A Multimodal Analysis of Immersion in Persona 5 Royal

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Abstract

This master's thesis presents an analysis of immersion in the acclaimed videogame Persona 5 Royal. Drawing on the principles of multimodal analysis, the study explores the interplay of various elements, including narrative, language, characters, intertextuality, and visual design. Due to the area of study, the strongest emphasis will be put on language and linguistic elements specifically. Through the inclusion of the aforementioned fields, the research examines the codependence between the game's various aspects. Firstly, the theoretical framework is established with the purpose of enumerating and defining the relevant fields of study, as well as certain central terms. Secondly, the game itself is briefly discussed in order to set the stage for the analysis that follows. In continuation, speech acts are examined inside and outside of combat with the focus on their type, frequency, and purpose. The section that follows is concerned with the protagonist and his representation in the game through tarot. Subsequently, the rest of the main cast is analyzed meticulously in regards to their speaking style. A linguistic profile is created for each of them, highlighting their unique personalities, interests, and backgrounds. The final chapter widens the scope of the analysis by peeling back the layers of the many instances of intertextuality within the game. It explains their significance and showcases how they serve to emphasize the game's themes, characters, and narrative.

Key words: multimodality, videogame, pragmatics, discourse, immersion, intertextuality, language

Contents

1. Introduction

This master's thesis will be examining and discussing a videogame titled *Persona 5 Royal* for the purpose of presenting a multimodal analysis. The game encompasses numerous areas of significant interest, which render it a compelling subject. The main focus will be put on language with the goal being to showcase the variety of linguistic elements and forms present within the game. The examination of speech acts will consider both the context in which they occur and their intended purpose. The dialectics of different characters will be presented and their importance explained. These speaking patterns will be shown to hold great importance in highlighting distinct personalities and backgrounds of the characters. As for the protagonist, he will be examined through the lens of tarot to showcase the game's utilization of symbolism for presenting meaning. Finally, the scope of the analysis will be expanded to include a discussion on intertextuality. The game will be shown to derive a great deal of its inspiration from not only other linguistic mediums and mediums in general, but also Christianity and broad mythology. The thesis will demonstrate a range of influences and references, from subtle narrative parallelism to the more obvious instances of wordplay in movie names. The thesis will also lean into pragmatics, semiotics, discourse analysis, and narratology. The central approach at use, as the title suggests, is that of multimodality, with immersion being the central notion.

The analysis itself is important from the perspective of linguistics, or, more specifically, pragmatics, for a few key reasons. Firstly, the analysis concerns a videogame, a relatively new medium that offers interesting grounds for a different approach to analyses in the designated subfield. Secondly, despite their immense popularity, videogames are still not widely regarded with the same level of seriousness as other mediums by the majority of people. By conducting an analysis of a videogame, outsiders may acquire a new perspective on the medium, while players may reflect on some of their past videogame experiences. Thirdly, this kind of analysis is important not only for videogame consumers, but also for developers and other creators involved in the process, such as game writers, character and level designers, animators, composers, voice actors etc. It is important because, through their dedication, they strive for their work to be recognized as a serious medium that is perfectly capable of holding artistic value. The analysis seeks to affirm that.

2. Theoretical Framework

Before an analysis can be conducted, it is important that one is familiar with the theoretical aspects that contextualize it. As mentioned earlier, the analysis concerns chiefly the areas of pragmatics, semiotics, discourse analysis, and narratology. Many of these fields encompass expansive domains of interest, underscoring the importance of clearly delineating their scope in the context of this thesis. Additionally, this theoretical foundation serves the purpose of reinforcing the core concepts and objectives of the thesis, which further strengthens the argument for videogames being not only a medium but also an art form.

The field of pragmatics, which Levinson (1983) defined as "the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding" (p. 21), will be put to the forefront. Aside from Levinson, Huang (2017) presents two different definitions of the field based on two different schools of thought. He writes about the component view of pragmatics that views the discipline as a study of meaning, which is dependent on the use of language. The view also emphasizes the importance of pragmatic elements, such as implicature, presupposition, speech acts, context, as well as the interaction between pragmatics and semantics. The second school of thought he writes about is the perspective view. In this view, pragmatics is seen as being a cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior. In the context of this thesis, pragmatics will be used to analyze the ways in which discourse in Persona 5 Royal impacts player engagement, as well as character relationships, character development, and narrative progression. Additionally, it will be used during the examination of speech acts that occur inside and outside of combat.

The second field, semiotics, will be employed to decode the symbolism of tarot within the context of the protagonist and his journey. Furthermore, it will be utilized to identify various visual elements and metaphorical imagery, mainly within the chapter on intertextuality, in order to extract meaning from it. This field of semiotics is important because it is related to multimodality and could also be considered to include multimodality as one of its subfields. Eco (1976) offers an interesting and memorable definition of the field by writing: "…semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot in fact be used 'to tell' at all" (p.

7). He explains a sign as "everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else" (p. 7). On the other hand, while discussing the objectives of the field, Sebeok (2001) writes: "The primary objective of semiotics is to understand both a species' capacity to make and understand signs and, in the case of the human species, the knowledge-making activity this capacity allows human beings to carry out" (p. 8).

When it comes to discourse analysis, it will be used to construct and analyze linguistic profiles of the main characters. This represents the central piece of the thesis as it delves into language and explores its functions that go beyond direct transmission of information. This purpose of the field is also communicated by Cutting (2002) who points out that much like pragmatics, discourse analysis also examines linguistic and non-linguistic features in communication and the way in which these features work together. It studies the meaning of words in context by focusing on what people are communicating beyond the words they choose to use. It also studies discourse by examining pieces of spoken or written language. Finally, it studies function, which is to say the short-term purpose of speaking for each individual speaker, as well as long-term goals when it comes to verbal interaction.

While discourse analysis seems to have a lot in common with pragmatics, it is also important to point out the ways in which these two fields differ. The main difference between them is the level of language they are concerned with. While pragmatics focuses on simple utterances and study of language use in context, discourse analysis goes a step beyond that and. Jones (2012) writes that discourse analysts "study the ways sentences and utterances go together to make texts and interactions and how those texts and interactions fit into our social world" (p. 2). He also mentions how discourse analysis "is not just the study of language, but a way of looking at language that focuses on how people use it in real life to do things like joke and argue and persuade and flirt, and to show that they are certain kinds of people or belong to certain groups" (p. 2). To conclude, Coulthard (2014) notes that discourse analysis is concerned with the structure of text, focusing on both portraying this structure, and characterizing how participants interpret meaning in a context of negotiation. Discourse analysis looks at structure at the sentence level, as well as supra-sentential level. It also emphasizes the importance of considering various factors such as ideologies, social roles, participant's history, as well as pragmatic principles.

