	
Affect				
Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Flag		1		1
Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke	7	4		11
Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flag			1	1
Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke	3		5	8
Affect: -ve Security: Fear: Afford		3		3
Affect: -ve Security: Fear: Flag		1		1
Affect: -ve Security: Surprised: Afford		1		1

Affect: -ve Security: Surprised: Flag		1		1
<hr/>				
Judgement of Social Esteem				
<hr/>				
Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Provoke	1			1
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke	18		11	29
Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke	16			16
<hr/>				
Grand Total	45	11	17	73
<hr/>				

6.9.1 Aiden

The qualitative visual evaluative meanings about characters from the game scene are now reported. The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving Aiden have been represented in Table 1 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Seven affective attitudes of unhappiness are depicted by Aiden provoking his misery at the death of Clara. The attitudes of unhappiness occurred when Aiden approached and looked down at Clara's body after the gunfight - such as in Images 22 and 23. Images 24, 26, 28, 29 and 30 represent Aiden's misery as he looked upon Clara. These images were classified as provoking the evaluative meaning of unhappiness as the game designer provided most of the contextual information regarding Aiden and Clara's relationship during the game's narrative, and players are required to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the story. Three evaluative meanings of provoked insecurity concerning Aiden's disquiet were represented in the scene. Examples include Image 2b, which depicted how players selected a gun from Aiden's weapons wheel to protect Clara. Image 8 depicted Aiden running toward Clara, calling her name. Image 20e depicted Aiden during the gunfight in which he was shot, and the screen turns red indicating he is bleeding. All the evaluative meanings of insecurity were coded as provoked owing to the contextual information provided by the game designer through Aiden rushing to protect Clara and players having to draw on their prior knowledge of the narrative storyline to infer the evaluative meaning.

Thirty-five judgements of social esteem were depicted during the scene. Eighteen of these 35 evaluative meanings depicted provoked judgements of physical capacity. Images 1a, 1b and 1c depicted Aiden driving to Clara as the South Chicago Club had placed a bounty on her. Images 1d, 2a, 2b and 2c depicted Aiden hopping out of the car and running towards Clara, during this time players could select a weapon for Aiden to help save Clara. Image 16

represented Aiden taking cover to get ready to confront the Hitmen. Images 20a, 20b, 20c and 20d depicted Aiden being controlled by players and shooting the Hitmen. Image 20b represented how players could slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. Image 20c depicted how players could instruct Aiden to reload his guns during the confrontation. Image 20d depicted how players could instruct Aiden to move around and chase after the Hitmen to target them better. Images 33a, 33b, 33c, 33d, 33e and 33f depict how players could move the game camera and access the weapon wheel while listening to Clara's voice message. All the depictions of judgements of physical capacity were classified as provoked as the players were required to draw on some of their prior knowledge of how the game world, while the game designers had provided most of the contextual information through the player's instructions of Aiden. One judgement of negative capacity concerning Aiden's physical weakness was provoked in Image 20e. Image 20e depicted Aiden in a gunfight with the Hitmen. In the image, Aiden was shot by the Hitmen and the screen turned red. The image was classified as provoked as the game designers had provided most of the contextual information through the red tint when Aiden was shot, while players had to use some of their prior knowledge to make this attitudinal response.

Sixteen of the 35 evaluative meanings were depictions of provoked judgements of mental capacity. These 16 images indicated Aiden's perception of the simulated game world. Images 1a, 1b and 1c depicted Aiden driving to protect Clara. Images 2a, 2b and 2c depicted Aiden running to protect Clara. These images indicated Aiden's perception within the game world as players were positioned behind Aiden and able to control his movement through the simulated world. Similarly, Images 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 20e and 20f depicted Aiden's perception during the gun battle with the Hitmen. Also, Images 33a, 33d, 33e and 33f portrayed Aiden's perception of the game world after Clara's murder. All the depictions of judgements of mental capacity were classified as provoked as the images were indicative of Aiden's perception of the game world, while the game designers had provided most of the contextual information through the game's narrative. Aiden's visual evaluative meanings were indicative of his struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative position. From the visual evaluative meanings about Aiden, it was inferred he implied the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Furthermore, it was inferred that Aiden did not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) as he behaved like a vigilante to protect Clara from the Hitmen.

6.9.2 Clara

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to each image description involving Clara are represented in Table 2 of the visual evaluative meaning supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Eleven affective visual evaluative meanings were depicted by Clara during the game scene. Four provoked affective depictions of unhappiness represented the misery of Clara's murder. Images 25, 27, 31 and 32 depicted Clara lying on the ground after the gunfight. A dark blue tint was used to darken the images and expressed the unhappiness of the event. The images were categorised as provoking the attitude of unhappiness because of the contextual information provided by the game designers - such as the use of the blue tint, while players were required to draw on some of their knowledge regarding Aiden and Clara's friendship. One flagged affective attitude of unhappiness concerning misery was depicted when Clara died while lying on the ground in Image 19. The image was coded as flagged as there was a shared responsibility between the players and the game designers to draw this attitudinal response. Three afforded affective attitudes of insecurity concerned Clara's fear were identified. Images 15, 17 and 18 depicted Clara's fear as she was shot by the Hitmen and fell to the ground. The images were coded as afforded as players were required to draw on their knowledge of the game's storyline for the attitudinal response. One flagged attitude of insecurity was depicted when Clara was shot in her shoulder by the Hitmen in Image 13. The image was categorised as flagged as there was a shared responsibility between the players and the game designers to draw this attitudinal response. Two visual affective attitudes of insecurity concerned Clara's surprise when she turned around to see Aiden running towards her in Image 9 and in Image 11 when she turned to see the Hitmen aiming at her. Image 9 was classified with an evaluative meaning of insecurity as it flagged a shared responsibility between the players and game designers to invoke this attitudinal response. Image 11 was coded as afforded as players were required to draw on their prior knowledge to invoke the evaluative response. Overall, the visual evaluative meanings represented the insecurity of Clara when being shot by the Hitmen and the unhappiness of her murder. From the visual evaluative meanings about Clara, it can be inferred that Aiden and her had a close relationship, which inferred a moral value of friendship (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014).

6.9.3 The Hitmen

The represented visual evaluative meanings relating to the image descriptions involving the Hitmen are represented in Table 3 of the visual evaluative meaning

supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Seventeen evaluative meanings were depicted by the Hitmen during the game scene. Five provoked affective depictions of insecurity occurred when the Hitmen hide with their guns as they approached Clara, as represented in Images 4, 6, 7, 10 and 12. These images were classified as provoked due to the contextual information provided by the game designer involving the men hiding with guns, while players were required to draw on their prior knowledge of the game's narrative to realise the attitudinal response. One flagged affective depiction of insecurity was represented when a hitman aimed toward Clara, as depicted in Image 14. The image were coded as flagged as there was a shared responsibility between the game designer and players to realise this attitudinal response. Eleven provoked judgements of physical strength were depicted when the Hitmen approached Clara with guns and aimed at her, as depicted in Images 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 14. Judgements of physical strength were also depicted by the Hitmen during the gunfight as they were in the background of Images 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d and 20e aiming at Aiden. All images classified as physical strength were categorised as provoked as the game designer provided the contextual information - such as the Hitmen with guns, while players were required to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the game to infer the evaluative meaning. Overall, the visual evaluative meanings about the Hitmen capitalised on Clara's decision to be more morally responsible by murdering her. The evaluative meanings also inferred their resistance towards the legitimation of Aiden's evaluative position. From the visual evaluative meanings of the Hitmen, it was inferred they did not convey the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) defined in Chapter One.

6.10 Visual evaluative meaning coupling



Below the visual evaluative meaning coupling about characters are reported. First, section 6.10.1 exams the coupling of visual evaluative meaning about Aiden. Second, section 6.10.2 describes the coupling of the visual evaluative meaning about the Hitmen.

6.10.1 Aiden

During the scene, Aiden expressed the highest frequency of visual evaluative meaning with 45 and the Hitmen the second highest with 12. A deeper assessment of the frequency of the evaluative meanings communicated in the scene can be understood by examining the coupling of the visual evaluative meanings about the characters represented in the scene. The

visual images concerning Aiden represented an evaluative meaning coupling between judgements of social sanction and affect. The visual representations of Aiden couple judgements of physical strength and mental capacity as represented in Table 6.9. Images 1a, 1b and 1c represented Aiden driving a car to rescue Clara. The images represented the provoked coupling between Aiden's physical capacity to drive the car and his perception in the simulated game world. These images were classified as provoked because the game designers provide most of the contextual information as represented in the images and players had to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the game's narrative storyline to realise the attitudinal response. A similar coupling between judgements of physical strength and mental capacity are represented in images 2a and 2c. The images represent the provoked coupling between Aiden's physical capacity to run and his prescription within the simulated game world. The images were categorised as provoked due to the contextual information represented in the images by the game designers and players had to draw on some of their knowledge of the game's story to make the attitudinal response. Also, coupling between judgements of physical strength and mental capacity representing Aiden's abilities in the simulated game world are represented in Images 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 33a, 33e and 33d. Once again, the images represented the provoked coupling between Aiden's physical capacity to shoot, slow down time to aim, reload and run during the gunfight. The images were coded as provoked because of the contextual information of the gunfight provided by the game designers and players had to draw on some of their prior knowledge of the game world to make the attitudinal response.



Table 6.9 Aiden's coupling between judgements of physical strength and mental capacity

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
1 Aiden. I'm tracking a number of Club cars heading your way.		1b Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
1 Aiden. I'm tracking a number of Club cars heading your way.		1b Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
2 Damien ... what did you do?		1c Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
2 Damien ... what did you do?		1c Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		2a Aiden runs towards Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke Aiden is running.
		2a Aiden runs towards Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		2c During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
				strength: Provoke
				Aiden is running.
		2c During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		20c Aiden reloading his gun.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20c Aiden reloading his gun.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
10 In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors. 11 That's the only place we feel safe.		33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
10 In our world we hide in the dark, behind monitors. 11 That's the only place we feel safe.		33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
12 It isn't enough to say that I didn't know. 13 That lives would be lost or that it was only a job.		33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
12 It isn't enough to say that I didn't know. 13 That lives would be lost or that it was only a job.		33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
14 I thought if I could help you heal, 15 help you find answers 16 - maybe I could heal myself. 17 But I can't.		33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
14 I thought if I could help you heal, 15 help you find answers 16 - maybe I could heal myself. 17 But I can't.		33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

The visual images depicting Aiden also communicated an evaluative meaning coupling between judgements of mental capacity, physical strength and affective attitudes of insecurity as represented in Table 6.10. Image 2b represented Aiden's perceptions of the game world and him running from his car to Clara. During this time players were able to access his weapons wheel to select a gun for him to use during the gunfight. Image 20e represented Aiden's perception of the simulated game world and his ability to use his weapons during the gunfight. During the gun fight if Aiden was shot the screen was covered by a red tint, which was interpreted as blood, creating a sense of insecurity. Images 2b and 20e were coded as provoked because of the contextual information depicted in the images by the game designers and players had drawn on some of their prior knowledge of the game's story to make the attitudinal response. The coupling of Aiden's visual evaluative meanings was indicative of his struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative positions over the Hitmen who were resisting.




Table 6.10 Aiden’s coupling between judgements of mental capacity, physical strength and insecurity

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
		2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke The need for weapons.
		20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Aiden	Judgement: -ve Capacity: Physical weakness: Provoke
		20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
		20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Aiden	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke Because of the red filter.

6.10.2 The Hitmen

The visual images concerning the Hitmen communicated an evaluative meaning coupling between physical capacity and insecurity as represented in Table 6.11. Images 4, 6, 7, 10, 12 and 14 represented the Hitmen bearing guns, hiding and aiming at Clara as they approached. The images of the Hitmen bearing guns and aiming at Clara depicted a judgement of physical strength and an affective attitude of insecurity. Images 4, 6, 7, 10 and 14 were classified as provoked judgements of physical strength and insecurity because of the contextual information depicted in the images by the game designers and the players had to draw on their knowledge of the game’s storyline to realise the attitudinal response. The only exception to this is Image 14, which was classified as a flagged affective attitude of insecurity as there was a shared responsibility between players and the game designers to realise the attitude of insecurity as players had to infer the hitman was aiming at Clara. The coupling of the evaluative meanings of the Hitmen represented their struggle to legitimise their evaluative position over Clara by murdering her.

Table 6.11 The Hitmen’s coupling between judgements of physical strength and insecurity

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual attitude
		4 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		4 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
		6 More South Chicago Club Hitmen runs towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		6 More South Chicago Club Hitmen runs towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke

Dialogue Line	Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual attitude
		7 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara and hides.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		7 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara and hides.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
		10 A South Chicago Club hitman loads his gun ready to aim at Clara.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		10 A South Chicago Club hitman loads his gun ready to aim at Clara.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
		12 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		12 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
		14 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
		14 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	The Hitman/men	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flag

6.11 Visual evaluative meaning similarities

The characters also depicted similar evaluative meanings of affect and judgement during the game scene. Aiden and Clara both depicted the evaluative meaning of unhappiness provoking misery with a combined total of 11 representations. These evaluative meanings occurred after the gunfight when Aiden approached Clara's body and indicated their close relationship. Aiden and the Hitmen depicted similar evaluative meanings of insecurity concerning disquiet, with Aiden representing three and the Hitmen five. The great number of represented attitudes of insecurity was indicative of the disquiet provoked by the Hitmen during their approach to target Clara. Also, Aiden and the Hitmen depicted similar evaluative meanings of judgements of physical strength, with Aiden representing 18 and the Hitmen six.

6.12 Visual evaluative meaning summary

In summary, Aiden represented 45 visual evaluative meanings, 10 affective meanings and 35 judgments of social esteem. Aiden represented a coupling of physical strength, mental capacity and insecurity. Aiden's visual evaluative meanings are an indication of his struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative position over the antagonist characters. Clara depicted 11 affective evaluative meanings during the game scene. Clara's visual evaluative meanings represented her insecurity when being attacked by the Hitmen and the unhappiness of her murder. The Hitmen represented 17 visual evaluative meanings, six affective meanings and 11 judgements of physical strength. They coupled evaluative meanings of physical strength and insecurity to portray their struggle to legitimise their evaluative position over the protagonist characters of Aiden and Clara. The higher representation of 45 visual evaluative meanings concerning Aiden was indicative of how players could control his abilities by pressing buttons on the game controller. From the visual evaluative meanings of the protagonist characters, it can be inferred Aiden and Clara conveyed a moral value of friendship (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to their close relationship. Furthermore, it can be inferred that Aiden conveyed a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but did not have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) due to behaving as a vigilante to protect Clara from the Hitmen. From the evaluative meanings of the antagonist characters, it can be inferred the Hitmen did not convey a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or have a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). Therefore, further examination of how Aiden was affiliated with players during the game scene was required.

6.13 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation




How players are positioned to perceive the simulated game world as or along with a character using camera angles was investigated. The extent to which the game *Watch Dogs* constructed player affiliation with Aiden during Clara Lille's Death scene is now be reported. Players are only positioned along with Aiden during the scene as represented in Table 1 of the affiliation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Players are positioned along with Aiden 16 times during the scene as represented in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12 Aiden’s focalisation and interactive meaning resources – Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Focalisation and Interactive meaning	Characters	
	Aiden	Grand Total
Along with character	16	16
Observe	16	16
Offer	16	16
Social	16	16
Involvement	16	16
Equality	16	16
Grand Total	16	16

Players are affiliated to perceive the game world along with Aiden 16 times during the game scene. The player-character affiliation was designed by coupling focalisation and interactive meaning resources, which are now be reported. Images 1a, 1b and 1c of Table 6.13 depict Aiden driving to Clara as the South Chicago Club had placed a bounty on her. An augmented marker had been placed on the road to lead Aiden to Clara’s location. Players are affiliated to see along with Aiden while he drives as the game camera had been placed behind the car enabling players to perceive the game world with him. A medium camera frame had been used to create a social connection between players and the car. Also, a frontal eye-level angle had been used to create an involved and equal power relationship between players and Aiden.




Table 6.13 Images 1a, 1b and 1c's coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden driving

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	<p>1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.</p>	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	<p>1b Aiden is driving to Clara Lillele as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.</p>	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	<p>1c Aiden is driving to Clara Lillele as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is</p>	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.

Similarly, Images 2a, 2b and 2c of Table 6.14 depicted Aiden out of the car and running towards Clara’s location. Players were affiliated to see along with Aiden as he was running by the game camera being placed behind him, enabling players to perceive the game world with Aiden. A medium, frontal, and eye-level camera angle was used to create an involved, equal, social connection between players and Aiden.

Table 6.14 Images 2a, 2b and 2c’s coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden running

Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	2a Aiden runs towards Clara.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	2c During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

This player-character affiliation continued during the gunfight between Aiden and the Hitmen. In Table 6.15, Images 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d, 20e and 20f depict Aiden during the fight. Players were affiliated to see along with Aiden as he was aiming and shooting at the Hitmen. This affiliation was achieved by the game camera being placed behind his right shoulder, capturing the back of his head and the top of his shoulder, allowing players to perceive the game world along with Aiden. A small variation of this occurs in Images 20d and 20f, which depicted Aiden running and a larger proportion of the back of his body is depicted; however, the game camera was still positioned behind Aiden, enabling the players to see along with him during the gunfight. A medium, frontal and eye-level camera frame was utilised to create an involved, equal social connection between players and Aiden during the fight. It was also important to note, the Hitmen that Aiden was shooting were in the background of the images. Therefore, the long-distance frame between players, Aiden and the Hitmen created an impersonal connection with the Hitmen Aiden was targeting during the gunfight.

Table 6.15 Images 2a, 2b and 2c’s coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden during the gun fight











Image	Verbal Description	Character’s Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	20c Aiden reloading his gun.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	20f Aiden defeats the Hitmen.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

A similar player-character affiliation occurred after the gunfight as Aiden listened to Clara's message, as depicted in Table 6.16 in Images 33a, 33d, 33e and 33f. Players were affiliated to see along with Aiden by the game camera being placed behind Aiden's avatar to enable players to perceive the game world through Aiden. A medium, frontal and eye-level camera angle was used to create an involved, equal, social connection between players and Aiden. The coupling between players being focalised along with Aiden and the camera positioning of the interactive meaning resources enabled players to be affiliated with Aiden during the game scene. The coupling of these meaning resources assisted with how players and Aiden perceive the simulated game world.

Table 6.16 Images 33a, 33d, 33e and 33f's coupling of affiliation resources – Aiden during the gun fight

Image	Verbal Description	Character's Perspective	Eye Contact	Mediation	Contact	Social Distance	Horizontal Angle	Vertical Angle
	33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	Aiden	Observe	Along with character	Offer	Social	Involvement	Equality

6.14 Similarities and player affiliation summary

During the game scene players were affiliated along with Aiden 16 times. Players were not affiliated with any other characters during this scene. Therefore, there were no similarities between characters to report concerning interactive meaning.

6.15 Ludic dimension

The results from the analysis of the ludic operations of the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework are now reported. First, Section 6.16 presents the results of the playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions. Second, Section 6.17 reports the results of the non-playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions.

6.16 Research Sub-Question Three: Playable characters

The variation of the ludic operations within and between playable characters in the game scene in which Clara Lille was murdered are represented in Table 6.17. The data investigated the ludic operations about characters utilised the interactivity, character ludic action system networks and visual evaluative meaning resources described in Chapter Three. The frequencies of the interactivity and initiated actions of playable characters occurring in the scenes are now reported. Aiden Pearce was the only playable character during the scene and had instantiated 30 interactive and initiated actions as listed in Table 1 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>).



