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LITERÁRIOS

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**A multimodal analysis of representations of masculinity in *Castlevania* and
*Metal Gear Solid***

Florianópolis
2021

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*Metal Gear Solid***

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Orientador: Prof.^a Dr.^a Viviane Maria Heberle

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**A multimodal analysis of representations of masculinity in *Castlevania* and
*Metal Gear Solid***

O presente trabalho em nível de mestrado foi avaliado e aprovado por banca examinadora composta pelos seguintes membros:

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This work is dedicated to Brazilian researchers and educators.

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"I believe what he went through was extremely painful. You know the will was sealed. The words: 'My express wish is to have a religious burial' were written on a loose sheet placed on the table where the strychnine was; but what he had written at first was: 'My express wish is not to have a religious burial.' It was only afterwards he crossed out the negative and scribbled over it several times. He probably didn't have enough strength left to tear the paper up and begin again."

"Fear?" Walter suggested.

"Or the end of the struggle: surrender."

"But anyway, how can we ever tell? Fundamentally speaking, man is what he hides."

Walter hunched his shoulders and brought his old hands together, like a child making a mud pie:

"A wretched little pile of secrets..."(MALRAUX, 1948)

ABSTRACT

Scholars who study masculinity and the ways it has an effect on social values and practices point out the association of men with violent behaviours, both physical and symbolic (BOURDIEU, 2001; CONNELL, 2000). According to Connell (ibid.), this association is encouraged by media that portray violent masculinity as hegemonic, which affects men who do not conform to these norms negatively. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it is possible to identify the discourses that are rooted in and reinforce these social practices, for a better understanding of social relations of power (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995; 2003; 2010). For that reason, CDA is often used by researchers who explore representations of gender in multimodal media (HEBERLE, 1997; LORENSET, 2010; SOUZA, 2016; TERRES, 2018). Following their steps, this study aims to carry out a study on the representation of masculinity in male antagonists of two video games: *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (1997) and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, regarding issues of violence. This medium offers a great number of violent male antagonists, as combat is often a crucial element of gameplay. To achieve this goal, the aforementioned games were chosen from different periods of the recent history of the medium. From these games, two characters who fit the proposed idea were selected: Dracula and Ocelot, respectively. This thesis proposes a study of the verbal and visual language associated with the characters' representations in their games, using Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Grammar of Visual Design to observe the aspects of language related to the events and participants represented in a text or image. The study also aims to understand if and how these characters express notions of violence that are typically associated with the male gender, as it is pointed out by scholars who are interested in masculinity and the impact of these representations on sociocultural practices.

Keywords: Video games. Multimodality. Masculinity. Critical Discourse Analysis.

RESUMO

Acadêmicos que estudam a masculinidade e as formas como ela afeta os valores e práticas sociais apontam a associação de homens com comportamentos violentos, tanto físicos quanto simbólicos (BOURDIEU, 2001; CONNELL, 2000). De acordo com Connell (ibid.), esta associação é encorajada pela mídia que retrata a masculinidade violenta como hegemônica, o que afeta negativamente os homens que não se conformam com estas normas. Através da Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD), é possível identificar os discursos que estão enraizados nestas práticas sociais e as reforçam, para uma melhor compreensão das relações sociais de poder (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995; 2003; 2010). Por esta razão, a ACD é freqüentemente utilizado por pesquisadores que exploram representações de gênero em meios multimodais (HEBERLE, 1997; LORENSET, 2010; SOUZA, 2016; TERRES, 2018). Seguindo seus passos, este projeto visa realizar um estudo sobre a representação da masculinidade em antagonistas de dois videogames: *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (1997) e *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, sobre questões de violência. Este meio oferece um grande número de antagonistas violentos, já que o combate é muitas vezes um elemento crucial da jogabilidade. Para atingir este objetivo, os jogos acima mencionados foram escolhidos entre diferentes períodos da história recente do meio. A partir destes jogos, foram selecionados dois personagens que se encaixam na idéia proposta: Drácula e Ocelot, respectivamente. Esta dissertação propõe um estudo da linguagem verbal e visual associada às representações dos personagens em seus jogos, utilizando a Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional e a Gramática do Design Visual para observar os aspectos da linguagem relacionados aos eventos e aos participantes representados em um texto ou imagem. O estudo também visa compreender se e como esses personagens expressam noções de violência tipicamente associadas ao gênero masculino, como é apontado por estudiosos interessados na masculinidade e o impacto dessas representações nas práticas socioculturais.

Keywords: Jogos digitais. Multimodalidade. Masculinidade. Análise Crítica do Discurso.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

SFL Systemic Functional Linguistics

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

2D Two-dimensional

GVD Grammar of Visual Design

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF INVESTIGATION

The popularization of digital games in the past decades, especially among the younger generations, offers possibilities for researchers who are interested in the intersection between language, visual representations and social issues to analyze this type of media. Narratives in electronic games can be complex and multifaceted and they have been explored by some researchers in the past (ALLOWAY; GILBERT, 1998; SQUIRE, 2002; SOUZA, 2016).

In the field of Linguistics, some recent literature has been published on the subject, recognizing the importance of discussing the emergence of new discourses and exploring issues of literacy, multimodality, teaching education and other topics related to linguistic studies within the medium (HENRÍQUEZ; ZÚÑIGA, 2017; SCHLEMMER, 2016; SOUZA, 2016; ZAGALO, 2019; SILVA, 2016). The work of Ensslin (2011) in particular should be highlighted here, for her extensive study of video games in the field of discourse analysis. The author emphasizes the importance of carrying out research on this subject as the number of players and the success of the gaming industry seem to grow more and more, demanding attention from scholars of many different areas.

The subject of gender relations has been current in discussions in academic fields for decades. Bourdieu (2001), Connell (2000) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have developed several studies on the topic focusing on masculine identity and gender relations. Masculinity can be studied from several perspectives: Psychology, Biology, Sociology and so on, but research of this kind is also pertinent for the fields of Linguistics and Media Studies. As such, masculinity and its representations have also been the focus of several recent analysis involving media (MONTENEGRO, 2018; GUTMAN; MOTA JUNIOR; SILVA, 2019; BORGES; CHAGAS, 2019).

Video games may play an important role on the identity of players, as explained by Alloway and Gilbert (1998, p. 112):

Given that the gaming culture is largely directed at boys, it seems particularly important that boys and young men have the opportunity to understand and to

contest a masculinity that is expressed in terms of domination and control of others, gratuitous violence and institutionalized warfare, competitiveness at any cost, disregard for others and the environment, and self-aggrandizement through conquest.

With this in mind, this study aims at exploring the issues of male representation in this type of media. Based on Fairclough (1995; 2003; 2010) in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and studies on multimodality (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2001; 2006), these issues can be studied taking into consideration concepts of power relations, social values and practices related to gender.

The representation of women in positions of power has been a popular topic in academia, as it has become more common in the media to see female characters portrayed under this light. For instance, Terres (2018) writes about the character of Daenerys Targaryen in the television show adaptation of popular fantasy series *Game of Thrones*, highlighting Daenerys' emergence as a prominent leader from her disempowered origins as a pawn in her brother's quest for the throne.

However, the portrayal of men in positions of power still seems to be the norm; male figures of authority are constantly present in all types of media, including video games. In this specific medium, these characters are often portrayed as oppressive forces to be destroyed. There are many examples of such characters¹: Handsome Jack (*Borderlands* series), Ganondorf (*The Legend of Zelda* series), Shao Kahn (*Mortal Kombat*), M. Bison (*Street Fighter* series), Andrew Ryan (*BioShock*), Caesar (*Fallout: New Vegas*), and Big Boss (*Metal Gear* series), to name a few. Their narrative arcs are often related to the maintenance or loss of the control and power they already have, or a quest for it. For instance, in *BioShock*, Andrew Ryan is already established as the founder and ruler of the underwater city of Rapture, and seeks to maintain that power amidst a civil war². In *Fallout: New Vegas*, Caesar rules over Caesar's Legion, according to the official *Fallout* Wiki, “a nationalist, imperialist, totalitarian, completely homogenous culture that would focus on long-term stability at all costs”³. The power that male characters possess is often taken for granted and unchallenged by the viewers — a reflection of our own social expectations when it comes to gender roles, often taken to be inherent to men (BOURDIEU, 2001).

¹ For reference, all video games mentioned in this thesis are listed in the “Ludography” section.

² Source: https://bioshock.fandom.com/wiki/Andrew_Ryan. Access on Aug 01 2021.

³ Source: <https://fallout.fandom.com/wiki/Caesar>. Access on Dec 19 2019.

Characters such as the ones mentioned above are common because of the very nature of video games: many (if not most) games contain bosses, a type of powerful and unique enemies who are usually much stronger and complex (gameplay-wise) than other enemies found throughout the game, and whose appearance signifies an important moment in the narrative (ŠVELCH. 2013). Boss fights are, therefore, key moments within the game, and some bosses go on to become some of the most beloved and well-known video game characters, such as the iconic Bowser from *Super Mario Bros.*

Even though men have the opportunity to see themselves represented in mediatic narratives in positions of power more often than women do, this depiction is not always a positive one. In the case of video game bosses, these powerful men are usually portrayed in a negative light, as they are, after all, the enemies. They are often shown to be egotistical, power-obsessed, arrogant, lacking in empathy and violent. The violence associated with masculinity is specifically mentioned by Bourdieu (2001) and Connel (2000), who emphasize the relation between gender and violence and the belief that violence is a natural state to men — beliefs which may be reflected in the narratives we produce and consume.

It should be taken into account that the subject of violence and video games has been historically a controversial one. Video games have long been associated with real-world violent behaviors, especially of teenage boys, a discourse that gained much media attention after the Columbine massacre in 1999, when it was revealed that the two culprits were fans of the shooting game *Doom*⁴. After the event, the relation between video game consumption and mass shootings became a recurrent point of discussion in the United States, especially by politicians and conservative news outlets, and to this day the medium is associated with complex issues of gun violence in the country⁵.

In a speech in 2019, president Donald Trump reacted to the El Paso and Dayton Stun Country mass shootings that resulted in the death of 31 people by condemning “glorification of violence in our society”⁶, naming violent video games as one of the responsible parties of such glorification. Trump’s words rekindled the decade-old association that fueled discussions not only in representative politics and media, but academia as well. In the past few decades, many scholars set out to investigate the issue, leading to disagreements in the academic

⁴ Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/1295920.stm>. Access on May 22 2020.

⁵ Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/23/us/politics/trump-video-games-shootings.html>. Access on May 22 2020.

⁶ Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/05/us/politics/trump-speech-mass-shootings-dayton-el-paso.html>. Access on May 22 2020.

community. While some studies are able to identify links between playing violent video games and an increase in aggression (KONIJN *et al.* 2007; GENTILE *et al.*, 2004), the association is contested by others (FERGUSON, 2007; FERGUSON; RUEDA; CRUZ; FERGUSON; FRITZ; SMITH, 2008) who question the conclusiveness of the data.

Taking into consideration the context for social practices related (or attributed) to videogames, as described so far in this chapter, this study approaches the topic through the point of view of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The nature of CDA demands a careful consideration of the influence of semiosis in a different number of social practices that affect the lives of many. With that being said, the issue of videogames and violence has been explored by politicians, such as Donald Trump, as the direct cause of aggressive behavior, an association that, according to authors such as Ferguson (2007), is not supported by conclusive data. My aim is to investigate this issue carefully in order to not contribute to discourse that may misinterpret the role of this medium in certain social practices.

The present study was born out of appreciation for video games and the belief that the merits of the medium are worth discussing in academic spaces. Besides, the study follows other works within the research group NUPDiscurso, which focuses on media and gender issues already mentioned, as well as studies which have also dealt with videogames (VIDAL; HEBERLE, 2013; SOUZA, 2016; SILVA, 2016; RODRIGUES, 2019). As such, recognizing the complex discourse around games that attempts to create a direct link between the consumption of this form of entertainment and violent tragedies (that are undoubtedly much more complex than the scope of this research could possibly comprehend) is of extreme importance. It is a subject that demands care and sensibility as to not misrepresent this medium as the direct cause of violence in a particular group of people and, consequently, unintentionally contribute to a one-dimensional perspective about video games.

Bearing in mind the previous considerations, this study proposes a multimodal analysis of two video games, based on the theoretical frameworks proposed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY; MATHIESSEN, 2014) and the Grammar of Visual Design (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006). The analysis will focus on one of each of the game's antagonists, two characters in total, regarding sociocultural values related to masculinity and violence that may be observed in their portrayal within the games. Additionally, this study delves into the issue of violence and masculinity in the medium beyond the discussions around shooting games such as *Doom*, *Wolfenstein 3D* and *Call of Duty*, which have been associated with violent gun crimes in the past, by exploring genres and

titles that are left out of such discussions but that are known and played by millions of gamers.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research identifies a lack of studies of videogames regarding masculinity and its representations in the fields of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, in the study of multimodal media. Regarding studies on multimodality and masculinity, Pimenta and Natividade (2013) present a multimodal analysis of magazine adverts in order to observe the construction of masculinity through semiotics. Heberle (1997; 2004), Loresent (2010) and Balen (2016), on the other hand, have approached the topic of gender representation in women's magazines.

In relation to other studies within NUPDiscurso which focus on videogames, Souza (2016) studied multimodal representation in video games focusing on depictions of witches across media, including the video game *Bayonetta* (2009). Rodrigues (2019) carried out an investigation of how the digital game *God of War* (2018) uses interpersonal and interactive resources to construct the identity of its main characters Kratos and Atreus in relation to fatherhood, both in the original English version and the localization in Portuguese. Additionally, Silva (2016) investigated localization practices in the game *inFamous 2* and its Brazilian Portuguese translation.

However, to the best of my knowledge, not much literature concerned with masculine representation in video games through a multimodal perspective has been published. With that in mind, this study aims at contributing to the discussions regarding gender representation in the media, particularly in videogames, a fairly new and less explored type of medium that is very popular among younger generations.

On the level of sociocultural context, this study attempts to question common conceptions regarding associations of video games with violence perpetrated by young men. By taking advantage of the lack of research of this type in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodality, I aim to provide a different perspective of the medium regarding issues of representation of masculinity, considering not only the context in which this type of multimodal medium is produced but also the mode itself, the discourses it carries in its texts and images. In doing so, I hope to contribute to this complex discussion with text-based evidence to support my arguments.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Main objective

This study proposes a qualitative research of two video game antagonists (bosses) to analyze the representation of masculinity in these games, emphasizing relations of power between the participants and social values or beliefs regarding masculinity (and the many issues and topics related) that might be represented in the text. As previously mentioned, two games were selected: *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

- To carry out an analysis of the verbal language of selected scenes from each game, observing the ideational and interpersonal meanings present in the text.
- To carry out a visual analysis observing the representational and interactive meanings present in the scenes.
- To contextualize the data selected within cultural practices and social values regarding masculinity, with Critical Discourse Analysis and studies of masculinity as a basis for these observations.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. What ideational and interpersonal choices are used in the construction of the characters' representation in the verbal language of the selected scenes in the two video games?
2. What representational and interactive choices are used in the construction of the characters' visual meanings in the selected scenes in the two video games?
3. What do these choices reveal about the sociocultural values, practices and power relations regarding gender and masculinity represented in the objects of this study?

1.5 METHODS

The data for this research were chosen to provide a view of the representation of masculine identity in a span of 19 years in the history of video games, starting in 1997 and ending in 2016. Within this time span, initially three video games, from 1997, 2005 and 2016 were chosen for the analysis, in an attempt to provide different perspectives of the topic from different times in video game development. Because of the limitations of the study, however, only the first two were included in the analysis. The following subsections provide details regarding the criteria for data selection and procedures followed for the analysis.

1.5.1 Data selection and criteria

As I am interested in the representation of masculinity and the interactional elements of power and gender relations, I have selected videogames which have a male antagonist who has, in some way, a position of power, to observe the power relations at play in the interactions between the bosses and the other characters in the game. The year of release was also taken into consideration, as an attempt to represent a diversified portrayal of masculinity in the medium over the years. Sales figures were also taken into consideration, as a way to measure the possible cultural impact of the games. *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* sold 1.27 million units worldwide⁷, whereas *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* sold 4 million units⁸.

To further narrow down the criteria for the selection of the two titles, I have dismissed any titles that were only available on platforms I had no access to (and, therefore, no way of playing them). The two platforms available to me were the PlayStation 3 (PS3) and PlayStation 4 (PS4). Having narrowed down significantly the number of titles by content, release date, availability and sales, two titles that satisfied all of my criteria were selected.

The data to be analyzed are scenes of each of the games, all of which contain both verbal (the dialogue text is displayed at the bottom of the screen, as it is traditional in this medium) and visual (characters and backgrounds) elements. I have selected three scenes from the

⁷ Source: <https://www.usgamer.net/articles/koji-igarashi-is-begrudgingly-appreciative-of-the-die-monster-line-from-castlevania-symphony-of-the-night>. Access on Apr 26 2021.

⁸ Source: https://vgsales.fandom.com/wiki/Metal_Gear_Solid Access on Apr 26 2021.

selected games *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. The criteria for the selection were:

1. Chronological order: the scenes are meant to represent the beginning, middle and end of the narrative of each game. By selecting scenes in this chronological order, I was able to observe the development of each character throughout the narratives.
2. Character dynamics: the selected scenes portray participants interacting with other characters to observe the power dynamics in the scenes.

The verbal language was transcribed for the analysis of textual elements and examined through Systemic Functional Linguistics, specifically the ideational and interpersonal choices.

In videogames, plot-relevant dialogue is mostly delivered through cutscenes⁹, including the scenes selected for this analysis. As the analysis of moving images is beyond the scope of this study, I have opted to utilize a recording of the cutscenes uploaded to *YouTube*, of which screenshots of each scene were taken. The screenshots were selected to represent the beginning, middle and end of the scene for a better understanding of the action and any changes in power relations that may occur during the events represented in the visuals, totalling nine images to be analyzed through the Grammar of Visual Design framework

1.5.2 Procedures for data analysis

This qualitative research is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Grammar of Visual Design as well as Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis of the data required an investigation of social actors through a social semiotic perspective, taking into consideration the visual and verbal modes in operation in the scenes of the games. The framework provided by SFL and GVD was used for analyzing both the visual and verbal elements of the data collected, keeping in mind the principles of CDA regarding power relations in society and discourse.

In the selected scenes, the interaction between the chosen characters and others were analyzed in respect to the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions (for the verbal analysis), as well as the representational and interactive meanings (for the visual analysis) represented in the data. For the verbal language, the transitivity system, as proposed by Halliday and

⁹ Cutscenes, also known as “cinematics”, are scripted animated sequences inserted into the game that usually require no player input (HOOPER, 2018). There are, however, some exceptions to this rule, as certain games occasionally require input from the player during cutscenes through quick-time events, moments in which the player is required to quickly press certain buttons to prompt the character into action, or provide some freedom to the player by allowing them to manipulate the camera or make decisions (FRITSCH, 2013; CHENG, 2007).

Matthiessen (2014), was the tool used to analyze the ideational meanings of the text, in order to observe the lexical choices made by the characters in the dialogue and what these choices reveal, specifically in terms of what is going on (participants, processes and circumstances). Mood¹⁰ was used to analyze the interpersonal meanings, in order to observe how the power relations between characters play out verbally. As for the visual language, the data was analyzed using two out of the three meanings proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006): representational, which concerns the events displayed on the image and the participants, objects and circumstances involved in these events; and interactive, the relation between image (represented participants) and the viewers (interactive participants).

