ESTABLISHING HYRULE:

ANALYZING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD AND LEVELS

IN SHIGERU MIYAMOTO'S OCARINA OF TIME

By

Douglas A Hollingsworth

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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Michael Harrawood, and has been approved by the members of his supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of The Honors College and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences.

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ABSTRACT

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Shigeru Miyamoto's *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* pushed the boundaries of video game design in 1998 by introducing players to one of the first virtual worlds fully-rendered in three-dimensions. The shift from rendering game worlds in two-dimensions to rendering them in three-dimensions required the development of new techniques for constructing virtual worlds. This thesis focuses on the construction of the virtual realm in *Ocarina of Time*, particularly the ways by which players are presented with cosmology of the virtual world and the divine ordering of the races that dwell there. In addition, this thesis explores how the process of building the virtual world of Hyrule is mimicked in the design of the game's individual levels, in terms of the spaces that players explore, the rules they are bound by, and the goals that they must reach while progressing through the central plot.

To my parents, for their tolerance and sacrifice

To my love, for finding me one day in the Burrow

To my Advisor, for holding my feet to the flames and never letting go

To my friends and peers, for sharing in this four-year adventure

Thank you: All of you.

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I. Introduction

This thesis is intended as an applied analysis of constructed virtual worlds in video games, a process which is handled, in the games industry, by two particular types of design specialist: World Designers and Level Designers. World Designers construct virtual worlds on the macro scale, including the lore, themes, and setting of the game. Level Designers take these aspects of World Design and apply them to each area and region of the game, known collectively as levels. In "We Need Radical Gameplay, Not Just Radical Graphics", Seb Franklin argues that each of these Designers plays a role in constructing the narrative of the game, that "the story of the game, what could be called the "internal" narrative, . . . [is] run within the game by its source code . . . [but] alongside this runs the story of the playing, a narrative that is pieced together out of action, experience, frustration, and imagining as the player makes his or her way through the game itself" (Franklin 2). In this thesis, I analyze the construction of the virtual world of Shigeru Miyamoto's fifth title in the *Legend of Zelda* series, the *Ocarina of Time*, both in terms of World Design and Level Design. Before I outline why *Ocarina of Time* is a viable piece for critical analysis, I will briefly cover two existing bodies of discourse which I do not include in this thesis, the first of which is Joseph Cambell's discourse on the *monomyth*. While many game designers may "embrace [the *monomyth*] as a potential structure for games [because] it is effective in creating a compelling storyline" (Howard 5), I do not believe that Campbell's three-part structure of heroic narrative, first published in his 1949 piece *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, is a viable framework for analyzing games and game-play at any depth; nevertheless, the *monomyth*, as Campbell constructs

it, can be applied as an analytic framework to any and all games which focus on the conflict between a central protagonist and one or more antagonists. In addition, my thesis does not include arguments or claims pertaining to the discourse of Ludology and Narratology, which focuses on the debate over whether games, or game-play, should be considered textual sources for academic analysis. As Narratologists and Ludologists begin to move away from this body of discourse, the emerging consensus amongst scholars of game studies is that both the game and the game-play are valid sources for textual analysis in academia. As such, this thesis analyzes both the game, through Miyamoto's World Design, and game-play, through the level design of *Ocarina of Time*.

Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* is a viable source for analysis for three reasons, first of which is founded in Gretchen Papazian's 2011 publication "A Possible Childhood: Video Games, Narrative, and the Child Player". In "A Possible Childhood", Papazian argues that the emergence of games which render spaces of play in 3-dimensions has resulted in an innovation in narrative point-of-view: the fourth-person perspective, which "breaks through [the Fourth Wall of narration], messing with time and space and collapsing the narrator-naratee relationship" (Papazian 6). This unique narrative point of view can only exist in games which copy the formal structures found in the real world to the point of mimesis, when the player is simultaneously involved in the performance of play and the narration of the events that they are performing in. In the words of Alison McMahan, "narrative and narrative genres are often used as a way of defining the conventions of a world and to help the user align their expectations with the logic of the world" (McMahan 69). Simply put, by adopting the fourth person point of view players

are able to adopt the role of the narrator and the characters within their own narration, an experience unique to the medium of games and game-play. The second reason for why *Ocarina of Time* is a viable source for analyses is that it is a major title in gaming canon. To quote Bill Loguidice from his 2009 publication *Vintage Games*, "a gamer who'd never heard of Zelda would be as bizarre as a science fiction fan who'd .never heard of Star Wars, or a fantasy buff who'd never read Tolkein . . . Love it or hate it, The Legend of Zelda is a foundational game, one of only a handful of titles that can truly be said to have helped to define the industry as we know it today" (Loguidice 303). The third reason why Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* is a viable source for academic analysis is that the central conflict between the player-protagonist and the game's various antagonists is an adaptation of the conflict between the forces of Good and Evil found in existing bodies of discourse. The conflict between Good and Evil is a consistent theme in media throughout history, and it is present to some degree in all fields of new media studies. For the purpose of this thesis, however, I will draw on existing bodies of discourse on the theme of conflict between Good and Evil in English Literature, mainly in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, when necessary.

While the use of fourth-person point of view and the theme of Good conflicting with Evil are present in *Ocarina of Time*, these factors require a theoretical framework through which they can be analyzed. While literature can be analyzed by reading the text and searching for common themes, motifs, and imagery in the text, games lack an established framework for analysis. Some game scholars, like Gonzalo Frasca choose to focus their analyses on the rules of game play. Rules serve to channel, control, and limit

available paths of play in games, providing game designers with the tools necessary to guarantee that players will experience certain points in the story, without compromising game-play (Frasca 232).

Rules analysis, however, is only one part of the necessary framework. In a 2011 publication *Reality is Broken*, Dr. Jane McGonigal outlines four fundamental aspects inherent in any game:

> When you strip away the genre differences and the technological complexities, all games share four defining traits: a goal, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation (McGonigal 21).

While the latter two aspects, a constructed feedback system and voluntary participation on the part of the player, are certainly necessary, they are not relevant to the argument put forth in this thesis. The introduction of an established goal as a fundamental unit in the design of games, however, is highly relevant to this thesis. While rules analysis can provide insight on how game designs channel players toward certain experiences and conclusions in game-play, analysis of goals in games can provide scholars with additional insight on how game designs motivate players to play in certain ways, towards certain ends, despite the limits introduced by rules. In short, both McGonigal and Frasca contribute to our understanding of narrative design in games by isolating two aspects of game design for focused analysis: the rules imposed on players, and possible goals presented to players.

In a 2003 article entitled "Zelda 64 and Video Game Fans: A Walkthrough of

Games, Intertextuality, and Narrative", Mia Consalvo touches upon the final aspect of game design that I will cover in this thesis: the construction of space in games. In short, an analysis of space in games should cover the spaces which are designed for players to explore and inhabit during sessions of play. In her article, Consalvo argues that the processes by which "video games . . . allow players to explore new and visually pleasing (but dangerous) levels [is] similar in some ways to [that of] travel diaries . . .where the traveler must overcome hardships to prevail in their [sic] quest" (Consalvo 4).The role of spatial design in games, as a tool for motivating players to explore, interact, and conflict with other aspects of the game world, is the final aspect in my analysis of Miyamoto's *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*.