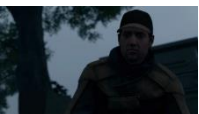

Table 6.17 Aiden’s interactivity and initiated actions in Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Interactivity and initiated actions	Characters	
	Aiden	Grand Total
Emergent Narrative	12	12
Actum	12	12
Scripted	12	12
Factum	12	12
Soft-scripted	6	6
Actum	6	6
Grand Total	30	30

6.16.1 Scripted factum interactions

During the game scene in which Clara Lille was murdered, Aiden was the only playable character. The scene comprises three segments: the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. The *scripted* segment was realised by film-like cut scenes coupled with factum interactions triggered by the game’s programming. During the *scripted* segment, players could not interact with the simulated game environment. Aiden was identified as having 12 factum interactions during the scene. Table 6.18 represented some examples of factum interactions involving Aiden. Image 8 depicted Aiden running towards Clara and provoked an evaluative meaning of insecurity. Image 16 represented Aiden taking cover to get ready for the gunfight with the Hitmen and portrayed a judgement of capacity concerning Aiden’s physical strength. Images 23 and 30 portrayed Aiden looking at Clara’s body after the gunfight provoking an affective attitude of unhappiness. The represented actions from the images in Table 6.18 were part of the *scripted* film-like segments initiated by the game’s programming.







Table 6.18 Aiden’s scripted factum interactions during Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	8 Aiden runs towards Clara to help her. Aiden calls out her name.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	16 Aiden takes cover to get ready to fire at the Hitmen.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	23 Aiden looks down at Clara’s body.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden	Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke
	30 Aiden looking at Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden	Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke

The *soft-scripted* segment was realised by players being afforded some interactivity within the game environment. During the *soft-scripted* segment, Aiden depicted six instances of actum interactions. Table 6.19 represented some examples of actum interactions involving Aiden. Image 33a portrayed Aiden listening to Clara’s voice message. During this image, Aiden could explore the graveyard. Images 33b, 33c and 33f depicted how players could pivot

the game camera around Aiden while listening to the voice message. Image 33e portrayed how players could access the weapon wheel while listening to Clara’s message. The actions represented by Aiden in the images are part of the actum gameplay within the *soft-scripted* segment of the game. The actum interactions were triggered by players’ input - such as pressing the buttons on the game controller. The actum interactions triggered by players during the *soft-scripted* segment are now examined.

Table 6.19 Aiden’s soft-scripted actum interactions

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action
	33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum
	33b Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum
	33c Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum
	33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum
	33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message and can access the weapon wheel.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden	Actum

Aiden represented six actum interactions triggered by players during the *soft-scripted* segment. The actum interactions involved Aiden engaging in a gunfight with the Hitmen or exploring the simulated game environment. Table 6.20 represents the actum interactions afforded players after Aiden’s gunfight with the Hitmen, which enabled him to explore the simulated game world. Image 33a portrayed Aiden looking at Clara’s body and listening to her voice message. Images 33b, 33c and 33d depicted how players could use the right gear stick on the controller to pivot the camera around Aiden to investigate Aiden’s surroundings. Some examples of the buttons that players could press during the *soft-scripted* section include pressing the weapon wheel in which players could select a weapon they would like Aiden to

use as represented in Image 33e. Image 33f depicted Aiden after a weapon was selected from the wheel. In Images 33e and 33f, players could also move the game camera around Aiden. The actions players were required to press on the controller during these images are now described. Players could press the L1 trigger button to bring the weapon wheel up on the screen. The L2 button let players instruct Aiden to aim during the gunfight. Players could also tap the R1 button to use projectiles and other game consumables. Players could hold this button to aim when throwing the projectiles. The R2 button could be pressed to instruct Aiden to sprint in the simulated environment; however, the R2 button could be pressed while aiming to shoot. Players also had the option of not pressing the trigger buttons. The left gear stick on the game controller was used to navigate Aiden through the game environment. Players could instruct Aiden to reload his guns by pressing down on the left gear stick referred to as the L3 button. The right gear stick could rotate the camera around Aiden in the simulated world. Players could press down on the right gear stick, referred to as R3 to instruct Aiden to look and focus on particular areas or objects in the game world. All images represented in Table 6.20 co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of capacity regarding Aiden’s physical strength and mental capacity. The co-patterning of ludic operations with visual evaluative meaning enabled the representation of Aiden’s fighting and exploring abilities during the *soft-scripted* segment. Overall, the actum interactions during the *soft-scripted* segment enabled players to instruct Aiden to complete game tasks through fighting and exploring actions.

Table 6.20 Aiden’s soft-scripting – actum fighting and exploring interactions






Image	Verbal Description	Fighting Trigger	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	33a Aiden listens to a voice message to him by Clara.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke






Image	Verbal Description	Fighting Trigger	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
			Not utilised left stick	Not utilised right stick	
	33b Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33c Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33d Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message and can access the weapon wheel.	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke


Image	Verbal Description	Fighting Trigger	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Not utilised left stick	Not utilised right stick	
	33e Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message and can access the weapon wheel.	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

6.16.2 Aiden's emergent narrative actum interactions

The *emergent narrative* segment of the game scene was realised by players being afforded full interactivity with the game environment. During the *emergent narrative* segment, Aiden was identified as having 12 actum interactions. Table 6.21 represents some examples of Aiden's actum interactions during the segment. Image 1a depicted Aiden driving to Clara as the South Chicago Club had placed a bounty on her. Image 1d represented Aiden hopping out of the car to run to Clara. Image 2b portrayed Aiden running as players selected a weapon from the wheel. Image 20b portrayed Aiden slowing down time during the gunfight. Slowing down time made it easier for Aiden to aim at the Hitmen. Image 20d depicted how players could move Aiden around the simulated environment to better aim at the Hitmen. Image 20e portrayed Aiden when he was shot by one of the Hitmen. A red filter covered the screen to simulate Aiden bleeding. The actions depicted by Aiden in the game scene were part of the actum gameplay within the *emergent narrative* segment. Actum interactions were triggered by players' input - such as pressing the controller's buttons. The different actum interactions triggered by players during the *emergent narrative* segment are now examined.

Table 6.21 Aiden's emergent narrative actum interactions during Clara Lille's Death Scene

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Initiated Action
	1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum
	1d Aiden hops out of the car.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum
	2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum
	20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum

	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden	Actum
---	--	---------------------------	-------	-------

6.16.3 Aiden's emergent narrative actum exploring interactions

Aiden represented 12 actum interactions initiated by players during the *emergent narrative* segment. The actum interactions involved Aiden exploring the simulated game environment and participating in a gunfight. Table 6.22 represents some examples of the actum interactions afforded players while Aiden was driving to rescue Clara Lille. Players could instruct Aiden as he was driving throughout the different suburbs of the simulated game world. Image 1a and 1d were some examples of the buttons that players could press, including instructing Aiden to enter and exit the car by pressing the triangle button. Players could press the square button to enable Aiden to conduct a contextual hack takedown. For example, if Aiden was being chased by the police and had passed through a traffic light intersection, players could instruct Aiden to hack the traffic lights to turn all the lights green causing all the traffic to collide. Players could press the touchpad button to view a game map representing all the suburbs of the simulated game world. Players could press the down button on the direction pad to set a waypoint marker to augment a blue line on the maps and simulated environment to lead Aiden to a specific location. Players could navigate Aiden through the simulated world using the left gear stick, while using the right gear stick enabled players to rotate the game camera around Aiden in the simulated game world. The actum interactions afforded Aiden co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of physical strength and mental capacity represented Aiden's ability to move and explore the simulated environment. Further actum interactions involved players instructing Aiden to fight within the simulated game environment are now examined.

Table 6.22 Aiden’s emergent narrative – actum exploring interactions during Clara Lille’s Death Scene



Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	<p>1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.</p>	<p>Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car</p> <p>Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown</p> <p>Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions</p> <p>Options – pause</p> <p>Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream</p> <p>touch pad button - game map</p> <p>up-button - open smartphone</p> <p>down-button - set way point (contextual)</p> <p>right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music</p> <p>no buttons used</p>	<p>Left stick – avatar movement</p> <p>L3 – reload</p> <p>Not utilised left stick</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p> <p>R3 – focus</p> <p>Not utilised right stick</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke</p>
	<p>1a Aiden is driving to Clara Lille as she the South Chicago Club has placed a bounty on her. A marker is placed in the map located in the bottom right corner, indicating where Clara is located.</p>	<p>Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car</p> <p>Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown</p> <p>Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions</p>	<p>Left stick – avatar movement</p> <p>L3 – reload</p> <p>Not utilised left stick</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p> <p>R3 – focus</p> <p>Not utilised right stick</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used			
	1d Aiden hops out of the car.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual)	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music			
		no buttons used			

6.16.4 Aiden’s emergent narrative actum fighting interactions

Players were also afforded actum interactions to enable Aiden to participate in gunfights during the segment. Table 6.23 represents the actum interactions afforded players while Aiden was fighting the Hitmen. Players could press buttons on the control to instruct Aiden to perform actions during a gunfight. Some examples of the buttons that were pressed by players included the L1 button to draw a gun from the weapon wheel as represented in Image 2b. The R1 button could be tapped to use a projectile. Players could aim where they would like the projectile to go by holding the R1 button. Players could press the R2 button to instruct Aiden to sprint. The R2 button could also be pressed to shoot Aiden’s guns during a fight as represented in Images 20b, 20d and 20e. Further actum abilities are depicted in Images 20b, 20d and 20e as players could press the triangle button to enable Aiden to use or pick up objects. Players could tap the square button to instruct Aiden to use his mobile to hack the ctOS to scan for another character’s profile to find out information about them. Aiden could enter covert mode by players pressing the cross button. Players could press the touchpad button to view the suburb and location maps of the simulated world. Players used the directional pad buttons to open Aiden’s mobile by pressing up, pressing right enabled players to skip a song playing. Players stopped a song by holding the right button. Aiden navigated throughout a simulated environment by players using the left gear stick. Players pressed the left gear stick, referred to as the L3 button to reload Aiden’s guns. Players could rotate the game camera around Aiden using the right gear stick. Pressing down on the right stick referred to as R3 enables players to slow down time to help Aiden better focus when aiming at the Hitmen. Players could also press the circle button to instruct Aiden to vault, climb or melee while in covert mode. The circle button was pressed by players to exit covert mode. The actum fighting interactions of Images 2b, 20b, 20d and 20e co-patterned with evaluative meanings concerning judgements of physical strength, mental capacity and insecurity, which support Aiden’s perception and abilities within the simulated game world to be realised. Overall, the actum interactions during the *emergent narrative* segment enable players to instruct Aiden to complete game tasks through exploring the simulated environment or fighting the Hitmen.

Table 6.23 Aiden’s emergent narrative – actum fighting interactions




Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.		L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.		L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	2b During this time players are able to select a weapon for Aiden to use to help save Clara.		L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles		Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
			R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used			Not utilised right stick	
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke



Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	<p>Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car</p> <p>Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown</p> <p>Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions</p> <p>Options – pause</p> <p>Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream</p> <p>touch pad button - game map</p> <p>up-button - open smartphone</p> <p>down-button - set way point (contextual)</p> <p>right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music</p> <p>no buttons used</p>	<p>L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel</p> <p>L2 – aiming</p> <p>R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles</p> <p>R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot</p> <p>no trigger used</p>	<p>Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover</p>	<p>Left stick – avatar movement</p> <p>L3 – reload</p> <p>Not utilised left stick</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p> <p>R3 – focus</p> <p>Not utilised right stick</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke</p>
	20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	<p>Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car</p> <p>Square - (tap) profiler on/off,</p>	<p>L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel</p> <p>L2 – aiming</p>	<p>Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover</p>	<p>Left stick – avatar movement</p> <p>L3 – reload</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p>	<p>Judgement: +ve</p> <p>Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke</p>


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		(hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used	R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used		Not utilised left stick	R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	
	20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		<p>Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions</p> <p>Options – pause</p> <p>Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream</p> <p>touch pad button - game map</p> <p>up-button - open smartphone</p> <p>down-button - set way point (contextual)</p> <p>right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music</p> <p>no buttons used</p>	no trigger used				
	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	<p>Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car</p> <p>Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown</p> <p>Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions</p> <p>Options – pause</p>	<p>L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel</p> <p>L2 – aiming</p> <p>R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles</p> <p>R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot</p> <p>no trigger used</p>	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover	<p>Left stick – avatar movement</p> <p>L3 – reload</p> <p>Not utilised left stick</p>	<p>Right stick – rotate camera</p> <p>R3 – focus</p> <p>Not utilised right stick</p>	<p>Judgement: -ve</p> <p>Capacity:</p> <p>Physical weakness:</p> <p>Provoke</p>


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used					
	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke


Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used					
	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/melee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke

Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
		down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used					

6.17 Research Sub-Question Three: Non-playable characters

The ludic operations about non-playable characters will now be described. Table 6.24 represents how the ludic operations about non-playable characters vary within and between characters. The frequency of the interactivity and initiated actions of the non-playable characters occurring in the scenes will now be reported. During the scene, Clara represents 21 interactive and initiated actions and the Hitmen 11.



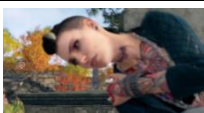

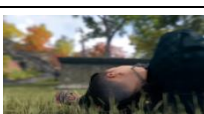

Table 6.24 Non-playable characters’ interactivity and initiated actions in Clara Lille’s Death Scene

Interactivity and initiated actions	Characters		
	Clara	The Hit-man/men	Grand Total
Emergent Narrative		5	5
Tactum		5	5
Scripted	17	6	23
Factum	17	6	23
Soft-scripted	4		4
Factum	4		4
Grand Total	21	11	32

6.17.1 Clara’s scripted factum interactions

Clara Lille’s Death scene was divided into the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. The *scripted* segments were realised by the film like cut scenes and were coupled with factum interactions. Clara represented 17 *scripted* factum interaction as listed in Table 2 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 6.25 represents some examples of the *scripted* factum interactions including Clara. Image 9 depicted Clara turning around to see Aiden running towards her. Image 11 portrayed Clara seeing the Hitmen targeting her. Images 17 and 18 represented Clara after being shot and falling to the ground. Image 19 depicted Clara lying on the ground after being shot. Image 31 represented Aiden reaching for Clara’s phone beside her body. All the images in Table 6.25 provoked affective evaluative meanings of insecurity concerning Clara’s surprise, fear and unhappiness. The actions represented by Clara during these images were a part of the *scripted* segment and were initiated by the game’s programming.

Table 6.25 Clara Lille’s scripted factum interactions




Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	9 Clara turns around to see Aiden running towards her.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Surprised: Flag
	11 Clara turns around to see the Hitmen aiming at her.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Surprised: Afford
	17 Clara continues to fall to the ground while being shot.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Fear: Afford
	18 Clara is shot again and falls to the ground.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Fear: Afford
	19 Clara dies while lying on the ground.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Flag
	31 Aiden reaching towards Clara’s phone, which is lying beside her.	<i>Scripted</i>	Clara	Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke

6.17.2 The Hitmen’s scripted factum interactions

The Hitmen represented six *scripted* factum interactions as listed in Table 3 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 6.26 represented some examples of the *scripted* factum interaction involving the Hitmen. Images 4, 6 and 7 represented the South Chicago Club Hitmen approaching Clara. Images 10, 12 and 14 represented the Hitmen aiming at Clara. The actions of the Hitmen in the images co-patterned with evaluative meanings concerning judgements of capacity and affective insecurity. All the images were represented from the *scripted* game segment and the portrayed actions by the Hitmen were initiated by the game’s programming.

Table 6.26 The Hitmen's scripted factum interactions


Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative meaning
	4 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	4 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	6 More South Chicago Club Hitmen runs towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	6 More South Chicago Club Hitmen runs towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	7 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara and hides.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	7 A South Chicago Club hitman runs towards Clara and hides.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	10 A South Chicago Club hitman loads his gun ready to aim at Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	10 A South Chicago Club hitman loads his gun ready to aim at Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	12 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative meaning
					strength: Provoke
	12 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Provoke
	14 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	14 A hitman aiming towards Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	The Hitman/men	Factum	Affect: -ve Security: Disquiet: Flag

6.17.3 Clara's soft-scripted factum interaction

The *soft-scripted* segments were realised by players having some interaction with the simulated environment. Soft scripting was used by game designers to deliver the game's narrative while making the game environment interactive for players. Clara represented four *soft-scripted* factum interactions as listed in Table 2 of the supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). Table 6.27 represented an example of soft scripting factum interactions representing Clara. Image 33f occurred after the gunfight and depicted Clara's body lying on the ground as Aiden listened to Clara's voice message. Clara's representation was a factum interaction that was initiated by the programming of the game whenever the game camera was positioned to look at where Clara was lying at the end of the scene.



Table 6.27 Clara Lille’s soft-scripted factum interaction

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable	Initiated Action
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Clara	Factum

6.17.4 The Hitmen’s emergent narrative tactum interactions

The Hitmen also represented actions during the *emergent narrative* segment of the scene. Five instances concerning the tactum interactions of the Hitmen were identified during the *emergent narrative* segment as listed in Table 3 of the ludic operation supplementary material (refer to <https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). These actions occurred during the gun fight with Aiden and were classified as tactum as they represent interaction between two or more game objects within the simulated world. The tactum interactions afforded the Hitmen included shooting, walking and chasing Aiden. These tactum interactions were depicted by the Hitmen firing at Aiden in the background of Images 20a, 20b, 20c, 20d and 20e of Table 6.28. The actions of the Hitmen co-patterned with evaluative meanings concerning judgements of their physical strength when fighting Aiden.

Table 6.28 The Hitmen’s emergent narrative tactum interactions

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Player-Game Interactions	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Hitman/men	Tactum	Shoot Chase, walk, stand and chat	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Hitman/men	Tactum	Shoot Chase, walk, stand and chat	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20c Aiden reloading his gun.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Hitman/men	Tactum	Shoot Chase, walk, stand and chat	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20d The player is able to move Aiden around to chase after and better aim at the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Hitman/men	Tactum	Shoot Chase, walk, stand and chat	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20e When Aiden is shot by the Hitmen the screen turns red.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	The Hitman/men	Tactum	Shoot Chase, walk, stand and chat	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

6.18 Coupling and similarities

A deeper assessment of the ludic operations about characters realised in the scene were examined by describing the coupling amongst interactivity, character and ludic action resources that occurred in the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments. The coupling occurred when two or more characters were represented in an image. Table 6.29 represented a sample of the coupling amongst the playable and non-playable characters, the interactivity and initiated action during the scene. Image 20a depicted Aiden and the Hitmen during the gunfight. The image represented the simultaneous coupling between the *emergent narrative* interactivity, playable and non-playable characters and actum and tactum initiated

actions. The simultaneous coupling between the above mentioned *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* resources, co-patterned with evaluative meanings about Aiden's judgements of physical and mental capacity and the Hitmen's judgements of physical capacity. Image 29 depicted Aiden looking upon Clara's lifeless body. The image represents the coupling between *scripted* interactivity, playable and non-playable characters and factum initiated actions. The coupling co-patterned with Aiden's depicted visual evaluative meaning of affective unhappiness. Image 33f depicted Aiden listening to the voice message by Clara as players explored the environment. The image represented the coupling between the *soft-scripted* interactivity, playable and non-playable characters and actum and factum resources. The coupling co-patterned with evaluative meanings concerning judgements of Aiden's physical and mental capacity. The analysis revealed a strong converging coupling between the *scripted* interactivity and game-initiated factum interactions. This similarity in coupling was found across playable and non-playable characters represented in Table 6.17 and Table 6.24. There was also a converging co-patterning between *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactivity and evaluative meanings concerning judgements of capacity. The coupling and similarities between playable and non-playable characters during the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the game scene realised the intersection of each characters' evaluative positions and their struggle for legitimacy within the fictive game world.