Finally, the field of narrative theory, or narratology for short, will allow us to analyze the game's narrative structure as well as instances of referential narrative threads. Narrative theory is a subfield within literary theory that has since been expanded in order to account for emerging mediums. As Barry (2002) defines it, narratology is "the study of how narratives make meaning, and what the basic mechanisms and procedures are which are common to all acts of story-telling" (p. 145). In other words, narratology studies the structure of narratives, and it analyzes how narratives are created and presented through different media, as well as how they affect those who engage with them.

The simplest way to define a narrative is to say that it refers to a sequence of logically connected events presented to the viewer in a particular form. Althoff (2018) noted that narratology is viewed as a classical approach to the study of videogames because, in order to derive meaning, it puts focus on elements such as the main plot, setting, and characters. These are the same methods that are used when studying areas like literature and film. This approach also allowed critics to compare videogames to other media, which is the reason why narratology was used for much of the initial studies of videogames.

As was already mentioned, with the emergence of novel types of media, the number of areas that we can apply narratology to has expanded as well. Most recently, one is able to apply narratology to the field of videogames in order to analyze how narratives function in an environment that is both digital and interactive, and how they contribute to immersion for the player. Persona 5 Royal is primarily a narrative focused game, with dialogue choices in discourse situations constituting a large part of its gameplay. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze its narrative structure, not only to grasp why players are drawn to the game, but also to figure out how the game manages to weave a relatable and immersive storyline for the player.

3. On Persona 5 Royal

Persona 5 Royal, a JRPG[1], skillfully blends elements of various different genres and subgenres, such as visual novel, time management/social sim[2], role-playing game, and dungeon crawler. The game allows players to live the life of a high school student, explore a realistic depiction of Tokyo, involve themselves in social activities and interactions, as well as strategize during supernatural turn-based battles. The game combines two intertwined gameplay aspects: the real world and the metaverse. In the real world, players study, socialize, and improve their character's stats. In the metaverse, they battle shadows and explore palaces. The game follows a calendar system, granting players free time slots to choose between activities in both worlds. Time progresses as actions are taken, and certain actions consume time slots. Building relationships with characters unlocks narrative and gameplay benefits, while palaces have timed deadlines to add pressure. The gameplay mechanics focus on balancing time and responsibilities while making meaningful choices. The game presents abstract objectives, allowing players to imagine and shape their honest student life. Additionally, it draws from real world psychological theories and concepts, particularly focusing on Jung's writing[3]. It intertwines linear storytelling with nonlinear gameplay segments, and the cohesion between the realistic and fantastical elements ensures that every gameplay aspect feels worthwhile. The characters that serve as the main driving force behind the narrative are all incredibly well-written and exceptionally well-voiced. Furthermore, these characters and the discourse surrounding them represent the central focus of this thesis. The relationships with them are built through different dialogue choices based on our perception of the protagonist and the responses of characters themselves. As such, these conversations offer unique and interesting insights into the personalities and backgrounds of the main cast and serve as fertile grounds for an in-depth analysis, as will be demonstrated later. Finally, it is important to mention that apart from being the entities that push the story forward, many of the main characters in Persona 5 Royal also exist as instances of social commentary.

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[1] Japanese role-playing game, an acronym created by adding the letter "J" to the already established RPG genre.
[2] A game that explores social interactions and social activities between different characters and centers its gameplay around it
[3] A general discussion on Persona 5's Jungian inspirations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a4EdAES0fk

4. On Dialogue Choices Inside and Outside of Combat

When analyzing instances of discourse that occur within Persona 5 Royal, we may group them based on whether they occur inside or outside of combat sections. The first category is referred to as hangouts and it represents one-on-one conversations with other characters called confidants. We may refer to this as the non-combat setting. In terms of language, certain categories of speech acts are more frequently observed in this setting than the combat setting. This chapter will, therefore, showcase the variance of speech acts present in Persona 5 Royal in regards to the setting. Similarly, it will examine the purpose behind these speech acts and how that purpose changes based on the aforementioned setting. Referencing speech acts in general, Searle, Kiefer and Bierwisch (1980) wrote: "The theory of speech acts starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologizing, thanking, congratulating, etc." (p. 8). In the context of Persona 5 Royal and its non-combat setting, we primarily observe commissives, expressives, assertives, and directives. Searle (1975) describes commissives as acts whose point is to commit the speaker to some future course of action. In the game, commissive acts emphasize commitment to nurturing friendships, with characters often expressing their willingness to help by saying "I am here if you need anything," or "I'll do whatever I can to help because we are in this together." Similarly, they frequently make promises or voice intentions, such as "I promise I will take your words to heart," or "I owe you one." When it comes to expressives, Searle (1975) defines them as acts that are used to convey the speakers emotional or psychological state regarding a specific situation or idea. In the game, expressives lend themselves to showing vulnerability and emotional resonance. Characters often apologize to each other, saying things such as "I'm sorry that I lied to you." They also express their feelings with statements such as "I'm glad that we all met." Searle (1975) defines the category of assertive speech acts by writing that they commit the speaker to something being the truth or current state of affairs. In Persona 5 Royal, assertive language becomes a tool for friendly boasting and banter alike. Boasting can be seen in proclamations such as "If it weren't for my hacking skills, we'd be lost in this digital age." Assertives are also employed to build trust with expressions such as "I know you did nothing wrong." Searle (1975) then turns his attention to directives and describes them as acts that attempt to get the hearer to do something. In the non-

combat setting, directives primarily revolve around shared experience and activities, such as saying "Let's go see a movie together." The fifth and final speech act is not present during non-combat sections, but it will be discussed in more depth later. This final group of speech acts is termed declaratives and Searle (1975) describes them as situations where the proposition that is being expressed is made real and brought into existence simply by the act of proclaiming it.

The second discourse scenario in the game pertains to the metaverse and the battles in it. We may refer to it as the combat setting. Knocking an enemy down will initiate a sequence called hold up. The player will then be prompted to pick from three separate, directive dialogue options. These options consist of "Lend me your power," "Show me the money," and "I want an item." If the first option is picked, a segment with additional dialogue choices will follow. This process consists of two questions posed by the shadow. Each shadow has a distinct mood and the player has to carefully pick dialogue choices based on the shadow's personality. For example, a gloomy shadow will take umbrage with jokes, while an upbeat shadow will appreciate a directive such as "Let's not take life too seriously." Additionally, a timid shadow will appreciate kind responses in line with commissives such as "I won't hurt you" and "I'll spare you," or an expressive like "I understand your fear."