To summarize, the three aspects of Miyamoto's Level Design in *Ocarina of Time* which are covered in this thesis are his construction of rules which impose limitations on the player-protagonist, the goals presented to motivate the player-protagonist's continued performance in the game world, and the spatial design of the world, levels, and dungeons that the player-protagonist must enter in order to achieve said goals.

The following sections are intended to serve as an analysis of Miyamoto's construction of the Legend of Zelda Universe. For the first half of this thesis I focus on the facts and dialogue relayed to the player, through the protagonist, concerning the cosmological ordering of the virtual world and the divine ordering of the various races that the player encounters during game-play. The second half of this thesis then focuses on recurring structural motifs and symbolic goals inherent in the Dungeons and Temples that the player explores throughout the course of the game. In a 2008 publication entitled

Quests: Design, Theory, and History in Games and Narratives, Jeff Howard asserts that "studying the spaces of the quest in games and narratives can lead to a set of design principles which involve the construction of an allegorical universe" (Howard 45). I agree that an understanding of the principles of spatial design in existing games and narratives can be beneficial for the construction of spaces in future narratives, whether in games, film, or literature. This understanding, more than any other reasoning, is the intended purpose of this thesis.

II. The Cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe

In *Ocarina of Time*, Miyamoto establishes a cosmological order for the Legend of Zelda Universe. The cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe is conveyed to players through dialogue with the Great Deku Tree, the Guardian Deity of the woods and forests of the mortal realm, early in the game. In this section, I provide a comprehensive outline of Miyamoto's established cosmology. In addition, I analyze many of the parallels between Miyamoto's cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe in *Ocarina of Time*, and Jonathan Milton's cosmology of the Universe in *Paradise Lost*. In particular, I analyze the similarities between the three distinct regions in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* and those regions visited in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

A. The Chaos

The first region described in Miyamoto's Ocarina of Time is the Chaos, an ever expansive void which is filled with vacuum. The existence of the Chaos itself is first introduced at the conclusion of a quest-line in which the player, as the young hero, Link,

enters the body of the Great Deku Tree in order to drive out the corrupting presence of Queen Gohma, a horrifyingly mutated spider who constructs a nest in the bowels of the Great Deku Tree. After driving the spider queen from the Deku Tree's bowels, Link is then rewarded with a recounting of the creation of Hyrule. The Great Deku Tree's recounting is, essentially, a creation myth. The first lines of the creation myth contain three important points regarding the cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe:

> Before time began, before spirits and life existed . . . Three golden goddesses descended upon the chaos that was Hyrule (Nintendo EAD).

The first point that should be drawn from these lines is that the Chaos existed before the realm of Hyrule was formed. So, in the cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe, the realm of Hyrule is circumscribed by the expansive void of the Chaos. The second point that should be drawn from these lines is that three deities "descended" into the region of Chaos that would become Hyrule. So, in the cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe, the regions encompassed by the Chaos, in addition to the region of Chaos itself, exist beneath an unmentioned realm from which the deities emerge. This realm is not included in the Deku Tree's creation myth, beyond his acknowledgement that the goddesses entered into the Chaos from an exterior realm, presumably one in which they dwell. The third, and final, point that should be drawn from these lines is that the deities, and the Chaos, were present "before time began, before spirits and life existed." This means, then, that concepts of time, life, and spirits did not exist in the Chaos before the goddesses' arrival.

In terms of practical application, these points can be used in conjunction with

readings of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Parallels can be drawn between the state of the

Chaos prior to the Goddesses' creation of Hyrule in *Ocarina of Time* and the state of the

Abyss prior to God's creation of the Earth in *Paradise Lost*. In Ocarina of Time, the

Goddesses enter the Chaos and find it devoid of at least four things, as mentioned in the

Great Deku Tree's retelling of the Hyrulian creation myth: time, spirits, the presence of

life, and discernable dimensions or boundaries. In comparison, the first recounting of the

Abyss in *Paradise Lost* occurs in Book II, in which Satan and Sin first open the gates of

Hell:

Before their eyes in sudden view appear

The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark

Illimitable ocean without bound,

Without dimensions, where length, breadth, and highth,

And time and place are lost; (Milton 84)

This passage describes the Abyss as being an ocean without discernable boundaries,

without any internal dimensions of length, breadth, and height, and as a region in which

time, or at least a character's position in time and space, is lost upon entering. When

compared to the Deku Tree's description of the region of Chaos in the cosmology of the

Legend of Zelda Universe, the Abyss is a nearly identical region of Milton's constructed

cosmology of the Universe. Both regions, in both narratives, are lacking in discernable

boundaries, dimensions, or organization. The only difference between the Chaos of

Ocarina of Time and the Abyss of Milton's *Paradise Lost* is the establishment of a

timeline. In *Ocarina of Time*, the Goddesses introduce time into the Chaos, setting time in motion as they begin to construct Hyrule out of the void, but in *Paradise Lost* time is already established before God creates Hell and Earth in the void of the Abyss. In this way, the regions of the Chaos in *Ocarina of Time* and the Abyss in *Paradise Lost* are similar, but not identical; both regions are endless spaces of limbo in which the worlds and realms of their respective narratives are formed by deific entities, but one region lacks the presence of time, while the other is already progressing along some point in time.

B. The Profane Realm of Hyrule

The second region described in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* is the realm of Hyrule, which was created from the combined efforts of the three Golden Goddesses; Din, Nayru, and Farore. Hyrule was created in a three-part process in which each Goddess created a separate domain within the Chaos. First, as the Deku Tree claims, Din, "with her strong flaming arms . . . cultivated the land and created the red earth." Next came Nayru, who performed two acts; first, she "poured her wisdom onto the earth," creating the great lakes and rivers of Hyrule, before giving "the spirit of law to the world," building and ordering the world according to her great wisdom. Finally, Farore "produced all life forms who would uphold the law" (Nintendo EAD).

From this procession in the creation myth, two more points can be drawn regarding the cosmology of the Legend of Zelda Universe. The first point is that the ordering of Hyrule and all other realms circumscribed by the Chaos is in accordance with

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will of the deities, implemented and set down by Nayru, the Goddess of Wisdom. The second point is that all forms of life created by Farore, those which are indigenous to the natural ordering of the world, are responsible for upholding and supporting the laws set down by Nayru.

Both of these points will be re-introduced in my analysis of the Goddesses' sacred ordering of the races of Hyrule in Part V, but, for now, it is important to note that Hyrule is a profane realm, circumscribed from the Chaos, separate from the whatever realm the Goddesses emerged from. While Guardian Deities, like the Great Deku Tree, may inhabit Hyrule to ward and guide Farore's creations, it is primarily the realm of mortals and beasts.

In terms of practical application, this knowledge can be used in conjunction with readings of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Parallels can be drawn between the Great Deku Tree's recounting of Hyrule's creation in *Ocarina of Time* and Raphael's recounting of the Earth's creation in *Paradise Lost*. In both tales, the narrators make clear mention of at least three separate stages of the world's construction; creating the Earth, filling it with oceans and rivers, and finally populating the world with creatures who are tasked with adhering to and upholding the divine ordering of the world. Both myths, however, are spatially opposed with regard to the direction in which their respective deities proceed with the construction.