Table 6.29 Example of co-patterning of ludic operations and evaluative meanings during different interactive segments

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable	Non-Playable	Initiated Action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	<i>Emergent Narrative</i>		The Hit-man/men	Tactum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	29 Aiden looking upon Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden		Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke
	29 Aiden looking upon Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>		Clara	Factum	
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>		Clara	Factum	

6.19 Ludic operation summary

In summary, the game scene was divided into three segments, *scripted* film like segments, *soft-scripted* segments, which afforded players some interactivity and *emergent narrative* segments, which afforded players full interactivity with the game environment. During the film like segment, Aiden used factum interactions that were initiated by the game's programming. The *scripted* factum interactions concerning Aiden co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity, unhappiness and judgements of capacity concerning Aiden's physical strength. During the *soft-scripted* segments, Aiden used actum interactions triggered by player's input, such as pressing the buttons on the game controller to select a gun from the weapon wheel or using the gear sticks to move Aiden around the simulated environment or pivot the game camera around Aiden. The *soft-scripted* actum interactions concerning Aiden co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings portraying judgements of Aiden's physical and mental capacity. The *emergent narrative* segment represented actum interactions in which players pressed buttons on the controller to instruct Aiden to participate in a gunfight or explore the simulated game world. The *emergent narrative* actum interactions concerning Aiden co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of Aiden's physical and mental capacity.

During the scene, non-playable characters such as Clara and the Hitmen were represented. The actions of these characters were depicted during the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the scene. Clara used factum interactions initiated by the game's programming during the *scripted* film like segments. Clara's *scripted* factum interactions co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings of unhappiness and insecurity concerning her surprise and fear at being shot at by the Hitmen. In the *soft-scripted* segment at the end of the scene, Clara lay murdered and therefore represents a factum interaction generated by the game's programming. During the *scripted* segment, the Hitmen used factum interactions generated by the game's programming. The Hitmen's *scripted* factum interactions co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of their physical capacity to murder Clara. In the *emergent narrative* segment, the Hitmen used tactum interactions generated by their interaction with Aiden. The Hitmen's *emergent narrative* tactum interactions co-patterned with visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of their physical capacity to target Aiden. The analysis revealed a converging coupling between *scripted* interactivity and game initiated factum interactions, which were apparent across playable and non-playable characters. The analysis also revealed a converging co-pattern between *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactivity and evaluative meanings

regarding judgements of physical capacity. The playable and non-playable characters coupling and similarities during the different segments of the game scene intersected to imply each characters' evaluative positions and their struggle to legitimise their position within the game's narrative story world.

6.20 Summary

The findings from the data analysis of the *Watch Dogs* scene in which Clara Lille's was murdered were reported throughout this chapter. First, Section 6.3 presented the results of the inscribed language evaluative meanings about the characters. Second, Section 6.5 reported the results of the invoked language evaluative meanings about characters. Third, Section 6.19 described the analysis of the visual evaluative meanings about the characters. Fourth, Section 6.13 examined the results of the player-game character affiliation from the *Watch Dogs* game scene. Fifth, Section 6.15 reported the results of the playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions. Sixth, Section 6.16 presented the results of the non-playable characters' interactivity and initiated actions. Next, Chapter Seven answers the overarching Research Question and Research Sub-Questions of the thesis by conducting a cross analysis of the results from *Arkham Asylum* presented in Chapter Five and the results of *Watch Dogs* presented in Chapter Six. The research findings are then synthesised to position the findings in the field of previous research concerning how intermodal connections between evaluative meaning in language and image modalities contribute to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION – LEVELLING UP

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in response to the research question and research sub-questions of the thesis. First, the research problem and questions are revisited in Section 7.2. Second, the findings in response to each research sub-questions are addressed. The findings in relation to Research Sub-Question One concerning language evaluative meanings about characters are discussed in Section 7.3. The findings in relation to Research Sub-Question One concerning visual evaluative meanings about characters are examined in Section 7.4. Section 7.5 explores the research findings in response to Research Sub-Question Two concerning player affiliation. Section 7.6 describes the research findings in response to Research Sub-Question Three concerning the ludic operations. A cross-analysis of the results of the two action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) from Chapters Five and Six are drawn on in each section to validate the findings of the thesis. Then a synthesis of the research findings is conducted in each section to position the findings in relation to the field of previous research concerning how intermodal connections between evaluative meanings in language and image meaning systems contributed to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values. Third, the overarching Research Question is addressed to answer how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters in Section 7.7.

7.2 Revisiting the research problem

This thesis investigated how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Previous research analysing evaluative meanings of attitude in language and image has informed discussions about the values conveyed in texts, such as newspaper articles and animated films (Economou, 2009, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). Findings from this research literature revealed that intermodal connections between evaluative meaning in language and image meaning systems contributed to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values. Chapter Two reviewed relevant evaluative meaning literature and identified that this research approach has been completed on texts such news articles and animated films and was not previously undertaken with action-adventure videogames traditionally designed

for male audiences. The evaluative meanings resource of language and image system networks and their intermodal connections offered semiotic tools for communicating evaluative meanings about characters in narratives of action-adventure videogames. However, videogames also engage players through the operation of playable game characters, which is significantly different from the news articles and animated films to which the evaluative meanings resources have been previously applied. This thesis investigated how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames conveyed values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. It has been argued that the co-patterning between the ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources about game characters form evaluative meaning patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames.

In addressing the above research problem, this thesis asked the overarching research question:

How do action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters?

Answering the overarching research question required the following research sub-questions to be investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?

Research Sub-Question One utilised the language and visual attitudinal evaluative meaning resources situated in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework. The findings related to the language evaluative meaning are discussed in Section 7.3. The findings focused on the visual evaluative meaning are discussed in Section 7.4.

2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

Research Sub-Question Two utilises the focalisation and interactive meaning resources situated in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework. The findings related to the player affiliation are reported in Section 7.5.

3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters?

Research Sub-Question Three utilises the character and character actions' *representational* system networks and interactivity *compositional* system networks situated in the *ludic dimension* of the conceptual framework. The findings related to the ludic operations are reported in Section 7.6. The findings focused on the language evaluative meaning are now discussed.

7.3 Research Sub-Question One: Language evaluative meaning

The first research sub-question investigated how the frequency of different types of language evaluative meanings about characters varied within and between the characters in action-adventure videogames. The conceptual framework's *narrative dimension's interpersonal* evaluative meaning resources of attitude (Martin & White, 2005) were utilised to examine Research Sub-Question One: how the frequency of different types of evaluative meanings about characters varied within and between characters in the action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). This study found that the varying frequency of the evaluative meanings about and between the characters was indicative of a diverging communicated evaluative meaning between the protagonist and antagonist game characters in the selected scenes.

7.3.1 Game scenes cross analysis: *Batman Arkham Asylum*

Results of the protagonist characters from *Arkham Asylum* revealed that Batman's language evaluative meanings consist of one inscribed negative judgement of the Joker's capacity and 17 invoked evaluative meanings comprising 11 judgements of social esteem, three affective meanings and three attitudes of appreciation. Batman coupled evaluative meanings of invoked judgement of capacity and insecurity; invoked judgements of tenacity and physical and mental capacity; and inscribed and involved judgements of social esteem. Overall, Batman communicates more judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength, mental capacity and tenacity, which is indicative of his adversarial nature with the super-villains such as the Joker. Batman's attempts to resolve issues created by the antagonist characters within the game's narrative storyline indicate his struggle to legitimise his evaluative meanings amongst the different characters. It can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meanings about Batman that he does emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but the higher frequency of judgements of physical strength and mental capacity expressed by Batman is indicative of a physical enforcement and mental perception of justice. It can be further inferred that Batman does not hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values defined in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). Batman is a vigilante superhero operating without legal authority.

The Commissioner represented 10 inscribed language evaluative meanings, including five judgements of social esteem, three attitudes of appreciation and two judgements of social sanction. Also, the Commissioner invokes four judgements of social esteem, two attitudes of

affect and one attitude of appreciation. Inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings of social esteem and appreciation are coupled by the Commissioner during the scene. The Commissioner's inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings indicate how he perceives the Joker as immoral owing to his criminal capabilities. The Commissioner acknowledges his capability to manage people such as the SWAT team, the media and Batman. It is indicated that the Commissioner and Batman have a close relationship as he can sense Batman's disquiet about the Joker's surrender, but the Commissioner also acknowledges Batman's negative normality. This acknowledgement infers a difference between the Police Commissioner, who has the legal authority to deal with the criminals, and Batman, who does not have such legal authority.

The protagonist characters of the Commissioner and Batman have a common interest in capturing the villains owing to their insecurity about the criminals. It can be inferred from the Commissioner's sensing Batman's disquiet about the Joker's surrender that the two characters share a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) in capturing the super-villains. Also, it can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meanings about the Commissioner that he emphasises the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). The value of justice and the rule of law underpin his evaluative meanings concerning his capacity to manage the Joker's invasion of City Hall and the Mayor being held hostage. The values also underpin his judgements of impropriety about the Joker's immorality and capabilities. The Commissioner's obedience to the rule of law can be questioned owing to his collaboration with Batman, despite the Commissioner's acknowledgement of Batman's negative normality, possibly owing to Batman's being a vigilante who dresses as a bat. Notwithstanding the shared values between the Commissioner and Batman, the two characters represent divergent evaluative meaning positions within the selected game scene.

The language evaluative meanings of the Guard include three inscribed and four invoked evaluative meanings. The inscribed attitudes include one attitude of affect and two attitudes of appreciation. The invoked attitudes include two attitudes of affect, one judgement of social esteem and one judgement of social sanction. The asylum Guard couples inscribed and invoked attitudes of affect, appreciation, and judgements of social esteem and sanction. Overall, the Guard is similar to Batman and the Commissioner, who express similar evaluative meanings of insecurity concerning the antagonist characters, such as the Joker and the inmates. However, the Guard's inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings acknowledge Batman's support in resolving the issues created by the antagonist characters, but imply his

anxiety about the capability of the antagonist characters and about having to ask Batman to stop escorting the Joker into the asylum. Therefore, the Guard expresses a divergent evaluative meaning position compared with the other protagonist characters. From the evaluative meaning patterns of the Guard, it can be inferred that he is feeling insecure about the Joker and the inmates. The Guard also acknowledges Batman's capacity to deal with the criminals. In summary, it can be inferred that the Guard's evaluative meanings are underpinned by a social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014).

Results of the analysis of the antagonist characters from *Arkham Asylum* reveal Harley Quinn's language evaluative meanings, including one invoked attitude of appreciation concerning her reaction to Batman's comment that it would be the last night that he would have to deal with the Joker. Harley's evaluative meaning implies a divergent position in which she contests the legitimacy of the protagonist character's evaluative meaning and indicates that she has a closer relationship to the Joker than the protagonist characters have. It can be inferred from the evaluative meaning expressed by Harley Quinn that she shares a moral value of collaboration with the Joker (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Also, it can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meaning about Harley Quinn that she does not emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to her relationship with the Joker in the game narrative's storyline.

The Joker inscribes 13 language evaluative meanings: four attitudes of affect, two judgements of social esteem, one judgement of social sanction and six attitudes of appreciation. Thirty-five invoked evaluative meanings are communicated by the Joker: nine affective attitudes, 18 judgements of social esteem, seven judgements of social sanction and one attitude of appreciation. The Joker couples invoked judgements of social esteem, social sanction and affect with invoked judgements of social esteem and sanction. Also, the Joker couples inscribed and invoked attitudes of appreciation and judgements of impropriety; judgements of social esteem and sanction; attitudes of affect and judgements of social esteem; attitudes of affect and appreciation; and appreciation and judgements of social sanction. Overall, it can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meaning about the Joker that he does not emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and does not hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). The Joker's expressed evaluative meanings indicate his divergent evaluative position, which contests the legitimacy of the evaluative meaning positions of the protagonist characters in the selected game scene. The Joker expresses inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings to communicate his sarcastic humour and positive

and negative judgements of social esteem, social sanction and assessments of appreciation, which subvert the attempts at justice made by the protagonist characters. In this way, the Joker's evaluative meanings present a divergent position, which contests the legitimacy of the protagonist characters. In summary, this study found that the varying frequency of the communicated language evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters indicates how each character from *Arkham Asylum* expresses a diverging evaluative meaning pattern within the analysed scene.

7.3.2 Game scenes cross analysis: *Watch Dogs*

The findings about language evaluative meaning were validated by the investigation of how the frequency of different types of evaluative meaning about characters varied within and between characters in the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). Results of the analysis of the protagonist characters from *Watch Dogs* revealed that Aiden expressed two invoked evaluative meanings, including one judgement of physical strength and another judgement of impropriety concerning the antagonist character Damien. Aiden coupled these two communicated evaluative meanings concerning his former hacking partner Damien, who tries to manipulate Aiden into helping him. The conflict between Aiden and Damien indicates a struggle for legitimacy representing divergent evaluative positions between the protagonist and antagonist game characters within the selected game scene. It can be inferred that Aiden's evaluative meanings imply the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his concern for what Damien has done.

T-Bone communicates three involved evaluative meanings during the game scene: one attitude of affective insecurity and two judgements of capacity. These evaluative meanings are coupled by T-Bone to express his concern about the South Chicago Club cars heading in Aiden and Clara's direction and T-Bone's ability to track the cars. Similarly to his ally Aiden, T-Bone acknowledges the positive capacity of the antagonists' characters – in this case, the South Chicago Club – which also affords an attitude of affective insecurity. However, he also acknowledges his capacity to track the Club cars' movements. Therefore, T-Bone's communicated evaluative meanings diverge from Aiden's but still imply a struggle for legitimacy between the protagonist and antagonist characters within the game's fictive world. It can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meanings about T-Bone that he emphasises the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his concern with the actions of the antagonist characters. Also, it can be inferred that T-Bone represents a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to his partnership with Aiden during the game.

Clara expresses 12 inscribed evaluative meanings during the scene: three attitudes of affect and nine judgements of social esteem. Clara invokes 16 evaluative meanings, including three judgements of social esteem, seven judgements of social sanction and six appreciations. Clara couples invoked evaluative meanings of veracity and propriety with inscribed and invoked evaluative meanings of social esteem and propriety. Clara's evaluative meanings represent a diverging position compared to the other protagonist characters, Aiden and T-Bone. Clara's evaluative meanings focus on her reflections about her past work as a hacker for the South Chicago Club and her actions leading to Aiden's niece's death. Clara reflects on the impropriety of her actions and how she can change to be more ethically responsible within the fictive game narrative. However, Clara's decision to help Aiden and not to work for the South Chicago Club leads to her murder. It can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meanings about Clara that she emphasises the social and political values of justice and accountability (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) owing to her decision to help Aiden to make up for her involvement in his niece's death. Also, Clara emphasises values of morality such as friendship and collaboration owing to her support for and work with Aiden. It can be inferred that Clara does not hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values defined in Chapter One (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to her work as a hacker and her involvement in the death of Aiden's niece. In summary, this study finds that the varying frequency of the communicated language evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters indicates how each character from *Watch Dogs* expresses a diverging evaluative meaning pattern within the analysed game scene.

7.3.3 Positioning language evaluative meaning findings

Positioning the findings about language evaluative meaning in relation to previous research about how intermodal connections concerning evaluative meaning in the language meaning system contribute to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values is now discussed. Findings about the language evaluative meanings indicate that the patterns of evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters in the selected game scenes from the analysed action-adventure videogames reveal how a game's narrative is constructed to legitimise an ideal reading position about a game character (Macken-Horarik, 2003b). Macken-Horarik (2003b) demonstrated how a narrative's ideal reading position and evaluative meaning patterns confirm or disconfirm the evaluative positions of characters within a narrative's fictive story world. In relation to the videogame *Arkham Asylum*, players may be entertained by the Joker's humour and immoral behaviour, which occur during narrative complications, but view them as divergent owing to the game being designed to

naturalise Batman as the narrative's protagonist. In relation to *Watch Dogs*, players may be entertained by the narrative complication regarding Clara's decision to work no longer for the South Chicago Club owing to her involvement in Aiden's niece's death, but view this as a divergent position owing to the game being designed to naturalise Aiden's position as the narrative's protagonist.

The divergent evaluative meanings represented by the characters in the selected action-adventure videogames contribute to understanding the conflict among players' *real*, *virtual* and *projective identities*, as introduced in Chapter One (Gee, 2003). The *real-world identity* refers to the identity of the gamers playing the game, such as their name, age, gender and nationality. The *virtual identity* refers to the game characters' identity used by the players in the simulated world – for example, taking on the role of Batman or Aiden and controlling the avatars in the selected action-adventure videogames. The *projective identity* refers to the gamers' values and desires for what they hope that their virtual avatar's identity will become while playing the game. The evaluative meanings communicated by the characters may conflict with players' *real-world*, *virtual* or *projective identities*. For example, Batman's adversarial nature with the super-villains, such as the Joker, realised through his communicated evaluative meanings of physical strength, mental capacity and tenacity, may conflict with players who value collaboration between opposing parties to resolve issues. This conflict may cause tension between a player's *real-world identity* values and the values of the *virtual identity* of Batman within the narrative of the game. This tension between identities could lead players to resist the ideal reading position of the narrative texts described by Macken-Horarik (2003b) and take a tactical or resistant reading position (Martin, 1995) when playing the game. Therefore, the first finding contributes to the overarching research question concerning how action-adventure videogames convey values by explicating how characters indicate diverging communicated evaluative meanings within and between game characters in action-adventure videogames. A deeper understanding of how the game scenes communicate evaluative meanings about characters also requires examining how characters visually represent evaluative meanings in action-adventure videogames.

7.4 Research Sub-Question One: Visual evaluative meaning

The first research sub-question also investigated how the frequency of different types of visual evaluative meaning about characters varied within and between characters in action-adventure videogames. The conceptual framework's narrative dimension interpersonal evaluative meaning resources of attitude (Martin & White, 2005) were used to examine the frequency of the different kinds of visual evaluative meanings about characters in the action-

adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). This study found that the varying frequency of the evaluative meanings about and between characters is indicative of the diverging representation of evaluative meanings within and between protagonist and antagonist game characters in the sampled game scenes.

7.4.1 Game scene cross analysis: *Batman Arkham Asylum*

The results of the analysis of the protagonist characters from *Arkham Asylum* revealed that Batman's visual evaluative meanings consist of attitudes of security and positive judgements of his capacity to fight the super-villains. Batman couples depicted judgements of physical strength and mental capacity. The depicted visual evaluative meanings about Batman represent security and positive judgements of his perception of the simulated game world. Also, the depictions represent Batman's physical capacity to manage the super-criminals. The visual evaluative meanings indicate Batman's struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative position over the super-criminals. The asylum Guard depicts visual evaluative meanings of affective security. The evaluative meaning of security is depicted through ideational means such as the Guard's uniform and associated badges, which require players to draw on their prior knowledge of a Guard representing security to make the attitudinal response. Therefore, the Guard's evaluative meaning is like Batman's in the secure management of the criminals, but diverges from Batman's owing to the absence of evaluative meanings regarding physical strength. It can be inferred from the patterns of Batman and the Guard's visual evaluative meanings that the characters emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020).