Furthermore, the data were considered under the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis to determine the relation to sociocultural practices and beliefs embedded in the discourse. The three-dimensional method of discourse analysis, proposed by Fairclough (2010), was central to the analysis, since this method entails the analysis of the text within discourse practice, on one level, and also within broader sociocultural practices.

Furthermore, studies of masculinity have provided the social context for the critical analysis. The perspectives of masculinity and its associations with violence in the social sciences have provided the context to comprehend the social practices in which the problem of this research is located.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This study is organized into four chapters. The first one contains the context of investigation, significance of the study, objectives, research questions and method, including data selection and criteria. It provides the context and justification for this study within the field of multimodal studies. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the theoretical frameworks used in the study, going over key concepts related to Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Grammar of Visual Design, Critical Discourse Analysis, and Masculinity Studies, which serve as the theoretical foundation of this study. The third chapter contains the verbal and visual analysis of the objects of study, based on the selected framework, along with a discussion of the main findings of the research. Finally, Chapter 4 concludes with some final

¹⁰ In accordance with the conventions of the field, the term “Mood”, when referring to the system of linguistic analysis, is capitalized in this study.

remarks, limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and pedagogical implications.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is aimed at disclosing the theoretical foundation and analytical frameworks used in this research. The first section presents the theoretical background in relation to sociocultural practices and issues, provided by studies of masculinity. The second section refers to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a framework for linguistic description, which provides the foundation for the verbal analysis. The third section presents a review of the Grammar of Visual Design (GVD), which supports the visual analysis of the thesis. The fourth section is about Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), necessary for locating the problem of research within the sociocultural context.

2.1 MASCULINITY STUDIES

The literature regarding studies of masculinity as the theoretical foundation of this study is mainly provided by Connell (2000; 2005; 2009). The author approaches masculinity from a sociological point of view, discussing the hegemony of masculinity (or the lack thereof), social struggles related to masculinity, gender hierarchy, privilege and power dynamics. Connell also writes about relations between masculinity and violence and how these come to be, which is of special importance for the present study.

Pimenta and Natividade (2013, p. 177) define masculinity as “a way to explain men”, but this is still a broad conception that does not account for the different perspectives from which the topic is perceived. In that sense, the authors identify two different sets of ideas concerning masculinity. The first one is biological determinism, in which masculinity is understood as being determined by innate traits of biological sex that differentiate men from women (*ibid.*):

As biological destiny, masculinity is used to refer to the innate qualities and properties of men that distinguish men from women. In this view, masculinity is men’s nature, and as such helps to explain not only differences but also inequalities between men and women. Men’s political, economic and cultural privileges arise from their masculine advantage, as variously reflected in genetic predisposition to aggression (in contrast to womanlike passivity), physical strength (in contrast to the weakness of femininity) and sexual drives (in contrast to the sexual reserve of femininity).The problem with biological determinism is the arbitrary nature of the

fixing of men's essential masculinity, which can range across a whole spectrum from men's innate physicality/animality to men's innate rationality.

The second one is cultural/social constructionism. According to this view, gender is seen as socially and culturally constructed, rather than biologically predetermined. In attempting to define masculinity, the cultural norms and social obligations men are subjected to are taken into consideration to understand what constructs their identity. The following paragraphs will briefly discuss how these perspectives on the topic have changed in the social sciences throughout decades of gender studies.

Connell (2005) discusses the popularization of "sex differences" between men and women as inherent, biological (in popular culture and certain scientific or pseudo-scientific discourse) or even divine, in the case of some religious discourses, as a way to explain gender. This narrative has provided a somewhat legitimized justification for so-called gender-specific behavior. Still according to the author, the concept of "sex roles" as a set of specific, binary gender-based behaviors originates in the nineteenth-century anti-women's liberation rhetoric about inherent sex differences. From that point on, much research was carried out on sex differences in behavior, emotion, personality, and so on, aiming at legitimizing social inequality by pointing out each of the sexes' supposedly predetermined role. Connell (2005, p. 22) explains a popular approach to the concept of sex roles :

[...] being a man or a woman means enacting a general set of expectations which are attached to one's sex - the 'sex role'. In this approach there are always two sex roles in any cultural context, a male one and a female one. Masculinity and femininity are quite easily interpreted as internalized sex roles, the products of social learning or 'socialization'.

Connell criticizes the narrative of sex roles in discourse regarding gender, as if these roles were a controlling power from which men and women are unable to escape in their interpersonal relationships. Through this view of gender and social relations, men and women would be doomed to behave only within the constructs of the roles their sex must perform, not taking into consideration other aspects of one's identity and social context they are inserted in. As explained by Pleck (apud CONNELL, 2005, p. 25): "The concept of sex role identity prevents individuals who violate the traditional role for their sex from challenging it; instead, they feel personally inadequate and insecure".

This criticism is shared by some feminist writers, such as Cameron (1998), who points out that, in feminist literary critique, descriptions of "feminine writing" often embody

supposed aspects of femininity that are most in line with anti-feminism discourse. In that manner, ‘sexual differences’ might be unreliable in describing the writings of women. Others, such as Meyerhoff (2015) and Bing and Bergvall (1996) transfer this critique to the field of linguistic studies, questioning the legitimacy of research on gender and language use that assumes men and women speak differently because of their sex or gender, without taking into account other particularities that might affect one’s use of language.

Connell is also critical of the concept of “male roles” as an absolute because it excludes from its analysis key aspects of gendered social relations, such as race, class, regional culture and sexual orientation. The author (2005) points out that gay men are often excluded from the “sex roles” discourse, and that the influence of economic structures in constructing the roles men are supposed to perform is often ignored. Bergvall and Bing (1998, p. 6) provide a similar critique by pointing out how the female-male dichotomy bias in linguistic studies excludes many identities that do not fit into gendered standards:

Both language and traditional social practice suggest that there are clear boundaries between biological females and males. However, if the boundaries are not problematic, it is curious that so much energy is expended to reinforce them and to render invisible large numbers of people, including homosexuals, bisexuals, eunuchs, hermaphrodites, transvestites, transsexuals, transgendered and intersexed individuals, and others who assume social and sexual roles different from those that their cultures legitimize.

What Connell proposes, instead, is that the study of masculinity must take into consideration the social context of gender relations throughout history, as she explains (2005, p. 29) that masculinity “is not just an idea in the head, or a personal identity”. She adds that “[it] is also extended in the world, merged in organized social relations” and that “[to] understand masculinity historically we must study changes in those social relations”. In other words, Connell’s perspective is concerned not only with social roles, but how and why they came to be imposed and with the consequences for men who must navigate these social impositions, whether by adhering to or rejecting them. This perspective takes into account the existence of multiple masculinities, as well as a multitude of power relations present in the social context (CARRIGAN; CONNELL; LEE, 1985).

The shift from sex role theory to the concept of multiple masculinities was fundamental for the current wave of masculinity studies in sociology. Research with men and boys in specific cultural contexts (school, workplace, sports, military, and so on) from different parts of the world have revealed a plurality of masculinities that go much beyond the

original concept of “male roles”. As a complement to the notion of masculinities, a second concept came to be: the concept of hegemonic masculinity, not as the only type of masculinity that exists, but one that is considered the standard to which men must adhere. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, p. 832) explain that:

Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue. Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.

The authors add still that hegemonic masculinity is “not a certain type of man but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices”, as men “[...] can adopt hegemonic masculinity when it is desirable; but [...] distance themselves strategically from hegemonic masculinity at other moments” (ibid., p. 841).

Thus, we arrive at the current understanding of masculinities, a plural set of identities holding different power status, some of which are subjugated to the so-called hegemonic masculinity, which carries higher social status. With this understanding, I shall review the literature concerning the issue of violence embedded within masculinity in the next subsection.

2.1.1 Associations with violence

Among other topics, masculinity studies are concerned with the relationship between gender and violence, which is often associated with men. This topic relates directly to hegemony in masculine identity, as “research in criminology showed how particular patterns of aggression were linked with hegemonic masculinity, not as a mechanical effect for which hegemonic masculinity was a cause, but through the pursuit of hegemony” (CONNELL; MESSERSCHMIDT, 2005, p. 834).

Welzer-Lang (2001) believes that violence is an essential part of raising boys into the world of men, marked by a profound desire to differentiate themselves from women and from what is considered feminine. Regarding this process, the author (p. 463, my translation) states that

[...] one "enters" a so-called friendly fight (not so friendly if one believes in the amounts of cries, disappointments, hidden sorrows that are associated with them) in order to be on the same level as the others and then to be the best. To earn the right to be with men or to be like other men. For men, as for women, education occurs by mimicking. Men's mimesis is a mimesis of violence. Of violence initially against oneself. The war that men undertake in their own bodies is initially a war against themselves. Then, in a second stage, it is a war with others.¹¹

Connell (2000) explains that the association between men and violence holds some truth, citing statistics that corroborate the idea that men are generally more engaged in violence than women, participating actively in violent criminal activities, wars or simply violent sports.

Engaging in sports-related communities is, in fact, particularly characteristic of men in many societies, as pointed out by Gastaldo (2006). Regarding the significance of football for Brazilian culture, the author explains how Brazilian men engage in social interactions with other men in a hostile manner of friendliness, by mocking, teasing or, in an event mentioned by Gastaldo, even jokingly threatening fans of rival teams with violence (with no intention of following through, by the author's account). Additionally, the author also stresses how the friendly teasing of rivals is also manifested through the rejection or mockery of characteristics that are perceived by such groups as "unmasculine", leading to homophobic insults being present in social interactions of this nature.

Although the association is common, Connell also stresses that, while men are (in general terms) more violent than women, that is not to say that all men commit acts of violence (in fact, according to the author, most do not, and never will), or that women are incapable of doing the same. In fact, the representation of hegemonic masculinity which is universally violent hurts men who do not wish to conform to that role, as explained by the author (Connell, 2000, p. 217):

Large numbers of men and boys have a divided, tense, or oppositional relationship to hegemonic masculinity. This is an important fact of life though it is often concealed by the enormous attention focussed (e.g. in the media) on hegemonic masculinity. Clearcut alternatives, however, are often culturally discredited or

¹¹ My translation of [...] se "entra" em luta dita amigável (não tão amigável assim se acreditamos no monte de choros, de decepções, de tristezas escondidas que se associam a eles) para estar no mesmo nível que os outros e depois para ser o melhor. Para ganhar o direito de estar com os homens ou para ser como os outros homens. Para os homens, como para as mulheres, a educação se faz por mimetismo. Ora, o mimetismo dos homens é um mimetismo de violências. De violência inicialmente contra si mesmo. A guerra que os homens empreendem em seus próprios corpos é inicialmente uma guerra contra eles mesmos. Depois, numa segunda etapa, é uma guerra com os outros.

despised. Men who practise them are likely to be abused as wimps, cowards, fags etc.

In this extract, Connell directly mentions the attention given by the media to violent masculinity. By overexposing certain types of violent behavior, the media helps the construction of a hegemonic identity for men, and those who choose to behave differently are ostracized for not conforming to sociocultural values. Once more, Gastaldo's report on the significance of football as a predominantly male social activity illustrates this issue. While watching the sport and engaging with fans can be considered a prevalent form of social interaction for Brazilian men in general, gay men have their identities used as a form of mockery thrown at rivals, making this popular manner of male social engagement hostile for this group of men.

As such, it is necessary to think about male representation in mediatic narratives in these terms, how often masculinity is equated with violent behaviors and practices, whether these are portrayed in a positive or negative light, and which other types of masculinities are also depicted in the media. These issues, according to Connell, have an impact on how men perform masculinity and the way they are perceived in the sociocultural context.

Not only are such behaviors overrepresented in the media, but they are also enforced by some of the most common social institutions that are mostly composed of men, such as the military, gangs or sports organizations. Violent behavior does not arise from the individual, but from the collective or institutional; it is enforced by the social structure of whatever environment the individual is part of.

In this study, I concentrate on the exploration of issues of masculinity through Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Grammar of Visual Design and Critical Discourse Analysis, as they allow me to examine verbal and visual meanings and adopt a critical stance towards sociocultural practices.

2.2 SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a social semiotic theory proposed by Halliday (1994) in which linguistic form and function are perceived to be closely related, as the structure of language derives from the meaning the speaker/writer tries to convey; therefore, this theory emphasizes the function and purpose of language (YOUNG, 2011). Halliday (1994) describes language as a set of meaning-making resources, which can be used

by the speaker/writer in different ways to create meaning according to the context. SFL has been used to analyze language in different contexts related to, for instance, education, politics, law and entertainment. In this perspective, language simultaneously influences and is influenced by the context in which it is being used; in other words, “language both realizes and creates the culture of which it is a part” (YOUNG, 2011, p. 628). In this study, the main focus is on three concepts in SFL, namely the context of situation (to contextualize the games in the broader social context of production of these works) as well as the transitivity and Mood systems (in order to explore the meanings in the interaction between the characters: what is being said and how it is being said).

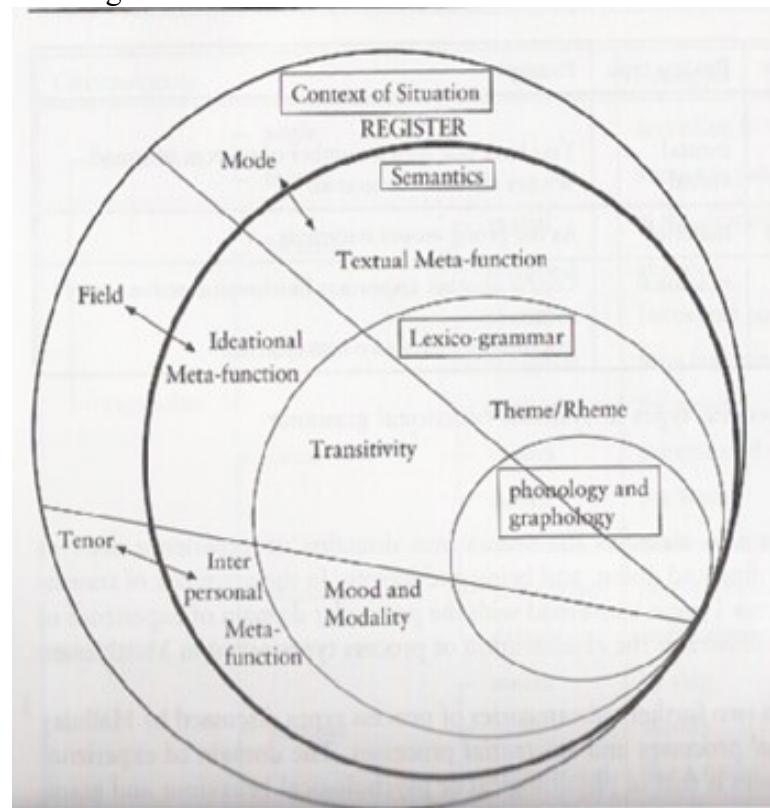
2.2.1 Context of situation

Regarding textual comprehension, Eggins (2004) states that in order for an utterance to be understood, it is necessary to not only decode its textual elements, but also the extra-textual context in which that utterance is inserted, or the context of situation. In SFL, the context of situation refers to the specific variables related to “the contextual instances involving particular people interacting and exchanging meaning on particular occasions” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2014, p. 32).

Eggins explains that “the major contribution of Halliday's approach to context has been to argue for systematic correlations between the organization of language itself (the three types of meanings it encodes) and specific contextual features” (2004, p. 90). Halliday (1994) proposes that there are three variables of situation, named register variables: field, tenor and mode, each associated with a metafunction, or meaning, a concept that will be further explored next. The situational variable system is known as the register theory.

Halliday (1994) explains that language is composed by functions. Although they can be separated within the clause for examination, the author emphasizes that they cannot exist separately; all these functions are present in the discourse as a single unit in order to convey meaning. These functions, operating together, create the structure of the language. From the examination of functions of the clause as separated units, Halliday has found that 1) functions cannot exist separately within the clause, as mentioned earlier, and 2) each and every clause is composed of three dimensions of meaning, or metafunctions: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual (BUTT *et al*, 2000). As mentioned earlier, at the level of the context of situation, the metafunctions are associated with the three register variables.

Figure 1 - Schematic: context of situation in SFL.



Source: Unsworth, 2001, p. 37.

The field variable refers to events, subject or activity that language is describing and it corresponds to the ideational metafunction in the semantic stratum. According to Young (2011) and Butt *et al* (2000), this metafunction relates to experience, and is divided into two sub-functions: experiential, related to the expression of the things that have happened, the actual content of experiences, and logical, which is concerned with how the clauses are connected to one another. The system through which this metafunction is represented is called the transitivity system.

The second variable, tenor, refers to the participants involved in the communication process, the roles they perform (i.e. reader/writer, listener/speaker, provider/demander), their social status and the nature of their relationship. It is associated with the interpersonal metafunction, which concerns speaker and listener interaction, exchange of information or service/goods and the speaker's attitude. This metafunction is represented through the system of Mood. This thesis is particularly concerned with the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions and their representation, which will be explored in greater detail later on in this

chapter through an overview of the transitivity and Mood systems, fundamental for the verbal analysis.

Mode is the third register variable, and it concerns the role language plays in communication, including the channel of communication and medium (UNSWORTH, 2001). It is associated with the textual metafunction, which refers to the organization, relevance and coherence of the language in use, making sure the interpersonal and ideational meanings are expressed in a comprehensible form. In SFL, the Theme/Rheme system is used to realize this metafunction.

For the analysis in this thesis, I will investigate the characters' actions and their relationships with the other characters by analyzing transitivity and Mood choices. The subsections below describe the transitivity and Mood systems.

2.2.2 Transitivity system

Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, p. 213) state that “our most powerful impression of experience is that it consists of a flow of events”, represented as figures of “happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having and organized in the clause by grammar”. These figures consist of: processes, participants and circumstances, each of which typically corresponds to, respectively, verbs, nouns and adjuncts (WEBSTER, 2015). Processes are descriptions of events, actions, states, or abstractions, and those involved in these processes are called participants. They can relate to the processes actively, by being the agent of an action, or passively, by being the receiver.

By using the transitivity system, we can perceive the flow of events by categorizing processes into sets of process types, each of which “constitutes a distinct model or schema for construing a particular domain of experience as a figure of a particular kind” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2014, p. 213). There are six sets of process types, listed below.

- Material processes represent the “doing”, what action is performed by the participant (BUTT *et al*, 2000).
- Mental processes correspond to the “inner world” of the mind, to processes of sensing: perception, affect, and cognition.
- Relational processes constitute processes of being and having and “relate a participant to its identity or description” (*ibid.*, p. 58). They can be attributive (description) or identifying (identity).

- Behavioral processes, according to Butt *et al* (ibid.) are the ones related to physiological or psychological behavior. The authors explain that behavioral processes “are often the doing version of a mental or even a verbal process” (p. 54).
- Verbal processes, verbs of saying, relate to what has been said by the participants, such as talk, report, explain, argue or promise.
- Existential processes, finally, construct the meaning of existence. They are usually used with an empty “there” followed by the verb to be, as in “there is/are”.

Material, Mental and Relational processes are considered “the three principal types of processes in the English clause” and “they account for the majority of all clauses in a text” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2014, p. 300).