In *Ocarina of Time*, the Golden Goddesses take turns adding to the construction left over from the previous Goddess; Din constructed the earth, Nayru added water and ordered the world according to her divine wisdom, and Farore completed the task by

adding all the races and creatures which would dwell in Hyrule. This process of

construction is one of layering new creations over the existing ones, adding content and

depth in a non-linear fashion. In *Paradise Lost*, as a comparison, Raphael recounts God's

construction of the world as one of building upward in a linear fashion, instead of

outward; first "over all the face of Earth / Main oceans flowed" (Milton 245), without dry

land present. God then raised land above the ocean, commanding the seas to "be gathered

. . . / Into one place, [to] let dry land appear." Finally, God commanded the oceans to

"generate reptile with spawn abundant," and birds to "fly above the earth," and all other

"Cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth" (Milton 250). In Raphael's

recounting of God's creation of the world, God constructs the world in stages, building

vertically each time towards his throne in Heaven: first the world, covered with water,

then the land above the water, and finally the creatures of the world and Man, who would

dwell on the surface of the world, closest to Heaven. In this way, the non-linear

construction of Hyrule in *Ocarina of Time* can be compared to the vertically linear

construction of the Earth in *Paradise Lost*.

C. The Sacred Realm

The third region described in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* is the Sacred Realm,

which exists separate from the profane realm of Hyrule but which is also circumscribed

by the Chaos. As such, the Sacred Realm remains sacred, but is separated from the divine

realm of the Goddesses. Once again, the knowledge of the existence of the Sacred Realm

is passed down to the player, as the hero Link, by the Great Deku Tree. As the Deku Tree

explains in its recounting of the Hyrulian creation tale, the Golden Goddesses departed

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Hyrule shortly after its completion. The Goddesses crossed from Hyrule back into the void of the Chaos and onward to divine realms unknown, "and golden sacred triangles remained at the point where [they] left the world" (Nintendo EAD). These sacred triangles were known collectively as the Tri-Force, and each Goddess imbued a portion of this sacred artifact with her divine power; Din's piece was the Tri-Force of Power, Nayru's was the Tri-Force of Wisdom, and Farore's was the Tri-Force of Courage. When held together, they would imbue any being, mortal or immortal, who held them with the divine powers and authority of all the Goddesses.

The Tri-Force remained at the point at which the Goddesses crossed from the realm of Hyrule into the void of the Chaos, and the divine power imbued in the Tri-Force circumscribed that point, creating an enclosed realm within the realm of Hyrule which was only accessible by means of the magic inherent in Farore's master race, the Hylians. The divine hierarchy of Hyrule's races is analyzed in more depth in the fifth section of this thesis, so I will return to this at a later point.

While the Great Deku Tree recounts the Hyrulian creation myth in great detail, it omits several key factors in the existence of the Sacred Realm in which the Tri-Force is stored. The most relevant point, in this instance, is how the knowledge of the Tri-Force's sacred resting site spread through the profane realm of Hyrule, since its very creation and existence were a divine secret; while the Hylians were created with the ability to wield magic capable of bridging the gap between Hyrule and the Sacred Realm, the rest of Hyrule's races were not so gifted. The truth of this matter is relayed to the player through the protagonist, Link, at a later point in *Ocarina of Time*. Midway through the game, the

player encounters and individual who is only known as the Sage of Light, an eternal warden of the Sacred Realm, presumably an ancient Hylian. The Sage then fills in the gaps omitted by the Great Deku Tree's creation myth by explaining to the player, through Link, that for each generation the races of Hyrule, to uphold the laws and ordering of the world as set down by the Goddesses Nayru, would produce a single individual to serve as a Sage of Light, six in total, to serve as wardens of the Goddesses' six temples of worship in Hyrule. These temples are discussed in more depth in sections VI-VIII of this thesis. In collaboration, the seven Sages of Light erected a sister temple to the Hylian Temple of Time in Hyrule within the Sacred Realm, known as the Temple of Light. The original seven sages then formed a bridge between the Temple of Time and the Temple of Light which, with the correct keys, would permit individuals to enter and return from the Sacred Realm. It is in this way that knowledge of the Tri-Force, and its divine properties, spread throughout Hyrule.

Understanding the origin of the bridge between the profane realm of Hyrule and the Sacred Realm is important because, in the events presented in *Ocarina of Time*, the subversive intentions of one mortal result in the corruption of the Sacred Realm, and the shattering of the Tri-Force. This cataclysmic event establishes the overwhelming presence of Evil as the dominant force in Hyrule throughout the second half of the game, and results in the eternal corruption of the Sacred Realm, turning it into a realm in which Evil is the dominant sacred force as well. This reconstructed realm is known as the Dark Realm.

D. The Dark Realm

The fourth, and final, region described in Miyamoto's Ocarina of Time is the Dark Realm. Put simply, the Dark Realm is an alternate state of the Sacred Realm. In the events portrayed in Ocarina of Time, Ganon, the Gerudo race's King, accesses the bridge within the Temple of Time and crosses into the Sacred Realm. While in the Sacred Realm, Ganon reaches the resting place of the Tri-Force and attempts to possess it for himself. The Tri-Force, a balance of the Power, Wisdom, and Courage of the Golden Goddesses, reacts to Ganon's desire to usurp the Kingship of Hyrule by shattering into three distinct golden triangles, each imbued with the divine power of a different Goddess. Ganon retains the Tri-Force of Power, due to his overwhelming desires for power and authority, but the Tri-Forces of Nayru's Wisdom and Farore's Courage are hidden within the mortals of Hyrule who best represent those Goddess' wills. Ganon, his own intentions and authority elevated to divine proportions through his possession of Din's Tri-Force of Power, supplants Nayru's sacred ordering of Hyrule by corrupting the Sacred Realm to serve his own ambitions, filling the six Temples of Hyrule with a perverse power, twisting and corrupting the people and beasts in close proximity to the Temples into monstrous abominations. Ganon then departs from what was the Sacred Realm and returns to Hyrule, leaving behind a sacred space filled with his corrupting influence, known now as the Dark Realm.

III. The Divine Ordering of the Races of Hyrule in the Legend of Zelda Universe

In *Ocarina of Time*, Miyamoto establishes a divine ordering of the races of Hyrule. The races are ordered in a hierarchal ladder according to how favored they were

by Farore, following the construction of Hyrule. Unlike the case of the cosmological ordering of the Legend of Zelda Universe, there are no dialogues or monologues in the game which neatly explain why or how the races of Hyrule were arranged in a hierarchy of divine favor by Farore. There are, however, signs of divine favor, or a lack of favor, unique to each race in Hyrule. To be more precise, I believe that the Goddesses bequeathed sacred artifacts to each of their favored races before they departed from Hyrule. In the events presented in *Ocarina of Time*, the player, as the protagonist, Link, acquires many rewards and artifacts during game-play. I believe that, by analyzing the rewards and artifacts related to the Goddesses, the races of Hyrule can be arranged in a hierarchal ladder according to how much the Goddesses favor them. This ordering is, I believe, comparable to the divine ordering of the races according to Nayru's wisdom.