The results of the analysis of the antagonist characters from *Arkham Asylum* illustrate the Joker's visual evaluative meanings, including one affective attitude of happiness, one affective attitude of satisfaction and three judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength, weakness and mental capacity. The Joker depicts divergent evaluative meanings that challenge the legitimacy of Batman and the asylum Guard. The other antagonist characters include Harley Quinn and the inmates. Harley Quinn's visual evaluative meanings provoked judgements of mental capacity, revealing her perception in the game world of seeking to support the Joker. The inmates depict visual judgements of capacity concerning their physical strength to chase, punch and kick Batman. Harley and the inmates' visual evaluative meanings imply their allegiance to the Joker but represent divergent visual evaluative positions, as Harley's position focuses on her mental perception of the game world and the inmates' position focuses on their physical capacity to implement the Joker's plan to

challenge the legitimacy of the protagonist characters. It can be inferred from the patterns of visual evaluative meaning about the Joker, Harley Quinn and the inmates that they share a moral value of collaboration (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Also, it can be inferred that the antagonist characters do not emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or obey a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to their position as villains in the game's narrative.

During Batman's fight with the inmates, the Joker, the inmates and Batman couple depictions of physical strength and affective happiness concerning joy. During the game scene, Batman depicts a higher frequency of evaluative meanings, and most of Batman's evaluative meanings consist of judgements of social esteem concerning physical strength and mental capacity. The depicted judgements of social esteem represent how Batman's evaluative meanings diverge from the antagonist characters and indicate his struggle to assert his legitimacy over the antagonist characters. Also, the higher frequency of Batman's visual judgements of mental capacity indicates how Batman's evaluative meanings are designed to be a naturalised reading position of the videogame. In summary, this study finds that the varying frequency of the depicted evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters indicates how each character in *Arkham Asylum* expresses a divergent evaluative meaning pattern within the analysed scene. However, the protagonist characters imply legitimacy in relation to Batman's evaluative meaning position, and the antagonist characters challenge this legitimacy. The struggle for legitimacy concerning Batman is indicative of his evaluative meaning position being the naturalised reading position of the videogame.

7.4.2 Game scenes cross analysis: *Watch Dogs*

The validity of these findings was further established by investigating how the frequency of different types of visual evaluative meaning about the characters varied within and between the characters in the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). Results of the analysis of the protagonist characters from *Watch Dogs* revealed that Aiden expressed 45 visual evaluative meanings, including 10 affective meanings and 35 judgements of social esteem. 18 of the judgements of social esteem depicted physical strength, and 16 were depictions of mental capacity. Aiden coupled judgements of physical strength, mental capacity and insecurity. Aiden's visual evaluative meanings indicate his struggle to assert the legitimacy of his evaluative position over the antagonist characters in the game. Furthermore, the 45 visual evaluative meanings attributed to Aiden indicate his role as a central character and imply a naturalised reading position for him in the game. It can be inferred from the

patterns of visual evaluative meanings about Aiden that he emphasises the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014), but the frequency of judgements of physical and mental capacity depicted by Aiden indicated a physical enforcement and mental perception of justice. It can also be inferred that Aiden does not obey a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020) owing to his behaving as a vigilante to protect Clara from the Hitmen. During the game scene, Clara depicts 11 affective evaluative meanings. The affective meanings represent Clara's insecurity when being attacked by the antagonist Hitmen and the sadness of her murder as Aiden grieves. Clara's evaluative meanings represent her allied relationship with Aiden. However, ultimately her evaluative position diverges from Aiden's as it is all focused on affective evaluative meaning and Aiden's mainly focuses on judgements of social esteem. It can be inferred that Clara and Aiden were allies and shared a close relationship; therefore, a moral value of friendship can be inferred (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014).

The results of the antagonist characters in the sampled scene from *Watch Dogs* reveal 17 visual evaluative meanings concerning the Hitmen. These evaluative meanings include six affective meanings and 11 judgements of physical strength. The Hitmen couple evaluative meanings of physical strength and insecurity during the game scene. The evaluative meanings of the Hitmen indicate a diverging patterning in which they struggle to legitimise their evaluative position over the protagonist characters Aiden and Clara. It can be inferred from the patterns of evaluative meaning about the Hitmen that they do not emphasise the social and political value of justice (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) or hold a commitment to the rule of law as described by the Australian values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). In summary, this study finds that the varying frequency of the depicted visual evaluative meanings of the protagonist and antagonist characters indicates how each character in *Watch Dogs* expresses a divergent evaluative meaning pattern within the analysed scene. The divergent evaluative meaning patterns of the protagonist and antagonist characters represent the struggle for legitimacy between these characters in action-adventure games.

7.4.3 Positioning visual evaluative meaning findings

The findings about the visual evaluative meaning in relation to previous research concerning how intermodal connections concerning evaluative meaning in the visual meaning system contributed to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values are now discussed. The findings indicate that the evaluative meaning patterns of the protagonist and antagonist characters in the selected game scenes from the analysed action-adventure videogame reveal how a game's visual narrative is constructed to legitimise visually an ideal

reading position about a character (Macken-Horarik, 2003b). Similarly to findings about the language evaluative meaning, this thesis concludes that visual images contribute meaning to a narrative's ideal reading position and to how visual evaluative meaning patterns confirm or disconfirm the value positions of characters within a narrative's fictive story world. For example, in the game *Arkham Asylum*, Batman's visual evaluative meaning consists of attitudes of security and positive judgements of his capacity to fight the super-villains. Similarly to Batman, the asylum Guard depicts visual evaluative meanings of affective security concerning the management of the criminals. However, the Guard's visual evaluative position diverges from Batman's owing to the absence of evaluative meanings concerning the Guard's physical strength to fight the super-criminals. The divergence between the characters' visual evaluative meanings is also represented in the game scene from *Watch Dogs*. Aiden's evaluative meanings consist of affect and judgements of social esteem concerning depictions of his physical strength and mental capacity. Clara's visual evaluative meanings consist of affective evaluative meanings of insecurity when being attacked by the Hitmen and concerning the sadness of her murder. Ultimately, Clara's visual evaluative meanings diverge from Aiden's as Clara's is focused on affective evaluative meanings and Aiden's mainly on judgements of social esteem. This thesis has extended Macken-Horarik's (2003b) research, which focused solely on the language meaning system in narrative texts and not on the visual meaning system in multimodal texts such as action-adventure videogames. This study concludes that patterns of visual evaluative meanings about characters can be seen as divergent from the ideal reading position naturalised in the visual narratives of multimodal texts such as action-adventure videogames.

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the SFS approach of logogenetic synergy of Painter et al. (2013) was utilised for this thesis to understand how modalities such as language and image co-pattern to represent a unified meaning in action-adventure videogames through the concepts of *commitment* and *coupling*. This thesis concludes that the repeated co-patterning between language and image evaluative meanings during the unfolding of selected game scenes revealed a *diverging* co-patterning between the language and image meaning systems. A typical example of the diverging co-patterning occurring during the analysed game scenes is now discussed. The opening of the *Arkham Asylum* game scene depicts the Commissioner waiting at the entrance of the Intensive Treatment Facility. Batman arrives escorting the Joker into the facility. The Joker is restrained in a vertical stretcher. Batman inquires how the Commissioner's night has been. The Commissioner then recounts the events of the night leading to the Joker's surrender. Figure 7.1 represents the diverging co-patterning occurring during the unfolding opening of the scene. Batman affords a negative reaction to the

night: “Long night, Jim?”. The Commissioner inscribes several judgements of capacity concerning the Joker’s physical strength and impropriety: “Joker **invades** City Hall and **holds the Mayor hostage**”. The Commissioner also affords and inscribes judgements about his capacity: “leaving it to me to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you”. The Commissioner affords Batman with a negative judgement of normality by referring to Batman as “you” in the previous statement. The Commissioner ends his recount with a negative reaction regarding the night's events: “Yeah, it’s been **a helluva night**”.

The images accompanying the Commissioner’s recount depict a diverging evaluative meaning pattern involving Batman’s depiction as having an affective attitude of security concerning his confidence when escorting the Joker into the facility in Image 2. Image 4 represents Batman’s perception within the simulated game world through a provoked judgement of positive mental capacity. Additionally, Image 6 represents the Joker with a negative judgement of physical capacity as he is restrained in the vertical stretcher. The reader is asked to refer to the co-patterning supplementary material for further examples of the diverging co-patterning between language and image meaning systems in the analysed game scenes (<https://tinyurl.com/5c2rmywp>). The diverging co-patterning between language and image meaning systems is similar to previous SFS findings that revealed that picturebooks designed for older audiences represented a diverging co-pattern between the written language and the depicted images (Painter & Martin, 2011; Painter et al., 2013).

Language Meaning System

	Appraising item	Appraiser	Appraised	Inscribed	Invoked
1	Long night Jim?	Batman	The night		-vg. Reaction: Impact: Afford
2	Joker invades City Hall	Commissioner	Joker	+vg. Capacity: Physical strength	
2	Joker invades City Hall	Commissioner	Joker	-vg. Propriety: Immorality	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	Commissioner	Joker	+vg. Capacity: Physical strength	
3	and holds the Mayor hostage	Commissioner	Joker	-vg. Propriety: Immorality	
4	leaving it to me	Commissioner	Commissioner		+vg. Capacity: Physical strength: Afford
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	Commissioner	Commissioner	+vg. Capacity: Physical strength	
5	to juggle SWAT teams, the media and you.	Commissioner	Batman		-vg. Normality: Afford
6	Yeah, it's been helluva night	Commissioner	The night	-vg. Reaction: Quality	

Visual Meaning System











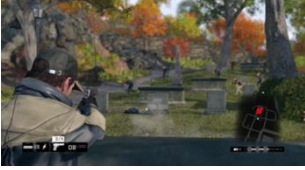
Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual attitude
	1 Commissioner Gordon waiting in the Intensive Treatment Facility		
	2 Batman and the Arkham guards escorting Joker in the Intensive Treatment Facility. The Joker is restrained in a vertical stretcher.	Batman	Affect: +vg. Security: Confidence: Flag
	3 Batman looks over to Commissioner Gordon and begins talking with him.		
	4 Commissioner talking to Batman.	Batman	Judgement: +vg. Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	5 Commissioner talking to Batman.		
	6 Commissioner talking to Batman as the Joker is escorted down the corridor.	Joker	Judgement: -vg. Capacity: Physical weakness: Flag
	7 Commissioner talking to Batman.		

Figure 7.1 Typical examples of divergent co-patterning of evaluative meaning

SFS literature is inconclusive about whether images can convey evaluative meanings of judgements (Economou, 2009; Martin, 2008a; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). This thesis contributes to this literature by concluding that visual images in action-adventure videogames can represent invoked judgements of capacity. The SFS literature is still inconclusive regarding whether images can convey evaluative meanings of judgements. It has been argued that visual meaning in picturebooks and news articles cannot represent inscribed attitudes of judgement (Economou, 2009; Martin, 2008a). However, research concerning picturebooks and animated movies demonstrated how visual images could inscribe attitudes of judgement through visual metaphors and symbols (Unsworth, 2014). Additionally, White (2014) investigated photographs that accompanied news articles and explained how these images could invoke attitudinal responses and position readers to take on a positive or negative evaluative meaning. The article concluded that viewers of images draw on their prior knowledge of a context presented in news articles to infer invoked visual evaluative meanings. This thesis concludes that visual images in action-adventure videogames can represent invoked judgements of physical and mental capacity. Examples of Batman's and Aiden's provoked judgements of physical strength from the analysed action-adventure games are included in Table 7.1. Images 22 and 30 depict Batman smashing and jumping through a glass window in pursuit of the Joker. Images 16 and 20a depict Aiden engaging in a gunfight with the Hitmen.

Table 7.1 Examples of provoked judgements of physical strength

Image	Verbal Description	Character	Visual Attitude
	22 Batman punching the glass to pursue the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	30 Batman breaking through the glass window to chase after the Joker.	Batman	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	16 Aiden takes cover to get ready to fire at the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

This thesis has not found evidence that visual images in action-adventure videogames can invoke judgements of propriety. Still, players may draw on their prior knowledge of a game’s narrative or their knowledge about protagonist and antagonist characters to infer the visual propriety or impropriety of a character. For example, players can draw on their prior knowledge of Batman being a superhero and the Joker having escaped to infer the visual propriety or impropriety of Batman’s action represented in Images 22 and 30. Also, players can draw on their prior knowledge of the game’s narrative storyline to infer the visual judgement of propriety or impropriety regarding Aiden’s involvement in the gunfight in Image 20a. In summary, the images in action-adventure videogames can depict judgements of a character’s capacity, but, similarly to research conducted by White (2014), players are required to draw on contextual knowledge provided by game designers and their prior knowledge to infer visual judgements of propriety or impropriety.

In conclusion, this study finds that the varying frequency of the visual evaluative meanings about and between characters is indicative of the diverging representation of evaluative meanings within and between protagonist and antagonist game characters in the

visual narrative of the examined game scenes. Moreover, the findings concerning the visual evaluative meaning resources contribute to addressing the overarching research question concerning how action-adventure videogames convey values by explicating how these games represent diverging depictions of visual evaluative meanings within and between game characters in action-adventure videogames. Next, the extent to which action-adventure games construct player-game character affiliations is explored.

7.5 Research Sub-Question Two: Player affiliation

The second research sub-question investigated the extent to which action-adventure videogames constructed player affiliation with different characters. The conceptual framework's narrative dimension interpersonal affiliation resources of focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) were used to address Research Sub-Question Two by examining the extent to which action-adventure videogames constructed player affiliations with different characters in the selected games. This study finds that player-game character affiliation orientates players with the lead protagonist character within the simulated game world. Therefore, the lead protagonist is implied as being the naturalised reading position when playing action-adventure games. Alternatively, player-game character affiliations that orientate players with antagonist characters imply a divergent reading position when playing the game. Additionally, the naturalised and divergent reading positions of action-adventure videogames are enhanced by the co-patterning of player-game character affiliation with the associated evaluative meanings about characters. For example, players being visually affiliated with a lead protagonist character legitimised the character's evaluative meanings and naturalised reading positions in the game. However, players being affiliated with antagonist characters creates a divergent reading position within the game as the evaluative meanings about the character are designed to be divergent within the fictive game narrative.

7.5.1 Game scenes cross analysis: *Batman Arkham Asylum*

Results of the analysis of the protagonist and antagonist characters from *Arkham Asylum* reveal that players are affiliated with Batman 16 times and with the Joker once. Also, players are affiliated with Harley Quinn twice during the analysed game scene. The higher frequency with which players are affiliated with Batman is indicative of how *Arkham Asylum* orientates players to the naturalised reading position of Batman as being the protagonist superhero within the game's fictive story world. The lower frequency with which players are

affiliated with the Joker and with Harley Quinn indicates how the game has been designed to represent the antagonist characters as divergent reading positions within the game's fictive narrative. The co-patterning of the player-game character affiliation with the visual evaluative meanings of mental capacity about Batman enhanced his legitimacy and naturalised reading position in the game and enhanced Batman's perception within the simulated game world. The player-game character affiliation also aligns players with Batman's inferred values discussed previously. However, the co-patterning of the player-game character affiliation with the evaluative meaning about the antagonist characters such as the Joker and Harley Quinn creates a divergent reading position in which players are orientated with divergent evaluative meanings within the fictive game world. It was previously discussed that the player-game character affiliation also aligns players with the inferred values of the antagonist characters less frequently than with those of the protagonist characters. This study finds that player-game character affiliation more frequently orientates players with Batman, the lead protagonist within the simulated game world of *Arkham Asylum*. Therefore, Batman is implied as being the naturalised reading position when playing the action-adventure games.

7.5.2 Game scenes cross analysis: *Watch Dogs*

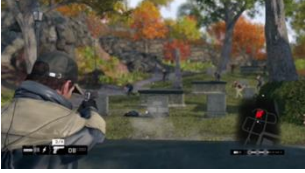
The validity of the player-game character affiliation findings is further established by the investigation of the extent to which the action-adventure videogame *Watch Dogs* constructed player affiliation with different characters. Results of the analysis of the lead protagonist character Aiden reveal that players are affiliated along with him 16 times and are not affiliated with any other character during the scene. Aiden being the only character with whom players are affiliated is indicative of how *Watch Dogs* orientates players to the naturalised reading position of Aiden as the lead protagonist within the game's fictive story world. The co-patterning of the player-game character affiliation with the evaluative meanings of mental capacity about Aiden enhanced his legitimacy and naturalised reading position in the game, enhancing Aiden's perception within the simulated game world. The player-game character affiliation also aligns players with Aiden's inferred values discussed previously. In summary, this study finds that player-game character affiliation orientates players with Aiden Pearce, the lead protagonist within the simulated game world of *Watch Dogs*. Therefore, Aiden is implied as being the naturalised reading position when playing the action-adventure game.

7.5.3 Positioning player affiliation findings

Positioning the findings about player-game character affiliation in relation to previous research concerning how intermodal connections between evaluative meanings contribute to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values is now discussed. The findings indicate how player-game character affiliation orientates players with the lead protagonist character within the simulated game world, which implies the naturalised reading position when playing action-adventure videogames. By contrast, player-game character affiliation, which orientates players with antagonist characters, implies a divergent reading position for players within the simulated game world. Previous research completed by Bradford (2010) described how player-game character affiliation was created by placing the game camera behind a game avatar, which enabled players to look upon the back of the avatar as it is navigated through the simulated game world. This thesis has enhanced the understanding of player-game character affiliation described by Bradford (2010) through the utilisation of the SFS affiliation resources of focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The SFS affiliation resources explicated how players are orientated to see along with or as a character during the analysed action-adventure game scenes. The focalisation resources offered explicit descriptions of how players are affiliated with game characters through a camera being placed behind the back of a character's shoulder to view the simulated game world along with the character, such as when Aiden is engaged in the gunfight or when players are positioned as Harley Quinn and view the game world from her first-person perspective with her arms or legs appearing in the edges of the images. The interactive meaning resources explicated how solidarity and involvement between players and game characters were created in the game scenes; for example, during the gunfight, players were focalised to see along with Aiden, but the use of a medium, frontal and eye-level camera frame created a social, involved and equal connection, which further enhanced the affiliation between players and Aiden during the scene.

This thesis concludes that the naturalised and divergent reading positions represented in action-adventure videogames are enhanced by a repeated converging coupling between players being focalised as or along with a character and the visual judgements of that character's mental capacity. Table 7.2 provides an example from *Watch Dogs*, representing Aiden engaging in the gunfight with the Hitmen. In the image, players have been focalised along with Aiden owing to the game camera being placed behind the back of his right shoulder. The image also represents a positive judgement of Aiden's mental capacity to perceive the simulated game world during the gunfight.

Table 7.2 Example of converging coupling of mental capacity and focalisation

Image	Verbal Description	Character	Focalisation	Visual Attitude
	20a The player is able to instruct Aiden to aim and shoot the Hitmen.	Aiden	Along with character	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

The repeated converging coupling is also noticeable in the correlation of the quantitative frequencies occurring between the visual judgements of mental capacity and focalisation as or along with character categories during the *Arkham Asylum* and *Watch Dogs* game scenes, as represented in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Converging coupling of mental capacity and focalisation

Converging Coupling	Batman	Harley Quinn	Joker	Aiden
Frequency of visual judgement: +ve capacity: mental capacity: provoke	16	2	1	16
Frequency of focalisation: Along with character	16	-	1	16
Frequency of focalisation: As character	-	2	-	-

The naturalised and divergent reading positions of action-adventure videogames are enhanced by the converging coupling between the player-game character affiliation and evaluative judgements concerning the character's mental capacity. The strong coupling between these semiotic resources enhances the player-game character affiliation and perception within the simulated game environment. The higher frequency in which players are affiliated with the lead protagonist characters of Batman and Aiden indicates how the action-adventure games legitimise the character's evaluative meanings and naturalised reading positions. Moreover, the low frequency with which players are affiliated with the antagonist characters indicates how action-adventure videogames delegitimise the evaluative meanings of antagonist characters, which contributes to a divergent reading position for these characters within the fictive game narrative.