The transitivity system can be used for analysing clauses according to the process types they present. As mentioned before, this system is associated with the ideational metafunction, related to human experiences. These sets of processes, then, categorize different types of experience.

As this thesis is also concerned with the interpersonal metafunction in the verbal analysis, the next subsection provides an overview of the Mood system, which is directly related to tenor in the context of situation. The analysis of the interpersonal meaning will allow me to investigate the relationship between the participants in the verbal analysis.

2.2.3 Mood system

This system corresponds to the interpersonal metafunction in SFL. Through the analysis of the interpersonal meaning in dialogue through the Mood system, we are able to identify the social roles of the participants engaged in a conversation. The analysis of the interpersonal metafunction refers to the function of language as an exchange between participants; in this exchange, something can be given or demanded, and this something can be either information or goods and services. This creates four basic speech functions: statement (giving information), question (demanding information), offer (giving goods and services) and command (demanding goods and services) (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). Eggins (2005, p. 144) states that

[...] whenever we use language to interact, one of the things we are doing with it is establishing a relationship between us: between the person speaking now and the person who will probably speak next. To establish this relationship we take

turns at speaking. As we take turns, we take on different speech roles in the exchange.

When engaging in a conversation, the lexical choices made by the participants and the roles they take reveal the attitudes and expectations between participants (WEBSTER, 2015); in other words, the interpersonal meaning in the interaction. A casual argument between friends will differ from a formal conversation between coworkers, for instance.

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), in order for an interaction between speakers to be initiated, a clause must contain, at least, two basic constituents: the Finite and the Subject, of which there is always only one of each in any given clause. In this case, it is said that the clause contains a Mood constituent and is, therefore, classified as a major clause (if it does not contain the Mood constituent, it is named a minor clause).

The authors (2004, p. 115) state that “[a] good way to make something arguable is to give it a point of reference in the here and now; and this is what the Finite does.” The purpose of the Finite is to contextualize the proposition; it corresponds to the verb or verbal group contained in the clause. The Subject, on the other hand, provides a reference point to the proposition; in other words, the subject is “(...) responsible for the functioning of the clause as an interactive event” (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 117)

Clauses can be separated into different classifications, and may be typically identified based on the order in which Subject and Finite are organized. A clause classified as a Declarative, for instance, is typically used to express a statement, to provide information, and will present the Subject before the Finite. An interrogative clause, on the other hand, will present the Finite before the Subject. However, Webster (2015, p. 22) highlights that language can be often used in more creative ways than the structure presented here may imply:

While a declarative typically expresses a statement intended to give information, it may also function to make a request of the listener. For example, the statement *it sure is cold here*, could in fact be a request to someone to turn off the air conditioner. To understand the speaker’s intended meaning, the situation context and the linguistic context are essential.

The clause may also contain elements other than the Subject and Finite, which are not part of the Mood constituent and considered less essential. In this case, these elements are classified in the Mood system as Residue. Three elements can be part of the Residue: the first one is the Predicator, defined by Eggins (2005, p. 155) as “ the lexical or content part of the verbal group”; any verbal elements present in a clause that follow the Finite are part of the

Predicator. The second one is the Complement, a nonessential element in the clause that has the potential to be Subject if the clause is rephrased in a passive form. Lastly, the Adjunct is an element that provides additional information to the clause, and does not have the potential to become Subject as the Complement does.

The two systems described in this section are the foundation for the verbal analysis; the next subsection describes the Grammar of Visual Design, the framework utilized in the visual analysis portion of the study.

2.3 THE GRAMMAR OF VISUAL DESIGN

Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) perspective of visual grammar presents the idea that images are their own form of language, which can be read and interpreted similarly to the way one would interpret or analyze a written text. The authors adopt SFL as the foundation for their work for the analysis of other semiosis, in particular images, which the authors are most concerned with. In that regard, they state that:

Any semiotic mode has to be able to represent aspects of the world as it is experienced by humans. In other words, it has to be able to represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system. That world may of course be, and most frequently is, already semiotically represented. (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, p. 42)

To exemplify this process of semiotic reading, the authors refer to the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity in visual representations as a contrast to the same concepts in verbal or textual modes. Visual representations, they explain, can be either objective or subjective, according to the perspective and angles the visuals are depicted from. An angled perspective might represent subjectivity, and the lack of such perspective, objectivity. Although perspective is a uniquely visual aspect, the authors draw a comparison with linguistic processes that express similar concepts; additionally, both are developed within the same sociocultural parameters, which emphasize the common aspects between the verbal and the visual.

Halliday (1994) argues that grammar is not simply a collection of rules that dictates proper use of language, rather, it establishes patterns in lexicogrammatical choices, allowing us to build a mental structure of language use in our social experiences. As GVD is based on

SFL, it follows the same approach to grammar, as stated by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 2):

Like linguistic structures, visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction. To some degree these can also be expressed linguistically. Meanings belong to culture, rather than to specific semiotic modes. And the way meanings are mapped across different semiotic modes, the way some things can, for instance, be 'said' either visually or verbally, others only visually, again others only verbally, is also culturally and historically specific.

Since Kress and van Leeuwen have based their framework on Halliday's SFL, there are many points of convergence between their works. For instance, for each of the metafunctions described by Halliday, visual grammar entails a similar metafunction for visual language (UNSWORTH, 2001), described below. I will focus on the representational and interactional meanings to better explore the visuals in the collected data, aligned with the analysis of verbal realizations in ideational meanings (with the analysis of transitivity choices in the selected scenes in the videogames), as well as the interpersonal metafunction (with the analysis of Mood choices).

- Representational: the equivalent of the ideational meaning in SFL;
- Interactional: the equivalent of the interpersonal meaning;
- Compositional: the equivalent of the textual meaning.

When it comes to the representational meanings, Unsworth (2001, p. 72) explains that it "verbally and visually construct[s] the nature of events, the objects and participants involved, and the circumstances in which they occur". In other words, it concerns relations and dynamics happening within the image, as a representation of the world outside of the picture and the way people experience it (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 1996). The representational meaning is concerned with the participants interacting within the image, who, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 48),

(...) constitute the subject matter of the communication; that is, the people, places and things (including abstract 'things') represented in and by the speech or writing or image, the participants about whom or which we are speaking or writing or producing images.

When talking about participants, the authors mean both the participants who constitute meaning through the interaction represented in the image (as explained in the previous paragraph) as well as the viewer, who is also a participant, interacting with the participants

involved. This relation between interactive participants (the viewer) and the represented participants is addressed by the interactional metafunction. When it comes to images such as the one in Figure 2, the cover art for the videogame *Hades* (2020), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 88) explain the interactional meaning between image and viewer in this specific manner of depiction: “the gaze of represented participants directly addresses the viewers and so establishes an imaginary relation with them (...)”. The interactional metafunction projects “(...) the relations between the producer of a (complex) sign, and the receiver/reproducer of that sign” (p. 42), and represent social relations between represented participant/object and the viewer.

Figure 2 - In this *Hades* poster, the gaze of the represented participant indicates his relation to the interactive participant(s).



Source: <https://www.aintitcool.com/node/81407>. Access on Apr 27 2021.

The gaze is an important aspect to establish the image-producer/object/viewer relationship; for Kress and van Leeuwen (ibid.), such images create an imaginary contact between object and viewer. The gaze acts as a vector, a line which connects the represented participant to the viewer through eyesight (in images in which visual contact is present, which is not always the case, as it will be discussed later on).

Regarding the image in which direct contact with the viewer is established by eyesight, Kress and van Leeuwen (ibid., p. 117) state that:

This visual configuration has two related functions. In the first place it creates a visual form of direct address. It acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual ‘you’. In the second place it constitutes an ‘image act’. The producer uses the image to do something to the viewer.

This kind of image is classified by the authors as a “demand”. By definition, it is a relationship in which something is expected from the viewer, according to the type of relation or reaction the participant expects. It establishes contact, a sort of relationship in which the interactive participant is addressed visually. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (ibid.), the nature of such a relationship or reaction concerns the other elements in terms of the participant’s position in relation to the viewer: it can be one of superiority or inferiority, a plea, an invitation, a warning, and so on. These can be interpreted by the angle from which the participant is depicted, their facial expressions, or the existence of other vectors (i.e., a hand pointing at the viewer), for example. In the case of a demand,

(...) the image wants something from the viewers – wants them to do something (come closer, stay at a distance) or to form a pseudo-social bond of a particular kind with the represented participant. And in doing this, images define to some extent who the viewer is (...). (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006, p. 118)

The box art for the role-playing video game *Persona 5* (Figure 3), offers an example of a demand, as it depicts Joker, the protagonist (positioned at the bottom center of the image) maintaining visual contact with the viewer while holding a mask (an object of great significance to the narrative of the game). Joker faces the viewer up front, neither superior nor inferior in this interaction. He smiles, which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 118), signifies that “the viewer is asked to enter into a relation of social affinity with [the participant].” His expression is inviting and cryptic, as if challenging the viewer to engage with the mystery of the game.

Figure 3 - An example of “demand” in *Persona 5*’s box art.



Source: Megami Tensei Wiki.

In contrast, an image may not establish such visual contact. In that case, the relationship between viewer and represented participant is very different. While in a demand the viewer is directed to the participant’s gaze, now this relation is inverted, with the participant being subject to the viewer’s gaze. In that case, the image is classified as an “offer” (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, *ibid.*). The name of the classification explains what relation the represented participant has to the interactive participant: the first is offered to the latter, as a means of providing something to the viewer: “[...] it ‘offers’ the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case.” (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006, p. 119)

In short, the direction of the participants’ gaze (facing the viewer, another participant or object within the image or outside of its frames, or even concealed from the viewer altogether) may alter the meaning completely. *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*’s box art (Figure 4) depicts protagonist Solid Snake with his gaze focused on something or someone out of the frames of the image, concealed from the viewer, an “offer”.

Figure 4 - An example of “offer” in *Metal Gear Solid 3*’s box art.



Source: Metal Gear Wiki.

Kress (2010, p. 9-10) points out that images produced in different cultures will still present some elements in common, as certain general principles apply to the production of semiosis in any human culture:

My view on that is that there are some highly general semiotic principles, which are common to all human (as well as to most mammalian and some other animal) communication. Consequently, these are present and evident in all human societies and their cultures.

Despite possible cultural biases, it should be pointed out that some literature about analysis of Japanese images through the studies of multimodality is available. Bowcher (2012) analyzes Japanese anti-war placards from the Iraq war period through the framework of intersemiotic complementarity, which is based on the aforementioned works of Halliday and Kress and van Leeuwen. Souza (2016) presents an analysis of the Japanese videogame

Bayonetta, using GVD as the framework for his findings. In my analysis, I intend to provide evidence that some concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen's framework, such as the visual representation of inferiority and superiority in the power relations between characters in a vertical axis, may be applicable to the Japanese media analyzed in this work.

The framework of the Grammar of Visual Design highlights the importance of multimodality for linguistic analysis, aligned with Halliday (1994), who approached linguistic description from the perspective of interdependency of functions within the clause. Likewise, Machin and Thornborrow (2003) point out that it is from the system of the component signs of a text that the meaning of the text arises; not from the sign in isolation, but in its unity.

Having defined the frameworks for the verbal and visual analysis of the data, I will, in the next subsection, briefly discuss Critical Discourse Analysis, a tool for reflecting critically on the results obtained by applying the data to GVD and SFL.

2.4 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to textual analysis that emphasizes how discursive practices and texts are influenced by questions related to the struggles of power in social and cultural contexts (FAIRCLOUGH, 2010). Language also represents a tool for struggles against social injustice and exploitation (FAIRCLOUGH apud HEBERLE, 2000).

According to Heberle (2000, p. 117), what sets CDA apart from other forms of language description is the concern with “the bidirectional link between language and society, taking into account socio-political and cultural aspects of discourse”. Heberle also points out that CDA approaches textual analysis in relation to social issues such as race, gender, power and political ideology. Its guiding principle is the idea that language is an essential part of social life and is interconnected with other aspects of it; the text contains social identities, relations and representations (FAIRCLOUGH, 1995; 2003).

The link between CDA and SFL resides in the mutual perspective of textual functionality. Fairclough (2003, p. 26) explains the multi-functional nature of the text:

(...) texts simultaneously represent aspects of the world (the physical world, the social world, the mental world); enact social relations between participants in social events and the attitudes, desires and values of participants; and coherently and cohesively connect parts of texts together, and connect texts with their situational contexts.

In the excerpt above, Fairclough makes it clear that the perceived (multi)function of texts, in CDA, follows the same patterns of meanings of Systemic Functional Linguistics. That is, ideational (as the text represents aspects of the world), interpersonal (as it enacts social relationships) and textual (as the text must be coherent and cohesive to allow communication). Based on this grammar, we can critically analyze discourses that “draw on, and transform, social practices” (VAN LEEUWEN, 2008, p.5).

An understanding of power relations in social practices is central to textual analysis through CDA; according to Van Dijk (1993), the dominance certain social groups or institutions exercise over others is the cause of political, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality. Critical discourse analysts explore the role that language plays in the legitimation (or representation, support, concealment, and so on) of such dominance.

Although verbal language is an essential component for Critical Discourse Analysis, research in the area is often multimodal, as explained by van Leeuwen (2008). The author points out the importance of analysing visual representations with the same critical treatment given to written texts. In that manner, van Leeuwen adopts a perspective of analyzing multimodal media based on Halliday’s SFL. Considering that video games are a type of medium composed of different modes (verbal, visual, interactional through gameplay, and so on), it is possible to use GVD to analyze games and their representation of the issues CDA is concerned with, as it has been done by Souza (2016). In that regard, Wodak and Meyer (2001, p. 123) state that CDA

is analysis of dialectical relationships between semiosis (including language) and other elements of social practices. Its particular concern is with the radical changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, with how semiosis figures within processes of change, and with shifts in the relationship between semiosis and other social elements within networks of practices. We cannot take the role of semiosis in social practices for granted; it has to be established through analysis. And semiosis may be more or less important and salient in one practice or set of practices than in another, and may change in importance over time.

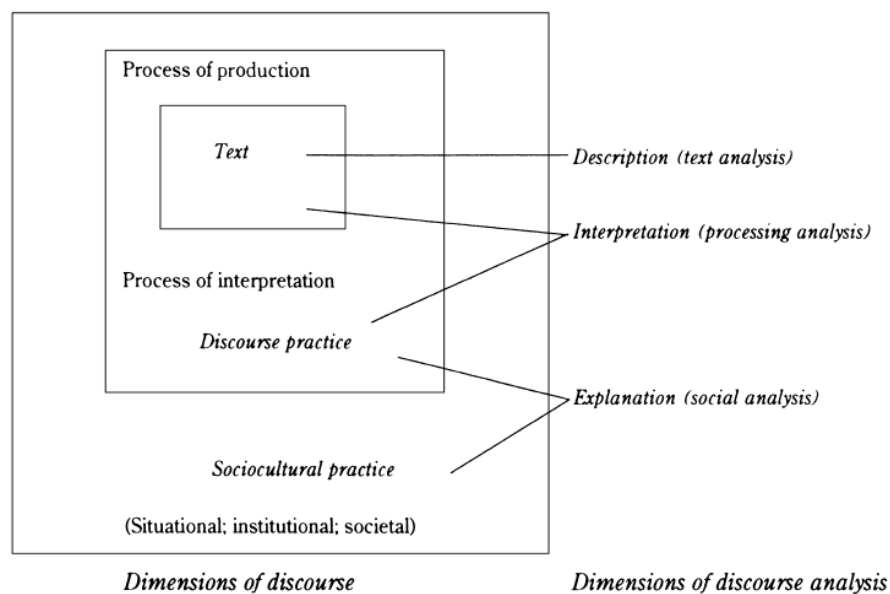
Critical discourse analysts hope to, through the study of semiosis, identify the relations of dominance that are embedded within social practices. Furthermore, as Van Dijk (1993) explains, CDA must also take a clear stance against imbalance of power, challenging the perceived legitimacy of the discourse of dominant groups or institutions, rather than simply describing its existence in social practice. For the author, critical discourse analysts should

adopt the perspective of groups that suffer the most from social inequality, as their voices are frequently silenced in spaces with large audiences and scope. Their concern should not be with the interests of the elite; as the author states (*ibid.*, p. 264), “one of the criteria of their work is solidarity with those who need it most”.

In this sense, it should be stated here how the present work is in convergence with the concerns of CDA. As mentioned in a previous subsection, authors such as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Welzer-Lang (2001) are concerned with how violence is intrinsically intertwined with the experiences of men in the pursuit of hegemonic masculinity, a problem that may be influenced by representations in the media. I assume here a position similar to that of these authors in the belief that this issue must be investigated, for its implications in the lives of men and those around them.

Fairclough (2010) proposes that texts can be analyzed through the three-dimensional framework, an approach which entails that discourse is, at the same time, text, discursive practice (text production/interpretation) and sociocultural practice (Figure 5). The author (p. 132) explains that “a special feature of the approach is that the link between sociocultural practice and text is mediated by discourse practice”. The production and interpretation of a text are both affected by the sociocultural practices that text is embedded in; these practices are reflected in text production, and they also shape the way in which the text is interpreted.

Figure 5 - Three-dimensional method of discourse analysis.



Source: Fairclough, 2010, p. 133.

In the present study, I use Fairclough's three-dimensional framework as a method of discourse analysis. The goal is to investigate the discourse practices observed in the collected data regarding the sociocultural practices the text itself is a part of.

3 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the contextualization of the objects of research, followed by the verbal and visual analysis, as well as a discussion of possible sociocultural issues represented in the data analyzed. First, the analysis of *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* is presented, followed by *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*.

3.1 CASTLEVANIA: SYMPHONY OF THE NIGHT

The following subsections provide detail concerning the context of situation for the video game *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, regarding field, mode and tenor, the analysis of the verbal and visual data as well as the sociocultural practices related to masculinity.

3.1.1 Context of situation

Regarding field, *Castlevania* is a long running series of side-scrolling platform¹² action-adventure video games, developed by the Japanese studio Konami since 1986, when the first game of the series, *Demon Castle Dracula*, was released¹³. The series is inspired by the novel *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker, and it expands on Stoker's character, Count Dracula, who in this iteration is in an ongoing war against the Belmont Clan, a family of vampire hunters sworn to defeat the vampire when he wakes up every 100 years. Since the released of *Demon Castle Dracula*, over 25 other titles have been released in the series, as well as other media: novels, guide books and an animated adaptation¹⁴.

Throughout the series, the members of the Belmont Clan are usually the protagonists of the games, shown in their struggle against Dracula and other creatures of darkness, although that is not the case in *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, as it will be discussed later on. The games are set in the historical region of Transylvania, where central Romania is now located. Aside from being the title of the series, in the universe of the games *Castlevania* is also the name of Count Dracula's castle, in which many of the games are set.

¹² A type of video game in which the background scrolls horizontally based on player input (NEWMAN, 2004).

¹³ Source: Castlevania Wiki. Access on Mar 24 2021.