A. The Golden Goddesses

The highest race of Nayru's divine hierarchy is the three Golden Goddesses themselves. While the player never encounters the Goddesses themselves during the events of *Ocarina of Time*, the Great Deku Tree includes a summary of the Goddesses in a single line of his recounting of Hyrule's creation, stating that "Din [is] the goddess of fire . . . Nayru [is] the goddess of wisdom . . . [and] Farore [is] the goddess of courage" (Nintendo EAD). Since the Goddesses formed Hyrule, and ordered it according to their divine insight and wisdom, they are indisputably the highest race of Nayru's divine ordering of the races.

B. The Guardian Deities

The next highest race of Nayru's divine hierarchy is the Guardian Deities who dwell amongst the mortals of Hyrule. Unlike the Golden Goddesses, who entered the Chaos from an external realm, each of the Guardian Deities inhabits a different region of Hyrule, educating the races. This race includes the Great Deku Tree, the guardian deity of Hyrule's woods and forests, Lord Jabu-Jabu, the guardian deity of Hyrule's lakes and rivers, and the Goddess of the Sand, an elusive deity who rules the deserts and mountains of Hyrule. Over the course of the game, the player encounters both the Great Deku Tree and Lord Jabu-Jabu, and bodies of these guardian deities serve as dungeons which the player must enter and explore, encountering parasitic monsters and corrupted versions of natural creatures from their respective locales. I believe that the Guardian Deities fill the second highest spot on Nayru's divine ordering of the races for two specific reasons; first, the deities are immortal, reincarnating in some embryonic form if they die from corruption or mortal wounds, and, second, there is a one-to-one ratio of each guardian deity to each Golden Goddess; Din to the Goddess of the Sand, Nayru to Lord Jabu-Jabu, and Farore to the Great Deku Tree.

C. Nayru's Master Race

The third most favored race of Nayru's divine hierarchy is, in my opinion, the Hylians, a race of fair haired and fair skinned humans from whom all humans in Hyrule are derived. I believe that the Hylians are the third favored race of Nayru's divine hierarchy because they are the only race entrusted with a sacred artifact which imbues the wielder with the ability to manipulate a fundamental law of Hyrule. In the case of the

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Hylians, the Goddesses conferred to them a sacred instrument which allows the wielder to manipulate the wielder's spatial and temporal placement along the timeline of Hyrule's existence; the Ocarina of Time is this artifact, and by playing certain melodies on the instrument the wielder is able to turn back time to some earlier point, move time forward, summon storms or clear the skies. Because the Ocarina of Time is an instrument which allows the wielder a degree of control over his or her place in the space and time of Hyrule, as well as being the only sacred artifact in the game which confers such an ability on the wielder, I believe that the Hylians, as the divinely ordained protectors of the Ocarina of Time, are the mortal race most favored by the Golden Goddesses; a master race of worshippers, in a sense.

D. The Secondary Races

The fourth most favored race of Nayru's divine hierarchy is actually indeterminable, because three of Hyrule's races can qualify for the position. Each of these races possess a sacred artifact granted to them by one of the Golden Goddesses: the Kokiri, a race of child-like woodland folk, received the Kokiri's Emerald by Farore; the Gorons, a race of tough-skinned, mountain-dwelling folk, received the Goron's Ruby from Din;and the Zora, an amphibious race of smooth-skinned folk, received the Zora's Sapphire from Nayru. These gemstones, while not imbued with magic or divine power by the Goddesses, are still sacred; all of the gemstones must be gathered in the Temple of Time, in Hyrule's capital city, and the Hylian's sacred Ocarina of Time must be present, for the player, as Link, to cross from Hyrule into the Sacred Realm, halfway through the game. The gemstones are the keys required to open the bridge between the worlds, while

the ocarina is the tool which facilitates the process of crossing over. By splitting the

sacred stones amongst the Kokiri, the Gorons, and the Zora, no single race could subvert

the Hylians or the Royal Family. I believe that, in this way, the Kokiri, Gorons, and Zora

of Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* exist below the Hylians in Nayru's divine ordering of the

races of Hyrule.

E. The Tertiary Races

The least favored race of Nayru's divine hierarchy is indeterminable, because the

final two races of Hyrule presented in Ocarina of Time are both equally lacking in terms

of favor from the Golden Goddesses.

The first of these races is the Gerudo, a tan-skinned, red haired race of desert-

dwelling folk, referred to throughout the course of the game as ". . . the Desert Thieves"

(Nintendo EAD). The Gerudo lack the favor or patronage of any of the Golden

Goddesses, but it would be more precise to say that their species is cursed; the Gerudo

race is comprised of near-human females who only beget female offspring, regardless of

the father's race. Every century, however, a single male Gerudo is born into the clans of

the desert thieves, and their culture holds that this male is a divinely ordained king of the

Gerudo race. In addition to being an almost exclusively mono-gendered race, the Gerudo

also lack any artifacts that can be traced back to the Golden Goddesses. Although the

Gerudo, being near-human, are descended from the Hylian race, I believe that their

mono-gender curse and lack of any mentionable sacred artifacts places them at the

bottom of Nayru's divine ordering of Hyrule's races.

The second of the tertiary races is the Sheikah, a tan-skinned and red-eyed race of near-humans who are essentially extinct during the events of Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*, due to a civil war in Hyrule which wiped them out. The only information of the Sheikah comes from the character Impa, a female Sheikah who guards the Princess of Hyrule's royal family. Impa recounts the demise of the Sheikah during the Hyrulian Civil War, a conflict between the various races of Hyrule which was sparked when the existence of the Tri-Force spread throughout Hyrule, prompting a struggle amongst the races to acquire all of the Goddesses' sacred artifacts. In the end, the Hyrulian Royal Family quelled the rebellion, but the Sheikah clans had been all but wiped out while serving the family as defenders and warriors. Although the Sheikah, like the Gerudo, were descended, in some way, from the Hylian race, they lacked any of the Goddesses' sacred artifacts. In addition, the Sheikah were subservient to the Hylians, a race which served and fought for the Hylians out of loyalty. Because the Sheikah lacked any sacred artifacts, and due to their natural subservience to Nayru's master race, I believe that the Sheikah are a tertiary race, similar to the Gerudo, in Nayru's divine ordering of the races of Hyrule.

IV. Good and Evil in *Ocarina of Time*

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term sacred to mean "esteemed especially dear or acceptable to a deity." If this definition of the term is accurate then I believe that all the races of Hyrule, for Good or Evil, are sacred to the Golden Goddesses of the Legend of Zelda Universe. There are at least two points in the game that support this conclusion, the first of which is that the Tri-Forces of Power, Wisdom, and Courage

do not discriminate between Good intentions and Evil intentions in their wielders. While the unified Tri-Force can only be wielded by an individual who embodies the best of all three traits, each of the individual pieces of the Tri-Force do not discriminate between wielders with Good intentions and wielders with Evil intentions.

Before continuing, it is important to define the terms Good and Evil. I believe that, in *Ocarina of Time*, everything which is in line with the natural ordering of Hyrule, according to Nayru's divine ordering, is Good. Once something begins moving away from Nayru's divine ordering, re-ordering itself or being re-constructed in some corruption of its natural form, that thing then becomes Evil. In this way, Good and Evil are two versions of the same thing; one being in its natural state, and the other being a subversion, or perversion, of its natural state. This, I believe, is why the individual pieces of the Tri-Force recognize the mortal who best embodies their traits, regardless of whether that mortal intends to do Good or Evil with the Tri-Force.