This thesis has also broadened the SFS research by applying the semiotic affiliation resources to investigate action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male

audiences. Previous SFS research involving interactive meaning has examined children's drawings, textbook illustrations, photographs, art and sculptures (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), while focalisation research was applied to children's picturebooks (Painter, 2009; Painter et al., 2013) and animation films (Barton & Unsworth, 2014; Unsworth, 2013a, 2013b; Unsworth & Thomas, 2014). Both interactive meaning and focalisation were used by Lowien (2016) and Burn (2003, 2005, 2006) to examine videogames, and this thesis has broadened the emerging SFS research involving videogames that are traditionally designed for male audiences. In summary, the player affiliation findings contribute to addressing the overarching research question concerning how action-adventure videogames convey values by explicating the extent to which action-adventure videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in videogames. Next, how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters is discussed.

7.6 Research Sub-Question Three: Ludic operations

The third research question investigated how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meaning about characters. The conceptual framework's *ludic-representational* meanings were used to examine the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of the playable characters (Apperley & Beavis, 2013; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) in the action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). Furthermore, the *ludic-compositional* meanings were used to examine these games' narrative and gameplay segments through the interactivity resources of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narratives* (Sylvester, 2013). The coupling between the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* resources of the *ludic* dimension was utilised to address Research Sub-Question Three and indicated how the ludic operations of the action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meanings about characters. This study found that the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames complement the player-game character affiliation and co-pattern with the character's visual evaluative meaning within the simulated game world. The analysis revealed a converging coupling between *scripted* film-like segments and game-initiated *factum* interactions. This co-patterning was evident across playable and non-playable game characters. The analysis also revealed a converging co-patterning between a playable character's visual judgements of physical and mental capacity and the player afforded interactive controlled segments of soft-scripting and emergent narrative.

7.6.1 Game scenes cross analysis: *Batman Arkham Asylum*

Results from *Arkham Asylum* reveal that the selected game scene can be divided into a *scripted* film-like segment and an *emergent narrative* interactive gameplay segment. Batman and the Joker were the playable characters in *Arkham Asylum*; however, in the selected scene the Joker was not a playable character. The results of the analysis of the playable character Batman reveal *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming during the film-like *scripted* segment. Batman's *scripted factum* interactions co-patterned with his visual evaluative meanings of security depict his confidence in and his positive judgements of his physical and mental capacity. In the *emergent narrative* segment, Batman is afforded *actum* interactions triggered by a player's input through pressing buttons on the game controller. Players can instruct Batman to punch, kick and stun the asylum inmates while fighting them. Batman's fighting during the *emergent narrative* segment co-patterns with his associated visual evaluative meanings of insecurity concerning his disquiet when the fight begins and positive judgements of capacity concerning his physical strength while fighting. Additionally, players can instruct Batman to explore the virtual game world by pressing buttons on the controller that instruct him to investigate the game world and to complete relevant tasks associated with the game's narrative storyline. During the *emergent narrative actum* segments in which Batman is investigating the game world, a co-patterning occurs between the evaluative meanings depicting Batman's physical and mental capacity to support players to perceive and explore the game world. Overall, the ludic operations complement players' affiliation with Batman by enabling players to instruct Batman to complete ludic actions that co-pattern with his depicted visual judgements of physical or mental capacity. Therefore, the ludic operations further enhance players' alignment with the inferred values of Batman discussed previously.

The results concerning the analysis of the Joker during the film-like *scripted* segments reveal that the Joker utilises *factum* interactions that are initiated by the game's programming. The Joker's *scripted factum* interactions co-pattern with depicted visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of his physical weakness when he is restrained at the beginning of the scene and judgements of his physical strength when murdering the Guard. The Joker also depicts affective evaluative meanings of happiness and satisfaction when murdering the Guard and escaping. During the *emergent narrative* segment, the Joker utilises *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming. The Joker's *factum* interactions co-pattern with depicted visual evaluative meanings of happiness concerning the Joker. The ludic operations complement players' affiliation with the Joker and co-pattern with his depicted

visual evaluative meanings. The ludic operation enhances players' alignment with the inferred values of the Joker discussed previously.

In *Arkham Asylum*, the non-playable characters are the Guard, the Doctor, Harley Quinn, the Commissioner and the inmates. The results of the ludic operation analysis reveal that the Guard, the Doctor and Harley Quinn are represented during the *scripted* film-like segment and utilise *factum* interactions that are initiated by the game's programming. The *scripted factum* interactions of the asylum Guard co-pattern with depicted visual affective evaluative meanings of security, which are realised through ideational representations such as security uniform and associated badges. The *scripted factum* interactions of Harley Quinn co-pattern with depicted visual judgements of mental capacity indicating her perception of the simulated game world. The ludic operations complement players' affiliation with Harley Quinn and co-pattern with her depicted visual evaluative meanings. Furthermore, the ludic operations enhance players' alignment with the inferred values of Harley Quinn previously discussed.

The results of the ludic operation analysis reveal that the Commissioner is depicted in the *scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the game. *Factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming are utilised by the Commissioner in both the *scripted* and the *emergent narrative* segments. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the asylum inmates are depicted in the *emergent narrative* segment using *tactum* interactions that initiate a physical fight with Batman. The inmates' actions involve punching, hitting, kicking and chasing Batman. The *tactum* interactions of the inmates co-pattern with the visual judgements of capacity concerning their actions when fighting Batman. The ludic operations represent the Commissioner and the inmates as non-playable characters and co-pattern with their depicted visual evaluative meanings during the game scene. This study found that the ludic operations of the action-adventure videogame *Batman Arkham Asylum* complement the player-game character affiliation and co-pattern with a character's depicted visual evaluative meaning within the simulated game world.

7.6.2 Game scenes cross analysis: *Watch Dogs*

The ludic operation's findings were validated by investigating how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meaning about the characters. The coupling of the *ludic-representational* and *ludic-compositional* resources of the ludic dimension of the conceptual framework indicates how the ludic operations of *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) communicate evaluative meanings about characters. The results from *Watch Dogs* reveal that the sampled game scene can be divided into three segments: a

scripted film-like segment in which players have no interactivity; a *soft-scripted* segment, which affords players some interactivity; and an *emergent narrative* segment, which affords players full interactivity with the simulated game environment. Aiden is the only playable character during the game, and Clara and the Hitmen are the non-playable characters. The results of the analysis of the playable character Aiden reveal the use of *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming during the film-like segments of the game. Aiden's *scripted factum* interactions co-pattern with the visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity, unhappiness after Clara's murder and judgements of capacity concerning Aiden's physical strength. The *soft-scripted* segments involve Aiden using *actum* interactions triggered by players pressing the buttons on the game controller to select a gun from the weapon wheel or by using the gear stick to navigate Aiden through the game environment or to pivot the game camera. Aiden's *soft-scripted actum* interactions co-pattern with depictions of visual evaluative meanings of Aiden's physical and mental capacity. During the *emergent narrative* segment, Aiden utilises *actum* interactions in which players press buttons on the controller to instruct Aiden to engage in a gunfight or to explore the virtual game world. Aiden's *emergent narrative actum* interactions co-pattern with depictions of visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of Aiden's physical and mental capacity. Overall, the ludic operations complement players' affiliation with Aiden by enabling players to instruct Aiden to complete ludic actions, which co-pattern with his visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of physical or mental capacity. The ludic operations further enhance players' alignment with the inferred values of Aiden previously discussed.

In *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014) the non-playable characters are Clara and the Hitmen. The results of the ludic operation analysis revealed that the non-playable characters' actions are depicted during the *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments of the sampled scene. In the *scripted* segment, Clara uses *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming. The *scripted factum* interactions of Clara co-pattern with the visual evaluative meanings of unhappiness and insecurity regarding her surprise and terror at being targeted by the Hitmen. During the *soft-scripted* segment, Clara's murdered body is represented in the background of the simulated game environment and is, therefore, a *factum* interaction generated by the game's programming. The ludic operations of the game represent Clara as a non-playable character and co-pattern with her depicted visual evaluative meanings of unhappiness and insecurity during the game scene.

The Hitmen use *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming during the *scripted* segment. The Hitmen's *factum* interactions co-pattern with visual evaluative

meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of their physical capacity to murder Clara. During the *emergent narrative* segment, the Hitmen utilise *tactum* interactions initiated by their interaction with Aiden. The Hitmen's *emergent narrative tactum* interactions co-pattern with visual evaluative meanings concerning judgements of their physical capacity to target Aiden. The ludic operations represent the Hitmen as non-playable characters and co-pattern with their visual evaluative meanings of affective insecurity and judgements of their physical capacity during the scene.

7.6.3 Positioning ludic operation findings

Situating the findings about ludic operations with previous research concerning how intermodal connections between evaluative meaning contributes to a text's overall evaluative meaning and conveyed values is now discussed. The ludic operation's findings indicate that action-adventure videogames enhance the player-game character affiliation and co-pattern with the character's visual evaluative meaning within the simulated game world. Put simply, the action-adventure games *Arkham Asylum* and *Watch Dogs* contain playable and non-playable characters. For example, in the selected scene from *Arkham Asylum*, Batman is the playable character and from *Watch Dogs*, Aiden Pearce is the playable character. The playable characters in the games have a range of possible ludic actions that can be enacted by players pressing buttons on a game controller. Furthermore, player-game character affiliation findings established that players are affiliated with the lead protagonist characters Batman and Aiden, and these characters are implied as being the naturalised reading position when the games are being played. Therefore, the possible ludic actions enabling players to operate and instruct Batman and Aiden in the simulated game worlds further enhance their naturalised reading positions in the games. The ludic operations findings are consistent with previous research in the game design field, which indicated that action-adventure videogames can represent values in their narrative and ludic gameplay segments (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014; Seraphine, 2016a). Also, the *Design dimension* from *the Games as Action: Games as Text* Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2013) and the *social semiotic approach to videogame design* (Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017) described how game characters could be non-playable and playable, and playable characters are afforded possible actions that are initiated by players pressing buttons on a game controller. Also, the "*Me*" as game player dimension from *the Games as Action: Games as Text* Framework (Apperley & Beavis, 2013; Bradford, 2010) described how camera angles could create affiliation between players and game characters. Other findings revealed by the ludic operations analysis in this study are now discussed.



This thesis concluded that the understandings of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactivity (Sylvester, 2013) and knowledge of ludic initiated actions of *factum*, *tactum* and *actum* (Aristov, 2017) about characters enabled the examination of how ludic actions and interactive segments combine to convey evaluative meaning about characters during the narrative and gameplay segments of action-adventure videogames. The use of these theoretical tools during the ludic operation analysis of the select games revealed a converging coupling between *scripted* film-like segments and game-initiated *factum* interactions. This converging coupling was consistent for playable and non-playable game characters. For example, in *Watch Dogs*, during the film-like segment, Aiden is represented through *factum* interactions initiated by the game's programming. Also, in *Arkham Asylum* the non-playable characters of Harley Quinn, the Guard and the Doctor are represented through *factum* interactions during *scripted* film-like segments. Furthermore, the converging coupling of the interactive and game initiated meaning resources is represented in Table 7.4. The converging coupling is represented by the similar frequency in the *scripted* and *factum* columns. The identical frequency of the *scripted* and *factum* columns is to be expected owing to the videogame's design and *factum* actions being initiated from the game's algorithmic patterns during the *scripted* film-like segments.

Table 7.4 Converging coupling of interactivity and initiated actions semiotic resources

Arkham Asylum		
Playable Characters	Scripted	Factum
Batman	19	19
The Joker	21	21
Non-playable characters		
The Asylum Doctor	8	8
The Asylum Guard	15	15
The Asylum Inmates	1	1
Commissioner Gordon	12	12
Harley Quinn	2	2
Watch Dogs		
Playable characters		
Aiden	12	12
Non-playable characters		
Clara	17	17
Hitmen	6	6



The ludic operation analysis of the action-adventure games also revealed a converging co-patterning between a playable character's visual judgements of physical and mental capacity and *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* segments, which afford to players interactive control of the character. Table 7.5 represents Image 35f from *Arkham Asylum*, in which Batman is listening to the Joker and exploring the simulated environment after fighting the inmates. The image represents the coupling between Batman's *emergent narrative actum* interaction and visual judgements of physical and mental capacity.

Table 7.5 Coupling of Batman’s judgements of capacity and emergent narrative actum interaction

Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.	L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode L1 holding operating – environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u> Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget Touch pad button – map level up	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	35f The Joker on the television screen announcing that it is round two of the fight and releasing more prisoners for Batman to fight.	L1 tap operating – toggle detective mode L1 holding operating – environment scan – <u>only when Arkham symbol is represented</u> Direction pad – up, down, left or right – select gadget Touch pad button – map level up	Cross – run/climb/glide/use Not utilised movement buttons	Left stick - movement	Right stick – rotate camera	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke

Additionally, Table 7.6 represents Image 20b from *Watch Dogs*, where Aiden is engaging in a gunfight with the Hitmen. The image represents the coupling between Aiden’s *emergent narrative actum* interaction and visual judgements of his Physical and mental capacity.

Table 7.6 Coupling of Aiden’s judgements of capacity and *emergent narrative actum* interaction






Image	Verbal Description	Operating Gadgets	Fighting Trigger	Non-Fighting Buttons	Utilise Left Stick	Utilise Right Stick	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden to shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/mel ee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	20b Players are able to slow down time to help Aiden to shoot the Hitmen. The slowdown in time is represented by the blurred screen.	Triangle - use object, pick up item, enter car Square - (tap) profiler on/off, (hold) hack, contextual hack takedown Cross - enter cover, (in cover) cover interactions Options – pause Share - share screenshots or gameplay stream touch pad button - game map up-button - open smartphone down-button - set way point (contextual) right-button - (press) next song, (hold) stop music no buttons used	L1 – draw/holster weapon, (hold) weapon wheel L2 – aiming R1 - (tap) use projectiles/consumables, (hold) aim projectiles R2 - (press) sprint, (while aiming) shoot no trigger used	Circle - (press/hold) vault/climb/mel ee, (in cover) exit cover	Left stick – avatar movement L3 – reload Not utilised left stick	Right stick – rotate camera R3 – focus Not utilised right stick	Judgement : +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke

The theoretical tools of interactivity (Sylvester, 2013) and ludic initiated actions (Aristov, 2017) also proved useful when examining the selected game scenes for representations of ludonarrative dissonance in which players may experience a disconnect from the simulated game environment owing to the incoherence in evaluative meanings represented in the narrative and gameplay segments of the game scenes (Hawking, 2007; Seraphine, 2016a). Table 7.7 represents a sample of the coupling during a sequential narrative and gameplay segment from the *Watch Dogs* analysed game scene. The narrative segment is realised by the *scripted* interactivity and *factum* interaction, and the gameplay segment is realised by the *soft-scripted* interactivity and *actum* interactions for the playable character Aiden and the *factum* interaction of the non-playable character Clara. The two images in the table indicate the coupling among the playable and non-playable characters, the interactivity and initiated action during the game scene. Image 29 depicts Aiden after the gunfight as he is looking at Clara after she has been murdered. The image depicts the coupling among *scripted* interactivity, playable and non-playable characters, and *factum*-initiated actions. The coupling co-patterns with Aiden's depicted visual evaluative meaning of affective unhappiness regarding the loss of his ally Clara. Image 33f depicts Aiden exploring the simulated game environment as he is listening to the voice message from Clara. The image represents a coupling of the *soft-scripted* interactivity, playable and non-playable characters, and *actum* and *factum* resources. The coupling co-patterns with evaluative meanings concerning judgements of Aiden's physical and mental capacity.

Images 29 and 33f represent a ludonarrative dissonance in which players experience a disconnection from the simulated game environment owing to the incoherence in evaluative meanings represented in the narrative segment (Image 29) and the gameplay segment (Image 33f) (Hawking, 2007; Seraphine, 2016a). Image 29 provokes an affective evaluative meaning of unhappiness as players can infer Aiden's grief owing to the murder of his close ally Clara. However, as the game transitions from the narrative segment to the *soft-scripted* gameplay segment, the visual depictions of Aiden provoke judgements of his physical and mental capacity owing to players being able to instruct Aiden to explore the simulated environment. The change in evaluative meaning in the *soft-scripted* segment conflicts with the game's narrative, which represents Aiden and Clara as having a close relationship despite their falling out owing to Clara's involvement in the death of Aiden's niece. Players experience dissonance from the game's narrative owing to how the ludic operations have been included in the game's storytelling. Flanagan and Hissenbaum (2014) acknowledged the difficulty for game designers to predict how ludic actions will influence the values represented in the game. This thesis concludes that the co-patterning and coupling of evaluative meaning resources of

attitude (Martin & White, 2005), the ludic theoretical tools of interactivity (Sylvester, 2013) and the game initiated actions of *factum*, *tactum* and *actum* (Aristov, 2017) provide game-designers with useful resources for understanding how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meanings about characters. These theoretical tools provide game designers with a set of choices to represent how evaluative meaning about characters can be communicated when creating games. Game designers can then draw on these tools to discuss any conscious or unconscious depiction of values that may occur when designing games (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). Next, the conveyed socio-political values of action-adventure videogames are discussed.

Table 7.7 Example of ludonarrative dissonance in *Watch Dogs*

Image	Verbal Description	Interactivity	Playable Character	Non-Playable Character	Initiated action	Visual Evaluative Meaning
	29 Aiden looking upon Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>	Aiden		Factum	Affect: -ve Happiness: Misery: Provoke
	29 Aiden looking upon Clara.	<i>Scripted</i>		Clara	Factum	
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Physical strength: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>	Aiden		Actum	Judgement: +ve Capacity: Mental capacity: Provoke
	33f Players are able to move the game camera while listening to the voice message.	<i>Soft-scripted</i>		Clara	Factum	

7.7 The overarching research question: Conveyed values and action-adventure videogames

The overarching research question investigated how action-adventure videogames convey values through communicating evaluative meanings about characters. The narrative and ludic dimensions of the thesis's conceptual framework were used to examine how the action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* and *Watch Dogs* convey values through communicating evaluative meanings about characters. It has been argued that the co-patterning between ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources about game characters forms evaluative meaning patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames. This study finds that action-adventure videogames communicate varying frequencies of language evaluative meanings about and between characters, which indicates a diverging communicated evaluative meaning between protagonist and antagonist game characters. Similarly, the game communicates varying frequencies of visual evaluative meaning about and between characters, which indicates the diverging representation of evaluative meanings within and between protagonist and antagonist game characters. There is a diverging co-patterning of language and visual evaluative meaning represented during the analysed game scenes.

This study also finds that players of action-adventure videogames are frequently affiliated with the lead protagonist character within the simulated game world. Therefore, the leading protagonist is designed as being the naturalised reading position of action-adventure games. By contrast, players are less frequently affiliated with antagonist characters, thereby implying that these characters have a divergent reading position in the design of the videogames. The co-patterning of player-game character affiliation with the associated evaluative meanings about characters further enhances the naturalised reading position of protagonist characters and the divergent reading position of antagonist characters in action-adventure videogames. For example, players visually affiliated with a lead protagonist character enhance the legitimacy of the character's evaluative meanings as the naturalised reading positions the text. However, players being less affiliated with the antagonist characters enhances the divergent reading position of these characters within the games as the evaluative meanings about the characters are also designed to be divergent within the fictive game narratives.

