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Audience: Me

Purpose: Discover correlations between thought and video games

Voice: Open/Free/No Documentation Necessary

Tuesday May 23rd : 3:00 PM-3:20 PM

Working through Fear and Freud

Playing *Inside* today was terrifying. The point in the game which you reach a submarine and are underwater for long amounts of time leads to a sense of claustrophobia that can only cause discomfort, see Example 1.

Example 1: A still from the underwater scene with the creature in the video game, *Inside*



On top of this aspect, a long black-haired girl discovers you, or you discover her. The slightly terrifying music that accompanies her remains parallel to the situation. I am finding myself within the character's situation. This part brought me to find the mirror concept from Lacan accurate. I felt scared and the anticipation of the creature showing up caused an extreme emotional reaction. I did not want to touch the keys, to control the boy, and I just wanted to stop playing the game. I am not sure where this fear of underwater creatures stems from, but I am sure it would be something interesting to delve farther into. She does not say anything or make any noises herself, but her visual presence and the sound change brings a sense of horror to the game. The ominous, eerie music that accompanies the underwater creature left me with a sense of dread when proceeding through the game. Quite similar to what I would imagine a siren sounding like, ghostly and a low shrill noise. I am an emotional person and highly affected by external stimulus often, and I have come to feel that I may have trapped myself inside some kind of mirror stage the past couple of years. Based on the fact that I did not show much emotion before I moved from Iowa and tended to bottle things up. I had thought that showing more emotion was good for me and allowed me to release stress more often, but the excessive overtly emotional reactions could have some underlying psychological significance.

Wednesday May 24th : 2:30 PM-2:50 PM

Today I made my way through the underwater creature portion of *Inside*. Completing this task was arduous and stressful due to the anticipation of her catching me. The relationship between the boy and the creature became much more intimate than I would have expected. My fear of her did not go away though, since we discussed the possibility of there being multiple creatures. More than one creature would mean that the one that saved me was just one, and others would still kill me. My relationship with the boy became solidified due to this stream of underwater circumstances. I projected myself onto the character from the beginning, but these moments brought me to identify with the scenario of the video game and my own circumstances. I would have never thought of myself as fearful of deep water, but *Inside* showed me otherwise. The connection I formed with the boy made my emotions more intense through the small bit I played after the creature saves me, see Example 2.

Example 2: The underwater creature has just saved the boy from drowning by connecting him to the orange light. She is not seen again after this scene and the boy can now breathe freely underwater.



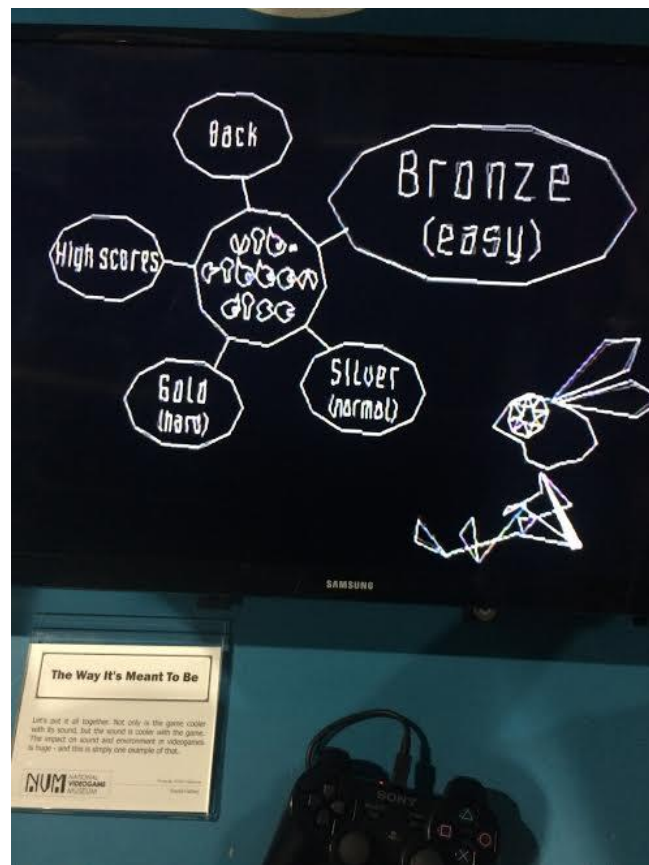
I felt more adrenaline and a higher intensity, as if the end of the game was approaching, but that ending did not come. The cry within the game became relevant, too. We discussed cries found in music and in life, and I found that explicitly applicable to the siren-sound of the underwater creature. Her terrifying cry remained quite hard to listen to without being scared or uncomfortable, but her cry changed when she saves the boy. Her vocalized cry, I believe, shows her threatening or warning you of her presence. It becomes more ominous and low pitched, but not threatening when she gives you her power. I feel as though playing through this extremely intense part of the game brought out reflexive and vocalization cries within me. Not only did my horrified yelps come out of simple reflex of fear, but I caught myself using the groans and whimper-like sounds to express my dread of continuing forward. The thought of cries being at the center of a tree when in relation to vocalization and sounds seems extremely accurate with this prime example. I am a twenty-year-old woman who had a sturdy background in language, but I reduce myself down to “primal” cries and expression when under certain stresses.

