Designing meaning: A Visual Design Analysis of Remedy Entertainment's Video Game Advertisements.

Master's Thesis

Niko Ollikka

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta - Faculty	Laitos-Department
Humanistinen tiedekunta	Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos

Tekijä-Author
Niko Ollikka

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Tiivistelmä - Abstract

Videopeli-ala on yksi maailman tasaisimmin kasvavista aloista ja sen on arvioitu olevan noin 139 miljoonan dollarin arvoinen vuonna 2021. Videopelejä ei enää nähdä pääasiallisesti lasten ja nuorten aktiviteettina vaan niistä on tullut vakavasti otettava harrastus tai jopa potentiaalinen ura. Kuitenkin lähes kaikki kaupallinen menestys vaatii myös aktiivisen markkinoinnin ja vaikuttavat mainokset taakseen. Videopelejä on tutkittu aikaisemmin, mutta pelien mainoksia käsitteleviä tutkimuksia ei juurikaan ole tehty pelien sisäisten mainosten tutkimisen lisäksi yhtään.

Tässä tutkimuksessa keskityttiin tutkimaan suomalaisen Remedy Entertainmentin pelien kuvamainoksia visuaalisen suunnittelun perspektiivistä. Tavoitteena oli tunnistaa visuaalisen suunnittelun keinoja välittää eri merkityksiä sekä pohtia mitä ne viestivät peleistä. Tutkimuksen viitekehykseksi valittiin Kress ja van Leeuwenin (2006) luoma monimodaalisen diskurssintutkimuksen tutkimusmalli.

Tutkimus osoitti, että valittujen videopeli mainokset välittivät katsojalle peleistä kahdenlaista viestiä, sekä pelimaailman sisäistä informaatiota sekä oikean maailman tietoa. Mainoksissa nousivat esille toistuvasti myös kontekstin ymmärrys sekä peli- ja kulttuuritietoisuus intertekstuaalisten viittausten ymmärtämistä tukevana keinona. Siten kohderyhmäymmärryksen tärkeys painottui mainosten suunnittelijan näkökulmasta sekä mainoksen toimivuuden kannalta. Mainokset myös käyttivät etäisyyttä tehokeinona tunteiden herättämisessä ja suhteen muodostamisessa pelihahmon ja katsojan välillä. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa selvisi, että tietyt markkinoinnissa yleisesti käytössä olevat rakenteet toimivat myös uuden median kontekstissa, joskin sovelletuin tavoin.

Asiasanat - Keywords: video games, advertisement, visual grammar, visual design

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Additional information - Muita tietoja
Remedy Entertainmentin edustajilta saatu vastausta heidän materiaalinsa julkaisuoikeuteen liittyen, useista kyselyistä huolimatta. Tämän vuoksi julkaistussa versiossa käytetyt kuvat on jouduttu poistamaan ja niiden sijasta tutkimuksessa kuvat ovat sanallisesti kuvailtu. Sen lisäksi

lähdeluetteloon on merkitty linkit käytettyihin kuviin, jolloin niitä voi tarkastella tutkimuksesta erillisenä materiaalina.

Contents

1. Introduction

Video game industry has been one of the most steadily growing industries in the world with its evaluated value for 2021 being little shy of 139 million dollars. Video games are no longer seen as merely child's play, but both as a serious hobby or even as a legitimate profession.

When it comes to video games, they are one of the most multimodal platforms that exist from their stunning visuals all the way to their narratives and exciting audio designs. For marketers this brings up the question of how their advertisements should be designed to best grasp the central elements of such a broad and multidimensional piece of work such as a video game.

The purpose of the present study was to identify the visual design elements in three Remedy Entertainment's video game advertisements and then evaluate how meaning was communicated about the game to the viewer. The digital images of the print advertisements were taken from Google Images, Adsofthewolrd.com and Mobygames.com.

The analysis was conducted by applying the principles provided by Kress and Van Leeuwen in their *Reading images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. After identifying the design elements, the analysis focused on discussing the possible reasons behind the chosen semiotic resources and what they communicated about the video game to the viewer. Remedy Entertainment was chosen because their games have been successful globally, which, in turn, implies successful marketing.

This topic is also interesting, because it seems that there are no similar studies that focused precisely on assessing the design and meanings of advertisements of video games. The advertising of video games as a research topic is not new but most of the studies in this vein focus specifically on in-game advertisements and their use, effectiveness, or memorability, rather than their actual design.

Aside from the newness of the topic, advertisements are also interesting because of their multifunctional nature: they are meant to both communicate and attract attention from their viewers. Therefore, it was worth studying as to how this dual focus is achieved with a video game context. Like television or film, video games are very strongly a visual medium, but in

addition to highlighting visuality, their interactivity could possibly affect how certain design choices in advertisements are made or possibly omitted.

As the focus in this study was on visual design and what it communicated, the present study belongs to the field of multimodal studies and social semiotics but also contributes to different fields. It sheds light on how multimodal analysis works in the analysis of advertisements. It can also provide more information about the marketing aspects of the game industry. The biggest contribution of the study is indeed to marketing studies. Even though my study will not necessarily provide information on the relationships between modes of advertisements and their effect on consumers, it will still provide crucial information about how meanings are communicated in the marketing of video games, and thus create a possibility to further study the topic of how differently designed game advertisements are promoting games and how do they possibly influence the viewer, moving them towards the purchasing decision.

The present study could work as a source of information to marketers working in the game field. Specifically, my hope is that this thesis could work as a guideline for an intern-level marketing designer or producer looking for insights into what could help them in the process of creating advertisements. Nowadays, as people rely more on studies, data, and facts in their decision making, this study could thus work as a source of information to the people working in the field.

2. Literature Review

This chapter works as an introduction to the key concepts, terminology, and important background literature. Chapter 2.1 starts with the introduction of the concept of multimodality and the key assumptions behind multimodal research as this forms the foundation to the understanding of the topic of the present study. Chapter 2.2 then builds upon the foundation laid by the previous chapter. It offers an introduction into the field of multimodal discourse analysis and the two most widely applied approaches giving the reader a brief overview of discourse analysis. Finally, Chapter 2.3 introduces the most important concept of the present study; visual grammar and its subcategories. The subcategories introduced are representational, interactive, and compositional meaning as well as an additional category focusing on multimodal markers. The information provided in this final chapter is most crucial to the full understanding of the present study.

2.1 Multimodality

To understand multimodality, one must first understand the basis of what is meant by a "mode" and what it means in terms of the present study. Kress (2010, 79) describes mode as "a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning." Kress also states that images, writing, layout, music, gestures, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects are all examples of modes that can be present and used in representation and communication. Kress also describes semiotic modes as being "shaped by both the intrinsic characteristics and potentialities of the medium and by the requirements, histories and values of societies and their cultures." (Kress, 2010, 35)

There are varying definitions of what a mode can be or how they should be characterized. One example is the three-factor model by Stöckl (2004, 11) cited by Selander (2020,26). In Stöck's (2004, 11) model, mode is characterized with three factors that were:

1. A mode cannot strictly be defined by its path of perception; the same mode can often be interpreted through visual and textual means (for example, in the case of written text)

2. A single mode can be interpreted or presented through a number of media (e.g., written

text can be read out loud or presented in video, audio, etc., blurring the line between media)

3. Modes often overlap and form sub-modes within and across themselves.

This model is used in other studies such as Selander's (2020, 26) and it provides important information about the differing definitions and views about the concept of a mode. Additionally, it also highlights the complexity and the certain hindrance of multimodal studies as there is no clear defining definition or theory. For the purposes of the present study this model focuses too heavily on the interaction between different modes, rather than on offering a tool that distinguishes modes from one another. Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, I follow the broader definitions provided by Kress (2009, 54) that states mode to be "a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning. Kress (2009, 54) exemplified this by highlighting image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image and soundtrack as examples of modes. The present study focuses heavily on the visual modes and thus concentrates on the individual semiotic resources that Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) distinguish and name under the three major functions mentioned in their *Reading Images: Grammar of Visual Design.*

Therefore, as mode is defined as a semiotic resource for meaning making, the concept of multimodality implies the existence and use of multiple different modes in a chosen medium of communication. In the heart of multimodality is the understanding of all semiotic systems rather than focusing only on written texts.

Multimodality has three main theoretical assumptions. The first one is the assumption that all representation and communication always draws on multiple different modes, all of which contribute to meaning. Due to this, multimodality focuses on analysing the full repertoire of meaning-making resources such as the previously mentioned examples of images, writing, visuals, and others. (Lyons, 2016, 3)

Secondly, in multimodality, resources are considered socially shaped over time and culturally tied. This means that for something to become a mode of communication, there needs to be a sense within a community about the set of resources and how they should be organized to realize meaning (Lyons, 2016, 3). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006,195) give an example about the tie-in of culture and modes: they mention how there are compositional differences

between how images are composed in the West and in the East. By this they exemplify the fact that certain meaning making resources differ in their use depending on the cultural context they appear in. (Lyons, 2016, 3)

Finally, Lyons (2016, 3) explains that people express themselves through their selection of modes, multimodality assumes that all communication is subjected to the norms and rules operating at the moment of sign making. In other words, people are influenced by the motivations and interests of the people and the specific social context. From Lyons' (2016) an assumption can be made that the decision to choose a certain mode of communication is most likely tied to the social context it appears in. This final assumption is especially prevalent in the present study as the data consists of images that have clear context and underlying goals that can be assumed to play a part in the chosen modes and the message they communicate.

Additionally, to the previously mentioned three key assumptions, according to Bezemer (2012, para 6.), there are also four core concepts to consider in multimodality that form the basis of multimodal analysis. These four concepts are mode, semiotic resource, modal affordance, and inter-semiotic relations. Bezemer (2012, para 6.) added to this that the key idea around mode is that it is understood as something that is the outcome of cultural shaping through its use in social interactions.

Bezemer (2012, para. 6) described the semiotic resource to mean different resources that a certain mode can entail. He further added that the semiotic resource of a mode displays certain regularities in the ways people use them. Due to this, it can be considered as a connection between representational resources and what people do with them. Representational resources are related to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, 13) point about representation, and it requires "sign-makers to choose forms for the expression they see best suited for their purpose and the forms which they see as most apt and plausible in the given context."

Bezemer (2012, para. 6.) then explained the concept of modal affordance to refer to the material and cultural aspects of modes. More specifically, this considers what is possible to express and represent easily with a certain mode. This concept connects to both the material as well as the cultural and social historical use of a mode. From modal-affordance the

question arises of what mode is best suited for what. Which brings the final concept of inter-semiotic relationships and how the modes are configured in each context.

Multimodal research can have multiple different directions and approaches. Bezemer (2012, para. 7) stated that multimodality can be "used to build inventories of the semiotic resources, organizing principles and cultural references that modes make available to people in particular places and times", putting the focus on the different actions, materials, and artifacts that people use to communicate. An example of this kind of inventory building is the mapping of different semiotic resources of visual communication, colour, gesture, movement, gaze, voice, and music.

Another approach to multimodal research is to focus on the understanding of how semiotic resources are used in discourse across different contexts and media. For example, school, workplace, online, textbooks and advertisements can all differ in their use of semiotic resources. This approach is extremely prevalent in Kress and Van Leeuwen's *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*' and is also the most important approach in terms of the present study.

The final notion relevant to the present aims of multimodal research, is that it makes a significant contribution to the evolution of research methods as it expands on the collection of data as well as to the analysis of digital data and environments within social research. Multimodal research provides new methods for data collection and analysis for example in terms of visual data, video data and methods of multimodal transcriptions and digital data management. (Bezemer, 2012, para. 9) In terms of the present study the visual modes and the semiotic resources used in them are very important, because its data consist mainly of visual elements.

2.2 Multimodal discourse analysis

For the further examination of the approaches to analysing multimodality, multimodal discourse analysis is highlighted as one of the approaches that the present study relies on in the analysis of multimodal discourses in the chosen data.

The previous section discussed what is meant by "mode" and "multimodality". To understand multimodal discourse analysis, one must also be aware of what is meant by discourse. The Merriam Webster dictionary, for example, offers a few definitions to discourse. Among them, the most suitable definitions for the present study are that discourse is a "formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject", and "a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts". This means that discourse can be thought of covering all forms of communication, that it is formal and organized, and that it can be observed in every context.

Smith (2003, 8) recognizes five different types of discourse: narrative, descriptive, report, informative and argumentative. However, the present study does not focus on any specific form of discourse as it is assumed that the data can present any of the five forms of discourse, or possibly even have several forms of discourse at the same time.

Multimodal discourse analysis thus is an approach that focuses on the multiple modes of communication mentioned by Kress (2009, 54) such as text, images, colour, and speech. It is a form of discursive analysis that focuses on individual modes and how they communicate and interact with each other to create meaning.

There are two most widely applied approaches to multimodal discourse analysis. The contextual approach and the grammatical approach. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996, [2006]) represented the contextual approach by exploring images and visual design. Michael O'Toole (2010), in turn, represented the grammatical approach by applying Michael Halliday"s (1978) systemic functional model (SFL) to a semiotic analysis of displayed art, paintings, sculpture and architecture. (O"Halloran, 2011, 3-4)

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) adopted a top-down approach with the focus being on the identification of the general principles of visual design, which are then illustrated through text analysis. Their approach gave the first extensive framework for the analysing of the communication in visual modes which then gave the foundation for additional advancement in the field. O'Toole (2010) grammatical approach is a bottom-up one by analysing paintings and sculptures to derive frameworks from then that could be applied to other works. (O'Halloran, 2011, 4)

Both approaches have later been broadened and extended. Contextual approaches have been developed for speech, sound, and music in addition to Kress and van Leeuwen's visual design. Grammatical approach has also seen new developments such as its application to mathematics and hypermedia. (O'Halloran, 2011, 4)

As the present study relies almost solely on Kress and van Leeuwen's work on visual design, it is important for the reader to understand how fundamental this framework is in the field of multimodal studies, and how their work has also influenced the development and advancement of the entire field. As the focus of the present study is not only to identify the semiotic resources used in the data but also analyse the visual discourse, it was necessary to provide some insight into the meaning of discourse, the analysing of discourse and the underlying foundation of the main theoretical framework. As stated by Mäntynen and Pietikäinen (2009, as cited in Selander, 2020, 34), "as a qualitative research method, discourse analysis provides tools for looking at the data on its microlevel, focussing on the features and characteristics that make it the way it is". In the present study, this fundamental idea behind discourse analysis is applied by utilizing the contextual approach of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). It is used to identify semiotic resources in visual data that then are analysed in the vein of multimodal discourse analysis with the goal of finding out *what* is being communicated to the viewer through the identified semiotic resources.

2.3 Visual Grammar

The research framework for the present study is the theory of visual grammar by Kress and van Leeuwen in 1996. It is based on the findings of the former school of social semiotics which originally illustrated linguistic texts. (Hu & Luo, 2016, 157) This framework was also applied by Hu and Luo (2016) who conducted two separate studies similar to the present study using this framework proving that it is a suitable framework for this kind of a visual design analysis.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* explores how figures, places and things in an image comprise a visual design to realize the compositional, interactive, and representative meanings. As mentioned above, it is based on Michael Halliday's systemic functional linguistics with the biggest takeaway being in the three metafunctions. These metafunctions are the "interpersonal", "ideational" and "textual functions" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 42). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 41) adopted these metafunctions and applied them into their own theory, separating them into their own metafunctions of meaning making called "representational", "interactive" and "compositional". These three metafunctions are in the core of the present study, and they are explained more extensively in the following section.