Given that the Tri-Force does not discriminate between possession by beings of Good or Evil intentions, and given that Evil things are simply subversions of Nayru's natural ordering of Hyrule, it is logical that mortals who seek to do Good by annihilating sources of Evil in Hyrule are justified in doing so. In truth, though, sources of Good and Evil are both immutable in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*. In the final event of the game, in which the player, as the hero Link, faces down and defeats Ganon, the source of corruption and the agent of subversion throughout the game, Link cannot kill or annihilate Ganon. Instead, the seven Sages of Light drive Ganon from the realm of Hyrule and banish him to dwell, eternally sealed, in the Dark Realm that he corrupted.

Although Ganon defied Nayru's divine ordering of the races and sought the three pieces of the Tri-Force with the intent to restructure Hyrule according to his own ambitions, he cannot be annihilated; to do so would destroy the piece of the Tri-Force at rest in Ganon's mortal coil. Instead, he is only imprisoned in the Dark Realm, banished from Hyrule, and sealed away by the Seven Sages.

The immutable nature of Good and Evil, as presented in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*, plays an important role in analyzing all of Miyamoto's titles in the Legend of Zelda series; in each installment, the player assumes the role of a young boy who must go forth and banish some being of Evil intentions from Hyrule. Given that Ganon could only be sealed within the Dark Realm at the conclusion of *Ocarina of Time*, and given that, in each title in the series, the main protagonist and some female character in the game are revealed to be the descendants of Link and Princess Zelda, I propose that beings of Evil intent in subsequent titles in the series are actually one single enemy. Ganon is sealed in the Dark Realm, but in subsequent titles in the series the player faces several incarnations of a tan-skinned, red haired man who seeks to gather the pieces of the Tri-Force for some Evil purpose. I propose that every title in the Legend of Zelda series serves as a single instance of Ganon's eternal rebellion against the natural ordering of Hyrule, in which his people are firmly at the bottom of Nayru's divine ordering of the races.

V. Spatial Design of Miyamoto's Ocarina of Time

In *Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, levels are designed along two distinct spatial patterns: Dungeons and Temples, in which the player must combat enemies, rescue allies, and uncover hidden items and information; and Towns and Villages, in

which the player can recover from previous encounters, purchase new items and supplies, as well as participating in mini-games to unlock new abilities, areas, and items which are not required for progressing through the central plot of the game, but instead provide the chance for the player to improve possible options, items, and abilities for future encounters. Areas which may not be considered a dungeon, temple, or village will still fall under one of these two spatial designs; Hyrule field, which occupies the central region of Hyrule and separates the many villages and towns that the player must venture to throughout the game, is an example of such a space which is not easily assigned to one spatial type or another.

In a 2011 publication entitled "Narrative Structures in Computer and Video Games", Barry Ip, a professor in the School of Digital Media at Swanea Metropolitan University, argues that the three parts of narrative that bear the most academic attention are "the temporal nature of narrative, the depth of narrative, and how narrative is depicted to the audience" (Ip 35). In this section, I detail the spatial designs present in Miyamoto's Ocarina of Time, the Dungeon/Temple and the Town/Village, and how each design introduces a specific meaning into the player's actions while in these areas.

A. Dungeons and Temples

Dungeons and Temples are areas which encapsulate many of the plot-centric encounters that the player must reach and overcome in order to complete the game; the hollowed out interior of the Great Deku Tree is an excellent example of such a space. Dungeons and Temples can be distinguished by the manner in which players progressively explore the level during game-play. Dungeons, as the name suggests, are

areas which channels the player's movement in a descending vertical vector; the player is continually falling, delving, diving, and dropping down into the mountains, hills, lakes, and fields of Hyrule in order to progress through the game's central plot. Temples, on the other hand, channel the player's movement in an upward vertical vector; the player is continually climbing, walking, or riding up above the geography of Hyrule in order to achieve the level's objective.

In *Ocarina of Time*, the Dungeon/Temple is an area through which the player must ascend or descend in order to progress through the plot point present in that area; defeat an opponent, acquire an artifact, save a non-player character, etc. The act of ascending through these virtual spaces in Ocarina of Time typically results in the acquisition of information, items, and equipment which aid the player in overcoming or faces the obstacles and enemies present in the area; for example, the player acquires the Fairy Slingshot while climbing up the hollowed out interior of the Great Deku Tree, which enables the player to attack spider-like monsters, which block further progression in the climb, from a distance. In this way, the act of ascending through virtual space in *Ocarina of Time* is a literal movement toward harmony and the natural ordering of Hyrule. The player, as the Hylian youth, Link, ranks higher in Nayru's divine ordering of the races of Hyrule than the spiders and other vermin, especially the corrupted versions, which are present within the interior area of the Great Deku Tree. By climbing up the interior of the Great Deku Tree, the player acquires the Fairy Slingshot, which enables the player, as Link, to destroy the spiders which block the paths to the concluding points in the area, therefore enabling the player's progressive movement towards restoring the

Great Deku Tree to a healthy state. In contrast, the act of descending through virtual

spaces in *Ocarina of Time* typically results in confronting opponents and obstacles which

hinder or harm the player, preventing further progression through the dungeons until they

can be overcome or overpowered. For example, the player progresses through the Great

Deku Tree by first climbing to the highest point of the hollowed out interior. The player

must then make a leap of faith, which sends the player's character plunging into the

deepest part of the Tree's root system, which contains several rooms and connecting

tunnels that the player must traverse. It is in these burrowed out rooms and tunnels of the

Great Deku Tree's root system that the player is confronted with the first embodiment of

Evil in Hyrule: the corrupted queen spider, Gothma, which the player must then slay, or

be slain by. In this way, the act of descending through virtual space in *Ocarina of Time* is

a literal movement towards areas which contain corruption, or which are subverted from

Nayru's natural ordering of Hyrule.

B. Towns and Villages

Towns and Villages are areas which do not necessarily contain plot-centric points

or objectives that the player must pursue or acquire in order to progress through the

game's central plot. Instead, these areas provide the player with alternative missions and

side quests that can be completed in order to acquire new abilities and items or improve

existing abilities and items. Threats to the player are minimal in Towns and Villages, and,

in most cases, non-existent. Towns and Villages, for the most part, lack the constant

threat of bodily harm and the possibility of failure which pervade the Dungeons and

Temples of *Ocarina of Time*. In general, Towns and Villages are designed and arranged

around a central point or landmark, radiating outward from this central point, providing the player with a symbol around which the area can be explored and constructed; Hyrule Village, for instance, is arranged around the central marketplace, which contains crowds of non-player characters and shops that the player can purchase supplies from. At any point in the player's exploration of Hyrule Village, the marketplace is a central location that the player can return to, quickly and simply, if he becomes lost during game-play. In addition to being arranged in this manner, these areas contain pathways which are highly redundant and interconnected; the player is not presented with any single path which must be traveled, and no single objective or alternative mission is over-emphasized by the area's spatial design or the character's assigned quests or missions. Instead, Towns and Villages tend to include many interconnected paths which branch off and overlap through the area, allowing the player to explore without the channeling influence of a designer-intended path of progression through the level.

