INTERACTIVE CINEMATOGRAPHY

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Introducing… the camera

Super Mario 64 (Nintendo)

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What This Is Isn't

- Not about "trying to be like Hollywood"
  - (they *wish* they had our interactivity)
- Not about interrupting the gameplay
  - Player-driven experience first
- Not even limited to the camera itself per-se!
  - The visual perception of the game environment goes beyond it

Kingdom Hearts (SquareEnix)

INTERACTIVE CINEMATOGRAPHY

1. Control

2. Framing

3. Composition

4. Transitions

What This Is

• A grammar to discuss cinematographic design decisions in <u>design</u>

• An exploration of the evolution of player-driven cinematography

Interactive Cinematography

=

Player Cinematography

(we just help make it easier)

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Classic Problem: Who knows better?

• Wanting to help the player, we take control of the camera through automations

   • Player ends up fighting the camera

Okami (Capcom)

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Listen to the player and help him

• In an interactive medium, the player wants to feel in control

> • Player shouldn't realize he is being helped

> • Yet player shouldn't have a hard time achieving the desired result

• The trick is to tie assisted cinematography to game mechanics

Halo (Bungie)

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Classic Problem: Even Framing

• Wishing not to conflict with what players want to see, we show everything

• The result is a flat rhythm of intensity…

Neverwinter Nights (Bioware)

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Framing via the environment

• Tightness of frame = amount of visual information

   • More information = comfort

   • Less information = anxiety

• Establish sightline evolution based on the desired information & emotional evolution

Far Cry (Crytek)

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Meaning via Framing

• Tightness of frame = intensity

• Wider framing = objective

• Tighter framing = personal

• Read player input on where his attention is and maximise its meaning.

Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter (Red Storm)

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Classic Problem: Where will the player look?

• Myth: we cannot predict where the player will look or where he will go, so we have no frame composition to exploit

> • Without guidance, player tries everything until the "right" choice is left

> • We then rely on immersion-breaking artifices to idiot-proof

Half-Life (Valve)

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Choose where to attract attention

• Players look somewhere or move somewhere because they get directed to

• Guiding lines in the composition (through perspective or implied movement)

• Contrast (light vs dark, detailed vs simple, animated vs immobile)

Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory (Ubisoft)

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Compose for guaranteed point-of-views

- Be aware of when line-of-sight is established with key ingredients and what is on-screen at that moment

    - Decisions are based on what is perceivable

    - Ingredients have a hierarchy of interest and take meaning in their spatial relations

Rainbow Six: Vegas (Ubisoft)

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Classic problem: disorientation

• Most games avoid camera transitions because it can disorient the player, especially when controlling movement

• Most games keep a single long camera, overextending a shot beyond its interest.

• Camera cut games resort to controller patches to minimize the side-effects of player disorientation

God of War (Sony)

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180º rule shorthand

STAND UP LADDER

- In a free-camera game, it can be hard to determine where the line of action is.

- The important part is to avoid changing the 2D screen left from being left, the 2D screen up from being up, etc.

- The movement vector then has to be clearly within 90 degrees.

- (Also move a minimum of 30 degrees to avoid the indecisive cut)
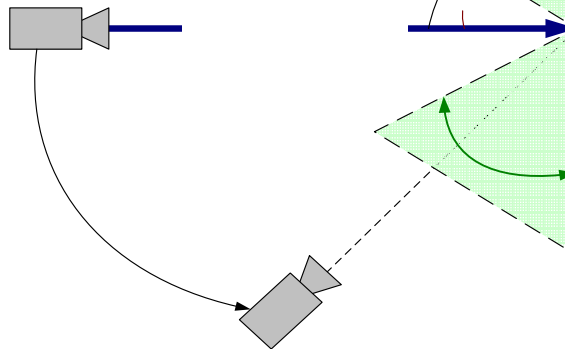
Resident Evil 4 (Capcom)

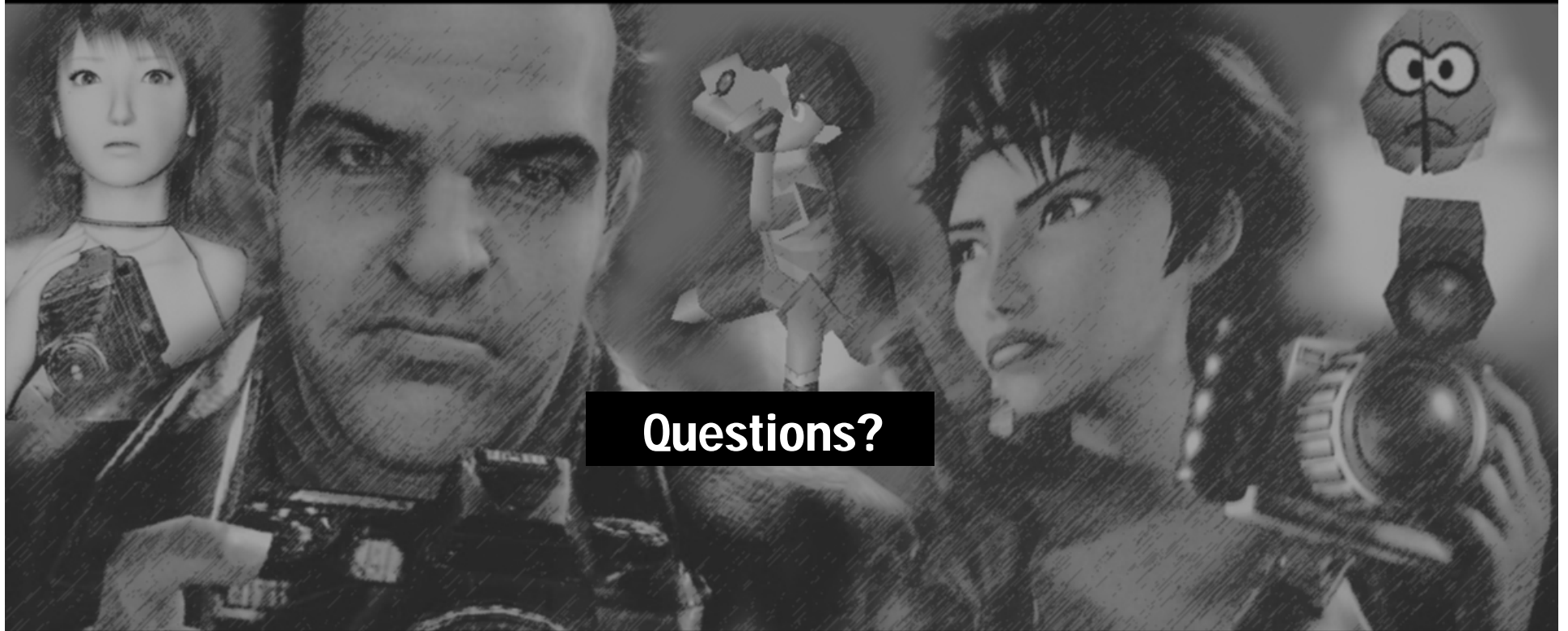# INTERACTIVE CINEMATOGRAPHY

So…

- Video game cinematography goes through enhanced player action

- A framing rhythm is created through sightline variations & attention focus

- Player eye & action are in direct control, exploiting line-of-sight establishing point-of-views

- Rich shot transitions can be exploited if attention is paid to 2D screen directions

Bone (Telltale Games)