Representational meaning

Representational meaning deals with the way images represent the relationship between represented participants in a picture. (Hu & Luo, 2016, 157) Representational meaning is divided into narrative representation and conceptual representation.

Narrative representation and conceptual representational both have their own processes. Representational meaning has several ones with the most prominent ones being action process, reaction process and speech and mental process. Conceptual representation then has processes called classification, analytical and symbolic processes. Narrative representation deals with the presentation of an action. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 59) explain that narrative representations present "unfolding actions and events, processes of change and transitory spatial arrangements." In narrative representation the participants are connected to

each other through lines called "vectors". Kress and van Leeuwen (idem.) state that in these representations, they always have vectors, and these vectors represent processes. The vectors also portray courses or directions and when participants are connected by these invisible lines the viewer understands that they are interacting with one another. Miers (2012, para.1) Miers (idem.) continues that this idea of vectors portraying relationships is the most important concept because it is the biggest differentiator that separates the narrative representations from the conceptual representations. He concludes that even though the name implies the telling of a story, narrative representations do not always do that but rather the main focus is on that the objects in the image are interacting on or with one another.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 46) explain that when in an image an object is doing something, or when it is viewed as the active participant, it is called "The Actor". Miers (2012, para. 2) also adds that to be The Actor, the object must be creating or interacting with a vector for it to convey a sense of action. Kress and van Leeuwen (idem.) then state that the participant at the receiving end of the interaction is known as The Goal. Therefore, The Goal is the object in an image that connects to The Actor's vector to imply the undergoing action or interaction. All narrative representations portray a form of action but there still are different types of narrative processes to consider which will be further expanded in the next section.

The analysis of the representational meaning of an image begins by looking at the participants of the image. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 48) define a participant as "objects or elements existing in visual images". Further, they (idem.) explained that in every semiotic act there are two participants; one being called the represented participant and the other the interactive participant.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 48) state that interactive participants can include the viewer or the experiencer of the semiotic source. They are effectively "interacting" with the semiotic source and are thus a part of the act of communication. To this same vein, the interactive participant can also be the producer or some other person who is creating the image. Kress and van Leeuwen's (idem.) list of interactive participants included "those who speak and listen, write and read, make images or view them".

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 48) continue by defining represented participants as being those participants who represent the subject matter of the communication in the semiotic act. Meaning the places, objects, things, people, and possibly abstract entities that are represented in or by the chosen form of communication. They (idem.) continue by explaining that these forms of communication can be speech, writing or an image or those participants about whom or which are being spoken of while producing a piece of writing or an image. In representational meaning additional focus is also given to different processes. These processes are most effectively differentiated through the types of vectors the representations have and the number and kinds of participants that are involved in the image.

The two most prominent processes are the Action process and the Reaction process. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 63) described The Action processes to be those in which The Actor is the participant that forms the vector or has it emanating from itself. They (idem.) add that when an image only has one participant, they can be considered as The Actor. This kind of image is then called a non-transactional image as in these sorts of images there is no Goal and thus the vectors are not done to or aimed at anyone or anything. Mears (2012, para. 4) then concludes that when the image has both The Actor and The Goal and they are connected through a vector, the image is called transactional.

Reactional processes are those that feature an eyeline or a gaze by one or several participants. Here the gaze or a glance forms the vector that is connected to a participant. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 68) argued that Reactional processes differ from Action processes in that the vectors that are formed are created only by the gaze of the objects in the image. In a Reactional process the participant that is doing the looking is called The Reactor rather than The Actor. In addition, in this case, the passive participant is not called The Goal; instead, it is called The Phenomena. Like Action processes, Reactional processes can be both transactional and non-transactional as well. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 68)

The third process relevant for the present study is the Speech and mental process. This process is something that can be observed in comic strips. In comic strips, images and dialogue are usually connected to a participant by a vector. Therefore, like in transactional processes, these vectors or processes connect a human or some other animated being with some "content" such as dialogue or a thought. However, unlike in a transactional reaction where the connection is made with the content of perception, with thought bubbles and other

similar devices the connection is made with inner mental processes such as a fear or a thought. With dialogue, the speech vectors are connected to the content of the speech. This structure is called "projective" as the content of the dialogue is not directly represented but rather mediated through these devices such as a thought balloon. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 68).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 72) explain that Narrative processes may present some participants that are not related to the main participants through vectors. Instead, they are presented by other means. They (idem.) elaborate that these participants are not the main participants in the image, but their presence contains information that, if removed, would mean that the Narrative process loses some information. These elements are referred to as the Circumstances, and they are divided into three subcategories; setting (locative circumstance), means (tools), and accompaniment (idem.). Miers (2012, para. 10) gave an example of an image that had a group of people doing an activity. From it one could remove one or two people from the image, and it would not disturb the overall message of the image, but it could remove secondary information for example relating to the size of the group and what it communicates.

Where the narrative representations were characterized by always having a vector between participants, conceptual representations represent the opposite, in that they never have these vectors. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 79) describe conceptual representations representing participants "in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning" once again as opposed to narrative representations where the focus was on representing unfolding actions and the process of change. Conceptual representations also have their own processes which are divided into classificational processes, analytical process, and symbolic process, with the former two resembling relational processes in SFL (Hu & Luo, 2016, 157).

First of the conceptual processes is called the "Classification process". Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 79) state that classification processes relate participants to one another in terms of the "kind of" relation, which means a focus on classification and the application of a taxonomy. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 80) mention tree diagrams as one of the examples of an image that has a classification process that clearly shows the taxonomies and relationships present.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 79) also add that in a classification process, at least one of the participants will play the role of a subordinate to at least one other participant who then is the superordinate. The viewers can usually figure out the superordinate from the similar visual features existing between subordinates or only verbally in the accompanying text. This kind of a structure is called a covert taxonomy (idem.). In overt taxonomies, one participant can be superordinate for some of the other participants while still being a subordinate to another participant. This kind of participants can then be called "interordinate" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 80).

The second process is called the Analytical process. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 87) describe it as relating the participants in terms of a part-whole structure. This involves two kinds of participants with one being the Carrier, meaning that they essentially represent the "whole" of the image. The other kind of participants are called the Possessive Attributes which are the parts of the whole. Here a good example can be taken from the medical field from an anatomic model of the human body. The human body model can be used to portray the different organs or bones that the human body has. Here the carrier is the human body, and all the organs or bones represent the parts (Miers, 2012, para 2).

The third and final process is known as the Symbolic process. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 105) explain the symbolic processes as being "about what a participant means or is." Similarly, to analytical processes, in symbolic processes there are two kinds of participants. The first one is the participant whose meaning or identity is being established in the relation, called the Carrier. The other participant is the one that represents the meaning or the identity itself which is called the Symbolic Attribute. Additionally, if there is only one participant, the Carrier, the symbolic meaning is established in another way. These processes are called Symbolic Suggestive ones. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 105)

Many good examples from symbolic processes come from religious arts such as the example provided by Miers (2012, para. 3) of Rembrandt's painting of St. Peter. In the painting, St. Peter is depicted as an old man and next to him are the pair of keys in the shape of a letter V. These keys are known as the symbol of St. Peter as they are the keys to Heaven given to him by Christ himself. In the painting St. Peter is the Carrier and the keys are the symbolic attribute, as without them the painting could be interpreted as just depicting an old man.

Interactive meaning

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 114) explain that interactive meaning is about the interaction between the viewer of the image and the producer of the image. Here the interactive participants are the real people who make and produce the images and the people who make sense of them in their varying contexts and degrees. In addition, they (idem.) explain that images involve three kinds of relations: the first being the relation between represented participants (within images), the second between interactive and the represented participant, and the third one between interactive participants, like for example the producer and the viewer. Finally, they (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 116-143) argue that the realization of interactive meaning relies on three elements, namely contact, social distance and the point of view.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 118-121) explain that contact refers to the demand or offer relation between represented participants and the viewer, this meaning the studying of the acts and gazes towards or away from the viewer as well as the actors in the image creating either demand from the viewer or an offer to the viewer. For example, when the represented participant gazes at the viewer and creates an eyeline with the viewer, they are making a demand from the viewer to act, buy or to perform whatever is the call to action. Opposingly when the represented participant is presented in the image addresses us indirectly without direct contact, they are offered to the viewer as sources or information or something to be observed at, thus making them an offer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 119). Social distance represents social relations between the producer, the viewer, and the represented participant, which is realized by the size of the frame. This means that with close-ups or wide shots the producer of the image can establish different levels of familiarity between the viewer and the represented participant. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 124) Here an example could be a close-up shot of an image showing a person from the shoulders up. The close-up allows the conveying of strong familiarity and even some level of intimacy between the represented participant and the viewer.

Finally, the point of view deals with the use of both horizontal and vertical angles. Horizontal angles convey attitude, which classifies images into subjective and objective ones. It is

deemed naturally neutral yet altered by angles. With horizontal angles, the producer can convey levels of involvement or detachment. On the other hand, with vertical angles the producer can convey hierarchies and power relations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 134-140). As an example of the use of point of view and the relation to power is an image where the represented participant is photographed from a lower level. This then places the viewer to a position of looking up at the represented participant making them feel more powerful than the viewer.

Compositional meaning

Compositional meaning relates the representational and interactive meanings of the image to each other through three interrelated systems (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). These three principles of composition are information value, salience, and framing. Kress and van Leeuwen (idem.) introduce "Information value" by stating that it deals with the placement of elements such as the participants and objects and how they relate to each other and to the viewer. They (idem.) add that in the assessment of information value there are certain informational values attached to the various "zones" of the image. Examples of these zones are top and bottom, left and right and centre and margin.

The first of these zones are the "left" and the "right" sides of an image called the Ideal and The Real (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 181) Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 181) explain that the left is called the "Given" because generally the elements placed on the left side are of such a nature that they are presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message. In contrast, the right side is considered the "New", due to the elements there being presented as something that is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention (idem.).

While The Given and The New focus on the analysis of the compositional elements of the left and right sides of images, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 186) also introduce a theory of the interpretation of the top and bottom of an image. They (idem.) state that in advertising the top is quite often reserved for the visualization of the product, its glamour, or the fulfilment it provides, whereas the lower section visualizes the product itself, providing more or less factual information and telling the viewer how to for example order it, obtain it or find

information on it. The information presented at the top part is called The Ideal and the information presented at the bottom is The Real (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 186-187).

Furthermore, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 186-187), for something to be The Ideal it needs to be presented as idealized or as essential information making it the most salient part. In contrast, for something to be The Real, it needs to present information that is specific, practical, or more-down-earth in its portrayal, such as maps or directions for action (idem.).

The final informational value structure in Kress and van Leeuwen's framework (2006, 179-200) is called the Centre and Margins. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 196) summarize them by stating simply that when a visual composition makes significant use of the centre area of an image by placing one element to the middle and other elements around it, the element in the middle is called "The Centre" and the surrounding elements around it, are called Margins. They (idem.) add that for something to be The Centre it needs to be at the nucleus of the information to which the other elements are subordinate in some sense or another. These subordinate and dependent elements are The Margins. Margins are also often identical or very similar to each other, so that there is no sense of division between the Given and The New and/or Ideal and Real elements within the images.

Salience refers to how a hierarchy of importance among the elements is created. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 202) explain that salience is not objectively measurable, but it rather results from complex interaction. They (idem.) provide some examples of the different factors affecting the salience of an element. Among these factors are size, sharpness of focus, tonal contrasts, colour contrasts, placement in the visual field, perspective, overlapping elements and specific cultural factors such as the human figure or cultural symbol. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 201) also note that the assessment of salience can also mean that sometimes the Given can be more salient than the New, or the other way around, or they can even be of equal salience. The same applies for Ideal and Real as well as the Centre and Margins as well.

Framing refers to the relationship between the degree of connectedness and the significance of individuality or differentiation. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 203) explain that the elements or groups of elements are either disconnected or connected or joined together. They (idem.) suggest that in visual composition it is also a matter of degree, meaning that some

element might be strongly or weakly framed as well. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (idem.) the stronger the framing of an element is the more it represents its own separate unit of information and signifies individuality and differentiation. In contrast, the absence of framing highlights togetherness and group identity (idem.).

Modality Markers

In the present study, the principle of "modality" is seen as an important aspect of the analysis of compositional meaning. There have been conflicting opinions and sources on the positioning of modality within the framework. In Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading images* (2006, 154) modality is a separate category from other the three levels of meaning making. Hu & Luo (2016, 157) citing Kress and van Leeuwen, argue that modality comes from linguistics and refers to the truth value or credibility of (linguistically realized) statements about the world. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 155) explain the role of modality markers and discuss such aspects as colour saturation, colour differentiation, colour modulation, etc. Due to this definition mentioning the visual realism or the lack of realism that can be achieved for example by the different modulation of the colour, the present study deems that these can be seen as compositional characteristics thus placing the assessment of "modality" under the section of compositional meaning. In the present study, modality is evaluated by using the modality markers provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-162) and these markers are further presented in their own section in the present study.

The term 'modality' refers to the truth value or credibility of (linguistically realized) statements about the world. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 155) Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 155-156) argue that modality is more interpersonal than ideational. This is because the viewers' judgement is always tied to the social and cultural context, and to the overarching understanding of what is considered "real". Modality does not represent absolute truths or falsehoods, but, rather, what one understands as the shared truth in their own social environment.

In visual communication, the concept of modality is essential as well. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 156) describe how visuals can represent people, places, and things as though they are real or exist in this way. Reversely, visuals can also represent things as if they are fantasies,

imaginings, or caricatures. Kress and van Leeuwen (idem.) add that with visual composition, too, the judgement of modality is social and dependent on what is considered real in the social environment or group.

The assessment of modality can be separated into two points of view, the naturalistic, and the scientific view. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 158) explained that from the naturalistic point of view, reality "is defined on the basis of how much correspondence there is between the visual representation of an object and what we normally see of that object with the naked eye." Scientific realism on the other hand observes and defines reality based on what things are like generically or regularly. In the present study modality is assessed from the standpoint of naturalistic modality.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-173) detail different ways to approach the assessment of modality. For the purposes of the present study and its scope, the concept of "modality markers" were chosen as they provide a detailed enough toolkit for the assessment of modality within the chosen pieces of data. Any additional evaluation of the modality will be done if deemed necessary by the content of each data piece. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 154) explained that modality markers are the tools or guidelines to use in the evaluation of the modality or the "realness" of the depicted image. Because people must trust some of the information they see, these modality markers work as cues in helping viewers to understand what can be regarded as credible and what should be treated with suspicion. The markers have been established within the social environment and groups one interacts with themselves, and they have developed out of central values, beliefs, and social needs of that specific group.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-162) named eight different modality markers for the assessment of the realness of a visual composition. The first three markers deal with the role of colour: the first one is colour saturation, the second colour differentiation and the third colour modulation (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 160). Colour saturation means the use of a scale running from full colour saturation to the absence of colour, i.e., black and white. Colour differentiation refers to the use of different colours and here the evaluation uses a scale of a diverse range of colours to complete monochrome. Finally, colour modulation focuses on the uses of different shades of colour ranging from a scale of using many different shades of the same colour to unmodulated colour (idem.).