¹⁴ Source: Castlevania Wiki. Access on Jun 17 2021

The *Castlevania* series has enjoyed critical and commercial acclaim, as well as great influence in the video game industry. The gameplay mechanics of the series (especially the *Symphony of the Night* instalment) have caused such an impact that a subgenre of adventure games is named after it: “Metroidvania”, a portmanteau of the words *Castlevania* and *Metroid*¹⁵, is a subgenre of two-dimensional (2D) side-scrolling platform games marked by a series of specific features of gameplay mechanics and level design based on the video game design philosophy of the two series (RODRÍGUEZ; COTTA; LEIVA, 2018). Furthermore, the *Castlevania* series has come into the spotlight again in recent years, as a result of the release of the aforementioned adaptation into an animated series by Netflix. The *Castlevania* animated show has had four released seasons as of 2021.

When it comes to mode, it concerns the role of language in social action (MARTIN, 1992): in this case it may be realized by the plot and the organization of the narrative. *Symphony of the Night* picks up where the previous entry in the series, *Castlevania: Rondo of Blood*, leaves off, with Richter Belmont defeating Count Dracula. After the battle, however, Richter disappears. Five years later, Castlevania reappears, and Dracula’s son, Alucard, wakes up from his self-induced slumber and sets off to investigate the reappearance of his father’s lair. He discovers that Richter had been enchanted by a dark priest who serves Count Dracula, and that he seeks to resurrect the vampire so that the two can battle for all of eternity. Alucard eventually breaks the enchantment cast on Richter, and sets off to defeat his father, who has returned.

Tenor is concerned with “the negotiation of social relationships among participants” (MARTIN, 1992, p. 523). For tenor, the analysis concerns the interactions among the characters in the game and with the player, specifically the way they give or demand information, negotiate their roles and show their power. In *Castlevania*, the characters curse and attempt to show their power. These relevant characters are specified below.

Count Dracula: The main antagonist of the *Castlevania* series is a powerful vampire who raises every 100 years. He was once a human soldier, who turned against God after the

¹⁵ *Metroid* is a side-scrolling platform action-adventure series created and published by Nintendo since the late 1980s. It follows bounty hunter Samus Aran as she battles her enemies, the Space Pirates, in defense of the Galactic Federation, the series’ established form of government. Source: Metroid Wiki.

death of his first wife, Elizabeth¹⁶. As a vampire, he seeks revenge against humanity because of the execution of his second wife and mother of his son, a human woman named Lisa.

Alucard: He is Dracula's son and also his main opponent during *Symphony of the Night*. Although he also suffers because of his mother's death, Alucard does not agree with his father's reign of horror and seeks to defeat him. He was named Adrian by his parents, and adopted the name Alucard, which is "Dracula" spelled backwards, later in life.

Richter Belmont: He is the descendant of a line of vampire hunters. Like other members of the Belmont Clan, his duty is to slay Count Dracula. He is enchanted by one of Count Dracula's servants, goes against his duty and resurrects Dracula to battle him for all eternity.

Lisa: She is Dracula's deceased wife and Alucard's mother. Lisa was a healer, executed by an angry mob of humans who believed her to be a witch due to her medical practice. Although she does not appear physically in *Symphony of the Night*, she continues to be the main source of motivation for Dracula's actions and his quest for revenge against humans.

The following subsection presents the verbal analysis of three scenes from *Symphony of the Night* through the systems of transitivity and Mood.

3.1.2 Power relations in Dialogue 1: *Symphony of the Night*

This subsection is dedicated to the verbal and visual analysis of the first scene extracted from *Symphony of the Night*, considering the power relations between the participants Richter, Alucard and Dracula. In Table 1, a transcript of Dialogue 1 is presented. This is the first cutscene of the game. After wandering around Castlevania and fighting minor enemies, the player, who is in control of Richter Belmont, enters the throne room and finds Count Dracula. As mentioned before, this scene portrays the end of the previous game, *Castlevania: Rondo of Blood*, and kicks off the events of *Symphony of the Night*.

Table 1 – Dialogue 1: Richter Belmont and Count Dracula

Richter: Dracula. Die now, and leave this world! You'll never belong here!

¹⁶ This period of the character's history is not portrayed in *Symphony of the Night*, therefore, I will not take it into consideration in the analysis of his representation. The purpose of this description is simply to contextualize the character in the fictional world of *Castlevania*.

Dracula: Oh, but this world invited me. Your own kind called me forth with praise and tribute.

Richter: Tribute? You're a thief. You steal men's souls, their freedom...

Dracula: Freedom is always sacrificed to faith, good hunter. Or are you truly here by choice?

Richter: All I'm here for is you. To hell with your heresy! You're nothing but a blight on mankind.

Dracula: Ha! Mankind. A cesspit of hatred and lies. Fight for them, then, and die for their sins!

The scene shows the struggle of power between the two participants. Richter is the more verbally aggressive one, demanding Dracula to leave the world of humans, to which Dracula asserts his right to remain, as he claims to have been called into that world by humans themselves. Dracula remains civil, using the vocative “good hunter” to refer to Richter, which could suggest a non-hostile attitude towards the other participant. However, in combination with the visual support for this dialogue (as it will be clear later in this analysis), it is more likely used in a sarcastic inclination. It is only towards the end that Dracula reveals his true opinion of men— in his words, “*A cesspit of hatred and lies.*” Below, a transitive analysis of this dialogue is provided.

RICHTER:

Die now,	and leave	this world!
Process: Material Circ: Location: temporal	Process: Material	Goal

You'll	never	belong	here!
	Circ: Location: temporal	Process: Relational	Circ: Location: spatial

DRACULA:

Oh, but	this world	invited	me.
	Actor	Process: Material	Beneficiary

Your own kind	called	me	forth	with praise and tribute.
Actor	Process: Verbal	Beneficiary		Circ: Manner

RICHTER:

You	're	a thief.
Token	Process: Relational	Value

You	steal	men's souls, their freedom...
Actor	Process: Material	Goal

DRACULA:

Freedom	is always sacrificed	to faith,	good hunter.
Goal	Process: Material	Actor	Vocative

Or are	you	truly here	by choice?
Process: Relational	Carrier	Circ: location: spatial	Circ: manner

RICHTER:

All I	'm	here for	is	you.
	Process: Relational	Circ: location: spatial	Process: Relational	Circ: cause: behalf

You	're	nothing but a blight on mankind.
Token	Process: Relational	Value

DRACULA:

Fight	for them,	then,	and die	for their sins!
Process: Material	Goal		Process: Material	Circ: cause: behalf

Table 2– Transitivity processes in Dialogue 1

Process	Richter	Dracula
Material	3 (<i>die, leave, steal</i>)	4 (<i>invite, sacrifice, fight, die</i>)
Mental		
Relational	5 (<i>be (3), belong</i>)	1 (<i>be</i>)
Verbal		1 (<i>call</i>)
Behavioural		
Existential		
Total	8	6

Both participants present a similar number of processes in their dialogue, in terms of material processes. The material processes used by Richter relate to Dracula, by threatening violence or accusing him of terrible deeds against humans (“*You steal men’s souls*”). Richter reveals very little of himself in these processes. When it comes to relational processes, which are the majority, Richter indicates Count Dracula’s otherness (“*You’ll never belong here!*”), and (“*You’re nothing but a blight on mankind.*”), accusing him in relation to humanity.

Richter also classifies Dracula as a thief. The main Actor in Richter’s lines is “you”, referring to the other participant, Dracula, which provides further evidence of Richter’s straightforwardness.

Count Dracula’s processes are mostly material. He uses them as a counterpoint to Richter’s accusations, to justify his presence in the world (“*Your own kind called me forth with praise and tribute.*”), and commands or threats (“*Fight for them, then, and die for their sins!*”). Now, I present a breakdown of this dialogue through the Mood system, which allows us to see the type of exchange (interaction) between participants. When it comes to the Actors of these processes (“your own kind”, “this world”, “faith”), the language used by this participant highlights the philosophical and argumentative nature of his speech.

RICHTER:

Die now,
Predicator
Mood: Imperative

(and) leave	this world!
Predicator	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

You	‘ll	never	belong	here!
Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

DRACULA:

Oh, but	this world	invited	me.
	Subject	Finite	Complement

	Mood: Declarative	Residue
--	-------------------	---------

Your own kind	called	me	forth	with praise and tribute.
Subject	Finite	Complement		Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

RICHTER:

You	're	a thief.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

You	steal	men's souls, their freedom...
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

DRACULA:

Freedom	is	always	sacrificed	to faith,	good hunter.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator	Adjunct	Vocative
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

Or	are	you	truly here by choice?
	Subject	Finite	Adjunct
Mood: Interrogative			Residue

RICHTER:

All	I	'm	here	for is	you.
	Subject	Finite	Adjunct		Complement
	Mood: Declarative		Residue		

You	're	nothing but a blight on mankind.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

Fight	for them, then,
Predicator	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

(and) die	for their sins!
Predicator	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

Table 3 – Clause classification in Dialogue 1

Clause classification	Richter	Dracula
Declarative	5	3
Interrogative		1
Imperative	2	2

Almost all of the clauses in this dialogue are declarative. In this specific context, the lack of interrogative clauses in Richter's dialogue might indicate his lack of desire to negotiate with his opponent; there is no attempt at reasoning with Dracula, who Richter treats as a purely and irredeemably evil. Furthermore, Richter also uses two imperatives (*die* and *leave*), which emphasize his wish, suggesting a command (or curse).

The declarative clauses present in Dracula's dialogue have an argumentative element to them, showing Dracula to be the more intellectual of the two participants. While Richter's dialogue is directed towards action, Dracula argues in favor of his presence ("*Oh, but this world invited me.*"), not so much as a way to dissuade Richter, but to point out flaws in Richter's logic. For example, in the one interrogative clause present in his dialogue, he questions the concept of free will ("*Or are you truly here by choice?*"). With this question, the villain implies that Richter's faith in religion is truly the reason for his actions. Similar to Richter, Dracula uses two imperatives (*fight* and *die*) as if to curse Richter.

Now, I will present the visual analysis that complements Dialogue 1. Two images (Figures 6 and 7) were retrieved from this scene (the same number of images was also retrieved for the subsequent scenes).

Figure 6 – Screenshot 1



Verbal text in the image: “Dracula. Die now, and leave this world! You’ll never belong here!”

From the perspective of the interactional metafunction, the viewer observes the scene from a distance, which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) classify as a very long shot, in which participants occupy only a portion of the frame’s height. From this distance, the viewer is unable to see the represented participants’ expression; the very long shot lacks intimacy, as if interactive and represented participants were in different worlds (and indeed they are). From this distance, the viewer does not engage directly with the represented participants, emphasizing the power relations between them. As such, these elements may also convey a certain level of detachment between represented and interactive participants.

When it comes to the nature of the interactional metafunction in the visuals of *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, it is necessary to point out certain limitations of the medium that may have contributed to it. *Symphony of the Night* is a decades-old 2D video game with limited cinematography; its dialogue scenes are mostly static, never changing in angle, distance, and other interactive elements.

A box is placed on the upper part of the image, displaying the dialogue (synced with the game’s audio track) along with the name and a portrait of the character who is speaking at any moment. This is a non-diegetic element of the image, and therefore, not revealed to the

represented participants. In this figure, the dialogue box displays Richter's lines and portrait. The participant is framed from the chest up, in a close shot, and his expression is visible. His gaze is directed towards the outer corner of the image, constituting this portrayal an 'offer'. It provides a visual cue to the interactive participant to correctly identify who is speaking at the moment and makes the image more personal to the viewer because of the close shot.

Next to his portrait, one of Richter's lines in this dialogue can be read. The dialogue boxes in *Symphony of the Night* may be meant to provide guidance or information to the player, along with other elements of the game's user interface (UI). These UI elements do not affect the meaning of the interaction between represented participants (the representational meaning), as they are only visible to the interactive participant.

When it comes to the representational metafunction, Count Dracula is visually superior to Richter, possibly to convey the power and fear the villain commands and how much Richter is risking himself by engaging in combat. It is also a visual representation of this participant's intellectual/philosophical superiority. Dracula sits on his throne in a relaxed pose, seeming bored by the interaction, potentially indicating disinterest or contempt towards the other participant. This relates to the verbal analysis through Dracula's use of the vocative "good hunter". Taking the visuals into consideration, it conveys a meaning of sarcasm rather than politeness. The participants face each other, resulting in a reactional image.

Related to interactional meanings, linked to compositional elements, as Count Dracula is centered in the image, both on the vertical and horizontal axes, he seems to be a character of major importance, occupying the central position— his central role in the narrative of the game. Richter, who is below him, to the right, occupies the position of the character the player is already familiar with, on the 'Given' side of the image.

Interactional meanings can also be identified by the setting for this image, Dracula's throne room, portrayed in gothic, dark elements of architecture and decoration. It furthers the antagonist's characterization as a creature of the darkness and creates an ominous and threatening environment that the protagonist/player must be brave to endure. It also serves to correlate the Count Dracula from the *Castlevania* series with the mythology around Bram Stoker's original character in the many different interpretations of the character in all types of media.

Figure 7 – Screenshot 2



Verbal text in the image: “Ha! Mankind. A cesspit of hatred and lies. Fight for them, then, and die for their sins!”

The only action that provokes a visual change in the scene happens when Dracula throws the glass of blood he holds to the ground and gets up from his throne, ready for a battle against Richter, as shown in Figure 7. Regarding the representational metafunction, by standing up, his figure becomes more imposing to signify that a fight approaches. In that sense, this change in the character’s stance complements the dialogue, which has taken a more aggressive turn as Dracula threatens Richter and the two prepare for battle.

The rest of the image remains the same, aside from the dialogue box, which now displays a close-up picture of Dracula and his dialogue. In terms of organization, the portraits are similar. Dracula, too, is framed from the chest up, the subject of his gaze occulted from the viewer, indicating the portrait as an ‘offer’. His appearance, however, is very different from the other participants. His skin has an unnaturally grey color, his eyes are red and his pointed ears resemble that of a fantastical creature. However, other elements, such as his hair, beard and clothes, are portrayed in the same style adopted by humans in the world of *Castlevania*. The mix of human and nonhuman features may symbolize Dracula’s complex nature, a being capable of monstrous acts but also very human emotions, which is explored throughout the narrative.

3.1.3 Power relations in Dialogue 2: *Symphony of the Night*

This scene portrays the first time in the course of the game that father and son meet. Dracula receives his son with a warm welcome (“*Well met, my son!*”), showing a different side of the character that the player has not seen before. The two discuss Alucard’s alignment with humans and how the two view humanity differently after Lisa’s murder. Just as in the first dialogue, Dracula does not seem to be willing to fight at first, trying to appeal to the other man with words, unsuccessfully. Below, the dialogue and transitive analysis are presented.

Table 4 – Dialogue 2: Alucard and Count Dracula

Alucard: Father...
Dracula: Well met, my son! It's been a long time.
Alucard: Not nearly long enough. I can't allow you to leave here, Father.
Dracula: Do you still side with humanity? Have you forgotten what they did to your mother?
Alucard: You think I would forget such a...! No, But neither do I seek revenge against them.
Dracula: Enough of your nonsense! Away with your humanity! Stand with me as Prince of all the world!
Alucard: You will never touch this world again. In Mother's name, I swear it!

DRACULA:

It's been	a long time.
Process: Relational	Circ: extent: temporal

ALUCARD:

I	can't allow	you	to leave	here,	Father.
Actor	Process: Material	Beneficiary	Process: Material	Circ: Location:	Vocative

				spatial	
--	--	--	--	---------	--

DRACULA:

Do you still	side	with humanity?			
Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon			

Have you	forgotten	what they	did	to your mother?	
Senser	Process: Mental	Actors	Process: Material	Goal	
		Phenomenon			

ALUCARD:

You	think	I	would forget	such a...!	
Senser	Process: Mental	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon	
			Phenomenon		

But neither	do I	seek	revenge against them.		
	Actor	Process: Material	Goal		

DRACULA:

Stand	with me	as Prince of all the world!			
Process: Material	Circ: Accompaniment	Circ: role: guise			

ALUCARD:

You	will never touch	this world	again.
Actor	Process: Material	Goal	

In Mother's name,	I	swear	it!
	Sayer	Process: Verbal	

Now I provide the discussion of the transitivity choices used by the two participants, related to this dialogue.

Table 5 – Transitivity processes in Dialogue 2

Process	Alucard	Dracula
Material	4 (<i>allow, leave, seek, touch</i>)	2 (<i>do, stand</i>)
Mental	2 (<i>think, forget</i>)	2 (<i>side, forget</i>)
Relational		1 (<i>be</i>)
Verbal	1 (<i>swear</i>)	
Behavioural		
Existential		
Total	7	5

Both participants have a similar number of processes, with Alucard having 2 more processes in his speech. Most processes are material and related to his decision of not allowing his father to live in the realm of humans any longer (“*I can't allow you to leave here, Father.*”), a similar approach to Richter's. The use of violence in Alucard's speech is purposeful; he seeks to stop the carnage his father has caused. Even then, the language used by this participant is not overtly violent, preferring non-literal language to describe his decision of killing his father, such as in the sentence “*You will never touch this world again.*”

Unlike Alucard, Count Dracula's most recurrent processes are mental and material. He shows concern with his son's alliances and his response to the tragedy that happened to his mother, Lisa.

Regarding the Actors and Sensers in Dracula's lines, Dialogue 2 differs from Dialogue 1 in the sense that this participant adopts a more straightforward language now, using "you" and "my son" to refer to Alucard. It is representative of the intimate relationship between the two participants; with Richter, Dracula adopted language that indicated distance or animosity. For Alucard, Actors and Sensers refer both to himself and his father ("I", "you"), mostly referring to his feelings regarding past events and his perceived duty to deal with his father.

Now I discuss Mood choices used by the two characters.

DRACULA:

It	's	been	a long time.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

ALUCARD:

I	can't	allow	you	to leave	here,	Father.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement		Adjunct	Vocative
Mood: Declarative		Residue				

DRACULA:

Do	you	still	side	with humanity?
Finite	Subject	Adjunct	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood: Interrogative		Residue		

Have	you	forgotten	what	they	did	to your mother?
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Interrogative		Residue				

ALUCARD:

You	think	I	would	forget	such a...!
Subject	Finite	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

But neither	do	I	seek	revenge	against them.
	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
	Mood: Declarative		Residue		

DRACULA:

Stand	with me	as Prince of all the world!
Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Imperative		Residue

You	will	never	touch	this world	again.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

In Mother's name,	I	swear	it!
Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Complement
Residue	Mood: Declarative		

Table 6 – Clause classifications in Dialogue 2

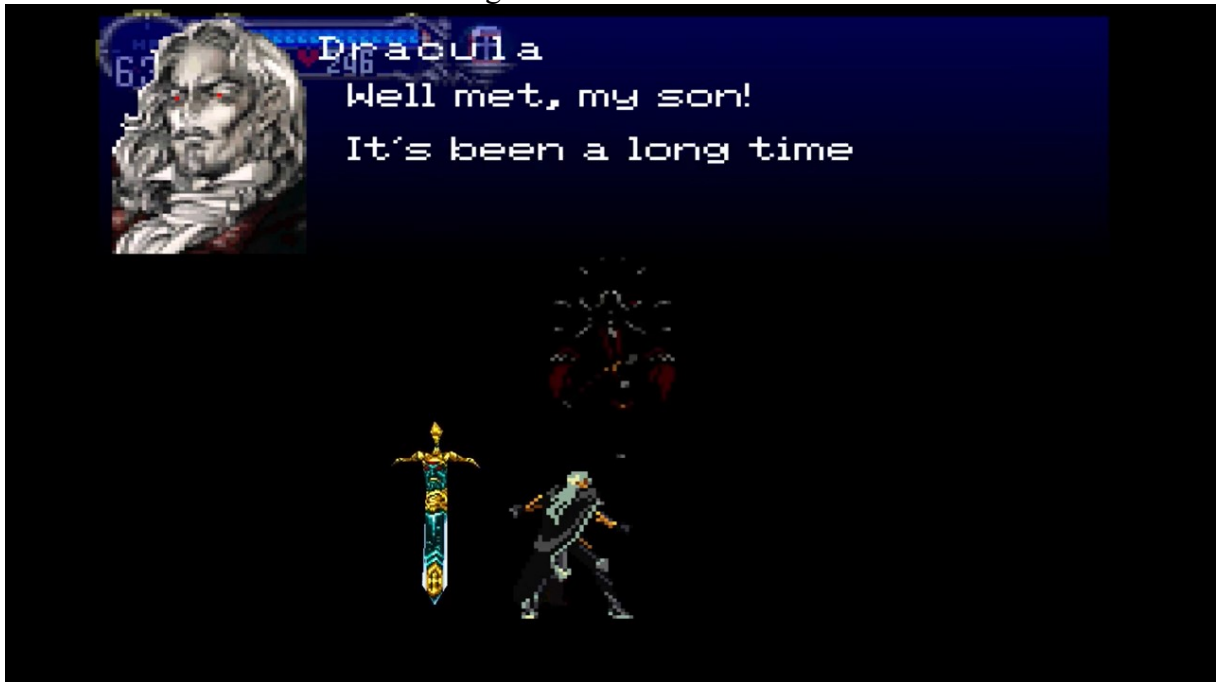
Clause classification	Alucard	Dracula
Declarative	6	2
Interrogative		2
Imperative		1

Alucard's dialogue presents six declarative clauses, most of them asserting his goal to stop his father's doing, as he does not belong to the world of mortals. His decision seems to be related to his mother (*"In Mother's name, I swear it!"*). He also states he has not forgotten the tragedy of her death, but denies a wish for revenge.