During actual combat encounters, the focus of the discourse shifts dramatically as opposed to hangouts, which were discussed earlier. In this setting, speech acts consist mainly of directives and declaratives, and they become concise and tactical, geared towards strategic coordination with party members. Directives provide immediate instructions such as "Focus on the enemy's weakness," "Use your ice attack," or "The opponent is strong! Don't do anything reckless!" They serve the dual purpose of coordinating between teammates and enabling real-time decision making, as well as providing in-game tutorials. In addition, characters will yell out certain directives as a way of announcing/facilitating the attacks of their Personas by saying things such as "Ravage them," "Taste my wrath," or "Take this!" In conjunction with directives, declaratives intensify the gameplay, but also provide insights into the characters' motivations and identities. In a similar vein, they showcase unique personalities of each character and demonstrate character growth through displays of confidence that evolve throughout the game. Characters will say things such as "I'll finish this with style," "I shall put you to the sword," or "I'll reveal your true form!" As far as assertive and expressive acts go, they take more of a backseat compared to non-combat

discourse situations. However, when they are present, their roles shift from advancing the narrative (hangouts) to characterizing party members (combat). Characters will often showcase their confidence or arrogance by saying things such as "No one can defeat me," or "I can handle anything!" In the case of expressives, they are usually reserved for conveying positive or negative reactions in relation to combat. Characters will often make exclamations such as "Wow, that was amazing," or "This is nerve-wracking!"

5. On Tarot and the Representation of the Protagonist

Persona 5 Royal features eight main characters who comprise the Phantom Thieves, as well as a plethora of supporting characters. Each of these characters is assigned a tarot card that serves as a representation of them and their role in the game. In addition, these cards are important in the gameplay sense because they track the level of the player's relationship with every single character. The cards serve to represent the duality of each character, as well as people as a whole. Each of the characters receives a specific costume when they enter the metaverse. They also wear masks on their faces, use codenames to avoid giving out their identities, and summon monsters called Personas to fight in their stead. These elements can be understood as multiple layers of the persona aspect itself, which can be analyzed through the lens of multimodality.

Jewitt, Bezemer and O'Halloran (2016) point out three key premises of the multimodal approach by noting that meaning is made with different semiotic resources, each of which offers distinct potentialities and limitations. They add that meaning making is equal to production of multimodal wholes and that we need to attend to all parts of said whole if we wish to study meaning. Additionally, Kress (2012) comments on the importance of the multimodal approach by writing: "A multimodal approach assumes that language, whether as speech or as writing, is one means among many available for representation and for making meaning. That assumes that the meanings revealed by forms of DA relying on an analysis of writing or speech are only ever 'partial' meanings" (p. 37).

Going back to the tarot cards, the game uses cards of the major arcana, which means that it incorporates a total of 22 cards to represent the Phantom Thieves and other confidants. When it comes to reading tarot cards, each of the cards has two different interpretations based on their position. The cards can either be drawn right side up or right side down/reversed. As a general rule, right side up cards signify positive or favorable things, while reversed cards signify the opposite. Joker's card is that of the Fool, which is the first of the 22 major arcana cards, and is often marked with the number 0. As for the illustrations, these cards signify archetypes that almost everyone across the world is familiar with, which connects the usage of tarot in the game to Jung's writing on archetypes.

The Fool card represents the protagonist, also known as Joker, in more than one way. Firstly, the Fool is often depicted as the court jester. This jester depiction can then be connected to the pseudonym "Joker," but also to the description of the character as a trickster. Secondly, when it comes to playing cards, the joker card is usually illustrated as the court jester as well. In terms of card game rules, the joker is often a wildcard, which means it can be used as a substitute for any other card. In the context of Persona 5 Royal, this relates to Joker's ability to hold multiple Personas, and summon them at will depending on the type of opponent he is facing. This makes Joker the perfect substitute character for any other character in a team, much like a joker card can replace any other card in a chain. This specific ability in the game is also named "wildcard," which completes the reference.

Finally, we have the actual interpretation of the card itself. While discussing the meaning behind the card, Gray (1972) wrote: "The Fool, representing the Life-force before it comes into manifestation on the earth plane, is in the center of the wheel, moves to its outer edge through 21 phases of experience, and then returns to the center whence it came" (p. 14). The card is, therefore, often regarded as a blank slate, a character that is embarking on a journey to experience the wide world and learn things for the first time. Persona 5 Royal does a great job of presenting these characteristics and adapting them for videogame form. After transferring to a new school, the player is presented with an opportunity for a fresh start. The things that occurred before that point in Joker's life, his prior place of residence, his family or friends from the countryside, all of that is irrelevant. The game separates Joker's life into the pre-probation era, which is left intentionally

vague, and the probation era, which is the part that the player not only experiences, but also plays out. This is also how the game manages to incorporate the blank slate aspect of the Fool character.

In conclusion, the Fool card representing Joker is a very intentional and appropriate design choice. Just as the Fool is the first card of the major arcana and the rest of the cards follow it, so are the relationships you form in the game built around you. You start as an individual in a new place, on a new journey, much like a single card in a tarot stack. As new cards from the deck are revealed, referencing the way you encounter other people, be it by chance or destiny, your path in life gets altered. It is altered precisely in the same way that different combinations of tarot cards lead to different interpretations, regardless of their individual meaning. This is what Gray (1972) is referencing when he mentions that the Fool moves through 21 phases of experience. Near the end of the game, Joker is given the World arcana, which is the final card of the major arcana. It symbolizes the end, completion, wholeness, and, in combination with the Fool, it represents one who has gone through life and seen their journey to completion. It requires the Fool to have gone on a journey, with the reveal of each subsequent card referencing a certain stage in life. By relating these things, the game allows for a more nuanced exploration of the role that different confidants play in the protagonist's journey, as well as their impact on his personal growth.