The fourth modality marker is called "contextualisation" and it deals with the presence of background. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006,161) stated that when assessing contextualisation, the scale ranges from complete absence of background to most fully articulated and detailed background. In a naturalistic orientation, the absence of setting lowers modality as the represented participant becomes generic and a "type example" of sorts. When the image has no background, it will be referred to as "decontextualized". When the image has a background, it is "contextualized", and its scale runs from full contextualisation to plain and unmodulated background.

The fifth modality marker was introduced by "Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 161) as "representation" and it focuses on the scale of the represented participant or object. It is assessed through a scale running from maximum abstraction to maximum representation of detail. This means that too much depicted detail can lower the modality as it makes the image "hyper-real". The sixth modality marker was called "depth". Kress and van Leeuwen (2006,162) state that depth is evaluated by a scale of total absence of depth to maximally deep perspective. In naturalism, the highest modality is achieved with a central perspective. With depth, the perspective can also become "more than real" through the use of converging vertical lines or a "fish-eye" perspective, thus lowering the modality (idem.)

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 162) named "illumination" as the seventh modality marker. Illumination is evaluated on a scale of fullest representation of the use of light and shade to its complete absence. The highest modality is achieved when participants are affected by the source of illumination as they would. Lower modality is reached when the illumination is abstracted or removed and instead shadows and shading are used.

The final modality marker stated by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 162) is "brightness". Brightness is evaluated by a scale of running from maximum number of different degrees of brightness to just two degrees; black and white, dark grey and lighter grey or brightness values of the same colour. The ability of basic photography to differentiate different levels of brightness values is limited, thus when exceeding these limits, the image can be perceived once again as "more than real" thus lowering the modality of the image.

There are some limitations to the use of these modality markers that Kress and van Leeuwen provide. The framework provides analytic tools by offering the terminology and the points of view from which modality can be observed in the form of each individual marker. However, the framework is partly too vague and does not provide a specific enough evaluation scale for the level of modality. For this reason, in the present study the assessment of each marker in the data is based around the framework and terminology provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-162) with the evaluation happening through my subjective view on what is perceived as natural.

3. Previous research on multimodality and video games in an advertising context

3.1 Multimodality and advertising

Significant scholars of advertising were Barthes (1977) and Williamson (1978) who both analysed advertising discourse from the semiotic perspective. Barthes studied the relationship between images and information in advertisements. McCabe (2009, para 3) explained that in Barthes's studies he identified three classes of message within the selected advertisement: linguistic, symbolic, and literal. Linguistic messages had two kinds of meanings: denoted and connoted. Denoted messages refer to for example labels and captions. Whereas connoted messages are implied or suggested in addition to literal meaning. Symbolic messages (also called connoted images) represent what is being communicated symbolically through the visual elements of the advertisement. Finally, the literal messages mean when something is communicated to the viewer as they are, and they are meant to be taken as they are without a code. (McCabe, 2009, para. 3) The work by Barthes works as an early foundation showing how advertisements have multiple levels of meaning and multiple ways of messaging to the viewers.

Hu & Luo (2016, 158) cited (Han, 2011) who brought up Judith Williamson's (1978) work where she argued that advertisements drew on the reader's already existing social and cultural understanding and that advertisement analysis is not only a process of coding and decoding. This means that for something to have connoted meanings, there needs to be a basis of cultural or societal knowledge to reflect the message against meaning that everyone has their own background that affects their interpretation and understanding of messages (Harvey, 2011, 2). This idea is important as it elaborates advertisement's communication process and highlights the fact that advertisements do not exist in a vacuum.

Hu & Luo (2016, 158) also cited Geis (1982) bringing up his studies of commercial television advertisements from the point of view of conversational implicature and cooperation principles. They (idem.) highlighted Geis's (1982) notion that advertising language is persuasive. Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) investigated social motivation in advertising discourse by using the pragmatic perspective. They showed that numerous sociological issues

such as sex, social class and perception play a part in how we understand advertisement language strategies and how society interprets meaning-making in advertisements. (Awonusi, 1996, 2)

Cook (1992) studied the interaction amongst music, picture, text, and people. He analysed advertisements' social functions and aesthetic effects with explanations drawn from semiotics, poetics, and linguistics. (Cook, 1992 as cited by Hu & Luo, 2016, 31) He (idem.) saw ads as pieces of cohesive discourse and as part of complex interaction, rather than as an isolated object. (Awonusi, 1996, 2) Cook's (1992) work is especially applicable to research in the field of game advertising, as games, too, tightly incorporate several multimodal elements such as moving image, music, text, and digital graphics. The interaction of music, picture, text, and people are all strongly present in for example television advertisements of a video game.

Huang (2001) based his analysis of advertising discourse on Halliday's theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics. His work expanded on Halliday's approach by adding additional steps to the process discourse analysis arguing that discourse analysis process cannot be oversimplified (Huang, 2001, cited by Hengxing, 2019, 36). Cheong (2004, cited by Nugroho, 2009, 75) focused on the structure of advertisements and divided their structures into two components: The visual and the linguistic. She (Cheong 2004 cited by Nugroho, 2009, 75) concluded that all advertisements have two mandatory elements that are always present: the first being the image that should be the most salient part and the second being a linguistic component that is usually a slogan and may accompany the image. Cheong's distinction is relevant in terms of the present study as the data of the present study preliminarily seem to follow Cheong's (2004) finding mentioned above with more emphasis on the visual elements and linguistic components being left as secondary. The present study does not focus primarily on the structure of the advertisements, but similar separation of components can occur in the study section.

Ding (2012) brought up the discussion of the applicability of visual grammar to English print public service advertisements using the framework of systemic functional grammar. Following Chandler's (1994) model, Al-momani, Migdadi & Bedarneh (2016) conducted a semiotic analysis of Arabic print commercials. Their main discoveries were that the advertisements represented specific values from the viewer's socio-cultural and ideological

repertoire, meaning the viewer's values were often reflected in the advertisements they would see. (Al-Momani, Migdadi & Badarneh, 2016, para 1.) Their work is similar to Williamson's (1978) earlier study that highlighted the contextual factors playing a crucial part in the advertisement's communication.

Finally, Hu & Luo (2016) analysed Air France's print advertisements, using a social semiotic approach in their analysis. Hu & Luo (2016) also conducted a multimodal discourse analysis on Tmall's Double Eleven advertisement. In both of their studies they applied Kress and van Leeuwen 's framework to analyse the semiotic resources featured in their targeted ads, and to investigate what was being communicated to the viewer by these resources.

3.2 Previous research on video game advertising

Previous research on video games and advertising shows that for most of the field the focus has been on a critical study of advertisements, or on *in-game advertisements* and the commercial brands that use those advertisements. Less attention has been paid on visual features of the ads, or on to the content of the communication to the viewer. However, some studies have conducted content analysis. The studies presented in this section illustrate the state of the art of video game advertising research. Additionally, the studies presented here highlight the research gap of studies like the present study among the field of video game advertising research.

Shira (2011) conducted a critical study on game advertising, analysing the links between images of productivity, video game advertisements and gender, especially for the purpose of establishing and illustrating how games are marketed towards women. Her study highlighted that productivity and self-help were major factors and themes in advertising towards women. (Shira, 2016, para 1.)

Also, Behm-Morawitz (2017) conducted a critical analysis of video game marketing, paying attention to race and gender. Her major finding was that in the USA, the advertisements still tend to uphold old stereotypes.

Combs (2010) conducted a content analysis on video game trailers and print advertisements with the focus on being the portrayal of violence in them. Her study indicated that violence is prevalent in video games, with almost 80% of the games including violent content. (Combs, 2010, para 3.) Cao (2010) on the other hand also utilized content analysis but he focused on how the advertising of a virtual world is conducted in Chinese and U.S and how they differ from each other. The study found out that in both China and the US men were more dominantly featured, while women were sexualized when presented. Additionally, violence was more prominent in the US advertisements. (Cao, 2010, para 1.) Both studies applied a content analysis approach, but from a critical perspective.

The studies presented next represent the orientation of business studies to the investigation of advertisements as the overarching theme in the features studies focus more on brand awareness and effectiveness of the advertisements, rather than the content or the communication.

Moonhee, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinu & Arpan (2006) studied in-game advertising and its effectiveness in terms of implicit and explicit memory for the brand names featured in the games. Their study showed that their subjects, college students, had low levels of explicit memory when it came to the brands, but showed implicit memory when it came to the names of the brands.   (Moonhee, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinu & Arpan, 2006, para 1.)

Yoo & Eastin (2017) analysed the link between the game context and the evaluation of brands in video games. Their findings demonstrated that both a positive and negative game context, decreased the brand memory due to them recurring a high level of cognitive effort. This means that regardless of how the player felt about the advertisement, the brand memory decreased in any case. (Yoo & Eastin, 2017, para 1.)

Williams (2019) analysed the recognition and recollection of brand advertisements in a driving game and sought to find out what kinds of advertisements were best remembered and why. His study showed that the ads that were integrated into the game environment were better recognized than virtual billboards. Landmarks were better recognized than either integrated ads or billboards. (Williams, 2019, para 1.)

Walsh, Zimmerman, Clavio & Williams (2014) studied the brand awareness levels when comparing in-game advertisements with visual and verbal cue to those with just the visual ad with the brand logo. The major discovery in the study was that the awareness levels were significantly higher with both verbal and visual cues. (Walsh, Zimmerman, Clavio & Williams, 2014, para 1.)

In sum, it seems that the field of video game advertisement studies has largely ignored the multimodal study of print advertisements. Most of the existing studies have taken either a critical or strictly business-oriented approach. The critical approach somewhat limits how the advertisements can be viewed: it narrows the scope of study. Business studies, on the other hand, seemed to have focused quite narrowly on the effectiveness of selected advertisements.

4. Set-up of the present study

4.1 Research Questions

Remedy Entertainment is a Finnish game company that is known for their adventure games and that have interesting and varying themes as well as game mechanics that defy physics and the boundaries of realism. There is pressure on the producers to create advertisements that can encapsulate the core elements of the game such as the mood, the mechanics, and the narrative to attract viewers to interact with the advertisements and then hopefully to encourage them to purchase and play their games.

The present study is interested in analysing the visual, verbal, and structural modes that the marketers have chosen to use as well as evaluating the rationale behind the chosen elements. This is done by analysing all the elements of the representational, interactive, and compositional meaning making, following Kress and van Leeuwen's framework (2006, 16-175). In the present study, the aim is to analyse each of the advertisements selected as data separately and section by section. The purpose is to both identify the visual modes used and those omitted.

The present study looks to address these topics through the following research questions:

1. How is meaning created using different semiotic resources in Remedy Entertainment's game advertisements?
2. What is being communicated about the game to the viewer?

4.2 Data

The data for this study were extracted from Google Images as well from Adsoftheworld.com and Mobygames.com. The data consists of three print advertisements in total with each advertising a different Remedy Entertainment game. The first game in the analysis section is a horror/thriller game called Alan Wake released in 2010. The advertisement for Alan Wake was part of an advertising campaign that ran along with other advertisements having similar thematic messages. The advertisement chosen for the present study was featured both as a

print advertisement as well as an outdoor advertisement visible in the streets. This is then followed by a supernatural sci-fi game Control released in 2019. The advertisement for Control was used as the key art for the game as well as being used as the cover art for the game. The final piece of data is an advertisement for a film noir action game Max Payne 2 which is the oldest among the data, being released in 2003. The chosen advertisement for Max Payne 2 was used as a promotional wallpaper and a different version from it was used as the cover art in the official game and it was featured in print magazines.

The data was chosen by evaluating a list of Remedy Entertainment's published games. Due to the scope of the present study the data had to be narrowed to only three advertisements. In the process of choosing the data samples, a contributing factor was the desire to have a data set that could provide differing findings in the advertisements' design choices and communication. All the games chosen represent a different genre as the underlying assumption was that this could have the desired effect in creating differentiation between the sample pieces. Additionally, another contributing factor was the publishing year of each game as it was also assumed that having years in between each game could affect the choices made with the approaches' taken with the advertisements' designs.

Finally, a Copyright Disclaimer needs to be made. All the images and graphics used in the present study belong to their respective owners and I or this thesis does not claim any right over them. Copyright Disclaimer under section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for "fair use" for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, education and research. Fair use is a use permitted by copyright statute that might otherwise be infringing.

1. All rights for material related to Max Payne 1 and Control© belong to Remedy Entertainment Oyj.

2. All rights for the material for Alan Wake© belong to Microsoft Corporation.

3. All rights for the material for Max Payne 2© belong to Rockstar Games.

4. All rights for related to Star Wars© belong to The Walt Disney Company

4.3 Methods of analysis

The present study is conducted by individually observing the pieces of data, and then investigating them step by step using all the three categories of meaning making and their separate subcategories suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen in their *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006, 16-175).

The pieces of data are first observed through the categories of representational meaning. It was then followed by the analysis of the interactive meaning and finally compositional meaning. After identifying all the elements used in the advertisements, the analysis moves into contemplating the reason behind the producer's decision to include certain things and omit others. The present study is not concerned with whether the advertisements were successful, but rather the focus is placed on identifying the modes that are used and what is being communicated about the video games to the viewer. Additionally, the present study considers the possible underlying intentions of the image's producers on what they wanted to achieve in terms of the viewer and what information they wanted to give to them and how.

Finally, a disclaimer needs to be made concerning the analysis section. In the analysis section all the images have been provided verbal descriptions in addition to the images themselves due to the possibility of being forced to remove the images from the published version of thesis, due to possible copyright issues with the owners of the commercial and intellectual property rights for the advertisement. The verbal descriptions are there to give the reader information and context about the images being analysed. However, in the Bibliography, links are provided for all the data so that the reader can access the data outside the thesis itself.

5. Analysis

5.1 Analysis of an advertisement for the game Alan Wake

The first piece of data that is analysed is from Remedy Entertainment's game called Alan Wake. Alan Wake is classified as a psychological action thriller and in the game the core game mechanics are built around the use of light as a weapon against the threat of the darkness.

Figure 1 depicts a wall lamp that is shining its light beam on a wall. Everything around the beam of light is dark and the beam itself forms a shape that can be identified as the shape of a casket. In the beam of light, we can see that the wall that works as the background of the image is cracked. At the bottom of the image there is a smaller image of the game's cover art with the text "Dark is Deadly May 2010", which is the official slogan used in the marketing of the game.

5.1.1 Conceptual representation

My deconstruction of Figure 1 begins by looking at the participants in the image. In Figure 1, there are no actors or reactors present. The absence of an actor and reactor also means that the image does not depict a distinctive action or reaction, meaning that there are no vectors present. As narrative processes were defined by the existence of vectors, we can thus state that because Figure 1 does not have any active participants or vectors, it falls into the category of a conceptual process, rather than a narrative one.