Thursday May 25th : 3:30 PM-4:00 PM

The underwater girl will not leave my head. I do not think I have had a character from any media stick with me this avidly. When I think about her, I mostly think of the motion and the sound. It makes me wonder if she looked different, would she have remained so memorable. If she looked scarier, then I feel as though it would not have been so impactful. My mind may have brushed it off as another jump scare aspect and the fear would have lost its appeal. If she was cuter she would definitely have brought out some kind of feeling, but I still do not think it would be this prominent. If she looked more like a mermaid, different connotations would have been drawn from my experience. Her current state makes me think of being trapped. She seems like a lost soul that was damned to drag innocent people into the water, so she spends her time perpetuating

her sorrow and grief for her loss of freedom on people who end up in her territory. From a theoretical standpoint this notion remains invalid with the fact that the game revolves around a brainwashing situation, but she definitely has more freedom than the other people the boy encounters. There was a game at the National Video Game Museum that perceived the difference that occurs when video games produce sound, see example 3.

Example 3: *Vib-Ribbon* at the National Video Game Museum, this is the second screen that involved sound. Sound clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yp9D9dxzAQ>



There were two screens playing the same game, one had sound and one did not. This aspect of sound made me feel as though sound may be the leading factor in my fear of this underwater

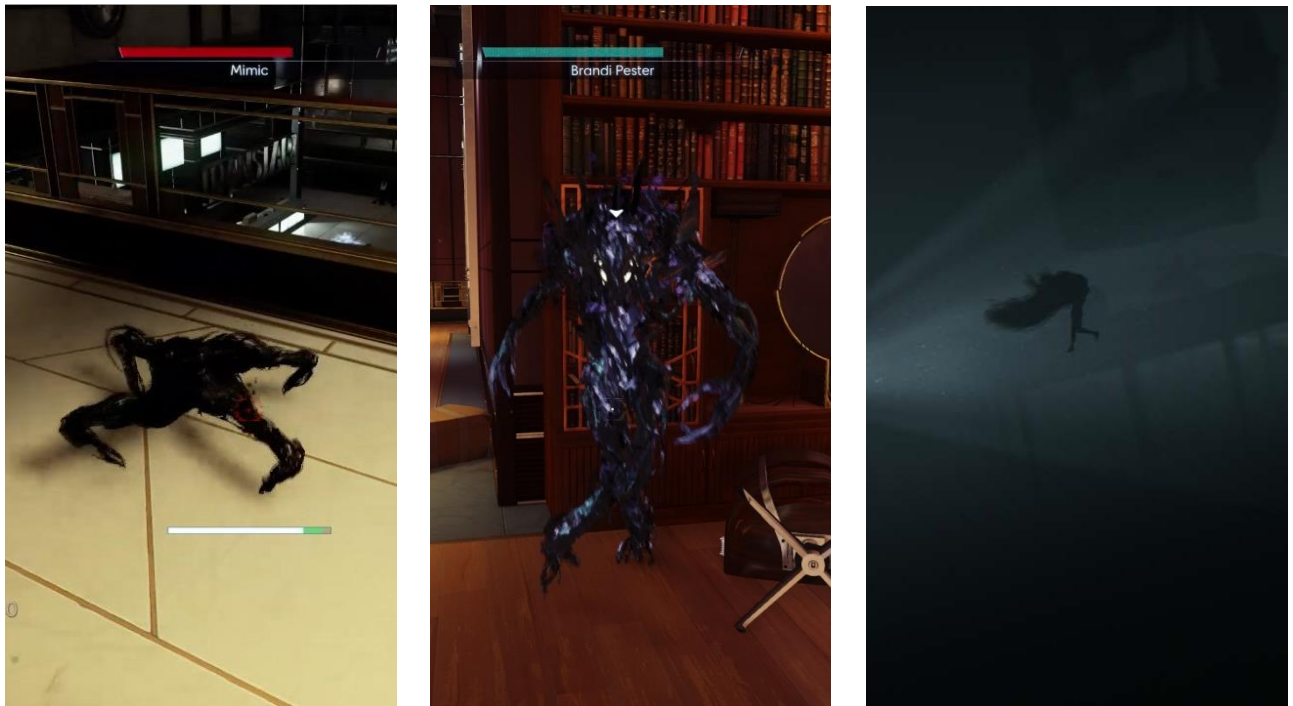
creature. The game without sound was just simple tasks of jumping and back flipping at specified moments. The sounds heard with the second screen were almost haunting. I only say haunting, because I kept dying and the combination of failing and the music was quite odd. The old-time pop musical sounds made it melodic with screeches whenever the character messed up on screen. I was not frightened while playing this game, but it hit a nerve. Maybe because I have been correlating sound to my fear recently, or maybe just because it was a rattling sound. When I think of underwater situations, I think of almost deadened silence. There are circumstances, like storms and people, which would project actual sound. The interesting fact that the underwater scenes had these haunting noises accompanying them whenever the creature came around remained unsettling. I have not attempted playing the levels with her without sound. I feel as though it would become a simple task of escaping rather than a frightened “run for your life” play through. The game designers gave a specific noise to her that accompanies the fear. When that noise is heard, my mind immediately jumps to her proximity to the boy.