6. On Characters' Linguistic Expression

6.1. On the Usage and Significance of Honorifics

Embedded within the intricate narrative web of Persona 5 Royal, we find a rich tapestry of linguistic nuances that extend beyond the realm of mere dialogue. These subtleties transform language into a multifaceted tool for character depth and development, interpersonal dynamics, and thematic exploration. Honorifics could be said to be the linguistic element in the game that piques our interest the most, especially because they are absent in English. It could be argued that titles like "Mr." or "Mrs." represent English honorifics, but I would argue that Japanese honorifics are vastly different in their form, function, usage, and scope. This is to say that they include not only titles, but also multiple forms of the same verb or noun, prefixes for those verbs and nouns,

alternative pronouns and demonstratives of a higher level of politeness, humble expressions/speech and so on. While portraying the extent of the complexity of Japanese honorifics, Pizziconi (2011) writes:

"...we have seen that honorifics form part of the repertoires of social registers. Recognisable patterns in the way types of user orient themselves towards the honorific repertoires (e.g. men or women use such and such a form, liberals or conservatives use such and such a form) transform them into emblems of speakers' values, demeanour, ideology, which can be used as justifications for social judgements" (p. 20).

In order to explore the language of Persona 5 Royal in more depth, this chapter will focus on the usage and meaning behind name-suffix honorifics, the presence of formal and informal language, and linguistic markers of personality that shape a linguistic profile of a character. Within the game, characters utilize both formal and informal language to express different ideas, portray their social relationships, and reveal power dynamics. This linguistic interplay between formal and informal ways of address provides a vessel through which the intricate fabric of interpersonal relationships is conveyed. At the same time, the subtlety with which characters shift between linguistic registers and honorifics provides the player with insight into the complexities of their interactions and the underlying social structures that shape their world. This is the reason why this element works both as a feature of the game that enhances immersion, but also as a tool that demonstrates, in an authentic way, social norms in Japan. Firstly, one should be familiar with name-suffix honorifics themselves and the way they fit into Japanese language and culture. While this knowledge may not be necessary to play or understand the game as a whole, it still allows one to acquire a more nuanced understanding and a deeper appreciation for the game itself. Similarly, it allows one to peer into the complexity of Japanese culture through the lens of language, which has been realistically incorporated into the game. In Japanese, name-suffix honorifics are linguistic elements that are used, as the name suggests, after a person's last name in order to indicate and express respect or politeness. We may also refer to them as linguistic or pragmatic markers. The four most common ones, which can be observed throughout the game, are "san," "kun," "chan," and "senpai". According to Academic Accelerator (n.d.), "san" is gender neutral and is used as a general expression of respect, whether it be towards people whose rank demands it, people who are older than us, or strangers. However, the Japanese also use it to address friends in a polite way, especially if they are not too close. "Kun" is a gendered expression and is

usually reserved for males. It is often used between class friends or people of the same age. However, this honorific is also used by bosses or managers when addressing their subordinates, or by coworkers when addressing their juniors. The third honorific, "chan," is another gendered expression and is usually used between female friends. However, this honorific implies childlike cuteness, which is why it is not uncommon for teachers to use "kun" when addressing their female students. Lastly, "senpai" denotes an upperclassman and signifies respect towards someone older or senior in a particular context. The significance of these honorifics is culturally ingrained, making them crucial markers of interpersonal dynamics. One of the paramount roles of honorifics, as was previously mentioned, lies in the portrayal of power dynamics. This is established very early on in the game when the protagonist addresses Sojiro Sakura, his temporary guardian, by using the honorific "san". On the other hand, Sojiro does not use any honorific at all to address the player. This serves to emphasize the protagonist's legal predicament and reinforces the severity of being associated with criminal acts in Japan. Through observation of the usage of honorifics within this scene, the power dynamic becomes clear to the player from the very beginning. Another example involving Sojiro includes his step-daughter, Futaba. In the beginning, Futaba addresses Sojiro with the honorific "san" as one would a stranger. This is used to portray their distant relationship. As the game progresses and the two grow closer, Futaba drops the honorific altogether and begins to address him solely by using his first name. In the case of Morgana, female characters frequently address him with the honorific "chan" to signify his cuteness. With Morgana existing in the form of a cat, "chan" is an apt honorific because it is often used for pets. In the scenes where Makoto talks to the school's principal, the principal uses the honorific "kun" to portray his seniority and status as opposed to the student, while Makoto uses the honorific "san". In a similar fashion, Sae Nijima uses the honorific "kun" to address Akechi as the detective with junior status. In contrast to this, Akechi uses the honorific "san" to maintain a professional boundary, as well as express his respect towards his senior. Finally, Kasumi uses the honorific "senpai" to refer to the protagonist despite them being close friends. This is done to signify Kasumi's respect towards Joker's position as an upperclassman and her mentor.

6.2.   On Linguistic Profiles

In Persona 5 Royal, language often transcends its conventional role, morphing into a powerful tool that breathes life into characters, and highlights their personalities and backgrounds. The distinct speaking styles of each character form a vibrant part of the narrative, contributing to and enriching the game's story. This subsection will explore this by delving into the unique speaking styles of characters like Ryuji, Yusuke, Futaba, Haru, Morgana, Ann, Akechi, Makoto, and Kasumi. The exploration of their unique speaking styles will allow us to peel back the layers of character development and shed light on the ways in which language reinforces their personalities and backgrounds.

The first character that we are going to take a look at is Ryuji. He is a representation of the casual/informal vernacular, which reflects his urban upbringing. His speaking style is youthful, loud, and energetic, filled with slang and expletives. It captures his rebellious spirit and his blunt, straightforward nature. He has a number of common expressions that he utilizes for different purposes. A phrase like "c'mon" is used to express both disappointment and frustration, but also when Ryuji wants to persuade, encourage, or comfort others. Emphatic phrases like "no way!" and "for real?!" are used to express surprise, shock, sadness, or embarrassment. On the other hand, "hell yeah!" is used to express approval, happiness, or excitement. He also has a habit of g-dropping, which is evident in his usage of words: "lookin'," "goin'," and "runnin'"[4]. When it comes to slang and expletives, he will frequently utilize words such as: ain't, dude, totally, scumbag, crappy, shitty, screwed up, wuss, freaking, bitch etc. The harsher expletives such as "fuck" are featured only a few times during the entire game and are never voiced, which may have something to do with acquiring a lower age rating for the game. These words serve to emphasize the emotional nature of the character while also affirming Ryuji's position as an outcast and a rebel against Japanese society, which is marked primarily by respect and politeness.