Now that Figure 1 has been identified falling under conceptual process, the process of deciphering its independent elements becomes easier. Following Kress and van Leeuwen's model, conceptual processes can be divided into three categories, classificational, analytical and symbolic processes. For the analysis to move on, it is first necessary to identify which of these processes is prevalent in Figure 1. Figure 1 does not show any clear taxonomies which

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 79) described to be the most identifiable characteristic of a classification process thus making Figure 1 either analytical or symbolic.

In Figure 1, it could be argued that the light acts as *the Carrier* in the image and with the beam of light acting as the *possessive attribute*. This argument is further strengthened by the additional description by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 99) that states that "when analytical structures can be read as accurately representing the 'logical' relations between participants, the way in which participants are connected to each other." It is fair to argue that with a lamp and a beam of light the logical relations are quite clear.

However, Figure 1 is not placed in the analytical process category in the present study due the context of the image and in the additional elements of the image itself. Considering the context of Figure 1, it can be stated that it is not an advertisement for lamps, meaning that the purpose of the image is not to present or place under evaluation the features of the light or to state the ability, functionality, or effectiveness of the light. Instead, the purpose of the image is to advertise the game and thus communicate to the viewer about the game.

The key meaning of the image can then be stated to be communicated by something more than what is clearly visible in the image; something that is presented to the viewer with symbols and symbolism. This realization thus makes it possible that Figure 1 can be placed in the final category of conceptual processes, the symbolic process.

With Figure 1 it can be difficult to establish whether there are one or two elements, since the light and the beam of light can be thought of as either being one singular element or, optionally, they can be viewed as separate elements. In the present study, it is argued that Figure 1 is formed of the light (the carrier) and the beam (symbolic attribute). This argument is supported by the formal characteristics that can realize a Symbolic Attribute relation provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 105). These characteristics read as follows:

"(1) They are made salient in the representation in one way or another; for instance, by being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being especially well lit, through being represented in especially fine detail or sharp focus, or through them conspicuous colour or tone."

"(2) They are pointed at by means of a gesture which cannot be interpreted as an action other than the action of 'pointing out the symbolic attribute to the viewer' – here we can also include the arrows which can connect visual realizations of participants with verbal realizations of the same participant, or vice versa, as in figure 2.4, for these also establish a relation of identity through 'pointing'."
"(3) They look out of place in the whole, in some way."
"(4) They are conventionally associated with symbolic values."

By looking at the characteristics, three of the characteristics given by Kress and van Leeuwen match Figure 1. In Figure 1 the symbolic suggestive element is the beam of light. In addition, it is placed directly in the middle of the image which makes it the most salient part of the image itself. The size of the beam is also quite considerable, and, as it is set against a very dark background, it is the most well-lit part of the image.

As mentioned above, a Symbolic Attribute is "pointed at by means of a gesture which cannot be interpreted as an action other than the action of 'pointing out the symbolic attribute to the viewer". In Figure 1, the beam of light is the central, focal point of the image and, as stated earlier, due to the context of the advertisement, it is known that the purpose is not to promote the lamp or the special abilities of the lamp. The purpose is to tell the viewer something about the game itself, thus one can state that the light can only be interpreted as "pointing out the symbolic attribute" to the viewer. The third characteristic identified is the final one of the four listed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), according to which symbolic attributes are conventionally associated with symbolic values. In Figure 1, a casket as a symbol can be thought of fitting that description, as it is almost exclusively related to death.

The most salient part of Figure 1 is clearly the casket shaped beam of light. Casket is a symbol that can be related to death and dying. Therefore, the producer has chosen to highlight to the viewer the idea of death or danger. Another element that is strongly present in the image is darkness. A dark colour scheme, darkness, and the symbol of death all usually evoke thoughts of fear which then is the central emotion in the horror genre. This sense of uneasiness is further strengthened by the cracked and dilapidated wall that is revealed by the beam of light. The cracked wall entails symbolic meaning of sorts as it shows something broken, flawed, and rugged and the wear and tear of the world is made visible in it.

The reasons for relying on symbolic illustration, instead of a more concise communication, are most likely related to the type of game that Alan Wake is. It is a horror themed thriller game where light is the player's main weapon against the creatures of darkness. The producer has chosen to focus on creating intrigue, uneasiness, and a sense of mystery. In Figure 1 there is a sense that the advertisers have aimed to present a *narrative* for the viewer using symbolism rather than concise information. It is quite common to at least present the main character in the promotional material for games, but in Figure 1 this is not the case. The purpose of this advertisement seemingly, is not necessarily to be informative and concise, but rather to highlight the central themes of the game (death and darkness), to create a sense of mystery. This allows the viewer to engage with the advertisement and to use their imagination which then is hoped to turn into intrigue and then into a purchasing decision. The symbolic message is also supported by the verbal message: at the bottom of the advertisement spells out the symbolism by explicitly hammering in the point that "dark is deadly".

5.1.2 Interactive meaning

Contact

This next section of the analysis of Figure 1 focuses on the interactive meaning making. The first aspect to be analysed is the contact between the represented participants and the viewer. With contact, especially the gaze of the represented participants is an important part of its analysis. In Figure 1 there are no clear represented participants whose gaze could either "demand" or "offer", meaning that there are no humans or animals present in the ad. Therefore, analysing the contact between the represented participants and the viewer can be argued to be impossible in the case of Figure 1.

The omission of contact is an interesting decision from the producer of the image in terms of the medium in question and its purpose. As video games are not only a medium of storytelling but also an interactive platform; there is room argue that the establishment of some relationship through contact between the represented participant (most likely the main character of the game) and the viewer could be quite important in terms of building the interest towards the characters and the story as well as of strengthening the gamer's

willingness to play as that character. The omission of all participants and thus all contact supports the previously mentioned notion about the producer wanting to place more emphasis on creating mystery and intrigue around the game, its narrative, and its characters as well as on pushing the viewers to interact, get curious and use their imagination. The design choices of Figure 1 focus primarily on the narrative aspect with additional informative aspects assisting the interpretation of the advertisement.

Distance

The second dimension of the interactive meaning of images is related to frames and social distance. This means the observing of aspects such as the size of the frame and what choices have been made in terms of the close-up, medium shot, or long shot. The designers of images need to decide whether to depict the participants from a close distance or from far away due to these choices affecting the portrayal of the relationship and familiarity between the participants and the viewer. This also applies to the depiction of objects and their relationship to the viewer.

As stated above, in Figure 1 there are no human/animal participants present, but there is a represented participant: the lamp with the beam. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 128) argue that usually the observation of frame and distance is defined in terms of how much of the human body is featured within the frame. Despite this, they also provided three significant distances for analysing objects as well as they argue that the size of the frame can suggest that there is a particular social relation between the viewer and the objects. These three distances are close distance, middle distance, and long distance. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 127) described the close distance as having "the object is shown as if the viewer is engaged with it" They added that usually only a part of the object is shown in the frame, unless the object is very small. The middle distance was something that Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 128) argued to be common in advertising. At middle distance, the object is shown in full, but without much space around it and it is represented as within the viewer's reach but not actually in use (idem). In advertising, this is shown as a product that is shown fully from a fairly close range, as if the viewer would be standing right in front of it. The final distance concerning objects is the long distance which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 128) describe as

involving an invincible barrier between the viewer and the object. In their view, the object is there for our contemplation only, rather than to be touched or to be held by the viewer.

When observing the distance between the viewer and the object in Figure 1, the object is shown fully, without much space around it, which aligns with the description of the middle distance by Kress and van Leeuwen. This interpretation is further supported by the fact that Kress and van Leeuwen specifically mentioned advertisements as an example of the middle distance, meaning that the middle distance is fairly standardized especially with advertisements because it creates the effect of a showcase. Therefore, Figure 1 insinuates levels of engagement with the object (the lamp) such as being in the same room and in a proximity with the object, but not involving a high level of engagement from the viewer.

As the chosen distance conveys a level of engagement, it also has a functional purpose in terms of what the advertisement communicates. As described above, this distance "places the viewer into the same room" with the object, meaning that in Figure 1, the producer wants to put the viewer in this dark, dilapidated room that conveys an ominous sense of mystery and fear coupled with a symbolic message of death. By doing this, the producer of the image puts the viewer inside the world of the game but does it so that the viewer is given the role of a witness as the distance did not imply full engagement with the world. Once again keeping the horror/thriller game context in mind, by placing the viewer close to the world and effectively its horrors, communicates a sense of dread to the viewer.

A key factor in horror or thriller games is the way they make the viewer feel. It is most likely that in a game like the one promoted in Figure 1; the world is used as a tool to invoke fear. Therefore, the producer is already planting the seeds for the *feel of the game* to the viewer. By doing this they can also still sustain a sense of mystery by not revealing too much. Additionally, the decision not to have a participant in the ad makes more sense as well as this way the world is experienced more personally from the point of view of the viewer.

Point of view

This final section of the analysis of interactive meaning focuses on the angle or "the point of view" from which the viewer is placed in relation to the participants, or the objects depicted in the image. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 130) stated that the angles can be used to imply "the subjective attitudes towards represented participants, human or otherwise. Kress and van Leeuwen (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 133-143) also distinguished between the horizontal and vertical angle and the difference in the implications and attitudes each offer.

My analysis focuses here first on the horizontal angles with the help of imaginary lines for both the represented participant and the photographer. It then pays attention to whether these lines run parallel to each other.

The image is presented to the viewer from the frontal angle, meaning that there are imaginary lines running parallel to each other, as it means that the photographer and the viewer are a part of, or "involved" with the world depicted in the image. When drawing the imaginary line to represent the positioning of the object, one can follow the already existing line of the wall's moulding visible at the bottom half of the image. In Figure 1.2, the frontal plane of the object is represented by the line (ab), and the frontal plane of the photographer and the viewer is represented by the line (cd). It can be seen the lines run parallel to each other solidifying Figure 1 as having a frontal angle. As the frontal angle typically conveys involvement, it can be stated that in Figure 1 there is a high level of involvement by the viewer with the depicted world.

The purpose behind the use of the frontal angle is to create a high level of involvement further emphasizing the producer's attempt to place the viewer into the inner world of the game. Combining the use of distance and the frontal angle, it can be concluded that the producer has no doubt wanted the viewer to feel like a part of the game world through the advertisement. Involving the viewer is also not highly surprising as advertisements usually tend to try and involve the viewer rather than to alienate them from the advertised product.

While the horizontal angle was used to convey levels of involvement or detachment, the vertical angle is, in turn, used to convey the positions of power between the represented participants or object and the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 140) discussed how a high angle makes the subject look insignificant and reversely, how a low angle makes the

subject seem imposing and powerful. When the image is shown at an eye level and the point of view is one of equality, there is no power difference involved.

When observing Figure 1, it does not have a high or low angle, but rather the entity in it is depicted at the eye level. This suggests that there is no clear power relation present in Figure 1. The lack of a power relation and the decision to choose the eye level convey the sense that the scene shown in the advertisement is experienced through the eyes of the viewer. The neutrality is a subtle way to inject a sense of "normalcy" into a scene that is relatively packed with an unnatural feel to it.

5.1.3 Compositional meaning

This section of the analysis focuses on the evaluation of the compositional meaning. As mentioned earlier, compositional meaning focuses on information value, salience, and framing. In addition, this section includes an analysis of the levels of "modality" in Figure 1.

Informational Value

This section focuses first on the information value of Figure 1. As stated earlier, informational value can be offered using three different structures. The first one is the left and right-side separation, called The Given and The New. The second one is the top to bottom separation, called The Ideal and The Real. And, finally, the third structure is the separation into a centre zone and margins around it called The Centre and Margins (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 179-201).

It can first be stated that in Figure 1 the information value is not provided with the use of Given and the New structure. The image is not divided distinctively into left and right sides, but instead it seems that the only relevant element of the image is featured at the centre zone of the image. At the same time, Figure 1 does apply The Ideal and The Real structure to some extent.

In Figure 1 there is a clear horizontal line formed by the moulding on the wall. This line creates a separation between the top half and the bottom half in Figure 1. At the top half, there lies the lamp and the beam it forms, conveying the symbolic message of the theme of the game: death, fear, and danger. The argument for The Ideal demands some explanation as it can be difficult so see how the symbolic meaning of "death" and "danger" can be seen as something *ideal.* By looking at the definition Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 187) stated that for something to be "The Ideal" it would need to present itself either idealized OR as *essential or most salient information.* In Figure 1, the lamp and the beam occupy most of the space in the image and together they might not provide the most information, but at the same time they constitute the most salient part of the image, thus making it "The Ideal".

The Real in Figure 1 is presented at the bottom using a smaller image and linguistic means. At the bottom, there is a small image representing the official cover art of the game and the name of the game "Alan Wake". Under this there is the caption "Dark is deadly May 2010" and beneath it the text stating "Xbox 360". All these elements provide "The Real" because they provide the real concrete, more down-to-earth informative aspects of the ad.

 While the top portion of the image is surrounded by mystery and symbolism, the smaller image tells the viewer what is the real visual of the game's cover, or, to put it another way, it tells the viewer what to look for when shopping online or going through the game shelfs. The tagline gives additional context to the image and information to the viewer. "Dark is deadly" is a tagline but it is also a statement about the game, something that the viewer understands. May 2010, on the other hand is there for the viewer to understand that this is referring to the month of the launch. Finally, the notion of Xbox 360 gives The Real in terms of the context of the image being that of a video game and additionally, it states the name of the game device the game is meant to be played on.

In Figure 1 there is also a strong sense of the Centre and Margin composition as the beam of light is the element that occupies the central zone in the image. However, as there are no clear margins visible in Figure 1, and as The Ideal and The Real description better matches with the structure of the image, it can be stated that The Ideal and The Real is the prevalent structure of Figure 1.

Salience

The analysing of the salience within a composition is done based on visual cues, meaning that the viewer can intuitively distinguish the "weight" of the various elements of a composition. The greater the weight, the greater is the salience of the element. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 202)

With Figure 1, the assessment of the salience of the elements is straightforward as there are not too many elements in the image to begin with. The most salient element in Figure 1 is the beam of light forming the shape of a coffin. The size of the beam fills most of the space and is by far the largest individual element visible in the image. The overarching colour scheme in Figure 1 is of darker tone or that of straight black, whereas the beam of light contrasts this overlaying dark tone with much lighter, blueish colour, thus highlighting the element and increasing its salience. In addition, the beam of light has increased salience due to its placement at the top portion of the visual field as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 202) stated that elements that are towards the top are more "heavy thus making them more salient". The perspective also adds the salience of the beam of light as it occupies the foreground making it more salient than objects in the background. Finally, it can be argued that the cultural factor is also present in Figure 1 as the shape of the coffin fulfils the definition of "potent cultural symbol" as it has such a strong connection to death or imagery of death.

The producer's decision to make the beam of light the most salient part of the image coincides with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, 203) notion that in many advertisements the top section that has the "promise of the product" is often the most salient part. This means that the Ideal and Real are ranked in importance as well. As stated in the Ideal and Real section of the present study, the light beam was also identified as "the Ideal" further solidifying the argument for its salience. This suggests that advertisers most likely direct readers to notice the attractive images at the top first and hook them. As noted above, in Figure 1, the beam of light and the symbolism behind its casket shape are used to attract the viewer by getting their attention, while also forcing them to consider the meaning behind the symbolism, and thus to interact and engage with the advertisement. It does not necessarily communicate a lot to the viewer, but it nevertheless achieves its goal as it effectively allows the viewer to participate in evaluating what is being communicated about the game.