Friday May 26th : 12:15 PM – 12:45 PM

I stayed at a friend’s house last night and it brought me to some odd dreams, which could have come from the fact that I have thought a lot about Freud lately, played *Prey*, and still had the underwater creature from *Inside* stuck in my mind. This “dream” could easily have not been a dream and just my imagination running wild, but I would classify it as a lucid dream. I was aware that I was not fully asleep yet, because we had just gone to bed and I was completely aware of him and all of my surroundings, but I was seeing images flying around the room from behind my eyelids (at least I am 99% positive I did have my eyes closed). The images I saw consisted of the Mimics and Phantoms from *Prey*, see example 4, and the underwater creature. The Mimics were jumping around the room while the Phantoms just walked back and forth. The

underwater creature was swimming between all of these other creatures and all around the space. She would stop occasionally and gaze in my direction.

Example 4: From left to right – Mimic (*Prey*), Phantom (*Prey*), Creature (*Inside*)



Prey, a horror game, and *Inside* (as we all know) scared me quite a bit. I was not scared while having this lucid dream. I knew I should have been scared, but knowing I was obviously JUST seeing these images and not interacting made a difference. I believe this may have to do with the facts that sometimes, like in *Inside*, the “bad” characters end up trying to help. The underwater creature helped my character in the game by giving him the ability to swim underwater without restraint, as well as leaving him alone after that point. I have found it a common theme within video games and movies where it turns out that the enemy is often not as bad as they seem. Take *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* for example. Yondu, (SPOILER ALERT) which had been an

enemy for a majority of both the first and second movie, ends up saving Starlord at the end of the second movie. This dream actually ended up waking me up, or at least opening my physical eyes, in which I discussed what I saw with my friend. I keep a dream journal and keep tabs on the different kind of dreams. I have not had a lucid dream, especially involving fictional characters, since I was ten years old. I am not sure what this says about my headspace right now, but I feel as though looking deeper into Freudian dreams would help me sketch out what is going on. I believe this says a lot about my relationship to fictional characters at the moment. Since my dreams usually consist of real people that I know and my relationships with them, that boils down to the only correlation I can find between the usual dreams and the lucid dream. Playing more video games in the past month may have led my unconscious to re-develop a relationship to these kinds of characters. When the underwater creature saved me during *Inside*, I was shocked. I thought it was going to kill me again, but she ends up dragging you down until she comes across the (possible) DNA altering machine that allows the boy to breathe underwater. This scene was the most beautiful scene I have played through in a long time. I had this thought as the body of the boy and the body of the creature seemed to merge into one where there was the boy and the long black hair encasing him and sprouting from his abdominal area. I feel as though the sheer beauty of that scene made me slightly less scared of the creature, but knowing there may be more kept me from forgiving her kind. This may lead to why I was not frightened by the dream and why the dream did not become a nightmare.

Monday May 29th : 8:20 PM – 8:35 PM

I cannot stop thinking about that dream that I had last week. When I remember it, I do not remember sounds. There remains a correlation between sound and my fear. I can see the relationship between noise/sound and the audience. The sounds used at specific moments in time during ANY media can draw out specific emotions from the audience or player. Specifically when thinking about the use of sound in video games, I have come to notice that they are often indicators of horrific characters approaching. I watched gameplay of the video game *Outlast 2*, in which a demonic character was looking for the player and the player evaded him by how close the sound was. The demonic character was singing a song about God and looking for you in several locations (bathroom, rocky tunnel, ect.), see example 5.