The second character is Yusuke, a representation of artistic elocution. His poetic and metaphorical expressions, as well as intricate comparisons, emphasize his introspective and artistic sensitivity. They also showcase his philosophical disposition since Yusuke often draws parallels between mundane situations and profound concepts. This characterization through his vernacular

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[4] These words are presented this way both phonologically and orthographically

draws from Yusuke's background as an artist, having been raised by his artist mother, and his general immersion in the world of aesthetics. This disposition extends even to the most casual of conversations. For example, while describing food at a restaurant, Yusuke will say: "A harmonious assembly of textures and flavors, the sushi platter presents an exquisite equilibrium." He is no stranger to using descriptive flourishes in order to evoke sensory experiences and capture the essence of a scene. Similarly, his way of speaking extends to the more tense moments as well. These can be serious and thoughtful in tone or provide comic relief: "You aren't some rotten artist... You're a despicable fiend who wears the skin of an artist!" [serious], "By the way, you're more feral pigeon than phoenix." [humorous][5]. It is evident that Yusuke's linguistic style is enriched by his extensive vocabulary, showcasing both his intellect and his contemplative nature. He uses words such as "ephemeral," "intrinsic," and "profound" while also choosing to substitute common words with their more complex synonyms, such as using "amalgamation" instead of mixture and "exquisite" instead of delicious. In essence, his vernacular provides us with an insight into the thoughtful and introspective mind of an artist.

The third character is Futaba, a representation of the digital lexicon, colloquialisms, and internet humor/memes. This vernacular reflects her expertise as a tech-savvy hacker and her time spent online while she lived as a recluse. As a consequence, her instances of speech are often peppered with digital/techy terms such as software, byte, and hack, which are seamlessly integrated into the rest of her vocabulary. Instead of saying "I think we need to come up with a solution to this situation," she will say something like "I think we need to debug this situation." Futaba's language is also laced with emoticons and internet-inspired expressions like "LOL" or "OMG," which reflect her immersion in online culture. Many of these instances can be witnessed within text messages, but some of them occur during face-to-face communication as well. On one occasion, she jokingly asks another character whether he is an NPC. In another instance, she refers to herself as a keyboard warrior. These digital elements and usage of internet, and videogame humor in real life serve as a bridge between Futaba's tech-oriented nature and her introverted, and goofy personality, which creates a dynamic and multi-dimensional character portrayal. In addition, Futaba often employs words or phrases such as "totally," "awesome," "nailed it," and "cool beans" to showcase her modern and relatable manner of speech. Finally, her introverted personality shines

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[5] Personal descriptions in parenthesis (do not appear within in-game dialogue)

through during moments where she, in a humorous way, voices her internal monologue by saying "I can't believe I just said that out loud" or "Did I really just do that?". In conclusion, the enumerated elements help flesh out her character as the youngest and most tech oriented of the group while also making her relatable, and capturing her journey from recluse to sociable.

The fourth character is Haru, a representation of graceful eloquence and gentle expression. Her way of speaking reflects not only her empathetic and caring personality, but also her refined manners as a result of her upbringing and association with high society. Her vocabulary often features words like "grace," "gentle," and "delicate," which mirror her personality and temperament. She will often choose to compliment others for exhibiting similar traits by saying something like: "Your kindness is truly touching," which emphasizes her sincerity. Her noble upbringing is shown during moments when she addresses others due to the fact that she often chooses to use honorifics of the same level of politeness as those younger than her. Along with these honorifics, she will also use formal and considerate language like: "I'm sorry if I sound impolite" or "Please allow me to express my gratitude". Finally, her language is adorned with botanical imagery and nature metaphors, reflecting her affinity for gardening and her connection to the natural world. She will often compare emotions to blooming flowers: "Like a bud opening to the sun, my heart feels lighter around you." These comparisons create a bridge between her appreciation of gardening and her empathetic and kind disposition. In summary, Haru's linguistic profile allows players to gain insight into her personality by underscoring her admiration of the harmony found in nature, showcasing values instilled in her, as well as her desire to foster positive relationships with others.

The fifth character is Morgana, a representation of playful expression and mysterious diction. His way of speaking is quite theatrical and enigmatic, which enhances his mysterious and playful demeanor, accentuating his role as a guide and confidant. It serves, at the same time, to complement his unknown origin. His vocabulary incorporates words such as "curious," "intriguing," and "puzzling," positioning him as almost a sort of detective who ponders a crime scene. It reflects his fascination with the unknown, mirroring his own origin. Similarly, he will often say things like: "We must uncover this mystery." Upon arriving at a new place, he may say something like: "This place holds an intriguing aura," which adds an air of mystique to his observations. His linguistic style in general is characterized by eloquent language and somewhat

formal tone that contrasts with his playful nature and feline appearance. His formal way of speaking lends credence to his role as a guide and a mentor. Finally, his speech is marked by cat-related idioms and puns, humorously reinforcing his feline identity. He will often quip about the number of his remaining lives or point out that curiosity killed the cat. In one such humorous instance, after spotting a cardboard box, he will say: "What a huge cardboard box... Oh, that's your stuff in there..." Other times, he will refer to himself as a "purr-suader". These quips and puns add a lighthearted element to his dialogue, and help capture his unique perspective. In summary, Morgana is the mysterious character of the bunch, offering a different view of each situation, owing to his unique predicament. His theatrical elocution mixed with the playful demeanor of a cat makes for both an endearing and enigmatic character.

The sixth character is Akechi, a representation of calculated eloquence, which reinforces his charismatic and intelligent persona, further accentuating his dual identity. At the same time, it also mirrors his public persona of a detective, further underscoring his background and reputation. His way of speaking is precise and well-structured, consisting of words that highlight his articulate nature. He will often say things like: "Your hypothesis is intriguing, though it warrants further examination." In contrast to this, he will sometimes cleverly use his position to deliver jokes by saying: "I may not seem like it, but I sometimes wish that Santa Claus actually existed. Although if he did, I'd have to arrest him for breaking and entering." This type of polished speech along with humorous remarks reinforces his image of a public figure that can navigate social interactions with ease. His personality is a mixture in which confidence and vulnerability are balanced, but also contrasted. His self-assuredness is evident in statements like "I pride myself on my deductive skills." On the other hand, he will also express self-doubt with phrases such as "I'm not as invincible as I may appear." This contrast serves to, once again, reflect the duality of his character and add depth to it by suggesting the existence of inner conflicts. Finally, his language often includes dualistic expressions that hint at a bigger picture or a deeper layer of meaning. He might say things like "it's not as simple as it seems" or "there's more to the story than meets the eye." These statements contribute to his enigmatic aura, hide his true intentions, and further emphasize his role as a detective. In conclusion, the linguistic profile of Akechi is that of a charismatic and enigmatic personality. His eloquence, intelligence, confidence, but also humility help create a multi-dimensional character portrayal, and invite players to unravel the mystery behind his motivations.