This thesis finds that the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames complement the player-game character affiliation and co-pattern with the character's depicted visual evaluative meaning within the simulated game world. In simpler terms, action-adventure

videogames have ludic operations that enable characters to be playable or non-playable. Players of action-adventure videogames are more frequently affiliated with the playable characters and with the character's depicted visual evaluative meanings. Furthermore, the analysis of the game scenes revealed a converging coupling between *scripted* film-like segments and game-initiated *factum* interaction across playable and non-playable characters. This means that during the film-like segments only programmed actions initiated by the games were utilised for both playable and non-playable characters. The analysis also revealed a converging co-pattern between gameplay segments and a playable character's visual judgement of capacity. The converging co-patterning occurred in both *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* interactive gameplay classifications. For example, during a gameplay segment a playable character's fighting or exploring actions coupled with visual judgements of physical and mental capacity.

A synthesis of the findings reveals that the two selected action-adventure videogames convey social and political values and values of morality. The social and political values conveyed by the games include the values of justice and accountability (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and a commitment to the rule of law (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020). The moral values conveyed by the games include the values of collaboration and friendship (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The ludonarratives of these games include storylines in which protagonist and antagonist characters contest different interpretations of these values and struggle to assert the legitimacy of their interpretations. The evaluative meanings communicated about protagonist game characters re-interpret behaviours usually regarded as demonstrations of impropriety, as if they are behaviours of propriety. The reinterpretation of these behaviours is justified by the narrative storylines in action-adventure videogames in which the behaviours of the protagonist characters are deemed necessary to provide the protection needed by citizens. For example, in *Arkham Asylum* Batman's use of physical violence to subdue criminals is framed as necessary, despite his being a vigilante with no legal authority. Additionally, in *Watch Dogs* Aiden's use of physical violence against the Hitmen is framed as necessary to defend Clara.

The evaluative meanings communicated about antagonist characters are interpreted as behaviours of capacity and impropriety, which indicate the ability of antagonist characters to conduct activities of impropriety. The impropriety of antagonist characters often introduces narrative complications, which require resolution by protagonist characters through the completion of a gameplay task. For example, in *Arkham Asylum*, after the Joker escapes, he releases asylum inmates to fight Batman. Players are required to instruct Batman by pressing combat combinations on the game controller to defeat the inmates. Additionally, in *Watch*

Dogs, Aiden rushes to protect Clara, who has been targeted for assassination by the Hitmen. A gunfight between the Hitmen and Aiden occurs in which players are required to instruct Aiden by pressing combat combinations on the game controller to defeat the inmates. Overall, action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences, such as *Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014), convey social and political values of justice, a commitment to the rule of law and accountability; and moral values of collaboration and friendship (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020; Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The ludonarrative in these games involves storylines in which protagonist and antagonist characters contest different interpretations of these social, political and moral values and struggle to assert the legitimacy of their interpretation.

7.7.1 Positioning conveyed values findings

Positioning the findings of the conveyed values of the selected action-adventure videogames with previous research concerning how intermodal connections concerning evaluative meaning contribute to a text's overall evaluative meaning is now discussed. The findings are consistent with the SFS theoretical understanding that ideology and values permeate the whole ensemble of semiotic meaning and culture (Martin & Rose, 2007). Understanding the social purpose of expositions and how evaluative meanings resources are used in texts to persuade audiences to align with a value and ideological perspective was researched by Martin (1995). Martin's (1995) research established how readers can draw on their prior experiences to infer values that may align with or diverge from a text's naturalised evaluative meaning position. In action-adventure videogames, players draw on their prior knowledge of a game's narrative, the origin story of a character or contextual information provided by game designers to infer values that may align with or diverge from the game's naturalised evaluative meaning position.

The evaluative meaning patterns used to describe technical terminology about the invasion or settlement of Australia in non-fiction texts such as newspaper articles and university handbooks were observed by Doran (2019), who demonstrated how the contextual knowledge of a text and a reader's prior knowledge could be used to infer the reader's value position and alignment with a text's naturalised reading position. The analysis of this thesis has examined the ludonarrative of action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences to reveal the conveyed values in the texts. Unlike the previously examined non-fiction texts, the ludonarrative game scenes selected for investigation did not contain technical terminology that described evaluative meaning patterns that could be examined. Instead, the analysis in this thesis focused on the communicated evaluative meanings about

characters and how these evaluative meanings could infer social, political and moral values in the games. This thesis examined how patterns of evaluative meanings in narratives are constructed to invite an ideal reading position that confirms or disconfirms the value position of particular characters within a narrative's fictive story world (Macken-Horarik, 2003b). The previous research completed by Macken-Horarik (2003b) was expanded upon in this thesis by its application to the ludonarratives of action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. It was revealed that the ludonarratives of these games contained storylines in which protagonist and antagonist characters contest different interpretations of social, political and moral values, which leads to a struggle between the characters to assert the legitimacy of their interpretation. Furthermore, action-adventure games use different camera angles to develop player-game character affiliations in which players are focalised as a character or along with a character (Painter et al., 2013). It was revealed that players of action-adventure games are frequently positioned as or along with the lead protagonist character of the game. It can then be inferred that the affiliation of players as or along with the lead character is the ideal naturalised reading position of the games, and that the supporting protagonist and antagonist characters can be inferred to be a divergent reading position of the games.

Action-adventure videogames are designed to naturalise the evaluative meanings of the lead protagonist character and to establish divergent evaluative meaning reading positions for the supporting protagonist and antagonist characters. This understanding of evaluative meanings about characters contributes to how players may experience conflicts among their real, virtual and projective identities when playing games (Gee, 2003). For example, Batman's and Aiden's interpretation of the social value of justice and of how this is enacted through violent confrontations involving judgements of physical and mental capacity may conflict with a player's real-world interpretation of the social and political value of justice. The real-world interpretation of the social and political values of players would be influenced by their age, ethnicity, social class, abilities and gender experiences (Knight, 2010).

7.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the research questions of the thesis. First, the research problem and questions of the thesis were revisited in Section 7.2. Second, the findings of the research sub-questions were reported. Section 7.3 discussed the findings of Research Sub-Question One concerning the language evaluative meaning about characters. Section 7.4 reported the findings of Research Sub-Question One concerning visual evaluative meanings about characters. Section 7.5 reported the research findings of Research Sub-Question Two concerning player affiliation. Section 7.6 examined the research findings of

Research Sub-Question Three concerning the ludic operations. A cross-analysis of the results of the two action-adventure videogames from Chapters Five and Six was drawn on to validate the findings of the thesis. Then a synthesis of the research findings was conducted to position the findings in the field of previously conducted research about how intermodal connections between evaluative meaning in language and image meaning systems contribute to the overall evaluative meaning and portrayed values. Third, Section 7.7 answered the overarching Research Question concerning how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Next, Chapter Eight discusses the study's contributions to intermodal knowledge, theory, conceptual understanding and methodology. These contributions concern how the ludic operation and evaluative meaning about game characters form axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. Also, implications for classroom teaching practice concerning a pedagogy for the critical interpretive appreciation of videogames and further research are discussed.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS – GAME OVER

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the contributions to intermodal accounts of how evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images portray values in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. First, the contributions to intermodal knowledge, theory, conceptual understanding and methodology are discussed in Section 8.2. These contributions concern how the ludic operation and evaluative meaning about game characters form axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames. Second, implications for classroom teaching practice concerning a pedagogy for the critical interpretive appreciation of videogames and opportunities for further research are discussed in Section 8.3.

8.2 Contributions to the research problem

This thesis has examined how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Earlier research into intermodal connections between evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images contributed to discussions about the values portrayed in texts such as news articles and animated films (Economou, 2009, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). Findings from the earlier research revealed that intermodal connections between evaluative meaning in language and image meaning systems contributed to a text's overarching evaluative meaning and conveyed values. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two identified that the research concerning the intermodal connections between language and image evaluative meanings contributing to a text's overall meaning had not been previously undertaken with action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. The SFS evaluative meaning resources of language and image system networks and intermodal connections (Martin & White, 2005; Painter et al., 2013) were apt semiotic tools for investigating the communication of evaluative meanings about characters in action-adventure videogames.

Videogames also engage players through the operation of playable game characters, which is significantly different from the news articles and animated films in which the evaluative meaning resources have been previously applied. This thesis investigated how the ludic operation of action-adventure videogames conveyed values through their

communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The researcher argued that the co-patterning between the ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources about game characters form axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames. The findings of this thesis discussed in Chapter Seven constitute a significant and timely contribution to knowledge concerning intermodal connections, as discussed in Section 8.2.1; a contribution to SFS theoretical and conceptual knowledge of videogames examined in Sections 8.2.2 and 8.2.3 respectively; and a methodological contribution to knowledge for the explication of how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames addressed in Section 8.2.4. Each of these contributions is now be discussed.

8.2.1 Contributions to knowledge

The research findings of this thesis contribute to intermodal accounts of how evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images contribute to the values portrayed in texts. Earlier research in this area informed discussion about the values portrayed in texts, such as newspapers and animated films (Economou, 2009, 2012; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014), and has not previously been undertaken with videogames. First, this thesis extended the body of research concerning intermodal accounts of how evaluative language and attitudinal meaning conveyed by images contribute to the values portrayed in texts by focusing on action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences, such as *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). This thesis has carried on Macken-Horarik's (2003b) research concerning how patterns of language evaluative meanings in narratives are constructed to invite an ideal reading position that confirms or disconfirms the value position of a character within a narrative's story world by identifying the communicated evaluative meanings about characters in action-adventure videogame ludonarratives. Furthermore, this thesis has extended Macken-Horarik's (2003b) research by analysing visual evaluative meanings about characters and found that the patterns of visual evaluative meanings are constructed to invite an ideal reading position that confirms or disconfirms the value positions of characters within the visual narrative story world of the action-adventure games.

Second, the research findings of the thesis contributed to intermodal understandings of character affiliation by examining the different camera angles used to focalise viewers as a character or along with a character. Previous research in this area focused on children's picturebooks and the different angles used by illustrators to position viewers to look upon, or to be mediated, as a character (Painter et al., 2013). This thesis broadened intermodal understandings of character affiliation by examining the extent to which action-adventure

videogames traditionally designed for male audiences affiliated players as a character or along with a game character. This thesis also further exceeded previous work completed by Lowien (2016) that focused on mediated focalisation with game characters, but that did not examine the extent to which players were positioned as a game character or along with a game character in actions-adventure videogames. This thesis revealed that players of action-adventure games are frequently positioned as or along with the lead protagonist character in the simulated game world. This player-game character affiliation with the lead character implies an ideal naturalised reading position of the games, and the supporting characters can be inferred to assume a divergent reading position.

Third, the research findings of the thesis contributed to intermodal understandings of how players may experience conflicts among their *real*, *virtual* and *projective* identities when playing videogames (Gee, 2003). The findings of the thesis contributed knowledge as to how a player's real-world interpretation of social and political values could conflict with the inferred character values portrayed in the games. For example, Batman's and Aiden's interpretation of the social values of justice are enacted through violent confrontations involving judgements of physical and mental capacity, which may conflict with a player's real-world interpretation of social and political values about justice. A player's real-world interpretation of social and political values would be influenced by their age, ethnicity, social class, abilities and gender experiences (Knight, 2010). In summary, the research findings of this thesis have contributed to intermodal accounts of how evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images contribute to the values portrayed in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences.

8.2.2 Theoretical knowledge contributions

SFS theoretical understanding of videogames is an emerging area of research in the 21st century. The research findings of this thesis contribute to systemic functional semiotic (SFS) theoretical understanding of how *interpersonal* meaning in videogames conveys values. First, previous SFS research examined how Harry Potter is represented in different media platforms such as books, films and videogames (Burn, 2003, 2005, 2006). It was revealed that each media platform emphasised different interpersonal interpretations of the characters by affording different interactive meaning and focalisation resources. The findings of this thesis have presented a nuanced understanding of player-character affiliation occurring in action-adventure videogames and how players are frequently affiliated with the lead protagonist characters. Second, action-adventure videogames were also investigated by Lowien (2016) for their use of evaluative meaning resources of attitude concerning character dialogue and visual

interpersonal meaning resources of interactive meaning and focalisation concerning depictions of characters. The co-patterning of the language and image resources were used to infer a character's evaluative stance. The findings of this thesis have once again presented a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. The findings of this thesis exceeded Lowien's (2016) work by revealing that the co-patterning between ludic operations and evaluative meaning resources about game characters form axiological patterns that convey values in the action-adventure videogames *Batman Arkham Asylum* (Rocksteady, 2016) and *Watch Dogs* (Ubisoft, 2014). Third, the findings of this thesis utilised the SFS intermodal concepts of *commitment* and *coupling* (Painter et al., 2013) to theorise the co-patterning of ludic operations and evaluative meanings resources about game characters for evaluative meaning patterns that conveyed values in action-adventure videogames. The findings from this thesis complement and extend on previous SFS research completed by Pérez-Latorre et al. (2017) that investigated how playable and non-playable characters and their ludic actions can influence the conveyed values communicated by the characters in the action-adventure videogame *The last of us* (Naughty Dog, 2014). In summary, the research findings of this thesis contribute to emerging SFS theoretical understandings of action-adventure videogames and, specifically, how the co-patterning between ludic operations and evaluative meaning resources about game characters form evaluative patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames.

8.2.3 Conceptual knowledge contributions

The conceptual framework for this thesis constitutes a significant conceptual contribution to knowledge, which enables the examination of how action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. The conceptual framework provided a robust and rigorous structure for how the values in action-adventure videogames could be investigated by examining the narrative and ludic gameplay segments of action-adventure games (Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017; Seraphine, 2016b). The framework synthesised apposite theoretical understandings and tools into an ensembled structure comprising the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions as represented in Figure 8.1. The *narrative* dimension represented the language and visual narrative of the game, which included the character's dialogue and the accompanying visual images of the games. The *narrative* dimension of the framework encompassed the *representational*, *compositional* and *interpersonal* meanings. During the thesis, only the *interpersonal*

meanings were investigated to reveal how the communicated evaluative meanings about characters were identified in the language and visual modalities using the evaluative meaning resources of attitude (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). Additionally, the *interpersonal* meaning enacting the player-game character affiliation was examined by coupling the visual focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Overall, the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework was used to address how the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters and the extent to which videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in the selected game scenes.

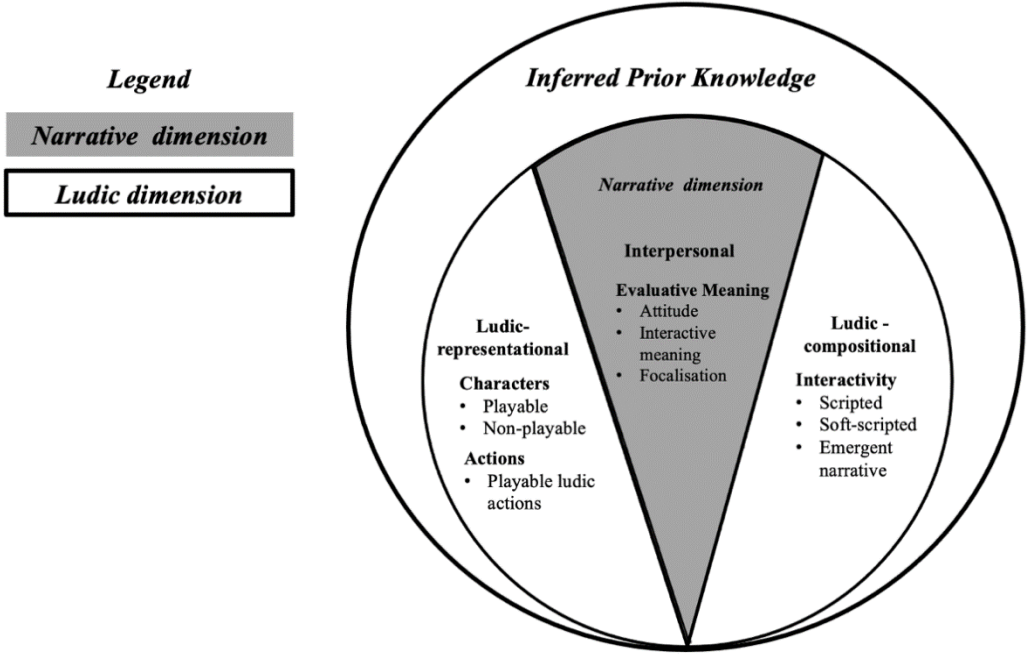


Figure 8.1 The ludonarrative and values conceptual framework

The findings of the *narrative* dimension revealed that action-adventure videogames communicate varying frequencies of language evaluative meanings about and between characters, which indicate a diverging communicated evaluative meaning between protagonist and antagonist characters. Similarly, the games communicated varying frequencies of visual evaluative meaning about and between characters, which indicates the diverging representation of evaluative meanings within and between protagonist and antagonist game characters. There was a diverging co-patterning of language and visual evaluative meaning represented in the sampled action-adventure games. The thesis also found that players of the sampled action-adventure videogames were frequently affiliated with the lead protagonist character within the simulated game world. Therefore, the leading protagonist is designed as

being the naturalised reading position of the games. By contrast, players are less frequently affiliated with antagonist characters, thereby implying these characters are designed to have a divergent reading position. The co-patterning of the player-game character affiliations and the associated evaluative meanings about characters enhanced the naturalised reading position of the protagonist characters and divergent reading position of the antagonist characters in action-adventure videogames. For example, players visually affiliated with a lead protagonist character enriched the legitimacy of the character's evaluative meanings as the naturalised reading position. Nonetheless, the lower frequency with which players were affiliated with the antagonist characters enhanced the divergent reading position of these characters as the evaluative meanings about the characters were also designed to be divergent within the simulated game world.

The *ludic* dimension covers the entire narrative and gameplay segments of games. The *ludic* dimension also encompassed the *representational*, *interpersonal* and *compositional* meanings. However, only the *representational* and *compositional* meanings were investigated to identify how evaluative meanings were conveyed by the utilised ludic operations of action-adventure videogames. The investigated *ludic-representational* meaning identified the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions of the characters (Apperley & Beavis, 2013; Pérez-Latorre et al., 2017). The investigated *ludic-compositional* meaning identified the narrative and gameplay segments of the games through the use of the interactivity resources of *scripted*, *soft-scripted* and *emergent narrative* (Sylvester, 2013). The coupling between the *ludic-representational* and the *ludic-compositional* resources in the *ludic* dimension was used to investigate the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames. Overall, the *ludic* dimension of the conceptual framework addressed how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meanings about characters.

The findings of the *ludic* dimensions revealed how ludic operations of action-adventure videogames complement the player-game character affiliation and co-pattern with the character's depicted visual evaluative meaning within the simulated game world. For example, action-adventure videogames have ludic operations that enable characters to be playable or non-playable. Players are more frequently affiliated with playable characters and with the character's visual evaluative meanings. Furthermore, the thesis revealed that, during the film-like segments, only programmed actions initiated by the games were utilised for both playable and non-playable characters. It was also found that there was a converging co-pattern between gameplay segments and a playable character's visual judgements of capacity; for example, during gameplay segments, a playable character's fighting or exploration of the simulated game world was coupled with visual judgements of physical and mental capacity.