Framing

When observing the framing within an image, the main focus turns to whether the elements in the image are connected to or disconnected from one another. In Figure 1, there is both framing and disconnecting. As stated above, there is a horizontal line formed by the moulding on the wall. This line creates a division between the top and bottom portions of Figure 1, thus separating the Ideal of the game's world and the reality of the information of the bottom.

Another level of framing and disconnecting comes from the use of colour around the beam of light when relating it to the rest of the environment. In Figure 1, the beam of the light is of a distinctively different colour from the darker background. However, the beam of light is surrounded by a sphere of darker light that is then in turn surrounded by complete darkness. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 204) stated that framing can be achieved through clear lines or by *discontinuing of colour*. With Figure 1, the different shades of colour create a frame around the central element (beam of light). Observing the image from the centre outwards, the lightest shade of colour is used in the coffin shape light. This is then followed by the slightly darker sphere of light around it, and then the colour finally gradually shifts to the overarching darkness. This gradual discontinuation of colour from one shade to another, from lighter to darker creates a gradual disconnection between the beam of light and the darkness thus framing them as separate.

The division of Figure 1into the top and bottom halves make sense considering the image is an advertisement. As noted above, this allows the image to convey different things with different purposes within the same image. The gradual disconnection between the beam of light from the rest of the image communicates to the viewer that the light is the most salient part, and in a sense, it is where the viewer should want to focus on, since it is in the light where they see the most and get the most information. This framing also highlights the role of light not just within Figure 1, but its role in the game as well. The producer of the image has chosen to give out very little to the viewer to focus on other than the light, therefore forcing the viewer to really think about the symbolism within the image and its overall meaning. The further away one moves from the light, the less they can make of the image and make of the world it is depicting. Everything outside the light is a mystery.

Modality

 In this section, drawing on the notion of modality markers, the analysis focuses on assessing the modality of Figure 1. Here the purpose is to assess the overall naturalness of the image. As mentioned before, the framework by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-163) provided the terms and elements that affect the modality of an image. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) offer a broad scale of evaluation for modality but fail to give a precise framework for the evaluation which is why the overall assessment of "naturalness" relies on the subjective perception of the author of the present study.

The first three modality markers all dealt with the use of colour, with the first point of focus being *"colour saturation"*. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 159) state that the more colour is taken away and the colours of the representation are made more abstract, the lower the modality. Here the scale runs from full saturation to absence of colour, black and white.

In Figure 1, the use of colour is very much leaning towards darker tones, such as black, grey and, at its brightest, shades of grey with a tint of blue. The use of colour in Figure 1 is thus minimal, with darker tones dominating much of the image. Even the brighter colours that contrast with the pure black are still either dark blueish, light greyish and, partly, close to white. This places Figure 1 strongly on the side of the "absence of colour" and "black and whiteness" on the scale of colour saturation. Therefore, it can be stated that from the standpoint of colour saturation Figure 1 has a low level of naturalistic modality.

The second modality marker focused on *colour differentiation* which has a scale extending from a maximally diversified range of colours to monochrome. It has the same evaluation standard as colour saturation, meaning the greater the abstraction, the lower the naturalistic modality. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 160)

As stated in the previous section, the colour palette here is limited to three or four distinct colours that all are on the darker side of the scale. Therefore, as Figure 1 has low levels of colour differentiation and as monochromatism represents the low end on the modality scale, it can be stated that in terms of colour differentiation, Figure 1 has a low level of naturalistic modality. The final modality marker dealing with the use of colour is *colour modulation*

which has a scale of fully modulated colours, meaning the use of many different shades of a certain colour, to plain, unmodulated colours. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 160)

Even though there is a low level of colour differentiation in Figure 1, it still has different shades of primary colours, as the shift in colour happens gradually. If observing the ad from the outside in, the outside is the darkest, purely black which then shifts into lighter greyish tone before then shifting back to a darker blue tone, which then once again shifts into a lighter bluish tone. It can also be observed that if the advertisement is looked at from top to bottom, the beam of light has its darkest tone of blue at its top which then gradually shifts in tone towards more lighter tones, eventually reaching a tone close to almost pure white. Thus, we can see here colour modulation as a factor that increases the modality of the image. Thus, it can be stated that from the point of colour modulation, Figure 1 has a high level of naturalistic modality.

Moving on from the modality markers that deal with colour, the next marker is *contextualisation* which assesses the background. The evaluation scale of contextualisation runs from the complete absence of background to the most detailed one. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 161) In Figure 1, the differentiation of background and foreground can be made through the process of salience. As the most salient part of Figure 1, the beam of light forms the foreground. Most of the image's space is filled with pure black colour with the only visible background element in the image being the dilapidated wall filled with cracks that can be seen behind the beam.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 161) state that in the scale from unmodulated background to fully contextualized, there is a step away from "full contextualisation". This is the case when there is a setting, but it is "out of focus to some degree or in which it loses detail through overexposure resulting in either "ethereal brightness" or "underexposing resulting in muddy darkness (idem.). This means that the image has some "props" to suggest a setting.

Taking these statements into consideration, it can be argued that Figure 1 has a setting where it loses detail due to underexposure, overarching darkness and the use of unmodulated colour black. Still, Figure 1 has a few "props" such as the lamp, the power plug and the wall's moulding and the cracks that do contextualize it a bit. Thus, in terms of contextualisation it can be stated that Figure 1 has a level of contextualisation, but that it also fulfils the described

elements of decontextualization, thus placing its naturalistic modality value somewhere to the middle ground.

Moving on to the assessment of the next modality marker called *representation*. For representation, the provided scale runs from maximum abstraction to that of maximum representation of pictorial detail. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 161) When observing Figure 1, it must be stated that most of the image is covered in darkness, making the points for observations scarce. Figure 1 has low modality in terms of representation. Using the zoom function pictorial details were found, but this only strengthens the notion of low modality, as the average viewer's naked eye could not distinguish these details and as they are visible with only the zoom it creates a sense of hyper realism which is also considered unnatural.

Moving towards the final three modality markers, the next marker is *depth.* Depth was analysed through the scale of complete absence of depth to maximally deep perspective. As shown above, Figure 1 has a central perspective. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 162), in the naturalism standard the central perspective has the highest modality. Therefore, in terms of depth and the use of perspective, according to the naturalism standards of modality, Figure 1 has a high level of modality.

The second to last modality marker to be discussed is *illumination.* Illumination is viewed through a scale of full representation of the play of light and shade, to its absence entirely. In Figure there is a clear source of illumination, but instead of natural shadows, the light and its illumination are almost consumed by not only the shade but the overwhelming darkness around it. In essence, the light's illumination stops in a very unnatural way. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 162) state that shading can be used to highlight certain areas against the natural logic of illumination. They add that one of the ways to achieve this is to apply fully modulated darkening of the shadow area and with just two degrees of brightness. This description seems to describe Figure 1 rather closely in its use of illumination to highlight the centre area and essentially the most salient part. The use of illumination in Figure 1 also creates an unnatural effect where against general logic of illumination, the darkness seems to overpower the light which in real life would be the other way round. In terms of natural illumination and its implication to modality, it can be stated that Figure 1 does not fulfil the naturalistic standards set for illumination, but rather end up abstracting them thus creating an overall lower level of modality for the image.

The final modality marker to be studied upon is *brightness.* Brightness can be evaluated through a range going from maximum number of different degrees of brightness to just two degrees such as black and white or two values of the same colour such as light and dark grey. The assessment of Figure 1 from the point of view of brightness creates a few different points of contemplation. According to the evaluation criteria (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 162), the highest level of modality comes from the maximum number of different degrees of brightness. When observing Figure 1, the viewer can see five to seven degrees of brightness, depending on the device one is using when observing, as some degrees were more visible on different screens. The brightness essentially decreases the further the viewer's gaze moves away from the lightbulb. Thus, it can be stated that there are several different shades of brightness visible in Figure 1. However, it is true that there are degrees of brightness in Figure 1, but these degrees essentially all come from black, grey, and blue, which all are on the darker side of the colour palette. The overarching dark colour scheme creates an ethereal feel to the image which in traditional sense does not convey the sense of "natural", but rather the opposite.

Finally, after assessing all the modality markers separately, the overall modality or realness of Figure 1 can be assessed. The use of colour, the colour saturation, and the colour differentiation all lowered the overall modality of Figure 1. The colour modulation is the only colour related marker that was used in a way that matched the standard of high modality. Figure 1 has both levels of contextualisation as well as decontextualization, which places its overall modality somewhere in the middle of the scale. With representation, Figure 1 portrays abstraction as well as strong pictorial details which represents both ends of the scale resulting in lowering modality. Depth, in turn, is depicted in a very straightforward way, from the frontal perspective thus providing the highest level of modality. The final two markers are illumination and brightness. Illumination shows that the way light works in Figure 1 does not correspond with the natural standards and brightness. From a technical standpoint, it fulfils some aspects of the naturalness standard, while simultaneously showing modality lowering traits. In the end, it seems that with both illumination and brightness, Figure 1's representation ends in the lower section on the modality scale.

From this summary, the following conclusions can be drawn. Figure 1 in many sections possesses elements of natural modality but its overarching, dominant elements overwhelm

them and lower the overall modality. With almost all the markers (disregarding depth and colour modulation) the final verdict on the naturalness placed Figure 1 at the lower end of the scale. Therefore, taking all of this into consideration it can be stated that Figure 1 does not depict naturalness, but it still contains elements that are generally perceived as natural, which is why the viewer can understand that Figure 1 is supposed to portray "realness" or "real world", but this is also why the viewer can still understand on a superficial level that what they are seeing is still not "real". With the context being that of a game advertisement, it is also unlikely that these decisions were made unintentionally. This is because many video games place themselves somewhere in the middle of our reality and the reality within the game. Additionally, once again retaining the notion that Figure 1 is an advertisement for a horror game, unnaturalness is something that is often quite prevalent in that genre. Therefore, it can be assumed that the decisions to portray darkness in terms of the use of light and colours are purposefully made in a way that it strikes the viewer as unnaturally dark. Unnaturalness is something humans tend to fear as it is something we cannot fully understand. Darkness is also another very common and primal source of fear. By having an unnaturally dark image, the producer has tried to prod on some underlying sources of discomfort in the viewers.

5.2 Analysis of an advertisement for the game Control

Figure 2: Control advertisement (unaltered)

The second piece of data under investigation in this study is taken from Remedy Entertainment's game called "Control". In Figure 2 there is a red-haired woman standing almost sideways in the middle of the space. She has her left arm extended with its hand open and the right arm is holding a gun close to her side. Behind her there is an upside-down triangle with a black and red colour scheme with the red portion of the triangle resembling a water splash shape. The rest of the background has a fog-like layer with white and light grey colours.

5.2.1 Representational meaning

Narrative representation

Once again, my analysis starts from identifying whether Figure 2 falls into the category of narrative or conceptual representation. Unlike in Figure 1, Figure 2 has a clear participant, a woman who is the actor in the image. There are vectors emanating from her hand and from

her gaze. This first and foremost allows the making of the statement that Figure 2 is portraying a "narrative representation." There is a gun featured in the image, but it can be argued that, as the gun is not being used or even pointed, it is in a passive role and not in fact part of the action process. The gun can be likened to almost a tool and as the tool is not being used for its intended purpose it becomes more of an extension of the participant, rather than being another represented participant. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 52) referred to this kind of model as having "compounded participants' ', where participants are "welded together" but remain as distinct components of the whole. In the case of Figure 2, the woman and the gun are welded together as part of a whole thus forming the Actor.

Now, to further dissect the nature of Figure 2, it must be considered whether the image depicts an action process or reaction process and additionally whether the image is transactional or non-transactional. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 62-63) state that action processes are effectively those in which "the Actor is the participant from which the vector emanates...or forms the vector." The antithesis of the action process is the "reaction process". Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 67) define reaction processes as having vectors that are formed by an eyeline or by the direction of a glance..

Looking at the definitions provided above and reflecting them to Figure 2, it can be stated that there are clear vectors emanating from the extended left hand of the woman thus making the woman the Actor of the image. According to the definition by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 63), The Action processes are those in which The Actor is the participant that forms the vector or has it emanating from itself. This presence of an Actor then makes Figure 2 an image that features an *Action process*.

As the gun cannot fully be thought of as being the goal in Figure 2 the focus shifts to the most dynamic element of the image - the extended hand left hand. The left hand creates a vector that points somewhere outside of the image's reach. The vectors formed by the gaze point to the same direction as the ones emanating from the hand which further implies that the Goal of the image is located outside of the image and outside of the viewer's perception. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 63) state that images that have only one participant are non-transactional – this matches the conditions of Figure 2, making its structure a non-transactional action process.

Figure 2.1 showing the vectors in Figure 2

The nature of this action plays a key role in understanding what the process is trying to communicate to the viewer about the game. The woman's arm is extended in a rather unnatural way as it does not match any common gesture in our cultural conventions such as greeting someone by lifting one's hand up or the act of pointing at something when wanting to direct someone's attention. The image states "control" that can help the viewer's interpretation of the scene. One assumption could be that the woman is looking to possibly block or protect herself from something or to signal stopping, but it seems unlikely due to her otherwise collected body posture and calm facial expression. As the act in the context of the image does not make a lot of sense, once again the additional external context needs to be considered. Figure 2 seems to rely on either the further knowledge of the game's context and narrative or on the understanding of popular culture. This sort of hand gesture in popular culture is very often associated with telekinesis or powers likened to that with the most popular example coming from the Star Wars franchise and its depiction of the use of the supernatural power known as the Force.

Through this interpretation or understanding of the mannerism and being able to link it to the use of some sort of 'invincible powers', the viewer can begin to interact with the image and

use their imagination to theorize the events or actions that are happening or being done outside of the frame of the image.

The Actor of the image can be assumed to be the protagonist of the game as she is portrayed heavily in the front and centre and given a salient role within the image's composition. This impression is also strengthened by the assessment of the relationship between the Actor and the viewer (see below). As the action (the hand motion) is ambiguous, in the same way as Figure 1, Figure 2 also pulls the viewer to interact and engage with the image. However, this time it is achieved by having the viewer focus on the action process. The hand is the most dynamic portion of the image that draws the viewer's attention. This then triggers the process of interpretation for the viewer where they are trying to evaluate what is the narrative within the scene depicted in the image, and how it relates to the game itself. If the viewer understands the meaning of the gesture and can relate it to the supernatural abilities, they can engage even more with the image by using their imagination to try and fill in the blanks of what is happening outside of the scene. This is enforced by the character's stance, the position of her arm and the direction of her gaze as they are all directed towards the same direction outside of the scene depicted in the image.

In addition, the viewer can see that The Actor has a gun. Even though it was deemed as a part of the Actor and it is not a part of any action itself, as a visual it has communicative value. Upon seeing the gun, the viewer can assume that it plays some role in the game. The game can be assumed to be a shooting game or at least an adventure game. Guns and weapons are objects often present in the adventure genre in general, therefore the presence of one in Figure 2 communicates that the game possibly involves shooting as well as action related to shooting. Overall, The Actor's role in the image is to communicate about the protagonist, it gives a hint of the action elements of the game and finally introduces a level of mystery about her powers and the world outside of the image.

