

Ryan Patrick Yates

M.Sc. Interactive Digital Media

**Can a Video Game Make You Cry?
Case Studies Analysing the Emotion of Sadness in Video Games**

Marguerite Barry

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Abstract

This research paper uses five case studies of recent video games to analyse the emotion of sadness as depicted in the narrative and design. The study uses a theoretical framework based on film theory to analyse three elements of the case studies: story, game design and gameplay mechanics. It demonstrates how the depiction of death and loss is the main element used to elicit sadness in video games. The analysis suggests that graphics are not crucial to the experience of sadness for the player. It also demonstrates the apparent lack of a requirement for interactivity during an event when the emotion of sadness is present. Lastly this paper concludes that the gameplay mechanic of choice is important to the development of interaction between the player and the emotion of sadness.