In this paper, I draw a distinction between the terms Town and Village, which is founded on the intended purpose of the respective area. The distinction between a Town and a Village is that Towns are the site of recurring travel, which the player will visit multiple times over the course of game-play. Villages, by comparison, are areas which tend to serve as concluding points for various quests and side missions as the player progresses through the game's central story plot; the use of enclosed spaces as the concluding points for side quests is, as Ip states in "Narrative Structures in Computer and Video Games", a "technique that enhances the illusion of branching and player choice . . . where the player may decide to deviate from the central narrative [of the game]" (Ip 24).

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Villages tend to be beyond the plotted path that the player will follow while pursuing the central story plot of Ocarina of Time, so the very act of seeking out and exploring these areas sets them apart from Towns; at some point in the game's central plot, the player will visit each of the major Towns scattered throughout Hyrule.

C. Constructing Meaning in Player Action

In a 2003 publication entitled *Interactive Storytelling*, Chris Crawford proposes a theoretical system for creating truly interactive virtual scenarios, well beyond the current limits of game design. Although Crawford freely admits that such a system is well beyond humanity's current computational prowess, his statement that the process of designing worlds and levels can be used as a method of "pruning" the possible dramatic options available to a player at any one point in game-play is relevant to this section. In *Interactive Storytelling*, Crawford states that:

> the universe of dramatic choices is stupendously large, and so rich and varied that no simple coding system exists that permits us to represent it manageably . . . We must therefore devise a scheme for pruning away dramatic options, reducing the list of [player options] to something manageable (Crawford 263).

This scheme for pruning player choices in interactive game-play, which Crawford refers to as "the Erasmatron," contains two main focuses for game design. The first of these focuses is on World Design, which Crawford labels "global pruning," which entails "figuring a broad list of dramatic options that would be available to the player at any point in the storyworld" (Crawford 263). The second focus in Crawford's proposed

Erasmatron is on Level Design, which he refers to as "local pruning," which entails figuring a list of dramatic options "which [are] specific to the immediate situation in which the player finds himself" (Crawford 263).

Crawford's Erasmatron is a system through which the game's design, on both the global and local scale, can reduce and limit the number of dramatic options for player action during game play. This is of particular use in analyzing the player's actions, and how they are limited or channeled by the designer's spatial construction of Hyrule, in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*. For instance, throughout the game the player descends into Dungeons to oppose agents of Evil, and ascends through Temples in order to acquire new items, allies, and information which can be used to combat Evil in Hyrule, but, in the final confrontation of the game, more commonly referred to as the 'boss battle," the player must ascend through a space which is riddled with monsters and obstacles until, eventually, the player reaches the tower's peak and confronts the game's main antagonist, the Gerudo King, Ganon, who shattered the Tri-Force of the Golden Goddesses and corrupted the Sacred Realm in his pursuit of power. If the player, up until this point in *Ocarina of Time*, has consistently descended through space to face Evil and corruption, and ascended through space to seek empowerment and enlightenment, what is the meaning behind ascending through space in order to throw down the source of Evil and corruption in Hyrule? The dramatic choices that the player is presented with, according to Crawford's Erasmatron, have been clearly defined by both the "local" design of areas, and the "global" designing of the world up to this point: ascending through space results in empowerment, and descending through space results in confrontation and conflict. I

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believe that this sudden inversion of the spatial design of the final Dungeon/Temple area also signals an inversion of the meaning in the player's actions during the final confrontation of *Ocarina of Time*.

In a 2003 publication entitled "Situated Meaning and Learning: What Should You Do after You Have Destroyed the Global Conspiracy?", James Paul Gee claims that " . . . meanings in video games are always specific to specific situations . . . they are always actively assembled (or changed) by the player, on the spot, in terms of images, materials, and embodied actions in the virtual world being mutually created by the game and the player" (Gee 84). This is why, in the final battle of *Ocarina of Time*, the meaning behind the player's act of ascending through the tower to face Ganon is, in a sense, inverted; as early as the first dungeon in the game, the Great Deku Tree, the act of ascending and descending through space during game-play has been encoded with a binaristic meaning. Ascending results in enlightenment, progression, and empowerment, while descending results in conflict, confrontation, and danger. This design holds true throughout the game, and it is founded, in a sense, upon the way in which the world of Hyrule is designed; the Golden Goddesses constructed the world of Hyrule in an ascending and expanding manner, so the act of ascending is, in itself, an act which mimics the creation of Hryule. In contrast, descending in a channeled, linear fashion is an inversion of the act of ascension; descending, therefore, inverts the meaning of ascending through the spaces of Hyrule. Instead of imitating the divinely ordered construction of Hyrule, the act of descending is an act which implies an opposition to the divine ordering of Hyrule, an opposition of the Golden Goddesses and their combined courage, wisdom, and power.

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The meaning behind this inverted act is not readily visible through the actions of the player-character, because, in each instance that the player must descend through areas of game-play, the player-character is doing so in order to confront and eradicate sources of Evil or corruption in those areas. The act of descending, in this sense, is not an act of rebellion, or opposition, against the divine order of the world, but a willing plunge into a den of Evil, with the intent of rooting it out and destroying it.

As Gee states, players intuit the meaning behind their character's actions in games by actively assembling images, materials, and embodied actions they experience during play. But, to make sense of these "images, materials, and embodied actions," the player "must fit them into the emerging plot and virtual world [being discovered] and [constructed]" (Gee 85). This act of assembling images and materials into a plot or story which reveals itself progressively through player-driven action is a process which Suellen Adams calls "active seeking" in her 2009 article "What Games Have to Offer: Information Behavior and Meaning-Making in Virtual Play Spaces."

In this article, Adams claims that "the most direct mode of information seeking [in games] is called active seeking," a process in which the player "seeks out an identified source in order to get answers to specific questions" (Adams 13). In *Ocarina of Time*, this initial "identified source" that the player seeks out is the Great Deku Tree; the Tree dispatches a fairy messenger to retrieve the player-character and bring him to aid the Tree in combating Evil. By being told where to go and who to seek out, the player begins to "actively seek" out answers to questions he might have about the world of Hyrule. In this first Dungeon, then, the player is shown the meaning, or at least the results, of ascending

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or descending through areas while exploring Hyrule. The meaning behind the player's actions is, on one level, constructed in the game's narrative: climbing up will reward the player, falling down will challenge or threaten the player. This constructed meaning is also reinforced through the use of climbing as the particular act which the player must perform. In a 2003 publication entitled "Stories for Eye, Ear, and Muscles: Video Games, Media, and Embodied Experience", Torben Grodal argues that meaning derived from player actions in virtual spaces can be reinforced by using actions which mimic the intended meaning behind the player's actions, particularly that the "motor cortex and muscles focus the audiovisual attention, and the provide "muscular" reality and immersion to the perceptions [of the player]" (Grodal 132). While climbing, the player intuits that falling would be harmful, while continued ascension is beneficial, on both the narrative and physiological level, due to the game's spatial design.

The Great Deku Tree, as a divine entity, serves as the voice of the Golden Goddesses, passing on their wisdom and knowledge to the player both before and after the encounters in the Tree's root system. In this way, the player intuits that the word of the Great Deku Tree is the verbatim word of the Golden Goddesses, and that what it says must be true. So, when the Great Deku Tree orders the player-character to descend into its bowels and confront Evil, the player intuits that the act of descending, in the player's case, is in accordance with the divine ordering of the structure and races of Hyrule. As the Chosen Hero of the Goddesses, the player can disregard the implied meaning behind descending, as an act of opposition or rebellion against the divine ordering of Hyrule. This is not the case, however, in the final dungeon of the game.