5.2.2 Interactive meaning

Contact

Unlike in Figure 1, Figure 2 has a represented participant whose gaze can be subjected to the analytic criteria set by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 116-123). This evaluation begins by distinguishing whether the represented participant is making *a demand* or *an offer* with their gaze.

Figure 2.4 Showing the vectors emanating from the gaze

In Figure 2, one can see that the woman's gaze is not facing directly towards the viewer. As mentioned earlier, the vectors from her gaze correspond to the vector emanating from her left arm. As the gaze does not face the viewer, it does not make a "demand" to them, but rather "offers" them a possibility to interact with the image.

This offer to interact allows the viewer to look at the image as an outsider rather than an active participant, which, in turn, allows them to evaluate the content of the image from the outside and use their imagination in interpreting the narrative and the action within it. Kress

and van Leeuwen (2006, 119) stated that with the "offer" from the viewer's point of view, the represented participants are viewed as "items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case." They further added that with the offer there is an imaginary barrier between the participants and the viewer…"

Therefore, it can be stated that Figure 2, "offers" itself to the viewer to be observed. The decision to have an offer rather than a demand is most likely rooted in the product. Video games are close to films in that they tell stories with imaginative worlds and characters. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 120) stated that "the offer" is preferred in "feature film and television drama and scientific illustration." This is usually done purposefully to create an imaginary barrier between the participants and the viewer, for the purpose of allowing the viewers to observe, while enjoying the notion that their presence is not known by the represented participants. Therefore, as games are close to films in this sense, the producer wants to give the viewer the same opportunity to observe the represented participant, the world, and the underlying narrative in Figure 1 without having to be active participants themselves.

In addition, avoiding "the demand" is significant here since it is more personal as it forms direct vectors with the viewer and makes a demand for something. Making demands in an advertisement can be a risky decision if the product does not warrant it. Therefore, in this context it seems more sensible for the producer to follow guidelines from films, and thus make an offer to the viewer, to observe and interpret Figure 2 as they please rather than trying to make things personal with them.

Distance

As mentioned above, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 128) argued that usually the observation of frame and distance is defined in terms of specific sections in the human body. Unlike in Figure 1 where there were no participants, Figure 2 has a participant which allows the analysis to define the frame and distance.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 124) named different distance shot types and their characteristics. The close shot featured head and shoulder, and a very close shot is an extreme close-up with only a part of the face visible. The medium close shot cuts the subject from the waist, medium shot at the knees and the medium long shot shows the full figure. The long shot on the other hand, has the human figure occupying half of the height of the frame, and the very long shot was anything wider than that.

In Figure 2, the woman's entire body is almost visible, except her legs. The shot cuts off around the knees – it is thus a medium shot. This further reiterates Kress and van Leeuwen's notion of middle distance being commonly used in advertisements as it was present in Figure 1's analysis section as well.

This information can be used to observe the relation between the viewer and the participant similarly to what was done with "the demand" and "the offer". Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 126) stated that these portrayed relations between the human participants and the viewer are imaginary, but they allow the viewer to imagine themselves as either being close with a public or an imaginary figure as if they were friends or, reversely, treating them as complete strangers, as things to be observed.

In terms of the portrayal of relation using distance, the basic pattern implies that the closer the distance, the closer the relation. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 125) stated that the close shot when the face and head are only visible, is considered as an *intimate distance.* Personal distance has a *close personal distance* where the participants head and shoulders are visible, as well as a *far personal distance* with the participant shown from the waist up. Moving away from personal distance, comes *close social distance* in which the whole figure of the participant is visible. *Far social distance* shows the entire figure of the participant with space around it. Finally, moving to *public distance*, the viewer can see the torsos of at least four or five people.

The shot in Figure 2 is seemingly an amalgamation of both the *far personal distance* and the *far social distance* as the woman is shown almost from her waist up, but in addition to that she is shown with a lot of space around her, although her entire body is not visible. Therefore, it can be argued that with Figure 2, a sense of personal relation with the woman is purposefully offered to the viewer. The viewer does not know who she is, but they are

encouraged to show interest in her to create a pre-existing familiarity with her that can then be deepened by playing the game. This notion of a semi-close social distance between the woman and the viewer builds the foundation of the relationship between the protagonist of the game and the viewer, before the player actually plays the game. Simultaneously, it sustains a distance that is not too personal and allows the viewer to also observe her and gather information about her. The decision to show the space around the character seems to be more about being able to show the background, implying its importance in a different way that will be further discussed later in the present study.

Point of view

When observing the level of involvement in Figure 2, the first step is to create the imaginary lines once again to the image to be able to distinguish the positions of the viewer/the photographer as well as locating the frontal plane of the subject of the image.
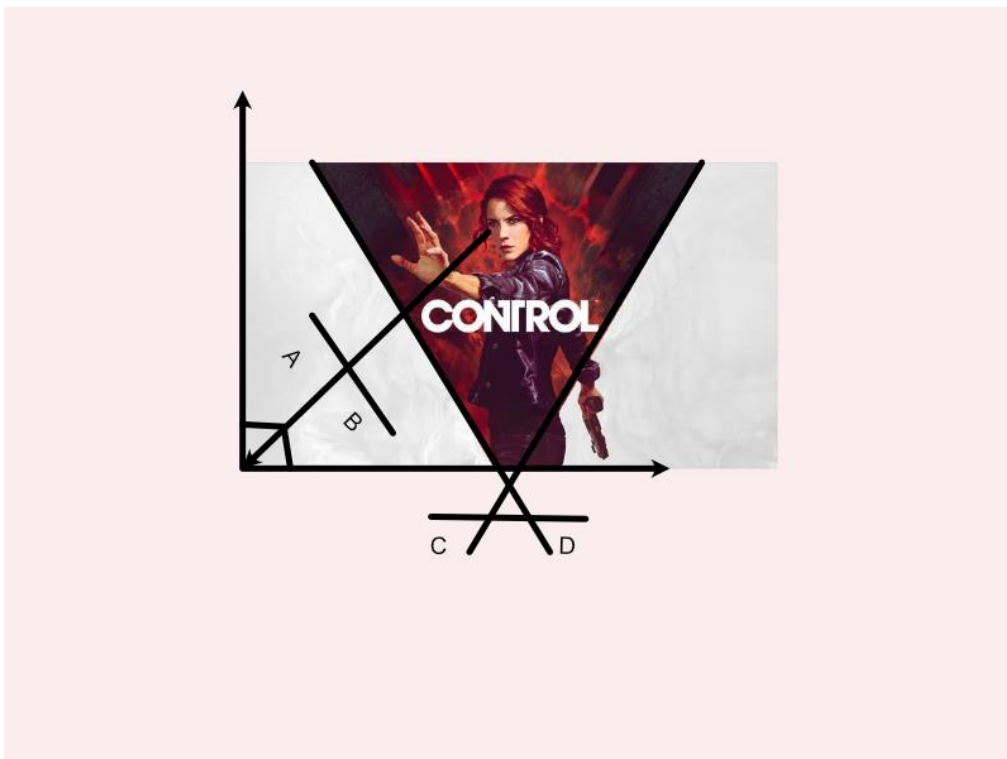
Figure 2.5 Demonstrating the position of the viewer as well as the subject frontal plane

In Figure 2.5, the line (ab) represents the frontal plane of the woman who is the subject of the image, and the line (cd) represents the position of the viewer/the photographer. It was established earlier that when the two imaginary lines run parallel to each other, it is thought as

if the viewer is a part of or "involved" with the world depicted in the image. In contrast, an oblique angle is present when the lines are not parallel with each other, therefore meaning that the viewer is not part of the world depicted in the image. In Figure 2.5, the two lines (ab) and (cd) do not in fact run parallel to each other making the angle oblique. Therefore, it can be concluded that in Figure 2, the viewer is separated from the depicted world, which thus decreases the viewer's level of involvement with the subject image.

As established in earlier sections, the lower involvement in Figure 2 allows the viewer to be in the role of an observant rather than an active participant in the depicted world. It can already be stated that the different semiotic resources used in Figure 2 achieve similar goals as there are some elements that pull the viewer's focus to them in the hope of engaging and interacting. However, overall, what has been achieved by elements like "the offer" structure and the use of horizontal angle there has been a clear goal to keep the viewer separated from the image's world. Therefore, here the angle is used to support the goals of the other elements which place the viewer outside of the game world for them to have the freedom to observe, interpret and assess what they see from the outside in.

In terms of its horizontal angles and power relations, Figure 2 does not have a distinctive high or low angle, but, rather, it is depicted at a relatively close to the eye level. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 140) offered a general rule in estimating the power relations using angles where the high angle conveys the participant as weaker, and, reversely, the low angle portrays them as formidable. In Figure 2, the eye level thus implies equality and therefore, no unequal power relations between the viewer and the represented participants are involved.

The decision to display no power relations can be evaluated from the advertiser's point of view. As the product being advertised in Figure 2 is a video game, it might not be in the advertiser's best interest to apply explicit power relations between viewer and the participant, since the presence of different power relations would not serve the purpose of this kind of product.

In some cosmetic or high-end brand advertisements, power relations are in fact present, because they aim to present the superiority that their product creates in the represented participants. Through this, the viewer is persuaded to buy the product to feel superior themselves as well. However, in video games and to some extent in other visual media, the

intention is to create curiosity about the character(s), the world, or the story, rather than to try to make the viewer feel superior or inferior. This is especially prevalent in interactive media like video games where the viewer often steps into the role of the protagonist as they play as them in the game. With Figure 2, the participant in the image is the protagonist, therefore not only is it made easier to approach the character due to the neutral power relations between the viewer and the participant. If the character would seem superior to the viewer, it would be harder to approach and create a connection with the viewer and the character as they would be less relatable. Or the other way round, making the character seem weaker than the viewer would make them less interesting and less appealing as someone to play as. Therefore, the neutral angle is the best choice to make in the given context.

5.2.3 Compositional meaning

Information value

The left and the right zones of Figure 2 echo similar results as their analysis in Figure 1. There is no clear split into left or right zones, but, instead, all the elements containing information seem to focus on the centre zone. Therefore, with Figure 2, The Given and The New is not chosen as the structure to present information. The omission of this structure implies that the producer of the image did not want to highlight or distinguish any elements as something previously familiar to the viewer or other elements as something that would be new.

Likewise, Figure 2 has no clear top to bottom separation either: all the elements containing information have been gathered to the centre of the image. The omission of the Ideal and The Real structure thus shows that the producer did not wish to present something in the image as the desirable or ideal state and then show it together with the real, concrete information.

Thus, all the key elements of information in Figure 2 are gathered at the centre of the image. The actor, the upside-down triangle in the background, and the name of the game (Control)

are all placed at the centre. However, the image does not really contain surrounding elements. As a result, there are no visible margins. This means that even though all the key elements are in the middle - which fits to the centre and margin structure - there still are no subordinate elements to form the margins.

The use of the centre structure in Figure 2 implies that the three elements visible in the image are almost of an equal importance in terms of information. Therefore, there are no assumptions about previous familiarity of the game. There is also no desire to portray anything as the ideal or desirable information or state of being and then placing it against the real information

With Figure 2, also the context matters, as the objectively observing the viewer reads the text "Control" and most likely realizes that to be the title of the game. The viewer recognizes that the woman is important, and most likely assumes her to be the main character and her to be "in control". Finally, the background triangle can be thought of reflecting the milieu of the game as it is placed in the background which usually is used to contextualize the image. The amount of previous knowledge about this game helps to understand the producers' design decisions more deeply as a lot of the other promotional material reveal more about the setting of the game as well as the narrative itself. The game itself is also a brand-new title which possibly explains the omission of "The Given" structure as there is no previous familiarity other than additional advertisements. The knowledgeable viewer also realizes that the text "Control" in fact is the title of the game, but they also know that it is also a central part of the overall narrative of the game as Control is the name of an in-game agency. This is also hinted at by the back cover of the game that states that "you become the new Director struggling to regain Control". Here "Control" is written in bold which in writing implies it being a name of something. This can possibly show why The Ideal and The Real structure is omitted as the name Control is not just a "real" and concrete piece of information about the name of the game, but it also has a meaning inside the game's world, thus placing it into the same category as the other elements in the image.

The importance of the triangle in the background becomes more prevalent to the viewer when they recognize it as a recurring visual in all the material. Thus, the producer has knowingly bundled all the elements at the centre: all the information there is in fact important in a deeper in-game way rather than just as a visual symbol, or a piece of concrete information. In Figure

2, all the elements are presented as almost equally important, and the viewer can distinguish this from the way they are grouped together. However, the deeper meaning behind all the elements and what they intend to communicate relies quite heavily on the viewer's additional knowledge of the true meaning the elements contain. Without the required knowledge, the elements still manage to raise questions and interest while giving out crucial information like the name of the game. However, even though the elements are all bundled at the centre, there still is a difference in the salience of the information presented, and this will be further evaluated in the next section.

Salience

As all the elements containing information are bundled in the same centre zone of the image, they are perceived almost as equally important. However, what the most salient part of the image is can be assessed by focusing on the overlapping of the visual elements.

The upside-down triangle is the background element that is behind everything else. In front of the triangle there is the woman (the actor), and in front of her is the name of the game (Control). The most salient part of the image lies in the forefront. Towards the background part, the salience of the elements decreases. As was already mentioned, at the forefront there is the name of the game; "Control", making it the most salient part of Figure 2. The reason behind this placement is most likely the producers' desire that the game's name is the one thing the viewer absolutely remembers after they have stopped looking at the advertisement. The placement of the game title indicates that it is the real, concrete piece of information to take with you after seeing the advertisement. Additionally, as mentioned above, the title has a double meaning; that of the title of the game but also an integral reference to the in-game world.

The picture of the woman is the second most salient part of the image as it is on top of the triangle, but behind the text. This implies her importance in terms of the entire game, second in salience only to the name of the game. It was also mentioned by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 202) that specific cultural factors such as the human figure are higher in salience. Here the producer has placed the protagonist of the story in a strong, salient position in the image:

she is the focal point of the game, its story and essentially the conduct for the player to interact with the game world. The producer wants the viewer, who is also viewed as a possible player to already be familiar with the protagonist. The reason behind this is for them to already have a head start to the process of forming a relationship with her through the gameplay and its story. Building a relationship between player and the playable character is an important aspect for the liking of the game as players get attached to them which then can have a positive impact on the overall reception of the game. This can then also affect the sequels and their success as well. Naturally, most of this relationship building is done while playing the game itself, but producers can jump start the process with the right kind of advertisements.

Finally, the upside-down triangle behind the woman is the least salient part of the image. Still, it obviously conveys salient information, because it is presented within the same zone as the two other elements. Additionally, even though the triangle is in the background, it still is one of the largest elements in the image, further strengthening its salience in the image. Finally, in addition to its large size, the triangle is also by far the brightest part of the image. It is bright red, which creates a strong contrast against the white background, further adding the salience of the triangle. This also reflects the previously mentioned understanding of the context as those privy to it are aware that there are additional meanings behind the element that is hinted in other promotional material and is further opened up when playing the game. It needs to be stated that the role of the upside-down triangle in the image is the hardest to evaluate in terms of what it communicates to the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 55-56) comment on triangles as symbols suggesting they convey directionality and point at things. They also state that the meanings triangles attract are less "like qualities of being and more like processes." Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 56) also cite Thompson and Davenport, (1982, 110) who mention triangles being 'a symbol of generative power' as well as Dondis (1973, 44) who states triangles representing 'action, conflict, tension'.