Dracula has only two declarative clauses, in which he greets his son, who he apparently has not seen in quite some time (*"It's been a long time."*). His dialogue also presents two interrogative clauses; in these clauses, Dracula questions the nature of his son's allegiance. The line *"Do you still side with humanity?"* along with the fact that the two have not spoken in a long time, seems to imply a stranded relationship, possibly caused by their disagreement regarding humanity after Lisa's death. He also has one imperative clause, demanding Alucard's allegiance to him.

Below, the analysis of the visuals that support this dialogue is presented.

Figure 8 – Screenshot 3



Verbal text in the image: “Well met, my son! It's been a long time.”

In Figure 8, in terms of representational meanings, Alucard is centered in the image and Count Dracula’s shadow is positioned above him, implying a dynamic of power imbalance, which may be related to the familiar bonds between the two participants – father and son. The choice of portraying Dracula as visually superior may also be attributed to the fact that this is the final confrontation in the game, known as the final boss, which is meant to be the biggest and hardest battle the player character must face. Thus, it is common to portray such antagonists as imposing and superior in their demonstrations of power.

Count Dracula’s silhouette is barely visible. His face is entirely hidden from both Alucard and the viewer as he emerges from darkness, creating a sense of mystery and anxiety around his final appearance in the game. On an interactional level, only his face, shown in the dialogue box, is visible as his line of dialogue is displayed on the upper part of the screen.

Count Dracula’s close up in the dialogue box is almost exactly the same as in Figure 7, except that the participant now gazes at the left edge of the shot. This compositional choice is possibly made to provide some dynamism to the dialogue display, as the same closeups of various participants are repeatedly shown throughout the course of the game.

The background of this image is composed of solid black. From the perspective of visual grammar, this absence of a setting signifies a lower level of modality, and the participants are decontextualized, detached from location and point in time (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006), inviting the viewer to focus on the represented participants, their relationship, instead of the world around them. It gives the scene a surreal and supernatural element, isolates the participants from the rest of the world of *Castlevania* and emphasizes the significance of the final confrontation between father and son.

Figure 9 – Screenshot 4



Verbal text in the image: “Not nearly long enough. I can't allow you to leave here, Father.”

As explained before, little movement happens in *Castlevania*'s cutscenes. Figure 9, the second image analysed from Dialogue 2, is similar to the image in Figure 8. In this shot, Count Dracula reveals himself completely. The represented participants in this image are much more closely related and have a complicated relationship, which seems to be portrayed through both the visual and verbal elements of the scene. The father and son confrontation is the culmination of Alucard's journey so far, and it represents not only a physical confrontation but an emotional one, as the two discuss the different ways in which they deal with grief.

Compared to his appearance during Dialogue 1, Dracula's representation has changed significantly. His body language when first encountering Richter, in Figure 6, can be interpreted as contempt or boredom with the other participant's presence. In Figure 9, he appears to be more imposing; whereas before he sat in his throne in a relaxed pose, now he sits upright, facing Alucard and the viewer, representing how, at this point of the narrative, the stakes have been raised.

In terms of interactive meaning, the dialogue box is present as always, this time displaying Alucard's portrait and line of dialogue. Alucard's appearance resembles his father's in some aspects, such as his long, light colored hair and pale skin. However, Alucard also resembles a human man more closely than his father does. His appearance may be attributed to the fact that he is half-human, but it may also signify Alucard's emotional and moral affinity with humanity. Additionally, his resemblance to Dracula may indicate that Alucard's actions are closer to his father's than they may seem at first glance, as this participant, too, must engage in violent behavior to accomplish his goals.

3.1.4 Power relations in Dialogue 3: *Symphony of the Night*

The final scene to be analyzed is the very last cutscene of the game in which Dracula appears. It shows the aftermath of the final boss fight against Count Dracula. He is defeated by the player/Alucard, and the two have one last conversation.

Table 7 – Dialogue 3: Alucard and Count Dracula (post-battle)

Alucard: Go back to the abyss! Trouble the soul of my mother no more!

Dracula: H-How?! How could I have lost?!

Alucard: You lost your heart. Your soul. You'll never win without them.

Dracula: Ah, how poetic. So I tragically sacrificed all I held dear in a search for power, did I?

Alucard: ...Did you not?

Dracula: ...Hmph. Tell me. What... What were Lisa's last words?

Alucard: She said, "Do not hate humans. If you cannot live with them, then at least do them no harm, for theirs is already a hard lot." ...She also said that she would love you. For eternity.

Dracula: Lisa, forgive me... Farewell, my son...

The outcome of the confrontation between Alucard and Dracula is the banishment of the latter from the world of humans. The two discuss why things ended the way they did, and Dracula ponders over his actions so far (“*So I tragically sacrificed all I held dear in a search for power, did I?*”), ultimately realizing he was wrong after hearing Lisa’s last words from Alucard.

ALUCARD:

Go back	to the abyss!
Process: Material	Circ: Location: spatial

Trouble	the soul of my mother	no more!
Process: Material	Goal	Circ: Time

DRACULA:

How could	I	have lost?
	Actor	Process: Material

ALUCARD:

You	lost	your heart.
Actor	Process: Material	Goal

You	‘ll never win	without them.
Actor	Process: Material	Circ: Accompaniment

DRACULA:

So	I	tragically	sacrificed
	Actor	Circ: manner	Process: Material

all	I	held	dear	in a search for power,	did I?
	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon	Circ: cause: reason	
Goal					

What were	Lisa's	last words?
Process: Relational	Token	Value

ALUCARD:

She	said,	"Do not hate	humans.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
		Verbiage	

If you	cannot live	with them,
Behavior	Process: Behavioral	Circ: Accompaniment
Verbiage		

then at least	do	them	no harm,
	Process: Material	Receiver	Process: Material (part of)

Verbiage

for theirs	is	already a hard lot.”
Token	Process: Relational	Value
Verbiage		

...She	also said	that she	would love	you.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
		Verbiage		

DRACULA:

Lisa,	forgive	me...
Vocative	Process: Mental	

Table 8 – Transitivity processes in Dialogue 3

Process	Alucard	Dracula
Material	5 (<i>go, trouble, lose, win, do</i>)	2 (<i>lose, sacrifice</i>)
Mental	2 (<i>hate, love</i>)	2 (<i>hold, forgive</i>)
Relational	1 (<i>be</i>)	1 (<i>be</i>)
Verbal	2 (<i>say</i>)	
Behavioural	1 (<i>live</i>)	
Existential		
Total	11	5

Again, Alucard's speech presents a higher number of processes; this time, the participant shows a greater control of the conversation. As in Dialogue 2, most of the processes are material. These processes are focused on dictating his father's actions ("*Go back to the abyss! Trouble the soul of my mother no more!*") and ("*If you cannot live with them, then at least do them no harm, for theirs is already a hard lot.*"). Dracula presents the same number of material and mental processes, two of each. These occur in relation to Dracula's understanding of the consequence of his actions and subsequent regret, such as in the line "*Lisa, forgive me...*"

Dracula's performance of masculinity, here, is unexpected, by expressing his emotions of regret explicitly and apologizing to a woman. By doing so, he gives away some of his power and strength, as his love for her becomes more important in this moment. This can also be observed in his use of Actors and Sensers; the participant often uses "I" ("*How could I have lost*" and "*So I tragically sacrificed all I held dear...*") to reflect on his actions and emotions.

ALUCARD:

Go back	to the abyss!
Predicate	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

Trouble	the soul of my mother	no more!
Predicate	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Imperative	Residue	

DRACULA:

How	could	I	have lost?
	Finite	Subject	Predicator

	Mood: Interrogative	Residue
--	---------------------	---------

ALUCARD:

You	lost	your heart.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

You	'll	never	win	without	them.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Predicator	Adjunct	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

DRACULA:

So	I	tragically	sacrificed	all	I	held dead	in a search for power,	did I?
	Subject	Adjunct	Finite		Subject	Predicator	Adjunct	Mood tag
Mood: Interrogative				Residue				

ALUCARD:

Did	you	not?
	Subject	
Finite		
Mood: Interrogative		

DRACULA:

What	were	Lisa's last words?
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Interrogative		Residue

ALUCARD:

She	said,	"Do not hate	humans.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

If	you	cannot	live	with them,
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Declarative		Residue	

then at least	do	them	no harm,
	Predicator	Subject	Complement
Mood: Declarative	Residue		

for	theirs	is	already a hard lot.
	Subject	Finite	Complement
	Mood: Declarative		Residue

...She	also	said	that	she	would	love	you.
Subject	Mood Adjunct	Finite		Complement	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative			Residue				

Table 9 – Clause classifications in Dialogue 3

Clause classification	Alucard	Dracula
Declarative	8	2
Interrogative	1	2
Imperative	2	

In this dialogue, Alucard is mostly fulfilling the function of giving information regarding the details of Lisa’s death. Many of his lines are quotes from Lisa’s last words; in a way, the communication happens not only between the two men, but also their deceased mother/wife. Alucard also explains to Dracula why he was defeated (“*You lost your heart. Your soul. You’ll never win without them.*”), implying there was a change in Dracula’s behavior, likely as a result of the loss of his wife.

Dracula’s interrogatives are demands for information he previously did not consider (“*What were Lisa’s last words?*”) and an attempt at understanding how he lost to his son. It shows a more introspective side of the character, as he tries to deal with his loss: whereas before he was intransigent and would try to convince others of his point of view, now he is open to Alucard’s interpretation of the facts – “*So I tragically sacrificed all I held dear in a search for power, did I?*”

It is unclear what Dracula means by “all I had dear”. Considering, however, that his wife Lisa was already dead by the time the events of *Symphony of the Night* unfolded, it is likely he refers to his relationship to his son, especially considering the previously established evidence that, throughout this conversation, Dracula attempts to make amends for their stranded relationship. Below, I present the visual analysis.

Figure 10 – Screenshot 5



Verbal text in the image: “Go back to the abyss! Trouble the soul of my mother no more!”

Figure 10 portrays the moment of Dracula’s defeat, the outcome of the boss fight that the player just had to face. The visuals, at this point, are quite different from the previous two scenes analysed so far, the most notorious one being Count Dracula’s new form, now appearing to be a gigantic monster instead of a humanoid being.

His arms and hands occupy both sides of the screen, his hands pointing inwards, forming a vector towards the center of the image. The position of his arms and hands forms a barrier around Alucard, which might indicate a violent stance towards the other, who cannot escape from this confrontation. As of consequence, the player, who is inserted into the world interactively by controlling Alucard (the player character), also has no means of escaping and must fight Dracula to progress through the game.

Instead of one solid dark color, the background now contains shades of red, grey and brown; thus, its appearance seems much more chaotic when compared to the background of Dialogue 1, which presents similar colors but conveys the image of a more sophisticated, classic man. In Figure 10, the abstract background contributes to portraying the beastly side of the character, conveyed more explicitly by his change in corporeal form.

Figure 11 – Screenshot 6



Figure 11 is the last image to be analysed. It portrays the last appearance of antagonist Count Dracula in *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, after being defeated by his son. Despite winning the battle, in terms of the positions of the participants, Alucard is still placed on the bottom part of the image, which indicates less power. We may find justification for this visual choice in the dialogue of the narrative. As it can be observed in Dialogue 3, in his defeat Dracula seems to regret his actions, and the two participants bond over Alucard's last memories of Lisa. For Alucard, his difficult and ultimately successful journey may not feel like a complete victory, as it ends with him having to banish his own father to save the world.

Alucard is highlighted in the foreground, while his father's figure fades away. In this image, Alucard stands at the center, his gaze turned away from his father. The white light effects emphasize the more human-like aspect of Dracula's appearance; his grotesque monster hands and wings are barely visible now, whereas before they overshadowed his face and body. Visually, the harsh, bright light over his hands alter the effect of the previous screenshot (Figure 10), in which the position of his gigantic hands forms a barrier around the other participant. The barrier disappears into the light, and Alucard is now free.

A significant change can be observed in the compositional elements. The background of the image is noticeably different, now light yellow with white streaks of light. In Figure

10, the participant emerges from darkness, and now, quite literally, vanishes into the light. The fact that the *Castlevania* franchise is based on classic Western vampire mythology and gothic aesthetics may signify that the producers of the image have adopted certain stylistic conventions that can be used to justify this choice. The use of black, dark red and brown may be associated with “dark” emotions and behaviors such as vengeance, grief, and violence, whereas light colors are associated with redemption, forgiveness and regret. In conclusion, the concept of “darkness” and “light”, in the sense of moral alignment, is associated with dark and light colors, as per western tradition.

3.1.5 Sociocultural practices regarding masculinity

In this subsection, some issues related to representations of masculinity in the data analyzed will be discussed, following the writings of Connell (2000; 2005). Here, I continue to follow Fairclough’s (2010) three-dimensional method of discourse analysis: in the previous subsections, the text was presented and analyzed (description and interpretation). Now, I will deal with the social analysis, relating the text to the sociocultural practices it is embedded within (explanation), which concludes the three dimensions of discourse proposed by the author.

In *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, there are many issues pertaining to masculinity with great potential for discussion represented in the relation between the involved participants, for instance: fatherhood, grief, and revenge. However, my scope here concerns the representation of Count Dracula and some of the possible sociocultural practices reflected on his representation that is most pertinent considering my readings of Connell’s work.

In terms of appearance, the character combines some features that fit Western standards (pale skin, masculine-looking) and some features of “otherness”, such as his unnatural-looking pointed ears and red glowing eyes (as seen in his portrait in Figure 12), pointing to the supernatural nature of the character. The clothing worn by Dracula is inspired by fashion trends in male clothing during the Victorian period.

Figure 12 – Dracula's official artwork.



Source: <https://castlevania.fandom.com/wiki/Dracula>. Access on Jun 07 2021.

Despite his more monster-like features, it does not seem he is meant to be physically unappealing, as his features still resemble what could be considered an attractive man according to Western ideas of beauty. These features may be meant to convey that, despite his entrancing appearance, Dracula has a monstrous, inhuman side. Although different iterations of the character have their own particularities and vary in character design, this seems to be consistent between at least his most well-known appearances in media, such as the most recent one, in Netflix's animated series (Figure 13).

Figure 13 – Dracula’s appearance in the Castlevania animated series.



Source: <https://www.geeksandgamers.com/review-castlevania-season-2-2018/>. Access on Jun 08 2021.

The game is based on classic Western vampire mythology and takes inspiration from cultural movements of different periods of European history. From the influence of gothic architecture and literature to the aesthetics of the Victorian period, this inspiration can be observed in the game’s themes, lore, set and character design. The latter can be observed in one of Dracula’s official artworks (Figure 12). These visual choices point to a relation to different periods of European culture, from the 14th to the 18th century.

With this in mind, it may be relevant to explore the development of masculinity as a cultural concept in early European culture. In that regard, Connell (2005, p. 186) describes cultural shifts at the time that “produced new understandings of sexuality and personhood in metropolitan Europe”. These mostly relate to the declining role of medieval Catholicism in European society, allowing for the rise of new identities that no longer placed extreme importance on the worship of God, mediated by the Church:

When medieval Catholicism, already changing, was disrupted by the spread of Renaissance secular culture and the Protestant reformation, long-established and powerful ideals for men’s lives were also disrupted. The monastic system crumbled. The power of religion to control the intellectual world and to regulate everyday life began its slow, contested, but decisive decline. On the one hand, this opened the way for a growing cultural emphasis on the conjugal household – exemplified by no less a figure than Martin Luther, the married monk. Marital heterosexuality displaced monastic denial as the most honoured form of sexuality. The cultural authority of compulsory heterosexuality clearly followed this shift. On the other hand, the new emphasis on individuality of expression and on each person’s unmediated relationship with God led towards individualism and the concept of an autonomous

self. These were cultural prerequisites for the idea of masculinity itself (...). (CONNELL, 2005, p. 186)

Although, as mentioned before, Lisa never physically appears in *Symphony of the Night* (or any game in the *Castlevania* series, for that matter), she is the main source of motivation for Dracula's actions and his quest for revenge against humans. His hatred of humanity stems from the death of Lisa, represented in his dialogue with Richter: "*Mankind. A cesspit of hatred and lies.*" The details of Lisa's death are not explicitly mentioned in the text, but it is established in the lore of series that her murder that was religiously motivated, as described in the official Wiki:

Lisa created medicine for those who suffered from the epidemic. Due to the witch trials going on in Europe at the time, Lisa was apprehended and executed. Dracula later found her body, but arrived too late to save her. Alucard was present shortly before Lisa's death, just like his father, being unable to stop the event, with Lisa requesting that Alucard allowed the mob to kill her, under the belief that it would ultimately save their souls from eternal damnation.¹⁷

As the lord of all vampires, Dracula is far removed from the regular, God-fearing, medieval man. His quest for revenge is of a highly individualist nature: he seeks revenge for the death of a single person by exterminating all human life. Lisa's death is the justification for violence: "*Have you forgotten what they did to your mother?*" Considering the historical context of the period and culture the series is inspired by, Dracula may reflect the emergence of a form of hegemonic masculinity in which the self is more important than his relation to God.

¹⁷ Source: <https://castlevania.fandom.com/wiki/Lisa>. Access on Jun 07 2021.

Figure 14 – Lisa’s official artwork.



Source: <https://castlevania.fandom.com/wiki/Lisa>. Access on Jun 07 2021.