The inverted meaning behind the act of ascending through the tower in the final

area of *Ocarina of Time* is a result of the inversion of the ordering of Hyrule. When

Ganon restructures Hyrule with the Tri-Force of Power, he inverts the natural ordering of

Hyrule's and its races, with himself as the self-appointed King of Hyrule. In doing so,

Ganon also inverts the meaning of ascending and descending through his tower;

ascending through his tower is an act of rebellion against the self-appointed King of

Hyrule, and an act of opposition against his power. In this way, the act of ascending is an

act of usurpation, of overthrowing Ganon in an effort to re-establish the divine ordering

of Hyrule and its races.

VI. Rules Systems of Ocarina of Time

Like spatial design, the system of rules which govern and limit the actions of the

player contribute, on the local scale of levels, to the theme of Good and Evil in the world

of Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*. A game's rules system is a significant influence on the

player's experiences while gaming, as explained in Bernard Perron's "From Gamers to

Players and Gameplayers", because "when the gamer interacts in a game, it is always in

the here-and-now. It's real time. What is happening can be changed, that is the story, but

not the order, duration, or frequency of this happening" (Perron 246). A game-player may

be able to interpret a story from game-play, but the game-world, and how it is

constructed, can be used, by the designer, to limit the player's options in the game world

to guide the player's story-making experiences.

In a 2003 publication entitled *Theory by Design*, Henry Jenkins touches on the

benefits of utilizing a game's rules system as a tool for embodying meaning in player

actions:

> Rather than presenting an explanation for a phenomenon (or a canonical
>
> illustration of "how things work") games present players microworlds; games
>
> offer players (Students) a contexts for thinking through problems, making their
>
> own actions part of the solution, building on their intuitive sense of their role in
>
> the game world (Jenkins et al 28).

Jenkins' claim emphasizes that the player's interpretation of his character's intended role

in the game world is derived from contextualizing the effects of the character's actions in

the game world, which is provided by what he calls the design of the "microworld" of the

game, otherwise known as Level Design. In the case of *Ocarina of Time*, this

contextualization regarding player's actions is provided through the rules system of the

game, particularly with regards to the player's spatial interaction with the World of

Hyrule and the passage of time in the World of Hyrule.

The rules which govern the player's spatial interactions with the world of Hyrule mimic

the standard rules which govern an individual's interactions in the real world. Mass,

momentum, stored and potential energy; all of these variables control the player-

character's ability to move, navigate, and fight through the spatial areas and levels in

Ocarina of Time. In particular, there are three instances of game-play in *Ocarina of Time*

that emphasize the degree to which the game-world's physical and spatial rules mimic

those of the real world. The first instance is the landing roll, an act in which, at the

moment of impact during a potentially lethal fall, the player can convert the character's

falling momentum into forward momentum at the moment of landing, and, instead of

dying on impact, rolling until the momentum is spent. The second instance occurs when

the player first encounters any monster which emits flames. This moment normally

occurs, for most players, in the second major dungeon of the game, the Dodongo Cavern.

Since, at this point in the game's plot, the character is a child who wields a wooden shield

for protection, the character relies on, and intuitively trusts in, the integrity of the wooden

shield to block, deflect, and defend against attacks from monsters. When a flaming

monster attacks the shield, however, the item visibly ignites and the player is left

vulnerable, off-balance, and open for further attacks from monsters. The third, and final,

instance, occurs when the player enters a later dungeon, the Water Temple, and gains a

magical tunic which allows the player-character to breathe water as easily as air. This

tunic, called the Zora's Tunic, is a sacred artifact given to non-Zora who gain the trust of

the race through valor or wisdom, as befitting their alignment with the Goddess Nayru.

Each of these instances, the parkour-esque landing roll, the first loss of the childhood

shield, and the acquisition of the Zora's Tunic, emphasize that while the game-world of

Hyrule is an enclosed system which mimics the physical and spatial rules of the real

world, the composition of space and materials in the game-world are, at times, mutable.

The rules which govern the passage of time in the World of Hyrule are similar, in

structure, to the rules which affect the passage of time as mankind perceives such an

event. A sun rises to a zenith in the sky, sets on the horizon, is imitated by a sister

satellite, a moon, which also sets on the horizon, and this process occurs in a continuous

cycle for as long as the player is engaged in the events of the game's plot. Although the passage of time is mainly an aesthetic system which alters the appearance and colors of the fields, mountains, and lakes of Hyrule, it also adds emphasis to the player's spatial position, depending on what time of day it is, in-game. During the day, when the sun is visible, the player-character can move about the landscape outside of Hyrule's dungeons and towns unopposed. As the sun sets, however, monsters are randomly generated as the character moves through the wild spaces of Hyrule, opposing, attacking, and oftentimes forcing, through sheer weight of numbers, the player-character to flee away from roads, walls, and other defensible positions. In addition to the added threat of randomly generated monsters during night, towns and villages in the game-world will raise their drawbridges, bar gates, and block off doorways, effectively preventing the player from exiting the area until the sun has risen. This system for governing time in the game-world serves two functions in the game. The first function is that time is always a factor in the player's actions, because being stuck outside of a town or village when night falls results in unnecessary conflict, potential harm, even death, and, worst of all, waste of time that could be better spent buying items, completing quests and missions, or playing mini-games to increase existing abilities or acquire new equipment. The second function of the system which governs time in the game-world of *Ocarina of Time* is that it utilizes the existing social norms regarding day and night that exist in the real-world, playing on existing anxieties and fears; the day is the period in which players, in this case generic citizens, commute, travel, work, and otherwise move about and explore the world around them. Night, in contrast, is a period for hunkering down, resting, recuperating, and

relaxing in anticipation of the next day to come.

So, how do both of these existing systems, which govern the spatial composition of and the player-character's interaction with the game world and which govern the passage of time and the effects of time on the player's game-play experience, contribute to the overarching theme of Good and Evil in Miyamoto's design of the world of Hyrule in *Ocarina of Time*? As stated before, these rules systems serve to emphasize that, while the game-world of Hyrule is an enclosed system which mimics the physical and spatial rules of the real world, the composition of space and material in the game-world are, at times, mutable, and that the system which governs time in the game-world utilizes existing social norms regarding day and night cycles in the real world to affect the meaning of character actions in-game. The emphasis that the world of Hyrule is an enclosed, constant space which is constantly shifting, changing, and mutable, reinforces the concept of intelligent design, and, thus, similarly reinforces the real existence of the divine outside of Hyrule's profane space. The emphasis on the absence of monsters, and Evil, during the daytime and the overwhelming presence of such entities during the nighttime establishes a clear dichotomy of Good and Evil with relation to the passage of time. This effectively dissuades, or, in unorthodox cases, incentivizes, traveling through the wild spaces of Hyrule during the night, much as existing social stigma regarding the night and its lurking denizens dissuades citizens from wandering the wilds past nightfall in the real world.