Taking these notions into consideration, the triangle could be given different symbolic meanings like "generative power" or "action" and "conflict". However, in terms of the communication it relies quite strongly for the viewer to understand the presence of a symbolic meaning behind a standard geometrical shape and then to be able to decipher the intended meaning from all the possibilities. The triangle both points and directs the viewer's attention towards the Actor and primarily works as a tool to contextualize the image by giving some

context and through it, information about the game even if the information does not open itself to the viewer before they become more familiar with the game itself.

Figure 2.6 demonstrates the approximate space occupied the elements

Framing

With framing the focus is whether the elements are connected or disconnected from one another. In Figure 2 there are some levels of framing. The triangle and the woman and the name of the game are all framed together as they are bundled together in the same zone, practically on top of each other.

The woman and the triangle are framed together even more closely, because they share the same primary colour scheme of black and red. The name of the game is written in a plain white font, which separates it from the other elements, and links it more closely to the white

background. This could imply its separation from the other two elements in terms of meaning, too.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 203) state that the more the elements are linked to each other in terms of spatial composition, the more they are also connected in meaning. They also mention how advertisers often use repetition of colours in different elements as another key connection device. Both can be observed here in the way the triangle and the woman are connected through their positioning, the lack of separation and the same colour scheme. This and the earlier established salience of the triangle implies that there might be a strong link between the woman and the triangle in the game and its narrative as well. This notion also once again distinguishes the triangle as an element that has more meaning than a simple background piece.

Modality

The first three modality markers all deal with the use of colour, with the first focusing on colour saturation. In Figure 2, the woman is the most fully saturated element of the image as her appearance follows the naturalistic standards quite closely. Her hair has a strong red tone, but it does not feel overly vivid or intense and it does exceed the maximum colour saturation point of the scale. The colour of her skin also is very close to the general skin tone of a Caucasian person as well as it is having different tonal shifts due to the lighting. In addition, there are different intensities of saturation in her clothing, as both her jacket and pants are black. The blackness of her jacket is more intense than the black of her pants. This increases the natural feeling as it makes the different articles of clothing look like they are made from different materials and gives them a unique texture. This is further supported by the way light also reflects from the clothing which will be further talked later.

The background is hard to evaluate in terms of naturalistic standards because the background seems quite unnatural. It seems that a large portion of the background is a mixture of white and grey. When applying the scale provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 160-161), it can be stated that there is a strong absence of colour in the background, lowering its overall modality. In addition, maximally saturated colours were also deemed as lowering the

modality and the triangle background features a strong tone of red which nears maximal saturation. Therefore, overall naturalistic modality is lowered by both the absence of colour in the white as well as the strong saturation of the red.

Figure 2 has a limited range of colours being used. Figure 2 basically has three primary colours being used which are black, white/light grey and red. The woman's skin tone is a distinctive fourth colour but depending on the point of view it can be thought as having the same root colour as the red tones in the image. Her skin colour has an orange base with a strong blend of white colour to create the light Caucasian skin tone. This was confirmed using a paint app and by picking her skin colour and looking at the colour chart. Its place in the image seems to be to increase modality as it sticks out as a far more modulated colour than the red, black, and white that seem to be the primary colours present in the image. The woman is once again the most natural element in the ad as she is depicted with a full range of colours.

Otherwise, there is not much colour differentiation in Figure 2, which lowers the overall modality of the image. The background has a strong red tone that is surrounded by a large area of whitish grey. These colours contribute to a feeling of unnaturalness.

There is colour modulation in the image conveyed by the different shades of red, white, and black. The black used in the image has a different shade from an intense black to lighter black in the woman apparel. The colour of her skin also has different shades used in the face and in the hand where the areas in the light have lighter tones than those areas that have shade. The triangle has a more intense red hue and a darker red hue. Additionally, on the woman's hair, there is a third different tone of red. Therefore, the few colours that are present in the image all seem to have levels of modulation, thus increasing the overall modality of the image. As mentioned earlier, Figure 2 has a low level of contextualisation as there is hardly a fully articulated background visible. This also lowers the level of naturalistic modality as the context seems unnatural.

Next marker to be evaluated is representation. Here Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 161) provided the scale running from maximum abstraction to that of maximum representation of pictorial detail. In Figure 2 there is a considerable amount of pictorial detail, especially in the image of the woman. Her hair and jacket, for example, are drawn carefully. The viewer can

distinguish the different material of the jacket and the pants. The pants also have visible wrinkles and pockets that give them a more natural look. The light also reflects differently from the clothes giving them both a distinct own look. There are also wrinkles on the palm of her hand that give her skin some sense of texture as well. Additionally, in the background triangle the viewer can also distinguish the look of a splash of colour as well as some smoky texture in the white area as well adding even more pictorial detail. The viewer still cannot distinguish too much detail as each separate strands of hair are not visible; no pores of the skin nor fingerprints can be observed and there are no visible fibres of the clothes that can be seen either. Therefore, Figure 2 is not a hyper realistic one which would lower the naturalness of the image.

Figure 2 has a high modality in terms of the pictorial details in the woman, because she is portrayed in the level of detail as a person would perceive someone in the real world. However, even though the background has some level of detail in the foggy texture, it still looks plain white without further detail, thus lowering the overall modality due to lack of details. Therefore, here the modality is once again highest with the participant but lower in the background.

The next marker, depth, is analysed through the scale of complete absence of depth to maximally deep perspective. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 162), in the naturalism standard the central perspective has the highest modality. The angle in Figure 2 is an oblique angle, showing a frontal-isometric perspective. Therefore, according to the modality standards Figure 2 has reasonably high naturalness in terms of depth.

As mentioned above, the way the light is used in an image affects the modality of the depicted scene. In Figure 2, the light and shade are present in the image in a quite natural way. The light is coming from the right side of the image as it reflects from the woman's jacket in a natural way, giving the jacket a sense of texture. Both the use of a stronger colour contrast as well as the way the surface reflects light allows the viewer to distinguish the jacket as a leather jacket due to the leather surface's higher reflective quality. Her hair also casts some shade on her face: the left side of her face is in the light and the right side of the face is in the shade. Additionally, on her extended arm the skin tone is lighter on the back of her hands and darker on the palm. The use of light in Figure 2 thus increases the overall natural modality of the image.

The final marker to be evaluated is brightness. In Figure 2, there are not too many different degrees of brightness. The colour scheme is dominated by the black and the white colours where the differentiation usually takes place just with two degrees. The white area in the background has some brightness differentiation with light greyish tone overlapping with the white one, creating a foggy or smoky look. The brightest value in Figure 2 is in the bright red colour on the triangle behind the woman. This red has different brightness values as there are both more vivid and intense tones of red as well as a darker tone of red. Overall, brightness is quite high, as the colour palette used has a lot of light colours such as whites, the light orange of the skin and the bright red. Brightness in Figure 2 looks close to the natural standard of brightness.

In Figure 2, the main findings about modality are that there were varying levels of naturalistic modality within the image. As mentioned above, the modality related to the participant was quite high. Subjectively observed through the given scales, her portrayal in terms of colour and details looks natural. In contrast, the way in which the background is portrayed echoed the opposite almost every time. The background lacked detail, colours, and lighting.

The picture of the woman is the most natural part of the image in terms of colour saturation and modality. This makes sense from a design standpoint. The producer has aimed to portray her in a sufficiently realistic way, to facilitate the viewer's relationship with her. By choosing to show her naturalness, they are also indicating that the protagonist of the story is (or at least is portrayed) as "human" or "regular", as opposed to the feel of the more ethereal and unnatural background. The context reveals levels of unnaturalness and in Figure 2 the unnaturalness of the background creates a juxtaposition between the natural participant and the supernatural background. The producer thus manages to convey two different sides of the game, the natural and the supernatural by distinctively portraying them with different levels of modality.

5.3 An Advertisement for the game Max Payne 2

The final piece of data in this study is taken from Remedy Entertainment's game called Max Payne 2 which is the oldest one of the sampled data. On the left side of Figure 3 there is a man and woman embracing each other with both having a handgun in their hand pointing towards each other. The man and the woman are shown as black silhouettes rather than in a detailed and realistic way. On the right side of the image there is a text section that has three rows. The top row reads "Max Payne 2", the row below it reads "The fall of Max Payne" and the final row features the logos of the game companies that made the game "Remedy Entertainment" and "Rockstar"

5.3.1 Representational meaning

Narrative representation

Figure 3 features a bidirectional transactional action process. The process is an action process as there are two actors: the man and the woman. They both have vectors emanating from both their hands that have the guns in them, as well as through their gaze. As both actors are embracing and looking at each other, both become the actor and the goal simultaneously as they are both performing an action while also being in the receiving end of the action.

A straightforward interpretation can be made as to what is being conveyed in Figure 3: the physical embrace, and their gazes imply intimacy and through this, romance. Their guns that are pointed towards each other imply, in turn, that the game features shooting and action. All of this put together, implies that the participant's relationship potentially has an element of danger, and possibly some level of distrust.

Figure 2 leaves it open which one of the participants is the protagonist of the game, but from the title of the game "Max Payne", an assumption can be made that it is the male figure who is most likely the title character. The image is simple, but it allows the viewer to make interpretations of the narrative. As guns almost always imply action and danger, the viewer can theorize whether the danger lies somewhere outside the picture's reach or with the participants themselves. The guns pointed at each other could hint at the latter, in that maybe there is a "dangerous romance" brewing where neither can really trust the other.

5.3.2 Interactive meaning

Contact

The participants in Figure 3 are not making a demand towards the viewer as there is no eye contact being made to the viewer. Instead, the participants' gazes are directed towards each other which can be interpreted that they are making demands to each other.

Therefore, as there is no immediate reaction being demanded from the viewer, it makes Figure 3 more of an "offer". Similarly, to the other figures already investigated, Figure 3 allows the viewer to interact with the image. Presenting the participants more as an offer implies that the purpose of the image is to be more informative than to for example evoke emotion through demand. Contextually this decision makes sense as the producers would like the viewer to interact with the image and realize the essential pieces of information provided regarding both narrative as well as concrete information facilitating the purchasing of the game. As the viewer observes the participants from outside the image, this allows them to form their own interpretations of the actors and the overall narrative in piece.

Distance

Like in Figure 2, in Figure 3 both the actors are cut from the waist which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 124) identified as the medium close shot. Distance contributes to the portrayal of the relation between participants and the viewer. The general rule on a basic level

is that the closer the distance, the closer the relation. Here, when the participants are shown from the waist up the distance can be labelled as a *far personal distance*.

By implementing the *far personal distance,* Figure 3 offers itself for the viewer to interact with the participants, to observe them and gain information from which they can form their own assumptions about them, while keeping a distance long enough not to incorporate the viewer into their world. With Figure 3, the viewer is placed close, almost at a personal distance to the participants, thus enabling a sense of familiarity with the character(s) of the game. The placement of the viewer at the personal distance helps the jump that the viewer hopefully makes when they purchase the game, when they effectively step into the shoes of the participant themselves. This then closes the distance between them. Using the opposite strategy - a long-distance sphere, for example would alienate the viewer and would most likely keep them away from the participants. Therefore, the close distance serves the advertiser's agenda well as this way they invite the viewers to come even closer rather than placing them at a distance which could push the viewer away and keep them there permanently.

Point of view

When one draws the imaginary lines within the ad to determine the positioning of the photographer/the viewer, the line of the frontal plane of the actors (ab) does not run parallel to the frontal plane of the viewer/photographer. This realization makes the angle used in the image an oblique angle.

While the frontal angle represents the highest level of involvement, an oblique angle diminishes the involvement of the viewer with the world and the characters in the image. In Figure 3, the participants are solely focused on each other, and they are not aware of the viewer's existence.

In this scene, the intimacy between the participants in fact supports the designers' decision to use the oblique angle. This is because it would not make sense for the viewer to be involved in the scene as a third wheel. It makes more sense to detach the viewer from their world and

the participants. This once again places the viewer into the role of an observer where they can assess the information provided to them such as who these people are, what is their relationship and what is the story there.

In figure 3 there are no high or low angles present but rather the neutral eye level angle has been chosen. The reasoning behind this decision most likely echoes the reasons speculated previously with Figure 2. Within the context of a video game advertisement, adding power relations between the viewer and the participants would not suit the product and thus would not serve the main purpose of the advertisement. The producers do not want to make the viewer feel more inferior to them. Reversely, presenting the participants as inferior to the viewer would also diminish the credibility of the participant. If the assumption is made that the participants in Figures 2 and 3 are the protagonists of each game, it would not serve the advertiser's interest to weaken the protagonist. With a product like video games, power fantasy can be assumed to be one of the motivating factors for the players which then means that the game character needs to feel strong and capable for the players to have the desire to play with the character.

 With a neutral, eye-level angle the participants and the viewer are on the same level, which makes it easier for the viewer to approach the main participants as protagonists and as the playable characters. There is a sense of likeness between the viewer and participants that helps the viewer to identify with the participants. Then eventually when the customer is buying the game, it helps the process of taking control of the characters and possibly sympathizing with them and their story.

5.3.3 Compositional meaning

Information value

Figure 3 is the first in the data set that implements clear left and right zones. In addition, it also applies the top to bottom structure to some extent.

In Figure 3 on the left side of the image, there are the participants (the man and the woman) making them together the Given. On the right side of the image, there is the text portion of the

advertisement which includes the name of the game "Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne, making this the New.

What is interesting in this compositional decision is that it is quite common in advertisements to present the text portion as the Given and then the images are used to convey the New, but Figure 3 does the opposite. Thus, the producer is assuming that the participants are viewed as something already familiar to the viewer. As the New, the producer has chosen to highlight the title which has the number "2", implying that this is a sequel, as well as the subheading "The fall of Max Payne".

The highlighted point here is the fact that the story of Max Payne continues in this sequel and that something possibly dramatic is going to happen to him. It could be argued that as the title advertises a sequel, its place would more organically fit to be the Given as there already is an existing "Max Payne 1", meaning that the familiarity is built into that title already. Then placing the image as the New would present the new information like the woman and her relation to the "fall" mentioned in the sub header. However, it can be assumed that the characters are placed on the left side as the Given, it indicates that they are already featured in the first game, thus assuming that they are familiar to the viewer in that they do not present anything "new". This also conveys the message to the viewer that these familiar characters are returning in this sequel. By knowing this, the text portion does convey the only new information which is the continuation of the story of Max Payne and the teaser of something happening to him as "The Fall".

For someone who is not familiar with the previous title all the information would be presented as new to them, therefore not allowing this structure to be used to its maximum capacity. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 184) alluded to this when they stated that "what is taken for granted by one social group is not taken for granted by another." This means that the target audience for this advertisement is those familiar with the previous title, and that the ones the advertisement was directed at during the design process.