The 7th character is Ann, a representation of warm and compassionate expressions that embody her caring and empathetic nature. Due to her background as a model and her experience with the challenges of the industry, she is imbued with a strong sense of empathy and can relate to the struggles of others. In that regard, her linguistic profile appears to be very similar to Haru's. However, there are subtle differences in the way their natures are expressed through speech, as well as in their overall characterizations. While Haru is more formal in her usage of gentle expressions, Ann opts for the more friendly and endearing language that emphasizes closeness like the words "cute" and "adorable". As an extrovert, she is also more straightforward and direct than Haru, who is more subtle and nuanced, reflecting her refined upbringing. Similarly, Ann will often choose to express her thoughts openly regardless of whether they are positive or negative. In that sense, she appears to be somewhat of a mix between Ryuji and Haru. Ann is also very encouraging of her friends and will often voice her support by saying things such as "You're not alone in this." As far as general speech goes, it mirrors her caring expressions in so far that it is casual and approachable, making it easy for others to connect with her. Unlike Haru, she avoids the overly formal language and feels more comfortable with the casual vernacular. She is also prone to using colloquial expressions such as "totally," "cool," "awesome," "hang out," and "chill out," which further emphasize her friendly nature. In conclusion, Ann's linguistic profile is that of a compassionate and sociable person. She could be described as the girl next door type of character. Her language is sincere and direct, delivered through her energetic personality. Her informal speech pattern laden with colloquialisms makes her seem friendly and approachable, which, in combination with the aforementioned compassion, creates meaningful and heartfelt interactions with other characters within the game's narrative.

The eight character is Makoto, a representation of analytical and authoritative expressions that mirror her intelligent and principled nature. Her dialogue often includes words such as "logical," "strategic," and "efficient," highlighting her methodical approach to problem-solving. When discussing a plan, she might say something like "Our strategy must be based on sound logic," or "This plan maximizes our chances of success." This kind of vernacular emphasizes her commitment to rational thinking and decision making, and reflects her position of leadership as student council president. Makoto is very precise with her words, and she always thinks very carefully before speaking. Her general language is very formal with a distinct polite tone. She always uses honorifics and other respectful ways of address to convey courtesy. In addition, she

might use phrases such as "Allow me to clarify," or "Please consider the following." This type of formality reflects her serious and cautious character, as well as her strong sense of duty owing to the fact that she was raised by a father, who was a police officer, and a sister, who is a public prosecutor. In summary, Makoto's linguistic profile captures her focus on problem solving, and portrays a sharp-minded individual with leadership qualities. What is more, her use of analytical and authoritative expressions, formal language, and logical reasoning convey her commitment to order and responsibility. These linguistic elements add depth to her character by reflecting her upbringing, and allow her interactions with the game's narrative and other characters to be intellectually engaging for the player.

The ninth and final character is Kasumi, a representation of upbeat expressions and an optimistic outlook. Her language embodies her enthusiastic and energetic nature, owing to the fact that she is a gymnast. Her dialogue often includes words and phrases such as "enthusiasm," "energy," and "positivity," emphasizing her perspective on things and a general zeal for life. For instance, when motivating her friends, she might say something like "Lets tackle this challenge together." As can be seen in the previous example, Kasumi frequently employs sports-related language and athletic metaphors, reflecting her dedication to gymnastics and her active lifestyle. To that extent, she will often use phrases such as "giving it your all" or "going for the gold" when discussing her goals, or encouraging others to pursue their own. When faced with a hurdle, she will usually say something like "I'm determined to achieve my dreams, no matter the obstacles." These moments showcase her passion and her determined, unswayable attitude. Her language in general is formal, with respectful ways of address and usage of honorifics. She tends to use polite expressions and tries to avoid colloquialisms in order to portray herself as a disciplined, respectable, and well-mannered athlete, student, and individual. In summary, Kasumi's linguistic profile captures her competitive and perfectionist disposition, as well as her friendly and approachable personality. Through her use of positive expressions, determined attitude, and sports-related language, players can gain insight into her enthusiastic and goal-driven character, which ultimately adds depth to the overall game and its narrative.

This chapter presents how language helps create full-fledged characters by bringing their personalities and backgrounds to the forefront. Through a close analysis of the lexicon, syntax, and speech variants of different characters, we unveil the intricate ways in which language

reinforces the aforementioned areas. By delving into the nuanced details of their speech, this study provides a deeper understanding of how the game crafts multi-dimensional characters, making Persona 5 Royal a compelling case study in the art of character development through language.

7. On Intertextuality, Inspirations, and Narrative Structures

In the previous chapter, an in-depth exploration of the linguistic profiles that define the diverse cast of characters was conducted. Throughout the thesis, it is shown how language emerges not only as a means of character development, character bonding, narrative enrichment, player guidance, and player engagement but also as a dynamic tool that shapes the very essence of interactions within the game. The following chapter will allow us to take a step back and widen the scope. The previous chapter delved into the microcosm of linguistic choices, while this chapter will explore the macrocosm of intertextuality, which is to say the thread that weaves together the narrative fabric of the game.

Being a narrative-centric videogame, Persona 5 Royal utilizes various literary devices, with the main one being intertextuality. Some would argue that intertextuality is not a literary device in the traditional sense, but more of a framework that allows us to analyze different texts and the connections between them. The term was first coined by Julia Kristeva (1980) and referencing the notion, she wrote: "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 66).

To expand upon this, intertextuality denotes and defines the interdependence between texts of different kinds. This interdependence refers not only to texts that include quotations, but also the discourse that is created between these texts. The framework of intertextuality includes texts that are constructed as mere references, as well as works that were inspired by or meant to mimic the structure of another piece of writing. This referential nature is what causes these different pieces of writing to echo one another across different contexts.

One central instance of intertextuality in Persona 5 Royal is found in the nature of the main characters and their Personas. Many of these Personas feature the word "Picaro" in their name,

which is interesting because it deviates from the usual, unique naming scheme. The term "Picaro"[6] itself, originating from Spanish, denotes a cunning rascal, often associated with picaresque novels. Thrall and Hibbard (1960) define these novels as having a narrative that revolves around the main character, who is a rascal and a rogue, albeit an appealing one that the reader wants to root for. Picaros are individuals that exist as outcasts on the fringes of society, and use their natural ability, wits, and resourcefulness in order to overcome insurmountable odds. They are experts at bending and pushing the boundaries, and their actions usually fall just a tiny bit shy of true criminality. Despite the fact that novels chronicling their adventures belong to the genre of fiction, picaresque characters have been present in collective history for centuries.