VII. Plot-Based Objectives in Ocarina of Time

In the same way that spatial design channels and focuses the player's attention

and actions in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*, the objectives that are set for the player by the game's central plot also focus the player's attention and actions by motivating the player to choose certain options over others. The question to ask, then is how game design influences "which options within choices are considered [by the player] to be the correct ones, and why" (Wolf 8).

In a 2006 publication entitled *Assessing Interactivity in Video Game Design*, Mark Wolf argues that "an analysis of a game's interactivity would have to include a look at the motivation and the basis by which choices are made within a game" (Wolf 7). In Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*, the basis by which choices are made within the game lies in the physical actions that the player-character takes in the game's narrative. The physical actions that the player-character takes in pursuit of plot-based objectives is more closely detailed in Sections V and VI, and this section focuses on the latter half of Wolf's proposed criteria for analyzing interactivity in games; the motivation, which is provided for the player in the form of the character's place and role in the greater context of the game-world.

Brenda Laurel claims, in a 2004 publication titled "Narrative Construction as Play", that:

> . . . materials for narrative construction take the form of characters – characters that are drawn with enough depth and potential to engage the player in imaginative construction of their motivations and thought processes . . . in other words, players should be enticed and enabled to create the back story for characters that appear in the action of the game (Laurel 1).

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Laurel's criteria for constructing, or, in this case, deconstructing, the narrative of game-play is based on the character backstory that the player interprets through the actions his character is required to perform in *Ocarina of Time*. The major goal of Ocarina of Time is, as the Deku Tree states, to defeat the source of Evil from which all Evil in the game-world of Hyrule originates; the character, upon reaching the capital of Hyrule, is tasked by the Princess with recovering the sacred sword of legends, the Master Sword, which drove Evil from the game-world in its distant past. To do this, however, the player-character must acquire the three sacred stones gifted to the secondary races of Hyrule: the Goron's Ruby, the Zora's Sapphire, and the Kokiri Emerald. This objective is presented to the player as little more than a very arduous fetch quest, a mission in which the player-character must explore the game-world and uncover a certain quantity of a certain item in order to progress in the game's central plot. In terms of Laurel's criteria, then, the actions that the character must perform to complete the first objective, when interpreted as indicative of the character's backstory and role in the game-world, presents the player with a delivery boy who is sent to pick up and drop off items.

In order to acquire each of the secondary stones, though, the player must defeat minor sources of Evil, which oppress the secondary races of each region. In doing so, the player-character's actions are not simply those of a messenger boy; the player is actively entering into conflict with monstrous beings for the sake of freeing entire races of sentient beings, all for the sake of acquiring each of the sacred stones of the Golden Goddesses. The first objective that the character is tasked with, then, presents the character as a liberator, a Hero from Hyrule's legends, instead of a messenger boy who

wears a green tunic and carries a wooden shield. This use of an objective which places the player-character's role in the game-world as a hero is useful in ensuring that the player will remain involved with the game's narrative, because "our emotional involvement with narrative is generated by occupying certain positions within the economy of the story, a position that give us our sense of role within the story (Punday 9).

On the scale of level design, the character is tasked by a representative of each race to enter dungeons in close proximity to their villages and drive out the source of Evil in each dungeon. The first representative is for the Kokiri, woodland sprites who appear as human children, and the character is summoned to arms against the Evil within the Great Deku Tree by a divinely sent agent; the fairy, Navi. Navi remains with the character, throughout game-play, providing advice and guidance when the player is stuck or doesn't know where to go next or what to do next. In this way, Navi is both a divine voice in the player-character's ear, providing instructions on where to go and what to do, and also, to a degree, an integrated unit in the game's interface-design; Navi is a character in her own right, but also a divinely-ordained source of truth and wisdom in the game, which the designer can utilize to help the player from time to time. In a 2010 article entitled "Faërian Cyberdrama: When Fantasy Becomes Virtual Reality", Péter Makai claims that "fairies are agents in the Tolkienian sense because they have effectu-ated some parts of the divine idea of the world, but they can also be called agents in the interface-design sense because their existence is implied by those who explore the otherworldly representational system of Faërie" (Makai 8). In this way, Navi's voice is

utilized by the designers to provide the player-character with detailed information regarding the various monstrous entities which oppress the secondary races of Hyrule: Queen Gohma, a monstrously corrupted spider, is the Evil which oppresses the Great Deku Tree and the village of the Kokiri. King Dodongo, a rock-skinned dinosaur, is the Evil which oppresses the Goron colony on Death Mountain. Barinade, a mutated sea anemone, is the parasite which infests and oppresses the lake of Lord Jabu-Jabu and his Zora worshippers. By following Navi's instructions and wisdom, the player can destroy each of these minor sources of Evil, cleansing the regions of each of the secondary races, and thereby gaining the three sacred stones of the Golden Goddesses.

On the scale of world design, the character is tasked, by the Hylian princess Zelda, with using the sacred stones to open a cross-dimensional path between the profane realm of Hyrule and the Sacred Realm to acquire the legendary sword of the game-world's history. This blade, the Master Sword, is referred to by Navi as the blade of Evil's bane; the only weapon in Hyrule which can harm, and destroy, the source of Evil from which all Evil in the game-world originates; the King of the Gerudo race, Ganon.

In terms of the objectives that the character must complete on the scale of both level design and world design, his role in the world is conveyed to the player through the actions he must perform. In the words of Marie-Laure " . . . a story [can be] created when the user's possibilities of actions are limited to moving, picking up objects, manipulating them, and solving riddles through this manipulation, as is the case in shooter and adventure games . . . the most obvious way to handle this . . . is to choose a type of plot that puts great emphasis on physical actions" (Ryan 9), in ways similar to the action-

focused plot objective in Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time*.

VIII. Conclusion

In 2004 text, entitled *What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy*, James Gee claims that:

> the content of video games, when they are played actively and critically, is
> something like this: They situate meaning in a multimodal space through
> embodied experiences to solve problems and reflect on the intricacies of the
> design of imagined worlds and the design of both real and imagined social
> relationships and identities in the modern world (Gee 48).

In this thesis, I have analyzed Miyamoto's *Ocarina of Time* on the basis of World Design, with the cosmological ordering of the virtual world and the divine ordering of the various races that the player encounters during game-play, and Level Design, with the motifs and symbolic goals in the design of the spatial world, the rules that govern player interaction with the virtual environment, and the objectives used to motivate player activity in the game-world.

The need for critical analysis of games and game-play in academia grows with each year, as "video games' penetration in society, and especially into the current generation of college students' lives, is well established and undeniable" (Tappiener 3). As new generations enter academia, the level of familiarity that these students have with video games will continue to grow as well. As it stands, "video games permeate education . . . social functions, family interactions, and workplaces: They are played by

many if not all ages, genders, sexualities, races, religions, and nationalities" (Shaw 15).

The demand for educational curricula which integrates theses student's pre-existing

familiarity with video games, will continue to grow as younger generations continue to

enter academia. Resistance to possible uses of, or ignorance of, video games in the

process of education can only prove detrimental. As Gee concludes, though, community

leaders need to understand the benefits and possible application of video games in

education because, "unfortunately, if human learning works best in a certain way, given

the sorts of biological creations we are, then it is not going to work well in another way

just because educators, policymakers, and politicians want it to" (Gee 68).

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