In addressing how action-adventure videogames convey values, the conceptual framework utilised Painter et al.'s (2013) theoretical understanding of intermodal commitment and coupling to make inferential links among social, political and moral values (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020; Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014) and the evaluative meanings communicated about characters during the narrative and gameplay segments of games (Bradford, 2010; White, 2014). The conceptual framework utilised the SFS theoretical understanding that values permeate each semiotic choice in the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions of the framework, and, therefore, values did not receive a separate stratum or dimension in the framework (Martin & Rose, 2007). Overall, the thesis findings revealed that action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences convey social and political values of justice, a commitment to the rule of law and accountability, and moral values of collaboration and friendship (Commonwealth of Australia, 2020; Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014). The ludonarrative in the game involves storylines in which protagonist and antagonist characters contest different interpretations of these social, political and moral values and struggle to assert the legitimacy of their interpretation. The conceptual framework of the thesis makes a significant contribution to the conceptual understanding of how action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences convey values through a synthesis of apposite theoretical understandings and tools.

8.2.4 Methodological knowledge contributions

This thesis has made a methodological contribution to knowledge by describing a multimodal critical discourse analysis methodology (Ledin & Machin, 2018) that utilises qualitative and quantitative methods to identify how the ludic operation and evaluative meanings about characters' co-pattern convey values in action-adventure videogames. Previous SFS critical discourse analysis and multimodal critical discourse analysis methods have consisted of a qualitative method to analyse the realised SFS language and image evaluative meanings in texts (Economou, 2009, 2012; Ledin & Machin, 2018; Macken-Horarik, 2003a, 2003c; Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005; Unsworth, 2014; White, 2014). This thesis has exceeded the previous SFS multimodal critical discourse analysis methodologies by situating the study in an interpretivist paradigm (Basil, 2010; Walter, 2010), which utilised both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse and corroborate the game scene data according to the described system networks presented in the conceptual framework in Chapter Three. The qualitative method involved analysing the game scenes for their realised SFS language, image and ludic operation meaning resources, described in Chapter Three. The quantitative method calculated the frequency of the realised meaning

resources from the sampled game scenes. The corroborative counting provided a rigorous method for triangulating the game scene data and for better validating the qualitative data (Basit, 2010; Hannah & Lautsch, 2011). Each game scene's qualitative and quantitative findings were cross analysed to validate further the analytical findings during the discussion in Chapter Seven. In summary, this thesis has made a methodological contribution to knowledge by describing a multimodal critical discourse analysis methodology that utilises qualitative and quantitative methods for investigating how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about game characters. Overall, the findings of the thesis discussed in Chapter Seven constitute a contribution to knowledge concerning intermodal connections, a contribution to SFS theoretical and conceptual knowledge of videogames, and a methodological contribution to knowledge for the explication of how values are conveyed in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences. The implications of the thesis for educational practice are now discussed.

8.3 Implications for educational practice and further research

Concerns over the values represented in action-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences and their use in educational settings have been potentially problematic for educators. This thesis has addressed this problem by articulating a systematic multimodal critical discourse analysis method that teachers can use to explicate the axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames through the co-patterning between the ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources. Therefore, the finding and intermodal knowledge, theory, conceptual understanding and methodology contributions of this thesis have empirical implications for educational practice.

Teachers can use the conceptual framework and systematic methodology articulated in the thesis to develop a critical interpretative appreciation of values in action-adventure videogames for their students. Teachers can analyse the dialogue, images and ludic operations of action-adventure videogames with their students using the semiotic resources described in the *narrative* and *ludic* dimensions of the conceptual framework. The semiotic resources depicted through system networks describe a shared metalanguage that teachers can use with their students to analyse and discuss how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meanings about characters. The systematic methodology described in the thesis forms the initial basis for stages of learning that could be completed during an English Curriculum Plan; for example, teachers and students could first analyse a game scene for the frequency of different types of evaluative meanings about characters that

vary within and between characters. Second, the extent of action-adventure videogame construct player affiliation with different characters could be examined. Third, how the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicated evaluative meaning about characters could be explored. Fourth, the intermodal co-patterning between the ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources in the analysed game scene could then be discussed with students to explicate the axiological pattern that conveys values in action-adventure videogames. The described critical interpretative appreciation of values conveyed in videogames would also be supported by content descriptions from the Australian Curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum: English (ACE), Australian Curriculum: The Arts Media Arts (ACAMA) and the Australian Curriculum: Technology Digital Technology (ACTDT) documents were reviewed in Chapter One for an understanding of how the curriculum could support a critical interpretative appreciation of values in action-adventure videogames. Example content descriptions from the ACE, ACAMA and ACTDT aligned with the general capability of Ethical Understanding that would support the teaching of a critical interpretative appreciation of values in actions-adventure videogames traditionally designed for male audiences are now discussed in relation to the research questions of this thesis. The first and second Research Sub-Questions aligned with the conceptual framework's *narrative* dimension and *interpersonal* metafunction and required players to draw on their inferential knowledge of values. The Research Sub-Questions investigated:

1. How does the frequency of the different types of evaluative meanings about characters vary within and between characters in action-adventure videogames?
2. To what extent do videogames construct player affiliation with different characters in action-adventure videogames?

Addressing Research Sub-Question One required the use of evaluative language and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images to identify the types of evaluative meanings about characters in action-adventure videogames (Economou, 2012; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2014) to analyse the characters' dialogue and accompanying images for communicated evaluative meanings about characters. Then, the identified evaluative meanings about characters were used to infer moral, social and political values (Bradford, 2010; Commonwealth of Australia, 2020; Flanagan & Hissenbaum, 2014; White, 2014). as defined in Chapter One. Addressing Research Sub-Question Two required the use of focalisation (Painter et al., 2013) and interactive meaning resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) to analyse the extent of videogames construct player affiliation with different characters. The player affiliation analysis was sorted to identify when players were affiliated "as a character"

or positioned “along with a character” to take on their point of view in the simulated game world. Table 8.1 represents content descriptions from the Year 10 ACE and ACAMA that would be achieved by completing the systematic process to answer Research Sub-Questions One and Two.

Table 8.1 ACE and ACAMA content descriptions (adapted from Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017a, 2020)

Australian Curriculum: English and the General Capability of Ethical Understanding
<p>Year 10</p> <p>Language Strand</p> <p>Understand that people’s evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and mode of communication (ACELA1565 - Scootle)</p> <p><i>Elaboration:</i></p> <p>considering whether ethical judgements of good, bad, right or wrong are absolute or relative through consideration of texts with varying points of view and through discussion with others</p> <p>Literature Strand</p> <p>Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812 - Scootle)</p> <p><i>Elaboration:</i></p> <p>identifying and analysing ethical positions on a current issue debated in blogs or online discussion forums, including values and/or principles involved and the strengths and weaknesses of the position in the context of the issue</p> <p>Literacy Strand</p> <p>Analyse and evaluate how people, cultures, places, events, objects and concepts are represented in texts, including media texts, through language, structural and/or visual choices (ACELY1749 - Scootle)</p> <p><i>Elaboration:</i></p> <p>considering ethical positions across more than one culture as represented in text and consider the similarities and differences</p> <p>questioning the representation of stereotypes of people, cultures, places, events and concepts, and expressing views on the appropriateness of these representations</p> <p>identifying and explaining satirical events, including events in other cultures, for example depictions in political cartoons</p> <p>analysing the ways socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs are presented in texts by comparing the ways news is reported in commercial media and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media</p> <p>Identify and analyse implicit or explicit values, beliefs and assumptions in texts and how these are influenced by purposes and likely audiences (ACELY1752 - Scootle)</p> <p><i>Elaboration:</i></p> <p>skim reading sections of a persuasive text to identify the main contention, key arguments in linked paragraphs and supporting evidence in order to locate points for building rebuttal or counter argument</p>
Australian Curriculum: the Arts Media Arts and the General Capability of Ethical Understanding
<p>Year 10</p> <p>Analyse a range of media artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their media arts making, starting with Australian media artworks, including media artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and international media artworks (ACAMAR079 - Scootle)</p>

The third Research Sub-Question aligned with the *ludic* dimension and *representational* and *compositional* metafunction of the conceptual framework. Addressing Research Sub-Question Three required consideration about the coupling among system networks, metafunctions and dimensions of the conceptual framework. It also required players to draw on their inferential knowledge of values. The Research Sub-Question investigated:

3. How do the ludic operations of action-adventure videogames communicate evaluative meaning about characters?

Research Sub-Question Three considered the ludic operations of the games by first using the *ludic-representational* metafunctional character and ludic action system networks. These system networks identified the playable and non-playable characters and the ludic actions made possible by the algorithms in which players input information when pressing buttons on a game controller or the videogame initiating action through pre-programmed setting. Therefore, the ludic actions were actum, tactum and factum actions. Additionally, the playable and non-playable segments of the game scenes were identified through the use of the *ludic-compositional* metafunctional interactivity system network (Sylvester, 2013). Next, co-patterning between the ludic operations in the ludic dimension of the conceptual framework and the evaluative meanings about character represented in the *narrative* dimension of the conceptual framework was used to explicate axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames. Table 8.2 represents content descriptions from the Year 10 ACAMA and ACTDT that would be achieved through the completion of the systematic process followed to answer the Research Sub-Questions.

Table 8.2 ACAMA and ACTDT content descriptions (adapted from Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2015, 2017a)

Australian Curriculum: The Arts Media Arts and the General Capability of Ethical Understanding
<p>Year 10</p> <p>Manipulate media representations to identify and examine social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMAM074 - Scootle)</p> <p>Produce and distribute media artworks for a range of community and institutional contexts and consider social, ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM077 - Scootle)</p> <p>Evaluate how technical and symbolic elements are manipulated in media artworks to create and challenge representations framed by media conventions, social beliefs and values for a range of audiences (ACAMAR078 - Scootle)</p>
Digital Technology and the General Capability of Ethical Understanding
<p>Years 9 & 10</p> <p><i>Digital Technologies Processes and Production Skills</i></p> <p>Implement modular programs, applying selected algorithms and data structures, including using an object-oriented programming language (ACTDIP041 - Scootle)</p> <p>Design algorithms represented diagrammatically and in structured English and validate algorithms and programs through tracing and test cases (ACTDIP040 - Scootle)</p> <p>Design the user experience of a digital system by evaluating alternative designs against criteria including functionality, accessibility, usability, and aesthetics (ACTDIP039 - Scootle)</p>

Further empirical research from this thesis would involve using the knowledge base to work with teachers to develop an English Curriculum Plan in which students were engaged in learning about how action-adventure videogames convey values through their communication of evaluative meaning about game character. Such a research project with teachers would establish a pedagogy of critical interpretive play for the critical appreciation of videogames and illuminate further implications for the use of videogames in learning contexts.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter first discussed the contributions to intermodal knowledge, theory, conceptual understanding and methodology in Section 8.2. Second, Section 8.3 examined implications for classroom teaching practice concerning a pedagogy for the critical interpretive appreciation of videogames, and opportunities for further research were

discussed. In conclusion, action-adventure videogames are popular and ubiquitous forms of entertainment in the 21st century. Popular press and research literature express concerns about the values represented in action-adventure videogames, such as their violence and their race and gender depictions. Also, curriculum documents advocate the teaching of multimodal texts. Concerns over the values represented in videogames and their use in classroom learning are potentially problematic for educators. This thesis addressed this problem by proposing a systematic multimodal critical discourse analysis method that can explicate the axiological patterns that convey values in action-adventure videogames through the co-patterning between ludic operation and evaluative meaning resources. The thesis extends on intermodal accounts of how language evaluative meanings and attitudinal meanings conveyed by images portray values in multimodal texts.

REFERENCES

- Aarseth, E. (1997). *Cybertexts perspectives on ergodic literature*. Johns Hopkins Press.
- Aarseth, E. (2003). A multi-dimensional typology of games. In Utrecht University and DiGRA (Eds?), *DiGRA international conference: Level up* (pp. 48–53). The European Commission. http://www.sts.rpi.edu/public_html/ruiz/EGDSpring2014/readings/new_topology_of_games_A_Arsneth.pdf
- Adgate, B. (2020, April 21). Esports is filling the programming void. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bradadgate/2020/04/21/esports-is-filling-the-programming-void/#35ccdfef533b>
- Alexander, L. (2014, September 5). Sexism, lies and video games: The culture war nobody is winning. *Time*. <http://time.com/3274247/video-game-culture-war/>
- Apperley, T., & Beavis, C. (2011). Literacy into action: Digital games as action and text in the English and literacy classroom. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 6(2), 130–143. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2011.554620>
- Apperley, T., & Beavis, C. (2013). A model for critical games literacy. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 10(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2013.10.1.1>
- Aristov, M. (2017). *Journey and the semiotics of meaningful play list of figures* [Paper presentation]. Forum Ludorum Seminar., Karlsruhe, Germany.
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2015a). *Digital technologies: Sequence of content F-10*. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/technologies/>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2015b). *English sequence of content*. https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/media/4401/english_-_sequence_of_content.pdf
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2017a). *Australian Curriculum: Media arts*. <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/media-arts/>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2017b). *Ethical understanding: In the learning areas*. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/generalcapabilities/ethical-understanding/introduction/in-the-learning-areas>
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2020). *Australian Curriculum: English*. <https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>
- Australian Government Department of Communication and the Arts. (2012). *Information for teachers—Showing films and playing computer games in schools*. Author.

- <http://www.classification.gov.au/Public/Resources/Documents/fact-sheets/information-for-teachers--showing-films-and-playing-computer-games.pdf>
- Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. (2021). Author. *Australian classification: How a rating is decided*. <https://www.classification.gov.au/classification-ratings/how-rating-decided>
- Bacalja, A. (2018). What critical literacy has to offer the study of videogames. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 41(3), 155–165. <https://doi.org/10.3316/aeipt.221222>
- Barton, G., & Unsworth, L. (2014). Music, multiliteracies and multimodality: Exploring the book and movie versions of Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing*. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 37(1), 2–20. <https://doi.org/10.3316/aeipt.201731>
- Basit, T. N. (2010). *Conducting research in educational contexts*. Continuum.
- Bateman, J. (2008). *Multimodality and genre: A foundation for the systematic analysis of multimodal documents*. Palgrave.
- Beavis, C. (1998). Pressing buttons: And continuity. *English in Australia*, 123, 42–51. <https://doi.org/10.3316>
- Beavis, C. (1999). *Literacy, English and computer games*. Deakin Centre for Education and Change, Faculty of Education, Deakin University. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED417056>
- Beavis, C. (2014). Games as text, games as action. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(6), 433–439. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.275>
- Beavis, C., Dezuanni, M., & O'Mara, J. (Eds). (2017). *Serious play: Literacy, learning and digital games*. Routledge.
- Beavis, C., O'Mara, J., & McNeice, L. (2012). *Digital games literacy in action*. Wakefield Press.
- Behm-Morawitz, E. (2017). Examining the intersection of race and gender in video game advertising. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 23(3), 220–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2014.914562>
- Blackburn, G., & Scharrer, E. (2019). Video game playing and beliefs about masculinity among male and female emerging adults. *Sex Roles*, 80(5–6), 310–324. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0934-4>
- Bogost, I. (2006). *Unit operations: An approach to videogame criticism*. MIT Press.
- Bogost, I. (2007). *Persuasive games: The expressive power of videogames*. MIT Press.

- Bradford, C. (2010). Looking for my corpse: Video games and player positioning. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 33(1), 54–64. <https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.731593017849200>
- Brand, J. E. (2018). *Digital Australia report 2018*. <http://www.igea.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/DA18-Summary.pdf>
- Brand, J. E., Jervis, J., Huggins, P. M., & Wilson, T. W. (2019). *Digital Australia 2020: The power of games*. <https://igea.net/2019/07/research-reveals-the-power-of-games-in-australia/>
- Buckingham, D., & Burn, A. (2007). Game literacy in theory and practice. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 16(3), 323–349. <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/4224/>
- Buckmaster, L. (2014, December 5). Why taking Grand Theft Auto off the shelf is like banning a Martin Scorsese movie. *Daily Review: Crikey*. <http://dailyreview.crikey.com.au/why-taking-grand-theft-auto-off-the-shelf-is-like-banning-a-martin-scorsese-movie/16598>
- Burden, M., & Gouglas, S. (2012). The algorithmic experience: Portal as art. *The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 12(2). http://gamestudies.org/1202/articles/the_algorithmic_experience
- Burn, A. (2003). Returning to Hogwarts: The modality of computer games. In A. Burn & D. Parker (Eds.), *Analysing media texts* (pp. 45–64). Continuum.
- Burn, A. (2005). Potter-literacy—From book to game and back again; literature, film and game and cross-media literacy. *Papers: Explorations into Children’s Literature*, 14(3), 5–17.
- Burn, A. (2006). Multi-text magic: Harry Potter in book, film and videogame. In F. M. Collins & J. Ridgman (Eds), *Turning the page: Children’s literature in performance and the media* (pp. 227–250). Peter Lang.
- Byrne, P. (2012). Game plan: Using computer games in English class to engage the disengaged. In C. Beavis, J. O’Mara, & L. McNeice (Eds), *Digital games literacy in action* (pp. 65–72). Wakefield Press.
- Cann, M. (2012). Game-O-Rama! In C. Beavis, J. O’Mara, & L. McNeice (Eds), *Digital games literacy in action* (pp. 81–92). Wakefield Press.
- Coiro, J., Knobel, M., Lankshear, C., & Lue, D. (Eds). (2008). *Handbook of research on new literacies*. Routledge.
- Commonwealth of Australia. (2020). *Life in Australia*. www.immi.gov.au
- Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). “Multiliteracies”: New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 4(3), 164–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15544800903076044>

- Cuddon, M. (2012). “Gamer Hands”: Console games as texts and activities that use gaming as a stimulus. In C. Beavis, J. O’Mara, & L. McNeice (Eds), *Digital games literacy in action* (pp. 41–49). Wakefield Press.
- Critical Hit Entertainment Pty Ltd. (2020). Community focused esports. *Australian Esports League*. <https://ael.org.au/#about>
- Derewianka, B. (2011). *A new grammar companion for teachers*. PETA.
- Derewianka, B. (2012). Knowledge about language in the Australian Curriculum: English. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 35(2), 127–146.
- Dewley, B. (2020, June 5). What games are played in eSports? *Lineups*. <https://www.lineups.com/esports/what-games-are-played-in-esports/>
- Dezuanni, M., & Zagami, J. (2017). Curating the curriculum with digital games. In C. Beavis, M. Dezuanni, & J. O’Mara (Eds), *Serious play: Literacy, learning and digital games* (pp. 67–82). Routledge.
- Dickerman, C., Christensen, J., & Kerl-Mcclain, S. B. (2008). Big breasts and bad guys: Depictions of gender and race in video games. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 3(1), 20–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15401380801995076>
- Doran, Y. (2019). Seeing values: Axiology and affording attitude in Australia’s “invasion”. In J. Martin, K. Maton, & Y. Doran (Eds.), *Academic discourse: Systemic functional linguistics and legitimation code theory* (pp. 151-176). Routledge.
- Economou, D. (2009). *Photos in the news: Appraisal analysis of visual semiosis and verbal–visual intersemiosis*. University of Sydney. <http://hdl.handle.net/2123/5740>
- Economou, D. (2012). Standing out on critical issues: Evaluation in large verbal–visual displays in Australian broadsheets. In W. Bowcher (Ed.), *Multimodal texts from around the world: Cultural and linguistic insights* (pp. 246–272). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Entertainment Software Association. (2017). *2017 essential facts: About the computer and video game industry*. <http://essentialfacts.theesa.com/mobile/>
- Exley, B. (2016). Secret squirrel stuff in the Australian Curriculum English: The genesis of the “new” grammar. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 39(1), 74–85. <https://doi.org/10.3316/aeipt.211879>
- Feminist Frequency. (2020). <https://feministfrequency.com>
- Flanagan, M., & Nissenbaum, H. (2007). A game design methodology to incorporate social activist themes. In M. B. Rosson & D. Gilmore (Eds.), *Conference on human factors in computing systems—proceedings* (pp. 181–190). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1240624.1240654>
- Flanagan, M., & Nissenbaum, H. (2014). *Values at play in digital games*. MIT Press.