The picaresque novels, much like Persona 5 Royal, are defined by their main character, the hero, and their undertakings in the face of corrupt society. When discussing the Picaro, we would be remiss not to mention the gentleman thief, which is closely related to the Picaro in its characterization. The gentleman thief is a type of character that relies on his charm rather than his physicality. Binyon (1999) defines the character as "a man of good breeding who makes his living by dishonest means" (p. 180). The difference between the gentleman thief and the Picaro is that the gentleman thief is usually portrayed as a member of the upper class. Contrasted to this, the picaro usually belongs to the lower walks of life, and can be more inclined to physicality in order to accomplish their endeavors.

For instance, Joker's primary Persona, Arsene, pays homage to Arsene Lupin, a renowned gentleman thief. His design, including a blazer, white ruffled tie, and oversized top hat, mirrors Lupin's iconic appearance. The metaverse outfits further symbolize rebellion, with Joker's attire resembling Lupin's cape and incorporating concealed weapons fit for a thief. The Café Leblanc, where the story begins, references the author Maurice Leblanc, creator of Arsene Lupin. Other characters follow suit. Morgana's Persona, Zorro, emulates the masked vigilante with its design and choice of weapon, while Ryuji's Captain Kidd channels a pirate theme in reference to William Kidd, a real-life Scottish pirate. Yusuke's Goemon references the Japanese outlaw, Ishikawa Goemon, sometimes referred to as the Japanese Robin Hood, while Ann's Carmen alludes to the

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[6] https://www.spanishdict.com/translate/picaro

femme fatale archetype from the famous opera of the same name, complete with Catwoman-inspired attire.

This blend of fictional and real-life picaresque characters, both from Japanese and wider folklore, as well as other archetypes makes Persona 5 Royal feel more immersive. It demonstrates that the game, despite having fantastical elements, takes place in our world, built upon the same general knowledge and established historical facts. This approach, infused with realism, allows the player to associate the world in the game with their own, recognizing that it is not an alternate timeline or some other alienating concept that was created solely to support the ideas behind the game. It also draws inspiration from the collective unconscious, and Jung's notion of archetypes, in order to present the rebellious nature of the main cast.

Another instance of intertextuality occurs through a song referencing Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death". The lyrics, "I'm a shapeshifter, at Poe's masquerade," evoke the story's themes of masked deception, paralleling the Phantom Thieves' exploits within palaces. The Velvet Room, a recurring dream-like space, mirrors Poe's description of the story's 7th room, enhancing the game's mysterious atmosphere. Additionally, the game's 7th palace seems to be another reference to the short story. Characters, members of the upper class, are seen wearing masquerade ball masks, while they isolate from the rest of the world sentenced to ruin. Both stories' illusions of safety collapse once hooded figures infiltrate the scene. According to the interpretation of Poe's short story by Bell (1973), prince Prospero, the main character, is hallucinating the events that are described due to insanity brought on by sickness. This interpretation is also highly fitting in the context of Persona 5 Royal since palaces are just figments of one's cognition and not places that exist in the real world.

The third intertextual element requires us to revisit narrative structure. Persona 5 Royal does not rely solely on the picaresque narrative structure, but it incorporates two additional, complementary narrative structures, and juxtaposes them with the picaresque one. Firstly, we have the narrative structure of detective fiction. Secondly, we have characters, locations, and gameplay instances that draw inspiration from heist movies. Both threads work in tandem to weave together a compelling setting and story, offering a fresh interpretation through a twist on the classic formula, which challenges and subverts the expectations of the player.

Persona 5 Royal introduces the mystery of mental shutdowns and psychotic breakdowns, i.e., the crime. The game then introduces Goro Akechi, a genius detective investigating these incidents. The twist, in this case, can be found in the fact that Akechi is the real perpetrator, while the Phantom Thieves are falsely accused. From the perspective of the player, Akechi starts off as one of the confidants in the game, and slowly becomes their rival. From the perspective of the general public, Akechi is a character who is both the star detective and a rising hope of justice, while the Phantom Thieves are dubious individuals who toe the line of law and conduct covert operations by unknown means. We may say the general public views Akechi as the typical protagonist of a detective novel. The player's initial perspective of Akechi mirrors that of the general public. However, as the protagonist aligned with the Phantom Thieves, the player is, naturally, left questioning Akechi's motives and intentions. Similarly, as a consequence of repeated interactions with Akechi, the player is led to question whether the actions of the Phantom Thieves, which is to say their own, are truly moral and just. Therefore, the player is both a reader, but also an involved party, which is to say a character within the story. This setup, achievable only in videogame form, sets the stage for an intriguing debate on morality and justice, both within the game's narrative (external) and within the player (internal).

As for Akechi, he seems to be another referential character. We can deduce that he is based on Kogoro Akechi, another fictional detective with a similar name. Kogoro Akechi was created by Japanese author Edogawa Ranpo. From this information, we may extract two additional intertextual implications. Firstly, Kogoro Akechi has many similarities with another genius, fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes. Secondly, the name Edogawa Ranpo is a pen name referencing Edgar Allan Poe, an author whose influence on the game has already been established. In addition to this, there is yet another layer of intertextuality, nestled between character representation and the detective fiction narrative structure. This relates to a collection of stories by Maurice Leblanc titled *Arsene Lupin Versus Herlock Sholmes*. In this case, Herlock Sholmes is an obvious reference to Sherlock Holmes. In his stories, Leblanc pits his titular hero against the mind of Sherlock Holmes to see which one of them is going to come out on top. This invokes a sense of strong familiarity in regards to Joker and Akechi and perhaps brings forth an argument in favor of the existence of narrative parallelism.

The second narrative structure is that of heist movies. The entire premise of the game could simply be boiled down to a group conducting heists. The twist on the formula lies in the fact that these heists do not take place in the real world, but rather the cognitive world. In what is another departure from the genre, the objects that are being stolen are intangible things like ideas and emotions rather than physical objects. In contrast to this, the game adheres to multiple established heist movie conventions.