Dracula uses violence to maintain his dominance over others, which Connell (2005) considers to be a common pattern of violence in patriarchal societies. In the dialogue, his perception of the domination over humans can be observed: in the line “*Your own kind called me forth with praise and tribute*”, he attempts at legitimizing the power he has over humans by claiming he was invited back into their world by humans themselves. Later in the narrative, he invites his son, Alucard, to join him in ruling over humanity (“*Stand with me as Prince of all the world!*”).

Despite all of that, Dracula is also well-mannered and polite when communicating with both Richter and Alucard, at least in the beginning. He is also shown to be capable of love for his late wife, Lisa, and attempts at reconciling with his son. The issue of fatherhood is especially relevant late in the game, when it becomes clear Dracula has lost, and in his last minutes he tries to make amends for apparently ruining his relationship with his son “in a search for power”, in his own words.

To conclude this subsection, the representation of this character carries some attributes that are in line with what could be considered the standard of hegemonic masculinity in Western societies. First, his appearance is masculine, and, to some extent, conventionally attractive. He is also individualistic, rejects faith and places more value on relationships to

those around him than to a religious figure. Most importantly, he engages in violence to maintain control over others or to eliminate those who question that control.

That is not to say this is a portrayal of masculinity that is endorsed by the narrative. Although Dracula has one final moment in which he sees the error of his ways and asks for forgiveness, his actions do not go unpunished. Alucard, who chooses not to seek revenge against the loss of his mother, may be considered the moral compass of the game. After all, as Connell (2000, p. 216) states, “[i]n any cultural setting, violent and aggressive masculinity will rarely be the only form of masculinity present.” The narrative is sympathetic yet critical towards Dracula, portraying him as a man who deals with loss by engaging in violence that realizes, in the end, that his actions hurt those close to him— a very common end result when it comes to gendered violence.

In the next section, the analysis of *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* is presented, starting with the context of situation, the verbal analysis through the systems of transitivity and Mood, the visual analysis and some remarks regarding sociocultural practices embedded in the text.

3.2 METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

The subsections below describe the context of situation of the game *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, the analysis of the selected data following the frameworks proposed by Halliday (1994) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and finally the sociocultural practices regarding masculinity.

3.2.1 Context of situation

Regarding field, *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* (2004) is the fifth instalment in the popular action-adventure stealth video game series, *Metal Gear*, created by Hideo Kojima and developed by the studio Konami. *Snake Eater* is a well-known and influential video game, having achieved critical success at its release. It was re-released in 2011 and a novelization of the game was released in 2014. *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*, the series’ final game under the direction of Hideo Kojima, was released in 2015, becoming a commercial success. Even after the ending of the main series, *Metal Gear* remains a much discussed topic in the communities of gamers and fans.

Still regarding field, the game follows the story of Big Boss, the villain of the predecessor games *Metal Gear Solid* and *Metal Gear Solid 2*, before his transformation into the main antagonist of the *Metal Gear* series. The game is set in 1964, during the Cold War between the United States and Russia, when Naked Snake (a codename the character who would later be known as Big Boss was assigned to during the mission), a CIA agent, is sent to Russia on a mission to rescue soviet scientist Sokolov. The mission goes sour when Snake's former mentor, The Boss, chooses to defect to the Soviet Union, as explained in the game's Wiki page:

At the height of the Cold War, America's greatest agent, a woman known only as The Boss, defects to the Soviet Union. At the same time, an extremist named Colonel Volgin fires an American-made portable nuclear missile at the Soviet design bureau OKB-754, sparking an international incident. In order for America to clear its name and avoid World War III, The Boss' last apprentice, a man named John, also known as "Jack" and codenamed "Naked Snake", is dispatched by the special forces unit FOX to assassinate the woman who taught him everything.

For tenor, the analysis concerns the role, relationships, the interactions among the characters in the game and with the player and the way they give or demand information, negotiate their roles and show their power. In *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* the relations among the characters show their search for or for the accomplishment of their mission as well as their involvement in dangerous situations. These relevant characters are specified below.

Adamska/Revolver Ocelot: a double agent working for both the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate), a Soviet intelligence agency, and the CIA. He spends most of the game chasing Naked Snake, showing up at various moments of the narrative to battle the other agent. His main goal seems to be to best Naked Snake at combat, although he is actually ordered by the CIA to aid the other soldier¹⁸. While technically one of the villains, the two men develop a friendly rivalry during the narrative.

John/Naked Snake: a CIA operative sent to the Soviet Union to rescue Nikolai Sokolov, a defecting Soviet scientist. The mission goes sour after Sokolov's facility is blown up by a rogue GRU operative and his mentor, The Boss, seemingly defects to the Soviet Union.

¹⁸ As this information is not revealed to the player in *Snake Eater*, I will not consider it for the analysis.

Nikolai Sokolov: a rocket scientist who, after creating nuclear weapons for the USSR as the head of a Soviet research facility, defected to the United States. In *Snake Eater*, Sokolov is captured by the Soviets and is to be rescued by Naked Snake.

EVA: A spy posing as a KGB agent named Tatyana, she aids Naked Snake during the operation Snake Eater. While, as Tatyana, she is on the same side as Ocelot, as EVA the two have several confrontations throughout the narrative, as she aids his opponent Naked Snake.

The Boss: A legendary American soldier and Naked Snake's mentor. In the events of *Snake Eater*, she defects to the Soviet Union, seemingly betraying her country and protégé. However, a late-game plot twist reveals that her defection was orchestrated by the U.S. government to avoid a nuclear war.

3.2.2 Power relations in Dialogue 1: *Snake Eater*

Now, the selected dialogues will be presented, along with their analysis. Dialogue 1 portrays the first time protagonist Naked Snake encounters Revolver Ocelot. Snake had just retrieved Sokolov from the Soviets, and the two are sneaking out of the building the scientist was being kept in when they are surrounded by several KGB soldiers. In this moment, a young, black-clothed Revolver Ocelot appears. For the transitive and Mood analysis presented below, I excluded the unnamed GRU soldier's lines, focusing on the characters who are thematically more relevant to the narrative and the purpose of this research.

Table 10 – Dialogue 1

<p>Ocelot: So this is the legendary Boss? We meet at last.</p> <p>Soldier: You... You're from the Ocelot unit of Spetsnaz! What's a GRU soldier doing here?</p> <p>Ocelot: Soldier?</p> <p>Soldier: He's the Ocelot commander!</p> <p>Ocelot: That's Major Ocelot to you. And don't you forget it.</p> <p>Soldier: Sokolov is ours. Now get out of here.</p> <p>Ocelot: An ocelot never lets his prey escape.</p> <p>Soldier: What!?</p> <p><i>(Ocelot kills all the soldiers.)</i></p> <p>Ocelot: I can't say it feels good to kill a comrade, even if it is for the GRU.</p> <p>Snake: Sokolov, take cover.</p>

Ocelot: Hmm... You're not The Boss, are you?

(Ocelot howls and soldiers from his unit gather around Snake and Sokolov.)

Sokolov: GRU operatives...

Ocelot: What is that stance? That gun?

(He laughs.)

Ocelot: If you're not The Boss, then die!

(Ocelot shoots Snake, but the gun jams. Snake knocks Ocelot down.)

GRU Soldier: Major!

Ocelot: Leave him! Shoot the other one!

(Snake defeats the entire unit. Ocelot recovers and attacks him, only to be knocked down again.)

Ocelot: Impossible...

Snake: You ejected the first bullet by hand, didn't you? I see what you were trying to do. But testing a technique you only heard about in the middle of battle wasn't very smart. You were asking to have your gun jam on you. Besides, I don't think you're cut out for an automatic in the first place. You tend to twist your elbow to absorb the recoil. That's more of a revolver technique.

Ocelot: You filthy American dog!

(Ocelot attacks Snake with a gun and gets knocked down once more.)

Snake: But that was some fancy shooting... you're pretty good.

Ocelot: Pretty good...

(Ocelot goes unconscious.)

OCELOT:

So	this	is	the legendary Boss?
	Token	Process: relational	Value

We	meet	at last.
Actor	Process: Material	Circ

OCELOT:

That	's	Major Ocelot	to you.
Token	Process: Relational	Value	

And don't	you	forget	it.
Imperative negative	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

OCELOT:

An ocelot	never	lets	his prey	escape.
Actor		Process: Material	Goal	Process: Material

I	can't	say	it feels good	to kill	a comrade,
Sayer		Process: Verbal	Process: Mental	Process: Material	Goal
				Phenomenon	
			Verbiage		

even if	it	is	for the GRU.
	Token	Process: Relational	Circ: cause: behalf

SNAKE:

Sokolov,	take cover. (phrasal verb)
Vocative	Process: Material

OCELOT:

You	're not	The Boss,	are you?
Token	Process: Relational	Value	

What	is	that stance?
Token	Process: Relational	Value

If you	're not	The Boss,	then	die!
Token	Process: Relational	Value		Process: Material

Leave	him!	Shoot	the other one!
Process: Material	Goal	Process: Material	Goal

SNAKE:

You	ejected	the first bullet	by hand,	didn't you?
Actor	Process: Material	Goal	Circ: manner	

I	see	what you	were trying to do.
Senser	Process: Mental	Actor	Process: Material

But	testing	a technique	you	only	heard about
	Process:	Goal	Senser		Process:

	Material				Mental
--	----------	--	--	--	--------

in the middle of battle	wasn't	very smart.
Circ: location: time	Process: Relational	Attribute

You	were asking	to have	your gun	jam	on you.
	Process: Verbal	Process: Relational		Process: Material	

I	don't think	you	're cut out	for an automatic	in the first place.
Senser	Process: Mental	Actor	Material	Circ	Circ
		Phenomenon			

You	tend to twist	your elbow	to absorb	the recoil.
Actor	Process: Material	Goal	Process: Material	Goal

That	's	more of a revolver technique.
Token	Process: Relational	Value

But	that	was	some fancy shooting...	you	're	pretty good.
	Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute	Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute

Table 11 – Transitivity processes in Dialogue 1

Process	Ocelot	Snake
Material	7 (<i>meet, let, escape, kill, shoot</i>)	8 (<i>take, eject, test, try, do, cut out</i>)
Mental	2 (<i>forget, feel</i>)	3 (<i>see, hear</i>)
Relational	6 (<i>be</i>)	5 (<i>be, have</i>)
Verbal	1 (<i>say</i>)	1 (<i>ask</i>)
Behavioural		
Existential		
Total	16	18

As it can be observed in the table above, most of the processes in this dialogue occur in Snake’s speech, the majority of them being material or relational. When it comes to the relational processes, they seem to occur when Ocelot identifies himself and his adversary in relation to their position in the institutions they are part of, as seen in lines such as “*That’s Major Ocelot to you*” and “*So this is the legendary Boss?*”

The material processes occur mostly in relation to actions that are expected in a battle, as the use of the verbs “kill”, “shoot” and “die” indicate, with one exception: in the line “*An ocelot never lets his prey escape*”, the material processes are used by Ocelot, in a metaphor, to provide a description of how he sees himself, as a predator. Although Snake has a similar number of material processes, they are mostly used to describe his opponent’s actions (“*You ejected the first bullet by hand, didn’t you?*”) or to protect his mission target (“*Sokolov, take cover.*”), revealing a less violent nature in comparison to Ocelot.

By observing this dialogue, it can be concluded that, while Snake is more mission-oriented, engaging with his opponent in a more strategic manner (although some processes are more personal, such as in “*You’re pretty good.*”), Ocelot is more prone to violence and seems to be very concerned about his and Snake’s identity. In terms of quantity of processes, Ocelot has more control over the dialogue in the beginning. However, as the scene happens, he loses that control to Snake, and ends up being defeated by the American soldier (as it will be

observed in the visual analysis of the scene). In the end, the dialogue is not at all one-sided, with the two men struggling for control and Snake coming out on top. Now, I will present the Mood analysis of this dialogue.

OCELOT:

So	this	is	the legendary Boss?
	Subject	Finite	Complement
	Mood: Interrogative		Residue

We	meet	at last.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue

That	's	Major Ocelot	to you.
Subject	Finite	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative			Residue

And	don't	you	forget	it.
	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Imperative			Residue

An ocelot	never	lets	his prey	escape.
Subject	Mood Adjunct	Finite	Complement	Predicator
Mood: Declarative				Residue

I	can't	say
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative	Residue	

it	feels good	to kill	a comrade,
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative	Residue		

even if	it	is	for the GRU.
	Subject	Finite	Adjunct
	Mood: Declarative		
Residue			

SNAKE:

Sokolov,	take cover.
Vocative	Predicator
	Mood: Imperative

OCELOT:

You	're not	The Boss,	are	you?
Subject	Finite	Complement	Finite	Subject
Mood: Declarative	Residue		Mood tag	

What	is	that stance?
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Interrogative		Residue

(If) you	're not	The Boss,
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

then die!
Predicator
Mood: Imperative

Leave	him!
Predicator	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

Shoot	the other one!
Predicator	Complement
Mood: Imperative	Residue

SNAKE:

You	ejected	the first bullet	by hand,	didn't	you?
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Subject	Finite	Complement	Adjunct	Finite	Subject
Mood: Declarative		Residue		Mood tag	

I	see	what	you	were	trying to do.
Subject	Finite		Complement	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative		Residue		Mood: Declarative	
				Residue	

But	testing	a technique
	Finite	Subject
Mood: Declarative		

you	only	heard about
Subject	Mood adjunct	Finite
Mood: Declarative		

in the middle of battle	wasn't	very smart.
Mood adjunct	Finite	Adjunct
	Mood: Declarative	
Residue		

You	were asking	to have	your gun	jam	on you.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct

	Mood: Declarative	
Residue		

Besides,	I	don't	think
	Subject	Finite	Predicator
	Mood: Declarative		
Residue			

you'	re	cut out	for an automatic	In the first place.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

You	tend	to twist	your elbow	to absorb	the recoil.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

That	's	more of a revolver technique.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue

(But) that	was	some fancy shooting...
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

you	're	pretty good.
Subject	Finite	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue

Table 12 – Clause classifications in Dialogue 1

Clause classification	Snake	Ocelot
Declarative	12	8
Interrogative		2
Imperative	1	4

At first, Ocelot mistakes Snake for his mentor, The Boss. Seemingly unimpressed by his presentation, Ocelot belittles the other man (“*So this is the legendary Boss?*” and “*What is that stance? That gun?*”). Most of his declarative clauses are aimed at imposing himself (“*That’s Major Ocelot to you.*” and “*An ocelot never lets his prey escape.*”), while his interrogative clauses are aimed both at mocking Snake and also trying to understand him better. He also seems to think Snake’s life only has value if he has already proven his worth as a soldier (“*If you’re not The Boss, then die!*”). His dialogue also contains an imperative clause (“*And don’t you forget it.*”). The use of an imperative here is to make a menacing demand regarding how he would like to be addressed. It shows, once more, Ocelot’s attempt at portraying himself as dangerous and superior to others.

Most of Snake’s clauses are declarative. They are mostly used to provide information for Ocelot – “*You were asking to have your gun jam on you. Besides, I don't think you're cut out for an automatic in the first place. You tend to twist your elbow to absorb the recoil.*” He also uses it to compliment his opponent. The way Snake talks to Ocelot resembles more a mentorship than a rivalry. The only exception in his lines is the clause “*Sokolov, take cover*”, an imperative, which he uses to command Sokolov into safety.

Below, the analysis of this scene’s visuals is presented. Three images were retrieved for this analysis (Figures 15, 16 and 17).

Figure 15 – Screenshot 1



In this image, Snake (and, by consequence, the viewer, who has been following Snake's point of view during the course of the game) meets Ocelot for the first time. The participants present are Snake, Ocelot, Sokolov and several KGB soldiers who attempt to get Sokolov back.

First, the interpersonal meaning will be explored. This image adopts an oblique point of view. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the oblique angle denotes detachment between viewer and represented participants. Additionally, the lack of eye contact further reinforces the distance between interactive and represented participants, or the fact that Ocelot is an enemy, and by not allowing the viewer to see his face, he continues to be the enemy.

Ocelot is closest to the camera, and he stands turned away from the viewer; at this point, very little about this participant has been revealed. The choice to hide a character's gaze, adopting this over-the-shoulder perspective, is very common in *Snake Eater*, as it will become clear in this section. In this first image, however, the context of the scene offers possible meanings which differ from the next images to be analyzed. In this case, it may be attributed to the mystery built around the presence of a new participant in this situation, unknown to the others involved, including the interactive participant who has not met Ocelot yet.

In terms of representation, the other participants gaze at Ocelot and all of them (with the exception of Sokolov) have guns pointed at him and their arms forming a vector towards the participant. Because of the presence of these vectors, this image can be classified as transactional. Ocelot also holds a gun, but he does not point it at the other participants. While his appearance in this scene seems to threaten the others, in this image, Ocelot himself does not respond aggressively by pointing a gun back at them, indicating how confident he is, something that becomes apparent as the scene unfolds. Overall, the representational and interactive elements of this image highlight this participant in particular.

Figure 16 – Screenshot 2



In Figure 16, in terms of interpersonal meaning, the situation is inverted now, as the viewer can only see Snake's back while Ocelot is clearly visible. However, Snake's position does not convey the same mystery as Ocelot's in Figure 15, as the viewer is already familiar with this participant. Considering the angle and the viewer's familiarity with Snake, this shot seems to adopt Snake's view of Ocelot, who holds power over both Snake and the viewer. In another context, Ocelot's instance here (unarmed, with his arms raised up while the other participants points a gun at him) may indicate surrender. Considering the context of this scene and the verbal text, it becomes clear that such stance comes from Ocelot's arrogance, as he

does not see Snake as a threat, even when the other man adopts a clear aggressive stance towards him.

Figure 16 is classified as reactional transactional, as Ocelot's gaze is directed towards Snake. Aside from the angle, explored in the interpersonal meaning, the way the participants are positioned also indicates the power Ocelot holds over Snake at this point. One participant stands erect, with his arms open, a stance that once again conveys his confidence. Snake, on the other hand, is in a crouched position, inferior to the other participant. Ocelot does not seem to respect or fear Snake's abilities, as it can be observed from both the dialogue and the visual representation of the participants.

Figure 17 – Screenshot 3



Screenshot 3 portrays the outcome of the first confrontation between Snake and Ocelot. In terms of interaction, the viewer once again assumes Snake's perspective, the participant who stands in closer proximity to the camera. However, Snake and the viewer now look down at Ocelot from an extreme angle. It emphasizes how badly Ocelot was defeated by his opponent, who he underestimated before, and puts into perspective his overconfidence at the beginning of the scene.

Regarding the representational meaning, Figures 15, 16 and 17 can be classified as narrative as there is movement, as well as transactions and vectors. In terms of Figure 17, there is a transactional reaction from Ocelot, who is looking up at Snake, even though we

cannot see Snake's reaction. Snake is now portrayed in a much higher position in relation to Ocelot, who lies on the ground. This screenshot, taken from the very end of the scene, indicates the last impression the viewer may get from the relationship between the two participants. Despite his impressive entrance, mysterious allure and an implied superiority (as portrayed in Figures 15 and 16), Ocelot is bested and shown, through the visuals, to hold less power than Snake.

In the next subsection, the verbal and visual analysis of Dialogue 2 are detailed.

3.2.3 Power relations in Dialogue 2: *Snake Eater*

In the table below, the second dialogue is presented. At this point of the game, Snake meets EVA, a spy who he eventually comes to trust as an ally. The two are sheltered in a factory, but are soon surrounded by enemy soldiers. Snake takes them out, but EVA is captured by Ocelot and held hostage.