Example 5 : *Outlast 2* screenshot in the tunnel. Sound clip from the song sang during both parts.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ip_f5ZUi9cs

This was quite terrifying for me as viewer and not a player. I had no control over what was happening on screen, much like in the lucid dream. I was only watching. That gave me a sense of relief, but the anxiety persisted whenever the singing was louder and the evil presence came closer to the player. This comes into play with the underwater creature too. Her sound became almost a haunting melody whisper as I listened to it more. She carries the water with her when she chases you, which provides for the “chased/hunted” sound. It almost reminds me of some kind of scene where there a descent to hell occurs and so many people are screaming that the language and vocalization turn indistinguishable, and the sound becomes a clamoring hum. I have listened to this clip, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N612Bb1_Pjc , several times now. I have begun to take more notice of the boy’s whimpering. The part where the player needs to lure the creature away from where he must be in order to proceed remained the most prominent. I have truly not noticed him making sounds up until around this point. I believe this adds to the fear I have of the creature. Unlike in *Limbo*, this boy does have expression. He expresses fear and that perpetuates fear in the player. If the character reacts in this sort of way, then why would the player controlling him not?

Tuesday May 30th : 9:00 PM – 9:20 PM

When a character controlled by an external being reacts in a way that is not expected, should the player feel a specific way about it? I began to think of questions pertaining to the relationship between the characters in-game and the player. *Inside* provides a wonderful scenario where the player has the potential to react with a multitude of emotions. The addition of more specified characteristic and vocalizations, when compared to the “prequel” *Limbo*, one would expect the player to make immediate connections to the boy. I did, but I do not hear stories of other people reacting as extremely. When I discuss the game and the underwater creature with friends, I have

received words of caution rather than fear. Roger, one of these friends, discusses the underwater creature as just another part of the game. The affect the creature had on me did not cause the same emotions in him. His focus stayed on the morbid combination of parts at the end of the game, see example 6. That statement not saying that the creature at the end did not unsettle me, as its grotesque nature did.

Example 6 : The final creature from the video game, *Inside*. The player is controlling him at this point and the photo shows him within a diorama of the final scene of the game before the credits roll.



I am fully aware that every person has their own thoughts and projections and react differently towards aspects of life, but when a game gears up the player to feel a certain way it is unordinary for those few to go unaffected (in a sense). The sounds made by the underwater creature are soft but intense, but the sounds of this final creature will not leave the ears. The final scenes of the

game are the first true direct and distinct vocalizations. The groans, moans, and painful screams of the body parts heard as the player sends the creature ambling across the screen and through glass. The underwater creature makes no noise of her own that could be considered a “normal” vocalization. When I say normal, I refer to vocalizations normal in human beings (groans, moans, coughs, screams, laughs, ect.). Her unearthly wail, the only thing we hear other than the water moving and the boy panting. The designers of the game cause the uneasy feelings using sounds throughout. The level of power it holds on the player will go from nearly nothing to a drastic emotional response within a short amount of time. My fears were exposed within this game. I am scared of possession and demons, which should have left me more horrified playing *Limbo*. Fully discovering the fear of water, or creatures under water, and of sounds that perpetuate fear was not what I expected when playing *Inside*.

Wednesday May 31st : 10:45 PM – 11:00 PM

Fear of water, fear of sound, and a Freudian concept of villains reversing roles to become heroes. Hyper-focusing on these concepts provided me with knowledge of myself, above all else. I have always loved water whether the context was swimming or drinking. Granted, my physical self has never experienced more than a foot of the ocean nor underwater creatures that were dangerous. Discovering a fear brought upon release in my being for some reason. Maybe considering I now know another aspect of everyday life to be weary of before witnessing it in person. On the other hand, this concept may lead to a false negative. I am associating my fear of the underwater creature with water specifically, but those two may not correlate. Consider the underwater creature flying around the air we breathe rather than in the damp flooded recesses of an experimental landmark. This leaves me to believe that maybe the NOISE is what led to the fear, not necessarily the water. The fear of sounds that I have associated within myself, from

experience with horror movies, brought me to be scared of her and everything associated with her. The underwater creature flies through the air chasing an innocent boy, but making the same sounds, and she becomes ten times more terrifying in my eyes. Flying through the air would mean fewer escapes, too. The fear may spur from a trapped feeling. This concept has just now come to mind, and I believe it makes the most sense. I have experienced many circumstances where I am left to rely on something other than myself (feeling trapped) and anxiety rides my body for all it is worth with thoughts of being stuck in a job, in a town, or in a state of mine (feeling trapped). THIS has been the consensus over the week. The true fear that hides beneath the superficial fear of water or the creature is a fear of remaining trapped. Drowned. Unable to progress, through the game or life. This brings me to tears finally making the correlation. Release from said trap, or when the underwater creature breathes life into the boy, becomes cathartic. The freedom to explore land and water freely, becomes an advantage. This is something I hope to retain.