- Flanagan, M., Howe, D. C., & Nissenbaum, H. (2005, April). Values at play: Design tradeoffs in socially-oriented game design. In W. Kellogg, S. Zhai, G. v. d. Veer, & G. Gale (Eds.), *CHI 2005 papers: Social behaviors* (pp. 751–760). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1054972.1055076>
- Flanagan, M., Nissenbaum, H., Belman, J., & Diamond, J. (2007). *A method for discovering values in digital games* [Paper presentation]. DiGRA 2007, “Situated play”. Tokyo, Japan.
- Folkeryd, J. W. (2006). *Writing with an attitude: Appraisal and student texts in the school subject of Swedish* [Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis]. <https://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:170114/FULLTEXT01>
- Frasca, G. (1999). Ludology meets narratology: Similitude and difference between (video)games and narrative. *Parnasso*, 3, 365–371. http://web.cfa.arizona.edu/art435a/readings/frasca_ludology.pdf
- Frasca, G. (2003). Simulation versus narrative. In M. J. P. Wolf & B. Perron (Eds), *The video game theory reader* (pp. 221–237). Routledge.
- Gee, J. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Palgrave.
- Gee, J. (2004). *Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling*. Routledge.
- Gee, J. (2007). *Good video games and good learning: Collected essays on video games, learning and literacy*. Peter Lang.
- Gies, A. (2014, May 27). *Watch Dogs* review: Spook country. *Polygon*. <http://www.polygon.com/2014/5/27/5746116/watch-dogs-ps4-xbox-one-review>
- Gilbert, B. E. N. (2021, December 24). Video-game industry revenues grew so much during the pandemic that they reportedly exceeded sports and film combined. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/video-game-industry-revenues-exceed-sports-and-film-combined-idc-2020-12?r=US&IR=T>
- Greenberg, B. S., Sherry, J., Lachlan, K., Lucas, K., & Holmstrom, A. (2010). Orientations to video games among gender and age groups. *Simulation and Gaming*, 41(2), 238–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878108319930>
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*. Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1992). Language as system and language as instance: The corpus as a theoretical construct. In J. Svartvik (Ed.), *Directions in corpus linguistics: Proceedings of Nobel symposium 82 Stockholm, 4–8 August 1991* (pp. 61–77). Mouton de Gruyter.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. (2014). *Halliday’s introduction to functional grammar/M.A.K. Halliday and Christian Matthiessen* (4th ed.). Routledge.

- Hannah, D. R., & Lautsch, B. A. (2011). Counting in qualitative research: Why to conduct it, when to avoid it, and when to closet it. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 20(1), 14–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105649261037598>
- Hartmann, T., & Vorderer, P. (2010). It's okay to shoot a character: Moral disengagement in violent video games. *Journal of Communication*, 60(1), 94-119. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01459.x>
- Hawking, C. (2007, October 7). Ludonarrative dissonance in bioshock. *Click nothing: Design from a long time ago*. http://clicknothing.typepad.com/click_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html
- Humphrey, S., Droga, L., & Feez, S. (2012). *Grammar and meaning*. Primary English Teaching Association Australia (PETAA).
- Hunicke, R., LeBlanc, M., & Zubek, R. (2004, July). *MDA: A formal approach to game design and game research* [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the AAAI Workshop on challenges in games, San Jose, United States of America.
- Iedema, R. A. (2001). Analysing film and television: A social semiotic account of hospital: An unhealthy business. In T. van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds), *Handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 183–204). Sage.
- IMDb. (2009). *Batman Arkham Asylum*. IMDb. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1282022/?ref_=vp_back
- IMDb. (2014). *Watch dogs*. IMDb. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2190152/?ref_=vp_back
- Interactive Games & Entertainment Association. (2020, October 14). Australian video games sales positioned for a rebound in 2020 following marginal drop. *Interactive Games & Entertainment Association News*. <https://igea.net/2020/06/australian-video-game-industry-positioned-for-a-rebound-in-2020-following-marginal-drop/>
- Jenkins, H. (2004). Game design as narrative architecture. In N. Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan (Eds), *First person new media as story, performance, and game* (pp. 118–130). MIT Press.
- Jewitt, C. (Ed.). (2014). *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Juul, J. (2001). Games telling stories? A brief note on games and narratives. *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research*, 1(1). <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/>
- Juul, J. (2011). *Half-real: Video games between real rules and fictional worlds*. MIT Press.
- Kalantzis, M., Cope, B., Chan, E., & Dalley-Trim, L. (2016). *Literacies* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- Kapell, M. W. (2016). *The play versus story divide in game studies: Critical essays*. McFarlan & Company.
- Kent, L. (2014, December 3). *Grand Theft Auto V: Target, Kmart pull game off shelves over sexual violence controversy*. *ABC News (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)*. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-03/target-kmart-pull-grand-theft-auto-5-game-sexual-violence/5939184>
- Knight, N. K. (2010). Wrinkling complexity: Concepts of identity and affiliation in humour. In M. Bednarek & J. Martin (Eds), *New discourse on language functional perspectives on multimodality, identity, and affiliation* (pp. 35–58). Continuum International.
- Koenitz, H., Ferri, G., Haahr, M., Sezen, D., & Tonguc, I. S. (2015). *Towards a ludonarrative toolbox* [Paper presentation]. DiGRA 2015: Diversity of Play: Games–Cultures–Identities. Lüneburg, Germany.
- Kowert, R., Breuer, J., & Quandt, T. (2015). Women are from FarmVille, men are from ViceCity: The cycle of exclusion and sexism in videogame content and culture. In R. Kowert & T. Quandt (Eds), *New perspectives on the social aspects of digital gaming* (pp. 136–150). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315629308-9>
- Krcmar, M., & Cingel, D. P. (2016). Moral foundations theory and moral reasoning in video game play: Using real-life morality in a game context. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 60(1), 87–103. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2015.1127246>
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2018). *Doing visual analysis: From theory to practice*. Sage.
- Lemke, J. (1998). Multiplying meaning: Visual and verbal semiotics in scientific text. In J. Martin & R. Veel (Eds), *Reading science: Critical and functional perspective on discourses of science* (pp. 87–113). Taylor and Francis.
- Leonard, D. J. (2006). Not a hater, just keepin' it real: The importance of race- and gender-based game studies. *Games and Culture*, 1(1), 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412005281910>
- Lowien, N. (2016). The semiotic construction of values in the videogame *Watch Dogs*. *English in Australia*, 51(2), 41–51. <https://doi.org/10.3316/aeipt.213569>
- Lynch, T., Tompkins, J. E., van Driel, I. I., & Fritz, N. (2016). Sexy, strong, and secondary: A content analysis of female characters in video games across 31 years. *Journal of Communication*, 66(4), 564–584. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12237>

- Macken-Horarik, M. (2003a). A telling symbiosis in the discourse of hatred: Multimodal news texts about the “children overboard” affair. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26(2), 1–16.
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2003b). Appraisal and the special instructiveness of narrative. *Text*, 23(2), 285–312. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2003.012>
- Macken-Horarik, M. (2003c). Working the borders in racist discourse: The challenge of the “children overboard affair” in news media texts. *Social Semiotics*, 13(3), 283–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1035033032000167024>
- Macken-Horarik, M., Love, K., Sandiford, C., & Unsworth, L. (2018). *Functional grammatics: Re-conceptualizing knowledge about language and image for school English*. Routledge.
- Martin, J. (1985). *Factual writing: Exploring and challenging social reality*. Deakin University Press.
- Martin, J. (1995). Reading positions/positioning readers: Judgement in English. *Prospect*, 10(2), 27–37.
- Martin, J. (2000). Beyond exchange: Appraisal systems in English. In S. Hunston & G. Thompson (Eds.), *Evaluation in text: Authorial stance and the construction of discourse* (pp. 142–175). Oxford University Press.
- Martin, J. (2008a). Intermodal reconciliation: Mates in arms. In L. Unsworth (Ed.), *New literacies and the English curriculum* (pp. 112–148). Continuum.
- Martin, J. (2008b). Tenderness: Realisation and instantiation in a Botswanan town. In N. Nørgaard (Ed.), *Systemic functional linguistics in use (Odense working papers in language and communication 29)* (pp. 30–62). University of Southern Denmark, Institute of Language and Communication.
- Martin, J. (2010). Semantic variation—modelling realisation, instantiation and individuation in social semiosis. In M. Bednarek & J. Martin (Eds.), *New discourse on language functional perspectives on multimodality, identity, and affiliation* (pp. 1–33). Continuum International.
- Martin, J., & Rose, D. (2007). *Working with discourse meaning beyond the clause* (2nd ed.). Bloomsbury.
- Martin, J., & White, P. (2005). *The language of evaluation appraisal in English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martinec, R., & Salway, A. (2005). A system for image–text relations in new (and old) media. *Visual Communication*, 4(3), 338–371. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357205055928>

- Maton, K. (2014). *Knowledge and knowers: Towards a realist sociology of education*. Routledge.
- McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world*. Jonathan Cape.
- McNeice, L., Smith, A., & Robison, T. (2012). Computer games, archetypes and the quest narrative: Computer games as texts in the Year 9 English classroom. In C. Beavis, J. O'Mara, & L. McNeice (Eds), *Digital games literacy in action* (pp. 24–32). Wakefield Press.
- Menon, L. (2015). History first-hand memory, the player and the video game narrative in the assassin's creed games. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, VII(1), 108–113.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from Case study research in education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6–18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- Murray, J. (1997). *Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace*. MIT Press.
- Naughty Dog. (2014). *The last of us* [Remastered]. Sony Computer Entertainment.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.66.1.17370n67v22j160u>
- Ngo, T. T. B. (2013). *The development of the language of evaluation in English and Vietnamese spoken discourse*. The University of New England.
- O'Mara, J., & Richards, J. (2012). A blank slate: Using GameMaker to create computer games. In C. Beavis, J. O'Mara, & L. McNeice (Eds.), *Digital games literacy in action* (pp. 57–64). Wakefield Press.
- O'Toole, M. (2011). *The language of displayed art* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Painter, C. (2009). Children's picture book narratives: Reading sequences of images. In A. McCabe, R. Whittaker, & M. O'Donnell (Eds.), *Advances in language and education* (pp. 40–59). Continuum International.
- Painter, C., & Martin, J. (2011). Intermodal complementarity: Modelling affordances across image and verbiage in children's picture books. In H. G. Wen (Ed.), *Studies in functional linguistics and discourse analysis* (pp. 132–158). Higher Education Press.

- Painter, C., Martin, J., & Unsworth, L. (2013). *Reading visual narratives: Inter-image analysis of children's picture books*. Equinox Publishing.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Pérez-Latorre, Ó., Oliva, M., & Besalú, R. (2017). Videogame analysis: A social-semiotic approach. *Social Semiotics*, 27(5), 586–603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2016.1191146>
- Phan, M. H., Jardina, J. R., Hoyle, S., & Chaparro, B. S. (2012). *Examining the role of gender in video game usage, preference, and behavior* [Paper presentation]. Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 51, Westin Boston Waterfront, United States of America.
- Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority. (2017a). *English 2019 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus*. <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/new-snr-assessment-te/redev-snr-syll>
- Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority. (2017b). *Essential English 2019 v1.0 Applied Senior Syllabus*. <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/new-snr-assessment-te/redev-snr-syll>
- Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority. (2017c). *Literature 2019 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus*. <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/new-snr-assessment-te/redev-snr-syll>
- Rockstar North. (2013). *Grand theft auto V*. Rockstar Games.
- Rockstar North. (2004). *Grand theft auto: San Andreas*. Rockstar Games.
- Rocksteady. (2011). *Batman Arkham City*. Warner Bros.
- Rocksteady. (2014). *Rocksteady Arkham Asylum*. <http://rocksteadyltd.com/#arkham-asylum>
- Rocksteady. (2015). *Batman Arkham Knight* (Special ed.?). Warner Bros.
- Rocksteady. (2016). *Batman Arkham Asylum (Return to Arkham)*. Warner Bros.
- Royce, T. D. (1998). Synergy on the page: Exploring intersemiotic complementarity in page-based multimodal text. *JASFL Occasional Paper*, 1, 25–50.
- Ryan, M.-L. (2001). *Narrative as virtual reality: Immersion and interactivity in literature and electronic media*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ryan, M.-L. (2006). *Avatars of story*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Salen, K. (2007). Gaming literacies: A game design study in action. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 16(3), 301–322.
- Sanford, K., & Madill, L. (2007). Understanding the power of new literacies through video game play and design. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30(2), 432–455. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20466645>

- Screen Australia. (2020, January 21). *CEO's 2019 year in review and 2020 preview* [Media release]. <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/media-centre/news/2020/01-21-ceo-2019-year-in-review-2020-preview>
- Seraphine, F. (2016a). Ludonarrative dissonance: Is storytelling about reaching harmony? The University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies, Japan. http://www.academia.edu/28205876/Ludonarrative_Dissonance_Is_Storytelling_About_Reaching_Harmony
- Seraphine, F. (2016b). *The ludic framework—a theory of meaningful gameplay* [Paper presentation]. Digital Games Research Association JAPAN: Proceedings of 2016 Annual Conference, Tokyo, Japan.
- Sinde, J., Medrano, C., & Martínez de Morentin, J.-I. (2015). Transmission of values in adolescents: An analysis with video games. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, 230–251. <https://doi.org/10.4185/RLCS-2015-1044en>
- Square Enix Ltd. (2013). *Tomb raider*. Square Enix Ltd.
- Sylvester, T. (2013). *Designing games*. O'Reilly Media.
- Todd, C. (2015). Commentary: GamerGate and resistance to the diversification of gaming culture. *Women's Studies Journal*, 29(1), 64–67.
- Toh, W. (2015). *A multimodal discourse analysis of video games: A ludonarrative model* [Paper presentation]. *DiGRA 2015: Diversity of play: Games—cultures—identities*. Lüneburg, Germany.
- Tomkinson, S., & Harper, T. (2015). The position of women in video game culture: Perez and Day's Twitter incident. *Continuum*, 29(4), 617–634. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2015.1025362>
- Tseng, C., & Bateman, J. (2012). Multimodal narrative construction in Christopher Nolan's *Memento*: A description of analytic method. *Visual Communication*, 11(1), 91–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357211424691>
- Ubisoft. (2014). *Watch Dogs*. Ubisoft Entertainment Inc.
- Ubisoft. (2016). *Watch Dogs 2* (Play Station 4). Ubisoft.
- Ubisoft. (2020). *Watch Dogs Legion* (No. PS4). Ubisoft.
- Ubisoft Entertainment Inc. (2016). *Ubisoft group: About Ubisoft: Facts and figures*. http://static9.cdn.ubisoft.com/ubigroupstatic/en-US/global/img/company/Ubisoft%20Facts%20Figures%20February%202016_238554.pdf
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. (2020). *UNICEF uses online gaming to showcase potential, skills and creativity of refugee and migrant children* [Press

- release]. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-uses-online-gaming-showcase-potential-skills-and-creativity-refugee-and>
- Unsworth, L. (2013a). Point of view in picture books and animated movie adaptations. *SCAN*, 32(1), 28–37. <https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.581930455780575>
- Unsworth, L. (2013b). Re-configuring image–language relations and interpretive possibilities in picture books as animated movies: A site for developing multimodal literacy pedagogy. *Ilha Do Desterro*, 64, 15–48. <https://doi.org/10.5007/2175-8026.2013n64p15>
- Unsworth, L. (2014). Persuasive narratives: Evaluative images in picture books and animated movies. *Visual Communication*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357214541762>
- Unsworth, L., & Cleirigh, C. (2008). Multimodality and reading: The construction of meaning through image–text interaction. In C. Jewitt (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis* (pp. 151–169). Routledge.
- Unsworth, L., & Thomas, A. (Eds.). (2014). *English teaching and new literacies pedagogy: Interpreting and authoring digital multimedia narratives*. Peter Lang.
- Van Eck, R. (2006). Digital game-based learning: It’s not just the digital natives who are restless. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 41(2), 17–30.
- Van Eck, R. (2015). Digital game-based learning: Still restless, after all these years. *EDUCAUSE Review*, 50(6), 13–28.
- Vermeulen, L., Van Looy, J., De Grove, F., & Courtois, C. (2011). *You are what you play? A quantitative study into game design preferences across gender and their interaction with gaming habits* [Paper presentation]. *DiGRA 2011 Conference: Think Design Play*, Hilversum, The Netherlands.
- Walk, W., Görlich, D., & Barrett, M. (2017). Game dynamics: Best practices in procedural and dynamic game content generation. In O. Korn & N. Lee (Eds.), *Game dynamics* (pp. 27–45). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53088-8>
- Walsh, C. (2010). Systems-based literacy practices: Digital games research, gameplay and design. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 33(1), 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.731555751906684>
- Walter, M. (2010). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- White, P. (2014). The attitudinal work of news journalism images—a search for visual and verbal analogues. *Quaderni Del CeSLiC Occasional Papers Del CeSLiC*, 2014, 6–42. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6092/unibo/amsacta/4110>
- Witkowski, W. (2021, January 2). Videogames are a bigger industry than movies and North American sports combined, thanks to the pandemic. *MarketWatch*, 50.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/videogames-are-a-bigger-industry-than-sports-and-movies-combined-thanks-to-the-pandemic-11608654990>

Zimmerman, E. (2009). Gaming literacy game design as a model for literacy in the twenty-first century. In B. Perron & M. J. P. Wolf (Eds.), *The video game theory reader 2* (pp. 23–31). Routledge.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Human Research Ethics approval



Human Research Ethics Committee **Project Approval Letter**

Principal Investigator/Supervisor:	Professor Len Unsworth
Student Researcher:	Nathan Lowien (Doctoral student)
Project title:	A Critical Interpretive Play Pedagogy: Teaching for the semiotic construction of evaluative stance and portrayal of values in videogames
Project approval period:	25/03/2019 - 31/03/2020
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number:	2018-282H

This is to certify that the above application has been reviewed by the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (ACU HREC). The application has been approved for the period given above.

Researchers are responsible for ensuring that all conditions of approval are adhered to and that approval for modifications to the protocol are approved prior to implementation. In addition, the ACU HREC must be notified of any reportable matters including, but not limited to, incidents, complaints and unexpected issues.

Researchers are also responsible for ensuring that they adhere to the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the *University's Code of Conduct*.

Any queries relating to this application should be directed to the Manager, Research Ethics and Integrity (reethics.manager@acu.edu.au).

Kind regards,

26/03/2019

Kylie Pashley

Senior Research Ethics Officer

On behalf of the ACU HREC Chair, Associate Professor Michael Baker

Research Ethics and Integrity | Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Australian Catholic University

T: +61 2 9739 2646

E: Res.Ethics@acu.edu.au

W: [ACU Research Ethics and Integrity](#)