Table 13 – Dialogue 2

Ocelot: I've been waiting for this moment...

Ocelot: That's it! That's the stance! (*EVA tries to escape.*) I don't think so! (*He fondles her chest.*) What...? A female spy? This bitch is wearing perfume... (*He turns to Snake*) Stay where you are! I've had enough of your judo!

Snake: I see you've got yourself a single action army.

Ocelot: That's right. There'll be no accidents this time.

Snake: You call that an accident? Well... it wouldn't have happened if you hadn't been showing off. It's a nice gun, I'll give you that. But the engraving gives you no tactical advantage whatsoever. Unless you were planning to auction it off as a collector's item. And you're forgetting one more very basic thing... You don't have what it takes to kill me.

Ocelot: What did you say!? We'll see!

(*Ocelot pulls the trigger but nothing happens. He is out of ammo. EVA frees herself and attacks Ocelot. He falls off the platform.*)

Snake: 6 shots... That thing only carries six shots. The Makarov carries eight. You have to get a feel for how many you have left. This is a high class weapon. It's not meant for shooting people.

Ocelot: Damn! This isn't over yet!

OCELOT:

I	've been waiting	for this moment...
Actor	Process: Material	Circ: extent: temporal

That	's	it!	That	's	the stance!
Token	Process: Relational	Value	Token	Process: Relational	Value

I	don't think so!
Senser	Process: Mental

This bitch	is wearing	perfume...
Actor	Process: Material	

Stay	where	you	are!
Process: Material		Carrier	Relational

I	've had	enough of your judo!
Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute

SNAKE:

I	see	you	've got	yourself	a single action army.
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Behavior	Process: Behavioral	Carrier	Process: Relational	Possessor	Possessed
		Behavior			

OCELOT:

That	's	right.
Token	Process: Relational	Value

There'll be	no accidents	this time.
Process: Existential	Existent	Circ: location: time

SNAKE:

You	call	that an accident?
Senser	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

It	wouldn't	have happened	if
		Process: Material	

you	hadn't been showing off.
Actor	Process: Material

It's	a nice gun,	I'll	give	you	that.
Process: relational	Attributive	Actor	Process: Material	Receiver	Goal

But the engraving	gives	you	no tactical advantage	whatsoever.
Actor	Process: Material	Beneficiary	Goal	Adjunct

Unless	you	were planning	to auction it off	as a collector's item.
	Senser	Process: Mental	Process: Material	Circ: Role

And	you	're forgetting	one more very basic thing...
	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

You	don't	have	what it takes	to kill	me.
Carrier		Process: Relational	Process: Material	Process: Material	

OCELOT:

What did	you	say!?
	Sayer	Process: Verbal

We'll	see!
Senser	Process: Mental

SNAKE:

That thing	only	carries	six shots.
Possessor		Process: Relational	Possessed

The Makarov	carries	eight.
Possessor	Process: Relational	Possessed

You	have	to get a feel	for how many you have left.
Actor	Modal	Process: Material	

This	is	a high class weapon.
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Token	Process: Relational	Value
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It	's	not meant for	shooting	people.
Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute	Process: Material	Goal

OCELOT:

This	isn't	over yet!
Token	Process: Relational	Value

Table 14 – Transitivity processes in Dialogue 2

Process	Ocelot	Snake
Material	3 (<i>wait, wear, stay</i>)	8 (<i>happen, show off, give (2), auction, kill, feel, shoot</i>)
Mental	2 (<i>think, see</i>)	2 (<i>plan, forget</i>)
Relational	5 (<i>be (4), have</i>)	8 (<i>be (3), have (3), carry (2)</i>)
Verbal	1 (<i>say</i>)	1 (<i>call</i>)
Behavioural		1 (<i>see</i>)
Existential	1 (<i>be</i>)	
Total	12	20

Once again, most processes occur in Snake's dialogue. The American soldier continues to take a mentoring role over his opponent, despite the two being rivals on opposite sides of the Cold War (as far as Snake is concerned). Most of the processes in his dialogue are material and relational, many of which are related to making comments on Ocelot's fighting ability and choice of weapon.

It is worthwhile to point out that, in this dialogue, Snake's material processes use some of the same verbs Ocelot uses in Dialogue 1, such as "kill" and "shoot", in very different ways. Whereas Ocelot uses these verbs in commands or direct threats, Snake's use of those words is not meant to show violent intent; in the context of the interpersonal relationship

being built between the two participants, with Snake giving genuine advice to improve his adversary's fighting skills: considering the context, the line "*You don't have what it takes to kill me*" may be interpreted as a challenge rather than a threat.

In Ocelot's dialogue, relational processes are the most common, calling attention to his perception of how a soldier should behave. In the line "*That's it! That's the stance!*" Ocelot praises Snake for carrying himself in a way that is more in line with Snake's ability as a fighter. In the line "*This bitch is wearing perfume!*" the relational process regards the participant EVA, who Ocelot treats with very little respect, as evidenced by the visual analysis as well as the verbal choices ("this bitch"). Now, the Mood analysis is presented.

OCELOT:

I	've	been waiting for	this moment...
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

That	's	it!	That	's	the stance!
Subject	Finite	Complement	Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	Mood: Declarative		Residue

I	don't	think so!
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative		Residue

This bitch	is	wearing	perfume...
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

Stay	where	you	are!
Predicator	Adjunct?	Complement	Predicator

Mood: Imperative	Residue
------------------	---------

I	've	had enough of	your judo!
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

SNAKE:

I	see
Subject	Finite
Mood: Declarative	

you	've got	yourself.	a single action army.
Subject	Finite	Complement	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

OCELOT:

That	's	right.
Subject	Finite	
Mood: Declarative		Residue

There	'll	be	no accidents	this time.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

SNAKE:

You	call	that	an accident?
Subject	Finite		Complement

Mood: Interrogative	Residue
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It	wouldn't	have happened
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative		Residue

if	you	hadn't been	showing off.
	Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative			Residue

It	's	a nice gun,
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

I	'll	give	you	that.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

But	the engraving	gives	you no tactical advantage	whatsoever.
	Subject	Finite	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

Unless	you	were	planning to auction it off	as a collector's item.
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue		

And	you	're	forgetting	one more very basic thing...
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement

	Mood: Declarative	Residue
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You	don't	have
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative		Residue

what	it	takes	to kill	me.
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative			Residue	

OCELOT:

What	did	you	say!?
	Finite	Subject	Predicator
Mood: Interrogative			Residue

We	'll	see!
Subject	Finite	Predicator
Mood: Declarative		Residue

SNAKE:

That thing	only	carries	six shots.
Subject	Mood Adjunct	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative			Residue

The Makarov	carries	eight.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

You	have	to get a feel
Subject	Finite	Predicator

Mood: Declarative	Residue
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for how many	you	have	left.
Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Predicator
	Mood: Declarative		
Residue			

This	is	a high class weapon.
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

It	's not	meant for shooting	people.
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

OCELOT:

This	isn't	over yet!
Subject	Finite	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue

Table 15 – Clause classifications in Dialogue 2

Clause classification	Snake	Ocelot
Declarative	17	9
Interrogative	1	1
Imperative		1

As it was made explicit in the transitivity analysis, this scene is the continuation of Snake's mentorship over Ocelot. This can be observed by the large number of declarative clauses in Snake's speech, as he comments on the other man's skill and weapon of choice. In terms of the interaction between the characters, this time around, Ocelot does not

underestimate and mock Snake, but is still hostile towards him (“*I’ve had enough of your judo!*”). However, he also comments positively on Snake’s stance, as he considers that now Snake is behaving properly, as a soldier should.

The next set of images (Figures 18 and 19) are the visual support for Dialogue 2, between participants Revolver Ocelot and Naked Snake. In the visuals, a third participant appears, EVA, although she has no lines in the dialogue analysed. Only two images were retrieved from this scene, as there are only two moments in which the two male participants are together on the screen.

Figure 18 – Screenshot 4



The participants in this image are Ocelot, EVA and Snake. Considering the angle, Snake is depicted as having less power here, standing below the other two participants, on the ground. The camera takes Ocelot and EVA’s perspective, looking down at Snake with their faces hidden from view, and showing Snake’s disadvantage in this confrontation. Snake’s opponent has just captured an ally, and the low angle conveys the fact that the other man has the upper hand, for now. This portrayal resets the stakes of their relationship, as this encounter once again starts with Ocelot being represented as holding power over Snake. The image

conveys Ocelot's determination, as he once again aims at defeating his rival despite the other man proving himself to be more capable.

EVA and Ocelot stand at a similar angle and are very close together. However, they are not depicted as holding power equally here. In this case, the close personal distance does not convey intimacy, but aggression, as explained by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 124):

[it] is the distance at which 'one can hold or grasp the other person' and therefore also the distance between people who have an intimate relation with each other. Non-intimates cannot come this close and, if they do so, it will be experienced as an act of aggression.

Ocelot, therefore, is depicted as the aggressor, who holds the most power in this moment, a similar position as the one in which he is depicted in the beginning of the first scene (Figure 15).

In terms of representation, this image can be classified as transactional and there are several actions happening. Ocelot holds EVA in place with one arm, wrapped up around her neck. With his other arm, he points a gun at her back. Although she will escape his grasp soon, in this image EVA is subjected to Ocelot's aggression. There is yet another action, as Snake points a gun at the other two participants.

Figure 19 – Screenshot 5



Verbal text in the image: “This isn’t over yet!”

In this image, Snake is framed in such a way that his gaze is not visible to the viewer; he is also foregrounded, very close to the camera. Once again, this frame makes the interactive participant observe the scene from Snake’s perspective, facing Ocelot. This time, even though the angle does not seem to favor either participant, putting them at the same level, Snake seems more powerful as he is portrayed in a bigger size, occupying more space in the image.

Ocelot and Snake now stand at eye level, and slightly closer than in the previous image. This image can be classified as reactional transactional, as Ocelot’s gaze is directed towards Snake. Even though Ocelot has lost to Snake again, his portrayal here, in relation to Figure 17, may indicate that Ocelot is evolving and becoming a bigger threat to Snake. Whereas he was completely defeated before, left on the ground with Snake looking over him, now the scene ends with Ocelot’s final threat in a position that may signify he has maintained some of his power. Both interactional and representational meanings convey a sense of progress in the development of Ocelot’s character. In his final statement, he ensures that, despite being defeated once more, this is not the last Snake has seen of him, pointing to the determined nature of the character.

3.2.4 Power relations in Dialogue 3: *Snake Eater*

The last scene to be explored happens towards the end of the game, and portrays the outcome of Snake and Ocelot’s relationship. Snake and EVA are aboard an aircraft and ready to leave. At this moment, the aircraft’s engine is shot. Ocelot, in a hovering vehicle, gets closer and boards the aircraft.

This scene has three outcomes, based on the choice made by the player. Each of these outcomes result in a slightly different line said by Ocelot at the end of the scene. For a matter of practicality, I will only analyze the line displayed to me as the consequence of the choice I made as a player. I will also not include the lines by EVA and The Boss, focusing on Ocelot and Snake as it has been done so far. Below, I present the dialogue in Table 15, followed by the transitivity analysis.

Table 16 – Dialogue 3

Ocelot: Snake!

Snake: Ocelot!

Ocelot: We're not done yet!

(Ocelot enters the aircraft. Ocelot and Snake fight, but neither is able to beat the other)

EVA: We're too heavy!

Boss: *(voiceover)* Snake, try to remember some of the basics of CQC...

EVA: Not good! *(the aircraft is about to crash)*

Ocelot: I've picked up a few new moves! It doesn't feel right to shoot an unarmed man... but I'll get over it.

Snake: EVA!!

(EVA throws Snake her revolver. Snake and Ocelot shoot each other, but neither has a loaded gun. Ocelot pull off a necklace with a single bullet)

Ocelot: What do you say to one last showdown?

Snake: Yeah... all right.

(Snake hands his gun to Ocelot. Ocelot loads the bullet into one of them and mixes them up. He places them on the ground, side-by-side)

Ocelot: What's your name?

Snake: Snake.

Ocelot: No, not that name. You're not a snake and I'm not an ocelot. We're men with names. My name is Adamska. What's yours?

Snake: John.

Ocelot: Very well, John... Plain name, but I won't forget it. C'mon!

(Snake chooses the gun on the left, the loaded one. However, he does not shoot Ocelot.)

Ocelot: It looks like your luck has beat mine again. But why didn't you pull the trigger? Ah, well. Till we meet again... John!

OCELOT:

We	're	not done yet!
Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute

I	've picked up	a few new moves!
---	---------------	------------------

Actor	Process: Material	Range
-------	-------------------	-------

It	doesn't feel right	to shoot	an unarmed man...
	Process: Mental	Process: Material	Goal

but	I'll	get over	it.
	Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon

What do	you	say	to one last showdown?
	Sayer	Process: Verbal	

What's	your name?
Process: Relational	

You	're not	a snake	and I	'm not	an ocelot.
Token	Process: Relational	Value	Token	Process: Relational	Value

We	're	men	with names.
Token	Process: Relational	Value	

My name	is	Adamska.	What's	yours?
Value	Process: Relational	Token	Process: Relational	

Plain name,	but I	won't	forget	it.
	Senser		Process: Mental	Phenomenon

It	looks like	your luck	has beat	mine	again.
	Process: Relational	Actor	Process: Material	Goal	

But why didn't	you	pull	the trigger?
	Actor	Process: Material	Goal
Till we	meet	again...	John!
Actors	Process: Material		Vocative

Table 17 – Transitivity processes in Dialogue 3

Process	Ocelot	Snake
Material	5 (pick up, shoot, beat, pull, meet)	
Mental	3 (feel, get over, forget)	
Relational	(be (7), look like)	
Verbal		
Behavioral		
Existential		
Total	16	0

An interesting development in the final dialogue occurs, as, upon analysis, one can observe that there is a huge imbalance between the two main participants; Ocelot presents 16 processes, while Snake's has none, even though the second participant also has lines in this dialogue. This is very different from the two previous dialogues, in which Snake presented a greater number of processes.

The most common process here is relational, following the tendency observed so far in this analysis of the participant's focus on his and his adversary's identities, this time getting even more personal by inviting the other to mutually reveal their given names (*"You're not a snake and I'm not an ocelot. We're men with names."*).

Even though Snake presents no processes, Ocelot's words and behavior seem to be affected by Snake's previous actions and speech; the progression in the relationship between the two characters points to Snake's influence over the other man. The imbalance in the number of processes may signify the completion of Snake's mentorship over Ocelot, as in this

final confrontation the Soviet soldier shows a more mature and less overtly and carelessly violent behavior towards the other man. Next, the Mood analysis of this dialogue is presented.

OCELOT:

We	're not	done	yet!
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

I	've	picked up	a few new moves!
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

It	doesn't	feel right to shoot	an unarmed man...
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

but	I	'll	get over	it.
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Declarative		Residue	

What	do	you	say to	one last showdown?
	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Interrogative		Residue	

What	's	your name?
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Interrogative		Residue

You	're not	a snake
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

(and) I	'm not	an ocelot
Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue

We	're	men	with names.
Subject	Finite	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue	

My name	is	Adamska.	What	's	yours?
Subject	Finite	Complement	Subject	Finite	Complement
Mood: Declarative		Residue	Mood: Interrogative		Residue

Plain name, but	I	won't	forget	it.
	Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Declarative		Residue	

It	looks like	your luck	has beat	mine	again.
Subject	Finite	Complement	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Mood: Declarative		Residue			

But why	didn't	you	pull	the trigger?
	Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
	Mood: Interrogative		Residue	

Till	we	meet	again...	John!
	Subject	Finite	Adjunct	Vocative
	Mood: Declarative		Residue	

Table 18 – Clause classifications in Dialogue 3

Clause classification	Snake	Ocelot
Declarative		11
Interrogative		4
Imperative		

In this scene, Ocelot has mostly declarative clauses and some interrogative clauses as well. He asserts his intention to end their confrontation (*“It doesn’t feel right to shoot an unarmed man, but I’ll get over it.”*). Many of these clauses are directed at getting to know Snake better, as he has done before during their interactions, and also to understand his intentions (*“But why didn’t you pull the trigger?”*). Once again, Ocelot shows a preoccupation with his and the other man’s identity (*“You’re not a snake and I’m not an ocelot.”*).

Regarding Snake’s lack of clause classifications, it may be interpreted that he has nothing else to say, as his interactions with the other are based on guiding him on becoming a better soldier. In the end, Snake is successful in that regard, as they now fight as equals and neither is able to defeat the other. For that reason, he hands the control of the conversation over to his opponent.

Now, I will present the analysis of the visuals.

Figure 20 – Screenshot 6



Figures 20, 21 and 22 are the visual support for Dialogue 3, and portray the last confrontation between the two men in the game. Figure 20 follows the standard so far (aside from Screenshot 1), in interpersonal terms, with the camera framing the scene from behind Snake with his gaze hidden from view. The camera is angled slightly to frame Snake from below, focusing the viewer's gaze on the participants' relationship, as they have finally become equals. There is less distance between the two participants in this image compared to the previous ones. The setting of this fight contributes to that, as the confrontation happens in a small aircraft. However, this visual choice is also supported by the narrative, as the two men have grown closer even if they remain opponents.

The participants adopt the same stance, ready for a fight to death. They hold equal amounts of power in this confrontation, unlike in the previous scenes, in which Ocelot started out with some advantage over Snake (only to, subsequently, lose that power to his rival towards the end of the scenes). In terms of representational meanings, both participants are confronting each other, in a bidirectional transactional image, as their bodies form vectors pointing towards each other.

Figure 21 - Screenshot 7



In Figure 21, the viewer observes the scene from above, as spectators to this final confrontation. This angle emphasizes the high stakes of the confrontation between Snake and Ocelot, as one intends to kill the other, while EVA attempts to fly the plane. For the first time in the analyzed images, the camera does not favor one participant over the other in terms of proximity; while Snake is slightly closer to the camera, it is not a very significant difference. For once, the viewer is not invited to adopt Snake's or Ocelot's point of view, but to watch the scene unfold with a certain level of detachment.

Snake and Ocelot can be seen pointing guns at each other. This image is the most overtly violent interaction between the two, and both participants remain at eye level, portraying equality between them in terms of power. As in Figure 17, Figure 18 can be classified as bidirectional transactional since it portrays both Snake and Ocelot confronting each other, with both participants acting as Actor and Goal.

Figure 22 – Screenshot 9



This image depicts the outcome of the confrontation, after the two men decide to end the hostilities and part ways amicably. This image stands out amidst the data analyzed so far for the unique perspective of the participants offered here. Instead of the over the shoulder framing, it adopts a side view of the participants. They also stand at close distance, portraying the evolution in their relationship from the first encounter, growing closer and coming to respect each other. They are equally close to the viewer, in between a close shot, which frames the head and shoulders of the subject, and a medium shot, which captures the subject from the waist up (KRESS; van LEEUWEN, 2006).

Neither man was able to beat the other, and their confrontation ends in a draw. The final scene shows the development of their relationship into something more friendly; Ocelot now respects Snake, and Snake seems to have taken a liking to Ocelot. The visuals in *Snake Eater* portray a certain struggle for power, which includes not only the represented participants but also the viewer, who constantly shifts perspective when observing the two participants, taking sides, occasionally looking up or down at them.