Firstly, heist scenarios play out in various iconic settings like museums, banks, and casinos, while characters discuss their plans, buy equipment, and gather information. Following a heist, the game presents an aftermath in the form of a target confessing their crimes, much like a heist movie would show the victim's realization that their valuables are nowhere to be found. Once inside a palace, the characters will have to stay clear of or engage with shadows, disable security systems, avoid traps, hack computers, open locked doors, and crawl through vents. All of these gameplay segments reference key elements of any heist. To build upon this, we can use the example of the movie "Ocean's 11" to illustrate how characters in Persona 5 Royal serve to reinforce this inspirational thread. Each character specializes in a particular area, reflecting archetypal roles within the group. Joker is the leader, but also a nimble infiltrator that can find a path for the rest of the group. Morgana is the mastermind familiar with the workings of the metaverse. Ann is the femme fatale, swindler character who uses her charms to distract targets or obtain information. Haru is the character with financial resources, but also an insider. Makoto is the character with law enforcement connections, and an analytical mind. Futaba is the hacker, Yusuke is the forger, and so on. Each of these roles is represented through both gameplay elements and narrative segments.

There are two additional intertextual inspirations that are worth exploring. Firstly, the game draws upon religious symbolism, motifs, and themes from various different cultures and traditions to craft meaning and provide additional metaphorical layers for its storytelling. In order to portray the theme of sin, the game features notable examples of Christian symbolism. It includes the concept of seven deadly sins, each of which corresponds to a palace and its ruler. The references to sins are confirmed through personalities of palace rulers, the theming and design of their palaces, as well as achievements awarded after each successful heist. These achievements reference a castle of lust, a museum of vanity, a bank of gluttony, a pyramid of wrath, a spaceport of greed, a casino of jealousy, and a cruiser of pride.

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Persona 5 Royal expands on its religious motifs through its choice of Personas. It includes Personas named and designed after characters and people from Japanese folklore, Christianity, Norse mythology, Hindu mythology, Greek mythology, and so on. It is not uncommon for the player to find themselves using Personas such as Thor, Loki, Prometheus, Vishnu, Gabriel, or Raphael. There is one last religious reference worth mentioning, which requires us to look back at the 7th palace. This palace is presented as a giant cruiser. The image of this ship sailing between skyscrapers, as water drowns everyone and everything else, is reminiscent of the story of Noah's Ark. This reference is also reinforced by a song that plays inside Shido's palace, simply titled "Ark".

Finally, we may briefly mention intertextual references to books, movies, videogames, and other pop culture. These usually occur as a sort of wordplay on their original titles. If you visit a cinema, you will see movies such as "Tanktop Millionaire," "The Cake Knight Rises," "Love Possibly," "Mes Misérables," "Clean Hard," and "The Good Father." These serve as references to real movies like Slumdog Millionaire, The Dark Knight Rises, Love Actually, Les Misérables, Die hard, and The Godfather respectively. While the protagonist is in the cinema, an audio parody of a famous scene from the movie that is being watched can be heard, which further emphasizes the reference. Books have a slightly different naming scheme in the sense that they allude to different characters and Personas. For example, "The Alluring Dancer" is a reference to Carmen, "The Great Thief" is a reference to Arsene, and "Pirate Legend" is a reference to William Kidd. The game also features references to anime and manga like "Soraemon" referring to Doraemon, as well as videogames with "Like a Dragon" and "Super Bash Bros." referring to Yakuza: Like a Dragon and Super Smash Bros. respectively.

In conclusion, this discussion helps illustrate how different types of intertextuality are employed in Persona 5 Royal to enhance its storytelling and world building. Downstream from this are the characters, which have been covered extensively in the previous chapter. Intertextuality is used to great extent in order to construct, frame, and present the game's main themes, characters, narrative structure, visual design, gameplay, as well as music. Undoubtedly, there are numerous other instances of intertextuality, both significant and subtle, that warrant further analysis. Unfortunately, the scope and the topic of this paper make it impossible to cover them all.

8. Conclusion

Taking everything into account, this thesis presents a multimodal and intertextual analysis of immersion, focusing primarily on language, in the highly acclaimed videogame, Persona 5 Royal. Throughout the analysis, it becomes evident that the game manages to exceed the conventional expectations of what the videogame medium should entail. The thesis delves into the character development side of Persona 5 Royal, revealing the characters' roles as vehicles for social commentary and the representation of archetypal concepts. Through the juxtaposition of additional narrative structures, like those of detective fiction and heist movies, the game is able to present players with unique but yet recognizable locations, while also providing exciting and thematically appropriate gameplay mechanics. The inclusion of supplemental, religious and mythological elements is utilized to represent the main themes and allow for further incorporation of Jung's notion of archetypes. The extensive exploration of intertextuality within the game sheds light on the game's rich tapestry of references and its contribution to the broader cultural landscape.

The protagonist of the game is briefly examined through the lens of tarot and the symbolism behind the general usage of tarot cards is explained. Additionally, the gameplay is analyzed through the lens of pragmatics, showcasing how different scenarios within the game deviate from one another based on types of speech acts that are utilized within them. Furthermore, the purpose of these speech acts is shown to vary depending on the context in which they occur. The main cast is similarly analyzed according to the kind of language they use. By doing this, the aim was to reveal the broader implications of someone's personal dialectic and examine what can be surmised about an individual from it. As we navigate the terrain of intertextual exploration, we get to uncover that the characters' linguistic choices, while deeply ingrained in their individual identities, are also windows through which the rich tapestry of intertextuality comes to life. The analysis contributes to the overall understanding of immersion in videogames and provides insight into the effective utilization of various elements, particularly language, in creating an engaging and cohesive gaming experience.

While this analysis has offered valuable insights, there are still possibilities for further exploration and analysis, particularly in areas such as social commentary and the broader cultural impact of Persona 5 Royal. Additionally, elements like music, audio design, and visual design have not been touched upon, yet they constitute significant contributors to Persona 5 Royal's immersive qualities. In the case of music, one could easily create an entire linguistic analysis based solely around its lyrics. Therefore, this thesis serves as a foundation for future research and invites further investigation into the immersive qualities of videogames and their impact on players.

As a final note, it is important to acknowledge that certain aspects of this analysis represent the subjective interpretation of the author and should be considered alongside other perspectives and interpretations. The analysis presented here offers a nuanced understanding of immersion in Persona 5 Royal based on extensive personal experience, but further discussions and diverse viewpoints are encouraged to deepen the understanding of this complex and captivating videogame experience.

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