There are several possible interpretations of this final image. As the two stand at the same eye level and close to each other, while the reader stands at the same level and distance, it may possibly convey that interactive and represented participants stand as equals. Alternatively, if one is to assume that masculinity can only be performed through the dominance of one man over another, Snake may be the superior participant, as he is

positioned in the “given” side of the image (for being the protagonist and the one who has taught Ocelot many things), while Ocelot is in the “new” (the apprentice who has learned to fight, to become a new man through his relationship with the other). A third interpretation is that Ocelot is the superior participant, because, despite his previous losses, he has not been defeated, and emerged as a more powerful, stronger man.

3.2.5 Sociocultural practices regarding masculinity

The context of the game is the Cold War, and almost all of the participants involved are part of a military organization (or multiple organizations, in the case of Revolver Ocelot, the focus of this analysis). The portrayal of male characters in military settings is very common in video games, either based on real events or imaginary ones. There are endless examples: *Battlefield V* (2018), *Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War* (2020), *Insurgency: Sandstorm* (2018), *Ace Combat 7: Skies Unknown* (2019) and *Call to Arms* (2018) are some of the most recent titles.

It is hardly a surprise that there are so many examples of this type of representation. Military forces are one of the most common forms of institutionalized masculinity: millions of people around the world are part of a military force, the majority of which are men (CONNELL, 2005), and these organizations, according to Connell (2009, p. 140) “are easily recognized as patriarchal institutions.”

The author establishes a link between the role of violence in the education of young boys and their choice of career in the military or in law enforcement:

Men are involved disproportionately in violence partly because they have been prepared for it. Though patterns of child rearing differ between cultures, the situation in Australia is not unusual. Australian boys are steered towards competitive sports such as football, where physical dominance is celebrated, from an early age – by their fathers, by schools and by the mass media. [...] Being capable of violence becomes a social resource. Working-class boys, who don't have the other resources that will lead to a professional career, become the main recruits into jobs that require the use of force: police, the military, private security, blue-collar crime and professional sport. It is mainly young women who are recruited into the jobs that repair the consequences of violence: nursing, psychology and social work. (CONNELL, 2009. p. 4)

Connell focuses on the context of modern Australia, however, parallels with other cultures can be traced in that regard. The engagement in competitive sports, especially football, is also a key element of some expressions of Brazilian masculinity (GASTALDO,

2006). In the United States, it is common for working-class young men to join the military to have access to college tuitions¹⁹. Military organizations, as explained in the previous paragraph, are universally mostly male.

Figure 23 - Ocelot in high resolution.



Source: https://metalgear.fandom.com/wiki/Revolver_Ocelot. Access on Jun 16 2021.

Regarding Ocelot's appearance, it also relates to his portrayal as a member of the military. Ocelot is a young man whose features fit traditional western standards of beauty, such as white skin and blue eyes. His clothes are inspired by military uniforms. Underneath his beret, he keeps his hair in the style of a buzz cut, which also alludes to a military background. Such visual choices may denote discipline and adherence to the rules of the organization he is part of. His unique uniform sets him apart from others in the Soviet military (as seen in Figure 15), representing his higher rank. The details of his character design can be observed in an official high resolution rendering of his model (Figure 23).

Another topic regarding the representation of Ocelot, especially considering his relationship to his rival, Naked Snake, is competitiveness. This trait is identified by Connell (2000, p. 84) as one of "the main patterns of contemporary hegemonic masculinity". His wish to best Snake at combat is his main motivator in the scenes analyzed; very rarely does he ever

¹⁹ Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/us/military-enlistment.html>. Access on Jun 17 2021.

refer to his mission as a motivation to defeat Snake. Rather, it is a more personal issue: he wants to prove that he is better than his opponent at any cost, a feeling that is not reciprocated by the other man, who actually takes a liking to Ocelot and gives him helpful advice. Ocelot is shown to be arrogant, proud and inexperienced, but very skilled. Snake's advice seems to offend him, but he still seems to have learned from them every time he appears in the game, showing his dedication to becoming a better soldier than his rival/mentor.

When it comes to the issue of violence, *Snake Eater* takes a different stance to it in comparison to *Symphony of the Night*. The violence caused by Ocelot is not challenged the same way that Dracula is treated in the previous game. Even the protagonist Snake does not take issue with him killing and shooting his own, going as far as advising him on how to become better at it. Although Ocelot claims to take no pleasure in "killing a comrade", he does not seem emotionally affected by his actions. Violence against women is also portrayed in the game, when Ocelot harasses EVA by touching her inappropriately and using derogative language ("this bitch"), shown in Dialogue 2. This is not addressed by his rival either (it should be noted that EVA is not portrayed as helpless²⁰, and escapes Ocelot on her own). The lack of response from other characters regarding Ocelot's actions is possibly explained by the military setting of the game. It may be related to how violent behavior is legitimized and encouraged as long as it is done by men who belong to certain institutions, such as the military.

In this chapter, I have analyzed the visual and verbal modes of the two video games *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* and *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, taking into account the sociocultural issues reflected in these works. In the last chapter of this study, an overview of the thesis is presented, the final remarks, a revisit of my research questions, limitations of this study and its possible pedagogical implications are presented.

²⁰ EVA's role in the narrative is bigger than what it may seem from the data analyzed in this study. Many of the scenes in which this character reveals her power and agency were not depicted here, as the focus was on the power relations between Snake and Ocelot. From the text and visuals analyzed, EVA is shown to be powerless, however, that is a questionable portrayal considered the narrative as a whole.

4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, an overview of the findings is presented, as well as some final remarks regarding the study, a few suggestions for further research and reflections on the possible pedagogical implications of the findings.

4.1 FINAL REMARKS

The goal of this study was to investigate representations of masculinity in video games. Through the exploration of verbal and visual meanings, it was possible to observe the power relations among represented participants. Based on those findings, some topics regarding sociocultural practices around masculinity were explored, such as the historical construction of masculinity and the matter of military organization as a form of institutionalized masculinity. With these topics in mind, a summary of the verbal and visual analyses will be presented in the next section.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE FINDINGS

Below, I present a brief summary of the findings, starting with the verbal meanings uncovered in *Symphony of the Night*:

Table 19 – *Symphony of the Night*'s verbal analysis overview

	Transitivity choices	Mood choices
Dialogue 1	Relational processes are used by Richter to define Dracula's nature and his actions in an oppositional matter. Dracula uses material processes to justify his actions or threaten Richter. There is a similar number of processes between participants, however, Richter presents a slightly higher number of processes (8 against 6).	Clauses in Richter's dialogue reveal his unwillingness to reason with Dracula, as he already defined his character beforehand. Dracula uses declarative and interrogative clauses to debate Richter, and imperative clauses to command him.
Dialogue 2	Dracula uses material and mental processes to inquiry Alucard regarding his decision to	Alucard only uses declarative clauses. He asserts his decision to

	side with humanity following his mother's death. Alucard uses a large number of material processes to refer to his decision to confront his father, avoiding overtly violent language. Alucard also presents a slightly higher number of processes (7 against 5).	fight his father and describes his feelings towards the tragedy of his mother's killing. Dracula shows concern for his son and inquiries him on his allegiance to humans. He once again uses an imperative clause to command the other participant.
Dialogue 3	Alucard controls more of the conversation, with 11 processes, while Dracula uses 5. Most of Alucard's processes are material and relate to what his father must do. Dracula uses an equal number of material and mental process to reflect on his loss in the battle against Alucard and ask for forgiveness.	Alucard uses declarative clauses to offer information regarding Lisa's death. He also uses imperatives to command his father. Dracula uses interrogative clauses to request information about Lisa, and declarative clauses to state the reason why he lost.

Similarly, an overview of the verbal meanings in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* is detailed in Table 20:

Table 20– *Snake Eater's* verbal analysis overview

	Transitivity choices	Mood choices
Dialogue 1	Snake uses 18 processes, most of which are material. He uses them to describe Ocelot's actions and give him advice on how to improve. Ocelot uses 16 processes, also mostly material, but they are much more aggressive and hostile towards Snake and other participants.	Snake uses a large number of declarative processes and no interrogatives. They are used to provide information to Ocelot. He only uses one imperative, to warn Sokolov. Ocelot uses imperatives to assert himself and interrogatives to question Snake's identity.
Dialogue 2	Snake uses 20 processes, mostly material and relational, to comment on Ocelot's	The large number of declarative processes used by Snake are

	abilities, continuing his mentoring role. Ocelot uses 12 processes. He comments on Snake's behavior, and no longer underestimates him as he did before.	another evidence of his relation of mentorship over Ocelot. The latter shows hostility against the former, but also praises his behavior, portraying a friendly rivalry between the two.
Dialogue 3	Ocelot uses 16 processes and dominates the conversation, as Snake uses zero processes. This may signify that his mentorship is over and Ocelot has risen to his level. Ocelot commonly uses relation processes, making comments about his and his opponent's identity.	Ocelot uses declarative clauses to state his decision to end their rivalry permanently, and interrogative clauses to demand personal information from Snake. None of Snake's clauses could be classified, which may signify he has nothing else to help Ocelot improve his abilities.

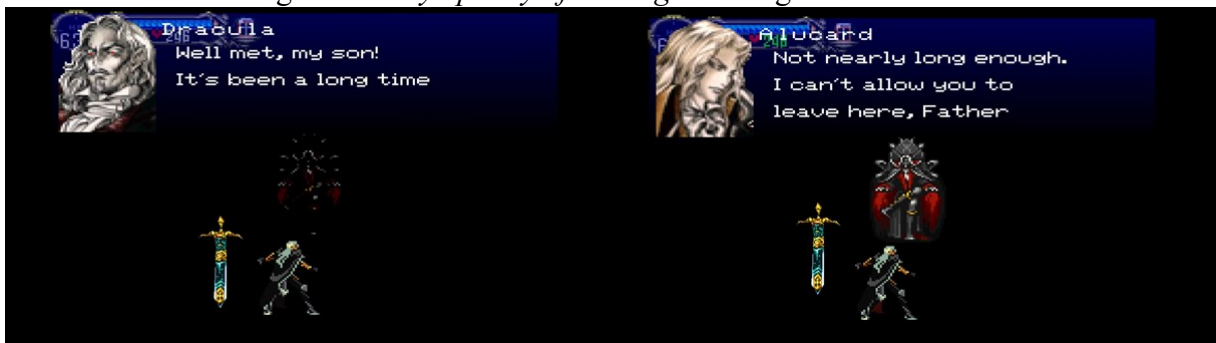
In terms of visual meanings, an overview of all analyzed images in *Symphony of the Night* can be seen below, providing details regarding the evolution of Dracula's character in his own appearance as well as in relation to the participants Richter and Alucard. In Figure 24, the two images relating to Dialogue 1 are displayed. Dracula is positioned above Richter, in an indication of dominance regarding the latter. At first, he sits on his throne, in a position that may indicate boredom or contempt. In the second moment of the scene, he stands up, becoming more imposing and symbolizing the beginning of the battle between himself and Richter.

Figure 24 – *Symphony of the Night* Dialogue 1 overview



Figure 25 specifies the images associated with Dialogue 2. Once again, Dracula is shown to be visually superior to the other participant, this time his son, Alucard. In the first moment of the scene, Dracula's silhouette is barely seen, creating a sense of mystery. When revealed, it can be observed that the participant is represented differently this time, his body positioned forwards, towards the viewer, which may indicate he is more serious about this encounter than the previous one.

Figure 25 – *Symphony of the Night* Dialogue 2 overview



The outcome of the confrontation between father and son can be seen on Figure 26. At this point, Dracula's visual representation has changed drastically, as he now appears to be an enormous monster, whose arms and hands form vectors towards Alucard, trapping him in. As he vanishes after his defeat, a white light engulfs his hands, signifying Dracula's release from this world (and his crimes) as well as Alucard's freedom from the confrontation.

Figure 26 – *Symphony of the Night* Dialogue 3 overview



Moving on to the visual meanings in *Snake Eater*, in Figure 27 I provide the overview of Dialogue 1. In this scene, the player meets Ocelot for this first time, and his appearance is surrounded by mystery. His face is initially hidden, and when he is finally revealed, he is

framed from low angles, as if superior to the viewer and Snake. However, he is badly defeated by his opponent, and in the very end of the scene he is framed from a very high angle to signify such defeat.

Figure 27 – *Snake Eater* Dialogue 1 overview



Dialogue 2 (Figure 28) follows the same pattern: Ocelot is initially portrayed in a position of advantage or superiority towards Snake, only to be defeated by the American soldier. This time, however, he is not as badly beaten, as shown by his last appearance in the scene: he still stands, and is not framed from a severe high angle as he did before. This may signify the effect of Snake's mentorship over him: Ocelot is improving as a fighter under the guidance of his rival.

Figure 28 – *Snake Eater* Dialogue 2 overview



In their last confrontation (Figure 29), the portrayal of the participants represents the evolution of Ocelot's character and the nature of the relationship between the two men. Neither is portrayed as superior to the other and neither has the advantage, always staying at equal level, representing how neither man can best the other. In the end, both participants (as well as the viewer) are shown to be equals, and end their rivalry amicably.

Figure 29 – *Snake Eater* Dialogue 23 overview

Considering the findings of the analysis, the research questions will be revisited in the next section in order to provide a more complete understanding of the outcomes of this study.

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

In relation to Research Question (RQ) number 1:

1. What ideational and interpersonal choices are used in the construction of the characters' representation in the verbal language of the selected scenes in the two video games?

In *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*, the analysis shows the hostility of participants Richter Belmont and Alucard towards Count Dracula, and his reaction in the face of such behavior. In the interaction between Richter and Dracula, the processes and clauses used by the former participant relate to threats and accusations, as his role is simply to stop Dracula from doing bad deeds against humanity. When it comes to the relationship between Dracula and his son, Alucard, other aspects of Dracula's nature are revealed, showing a more human side to the character. Although he always presents a lower number of processes, Dracula maintains some control in the struggle for power against the other two; however, he is ultimately defeated by his son in Dialogue 3, in which Alucard presents a much higher number of processes.

In *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, the analysis revealed the development and outcome of a friendly rivalry between the participants Revolver Ocelot and Naked Snake. Both participants use mostly material and relational processes. The material processes often relate to actions that are expected to happen in a war ("kill", "shoot", "escape"), whereas the relational processes are concerned with the identity and actions of the participants. While Ocelot occasionally asks questions to the other man, Snake never does, as he adopts a

mentoring role towards the Soviet soldier. In the first two dialogues, Snake has the highest number of processes, showing the control he has over the encounters between the two. In the last dialogue, however, Snake has no processes, while Ocelot has several. This may be explained as Snake has nothing else to teach Ocelot, which means they stand as equals now.

Regarding RQ 2:

2. What representational and interactive choices are used in the construction of the characters' visual meanings in the selected scenes in the two video games?

When it comes to representational choices, the visuals of *Symphony of the Night* portray Dracula as the most powerful being, always placed in a relation of superiority to the other participants and in the center of the images, indicating his significance. His portrayal changes significantly through the scenes; at first, he sits in his throne, seemingly bored. As the stakes are raised, his figure changes significantly to convey that, culminating in his body changing to the point of becoming an enormous, monstrous figure. The interpersonal choices in the game combine elements of detachment (the use of extremely long shots in which facial expressions are hidden from the viewer) with elements that convey intimacy (the presence of character portraits in almost every image). These choices may convey a degree of separation between represented participants and viewers, who exist in different worlds.

The representational choices in the first two scenes of *Snake Eater* reveal the power dynamics between Ocelot and Snake. In the first two scenes, Ocelot is initially portrayed as the participant who holds the most power, framed in low angles and placed in a relation of superiority in contrast to Snake. However, he loses that power as the scene develops, and in the end Snake holds power over him. There is a sense of progression in that regard, as Ocelot initially is portrayed in a position of extreme inferiority in the first scene, and the difference in the power dynamics becomes less extreme in the second scene. The interactive choices reveal a tendency to frame participants from an over-the-shoulder perspective, which may convey a sense of mystery around a certain participant, or to invite the viewer to adopt the perspective of another. The shifts in power dynamics (interpreted through angle variations) also include the viewer, and are settled in the last scene, with both represented participants and viewer standing on equal footing at last.

In terms of RQ 3:

3. What do these choices reveal about the sociocultural values, practices and power relations regarding gender and masculinity represented in the objects of this study?

I could observe different representations of masculinity, strengthening Connell's point about the existence of multiple masculinities that coexist in the same space or culture, albeit with different levels of social acceptance. It should be pointed out that, in both games, there is usually no clear domination of one participant over another: the relations between men are marked by a constant struggle for power.

In *Symphony of the Night*, masculinity is represented through family relations and the rejection of faith, which I could relate to the emergence of masculinity in the Renaissance period of European history, a region and period that *Castlevania* takes much inspiration from. When it comes to Dracula's loved ones, in particular his son, the decay of their relationship is portrayed as a consequence of the search for unconditional power that is central to this character. The use of power as a way of dominance is common in patriarchal societies.

In *Snake Eater*, masculinity is related to the practices and aesthetics of the military. This social institution is universally masculine and present in the lives of many men worldwide. The analysis of the game's scenes revealed that, in this context, some violent social practices may go unchallenged. I could also observe another aspect of hegemonic masculinity in patriarchal societies, which is competitiveness between men, as shown in Ocelot's behavior towards Snake. This issue, however, is resolved amicably between participants in the last scene.

Although the focus of the study was on relationships between male characters, some of their attitudes towards women were also revealed by the analysis. *Symphony of the Night* uses the death of Lisa as the driving force for Dracula's actions and not much else. The player never learns much about her personality or motivations, as she exists solely as the point of conflict between the male characters. In *Snake Eater*, the treatment of EVA by Ocelot is verbally violent (by the use of the term "this bitch" to refer to her) as well as physical (he touches her chest without consent). EVA eventually frees herself, but it is interesting to note that there is no reaction from her ally, Snake, regarding this behavior.

4.4 LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The limitations of this study, in terms of space and time constraints, resulted in several paths that can be explored further. Only two titles were explored, and a limited number of scenes was selected. Still, the analysis revealed several sociocultural values present in the

text, some of which could not be discussed to their full potential. Future research could potentially expand on the number of scenes or games analyzed, or explore other aspects of masculinity revealed in the games, such as the concepts of fatherhood and grief in *Symphony of the Night* and friendship and rivalry between men in *Snake Eater*. Additionally, the topic of violence can also be investigated in countless other titles, as there are many examples of representations of this practice in video games due to the popularity of combat-based gameplay, as mentioned earlier in this study.

4.5 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Video games can be a helpful resource in the teaching of multiliteracies, allowing students to reflect on the social practices and cultural marks that influence the lexical and visual modes of a multimodal text. Beyond that, the interactive nature of video games allows for the educator to go further than the limitations of this study and explore aural, spatial and gestural modes through this medium. In that sense, Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Grammar of Visual Design provide a framework for textual analysis that is grounded on the promotion of critical thinking regarding social practices, and may aid educators in the development of cultural awareness with the goal of provoking social transformations.

As this study has demonstrated, video games may reflect the values of the cultures they intend to represent. The values attributed to representations of masculinity were of special interest to this study. However, other aspects of gender, race, class, sexuality and their representations in media may be explored in the classroom through the multimodal study of video games — a very rich medium with no shortage of engaging and interactive material that may be of interest, especially to young learners.

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