In the text section, the top to bottom presenting of information is used. When reading the text section from the top to bottom, the first part the viewer sees is the main header; "Max Payne 2". Then, instead of following on the same line, the text "fall of Max Payne" is dropped one

line below the main title of the game, thus making it effectively the sub-heading. This is then followed once again one line below by the logos of the two companies making the game "Remedy" and "Rockstar"

In Figure 3, the information value thus follows the top to bottom model in a sense that the key information in the text section is presented with the most salient information on top and then going down in the order of importance which fulfils the ideal and real structure. Even though the main heading "Max Payne 2" does not represent anything idealized, it still provides what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 186) called the "generalized essence of the information", which in turn is also the most salient part of the information which make it the Ideal. The bottom row of the text portion contains the logos of the two companies that produced and made the game. The information here distinguishes itself from the rows above as it breaks away from the world of the game and in turn offers information related to the real world. The logos provide information outside the game that is more practical, real, and secondary in importance which in terms makes it the Real.

Salience

Compared to the text portion, a slightly bigger area of the image is occupied by the two participants. Nevertheless, the size difference is not significant enough to be the sole base form determining salience in Figure 3. As there is no difference in the sharpness of focus, the analysis of salience derives from the use of colour.

In Figure 3, there are strong colour contrasts. Both the participants are shown as black silhouettes against the white background, creating a strong tonal contrast. However, the right side's text section also features strong tonal contrasts as the main heading "Max Payne 2" is written in bright red with the number "2" shown in white with a dark outlining. The subheading is also in pure black colour against the white background. Similarly, the logos contrast strongly with each other: "Rockstar's" logo is shown bright yellow, and "Remedy's" is pure black against a white background. As mentioned above, The Given and the New structure places the most salient information on the right side of the image as the New, which in Figure 3 is the title of the game with its sub header and developer logos. As there is no

visible background, all the elements lie in the foreground which is the most salient part of the image.

The only relevant differentiating factor in terms of salience is the bright red colour used on the right side of the text on the "Max Payne 2" heading. This bright red colour is by far the most strongly saturated colour used in Figure 3. It thus distinguishes the right side, and most importantly the name "Max Payne" as the most salient part of the image. Additionally, as mentioned above, the most valuable information is provided on the right side of the image. The Ideal and Real structure also only really affects the right side of the image with the hierarchical placement of the information onto different rows of text.

In terms of salience then, the core message about the game is the information provided by the text portion. This information then has an additional emphasis placed on the title "Max Payne" by the red colour, further highlighting a specific portion of the text, meaning that upon seeing this advertisement the viewer should remember one thing and that is the name "Max Payne".

Framing

There is clear framing in Figure 3. The actors are framed together as they are quite literally embracing each other and thus are 'together'. All the text is separated from the participant/s by spatial distance. Even though the distance is not large, it is still significant enough to create a small framing into their own sections of "participants" and "textual element". This framing is also visible through the Given and the New structure. The left side is the "image" zone which has the pictorial elements in it and on the right is the "text" zone with all the text and tangible information. As also mentioned above, the only strongly saturated, bright red element in the image is the name "Max Payne". The distinctive colouring frames the name "Max Payne" separate from the other text portion highlighting both its salience but also working as a call back to the earlier game which was simply called "Max Payne" featuring the same font and colouring. In addition, framing on a grander scale is created, through actual

frame lines by the horizontal lines which create the outline and the shape of the white background box that has the represented participant inside it. This framing separates everything within the white box from the black area of the background. This separation of the white from the black creates a sense that all the things inside the white box are framed together and the black area is disconnected from the elements inside the white frame. This along with the rest of the visual style resembling a film noir style with its darker tones create an overall visual that resembles the film screen at a movie theatre.

Modality

Figure 3 has a very low colour saturation as most of the image is in pure black and white. The Actors are both shown as black silhouettes, the background is pure white, and, aside from the "Max Payne" text and the Rockstar logo, the text portion is also pure black. The red colour used is rather strong, meaning that in Figure 3 there is also an element of strongly saturated colours. Despite this, the overall modality of Figure 3 remains at the lower end of the spectrum as the overarching use of colour saturation is very low.

To continue the point above with colour differentiation, the colour scheme in Figure 3, is mostly black and white. Even with the addition of the red in the title and the yellow of the Rockstar logo, it cannot be said that Figure 3 has used a diversified range of colours. Therefore, it can be stated that similarly to colour saturation, the modality in terms of colour differentiation in Figure 3 is also at the lower end of the spectrum. The few elements of colour cannot be considered close to what is considered as a maximized range of colours used.

In Figure 3, the use of bright red is most likely not strengthening the modality of the image. Here the bright red most seems to be used for several different reasons. As mentioned earlier, it echoes the heading of the previous iteration of the Max Payne series and thus works as a throwback reference to the audience already familiar with the game series. Additionally, the red colour draws the viewer's attention to the title and thus to the part the producer sees as the most prevalent and important. Finally, the original decision to choose the red colour scheme can also have symbolic meaning behind it as red is the colour of blood, love and even hate which all may or may not be present in the game series.

Finally, in Figure 3, there is a low level of colour modulation, bordering on non-existent as there are only four distinct colours used: black, white, red, and yellow. All these colours are plain, unmodulated, meaning that there are no different tones used on either one of them. Therefore, colour modulation also places Figure 3's overall modality as low. Context-wise, Figure 3 also fails to give the image a proper sense of contextualisation as there are no background or background elements at all, but rather a pure white box as a background, with black outlining. Thus, can be thought as a full absence of a background which on the natural modality standard is at the bottom of the spectrum.

However, as mentioned earlier in the previous study, the white background in addition with the overall style of the entire advertisement evokes ideas of a cinema screen. The black and white colour scheme, the depiction of the actors as silhouettes and their placement against the white background creates a sense of a film noir movie thus in a way contextualising Figure 3.

Furthermore, those who are familiar with the previous iteration of the Max Payne series, know that it in fact is made in a film noir style and it heavily loans elements from the movie genre in terms of both its narrative and its visual style. Therefore, the contextualisation here could be stronger to those familiar with the franchise. However, in terms of the standards set by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 161), what can be seen in the image is the absence of a clear background thus failing to contextualize and inevitably then lowering the modality of the image.

Following the pattern set by the other markers, Figure 3 shows a low level of pictorial detail as one can observe the two participants are not shown in a detailed manner. In Figure 3, the participants do not have identifiable facial characteristics depicted or clear textures in their clothes. The silhouettes portray their overall shape, some shape of their clothes, their hair, their apparent gender and roughly the shape of their faces. The weapons are highlighted strongly through their colour as they are portrayed as all white with black lines against the participants who in terms are depicted mostly in colour black with white lighting effects used. As mentioned above, there is no background detail to observe either. All of this leads to the conclusion that Figure 3 has a high level of abstraction in it, which in turn lowers the overall modality. The choice to have low pictorial detail creates almost a comic book feel. A sense of

ambiguity then fits both the genre the producer wants to portray as well as the purpose of the advertisement to inform the key pieces of information.

As mentioned above, the viewer has an oblique view as they do not share the same frontal view with the participants. There is a low level of depth as the perspective is hard to establish properly. The presentation almost looks like a presentation where three dimensional objects are presented as two dimensional. Figure 3 is almost two dimensional in its presentation, but the use of lighting gives the participants depth and a sense of three dimensionality. Therefore, the sense of depth in Figure 3 is very low, borderline absent entirely, thus lowering its naturalistic modality.

Figure 3 does not have the fullest representation of the play of light, but it does have some. As mentioned above when observing the participants, one can see some illumination on the participants. This use of light gives them more depth and allows the highlighting of certain areas, such as the face and their jackets. This also gives their jackets a sense of texture when light is reflected on them, increasing the overall naturalness of the image. However, even with the use of the light, the illumination itself is done with the colour white on black, which does not represent natural light. What is more, the light does not illuminate the participants in a natural way: the illuminated white areas are placed all around the participants which makes it difficult to assess a clear source of light. The reason for this is most likely that the light is used to give the participants both more depth, but also texture to their clothes as well as to give their faces some shape. Therefore, it is used more to highlight certain areas, than to bring more naturalness into the image. Therefore, Figure 3 has low modality as the play of light and shade is kept at minimum and is not portrayed in a natural way.

Finally, Figure 3 has basically just two degrees of brightness: black and white. The red and yellow are by far the brightest colours of the image, but both only have that one degree of brightness that they represent. There is a strong contrast between the lightest and the darkest areas of the image. This in turn means low modality due to the degrees of brightness being scarce.

In Figure 3, the overall modality is very low. Almost all the markers lowered the overall modality, as the use of colour was unnatural, as was the level of detail and contextualisation. Unlike in Figure 2, the low modality was not used to convey the sense of unnaturalness of the game world but rather it was used to convey the characteristics of the noir genre. Therefore, the low modality of Figure 3 was used to try and capture the essence of a film genre that itself is characterized by elements of low naturalistic modality.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate and evaluate the meaning making and communicative functions of semiotic resources in the context of print video game advertisements of the Finnish game company Remedy Entertainment. Additionally, the study evaluated the underlying intentions of the producers as well as the message communicated about the games. The analysis was conducted using Kress and van Leeuwen's framework (2006, 45-215). This framework provided the three main levels for the analysis of visual meaning making: representational, interactive, and compositional meaning. In addition, the significance of modality was emphasized in the framework. In the present study its analysis was placed under the compositional meaning section.

The present study looked to answer the following research questions:

1. How is meaning created using different semiotic resources in Remedy Entertainment's game advertisements?
2. What are the underlying intentions of the advertisement and what is being communicated about the game to the viewer?

With respect to meaning making in the advertisements, one of the main findings in the study was that the context and "being in the know" played a significant role. Figure 1 was the only one that did not feature a participant in the advertisement but rather depicted a scene from the viewer's point of view. Figure 1 offered little information in general as the meaning was created using symbolism and mystery which in turn created intrigue towards the game's narrative. In both Figure 2 and 3, the meaning was generated with the help of certain semiotic resources that relied on the viewers having a deeper understanding or knowledge of the product, prior to seeing the advertisement in question. The design of Figure 2 placed all the main resources together at the centre of the image, emphasizing their close to equal salience and framing. All the elements contained in-game meaning such as the portrayal of the protagonist and hints of the game's narrative. However, the deeper meaning of these elements would only be truly accessible to those who were aware of the other elements in relation to

the in-game story and the game world because the elements in themselves were obscure and hard to decipher. With Figure 3, the game in question was a sequel and the design was made in a way that relied on the assumption that the viewer is familiar with the participants in the image and the name of the previous installation.

Another key finding in the study was the recurrent use of distance to position the viewer to the desired role. In all the figures, the viewer was placed at a distance that was close, but not personal. In Figure 2 and 3, the viewer was kept at a longer distance away from the world depicted in the image, while still placing them close enough to the participants for them to communicate a sense of familiarity and rapport. Figure 1 was the only one in which the viewer was placed inside the game world but even then, the distance from the participant was not a personal one. This difference in approach was rooted in the genre difference between Figure 1 and the other images. With Figure 1 the game genre was a horror/thriller game, and the viewer was placed in the middle of the scene in an attempt to convey the feeling of dread that is often in a key role in the horror genre.

It was also shown that the game genre also played a role in the way the communication in the advertisements was designed and how it borrowed genre-specific characteristics from films. As mentioned above, in Figure 1 the game genre was horror/thriller, which is why the advertisement had a different point of view, darker colour palette and closer viewer-participant distance. In Figure 2, in turn, the action depicted relied on the viewer's understanding of imagery in science fiction films (e.g., the participant's hand gesture). In addition, the juxtaposition of the naturalistic participant and her unnatural background further highlighted the unnaturalness of the world and conveyed the feeling of the sci-fi genre. Finally, in Figure 3 the black and white colour palette, the black silhouettes on the white background, and the overall low modality borrowed from and emulated the film noir genre. In all the images, the theme and genre contributed to the different approaches taken. They strongly relied on the viewer to understand these genre related characteristics and tropes.

All the images also shared a similar approach to communication. They shared the same basic function which was to offer themselves for the viewer to engage with. All the images were meant to be observed and were presented in a way that allowed interpretation and the use of imagination from the viewer. In all of them, the information given was vague enough that they raised questions for the viewer on the possible narrative of the game and the characters.

In addition, in all the images their purpose was rooted in giving out information of two kinds: information about the game and concrete, real life information, such as the title of the game. In Figure 1 the title was part of the Ideal and Real structure, and in Figure 2 the title was presented in the Given and The New structure. Figure 3 was the only image that presented the title together with the other information. This was explained in the analysis to result from how the game title shared both in-game and real-life information. In Figure 1 and 3, the additional real-life information provided included elements such as a slogan, release date, subtitle of the game and company logos. The in-game information provided by the advertisements varied to some extent with the images giving similar information as well as some differing one.

In Figure 1 and 2, the game world was given some contextualization: in both there were background elements given that communicated the meaning of the game world. In Figure 1, not much was shown but it was still enough to communicate the dark and dilapidated state of the game world in question. In the same way, In Figure 2, little information was given about the background. The triangle and the ethereal white space were nevertheless enough to convey the unnatural feeling of the game world. Figure 3 was exceptional in that it did not really provide any information about the world of the game; instead, it had a pure white background. Figure 3 portrayed the game Max Payne 2 that takes influence from the noir movie genre. The use of the white background then created a sense of a film screen that enhanced the movie screen aesthetic.

Figures 2 and 3 were the ones that included human participants. In both cases, these were the protagonists. In addition, Figure 3 introduced a familiar minor character as well. This highlighted that more emphasis was put on depicting characters of the game rather than the game world. In both Figures 2 and 3, the images also showed a weapon. This had the effect that it communicated that the gameplay was focused on action, and that possibly one of the core mechanics was shooting. Figure 1 was the only one that did not include a protagonist. Its absence was hypothesised to result from the producers' desire to focus on the viewer as the human participant of the image. As Figure 1 was a horror/thriller game where the main focus is to evoke emotion in the player, the producer focused on bringing the sense of fear of the game world closer to the viewer. Figure 1 was by far the most mysterious one of the images as it relied on symbolism and the use of a slogan to communicate the major themes of the game (light, darkness, and death), rather than giving concrete visual cues of the game itself.

Another interesting finding from the analysis revealed that the structure of the advertisements differed when informed about a new title and a sequel. Figures 1 and 2 both were advertising new titles and thus neither used structures like the Given and the New. In other words, they did not try to present anything as previously familiar. Figure 3 used a different strategy that relied on the viewer's familiarity with the previous installation of the game. Figure 3 used the Given and The New structure that placed the participants (including the titular character, Max Payne) on the left side to be presented as the familiar information and then the new information (title and the subtitle of the sequel) was placed on the right side. Also Figure 2 differed in an interesting way from the other two advertisements in that it was an advertisement for a new title and had a structure that hints at the deeper in-game meaning of all the elements of the image by presenting them as almost equally important in the centre. This can be thought of as planting a sense of familiarity with not only the protagonist, but with the other visual elements in the image whose true meaning only opens in the game's narrative as the game progresses. Alternatively, the producer hoped that the viewer was intrigued by the elements and their ambiguousness and would then want to find out more about them through playing the game resulting in the purchasing of the game.

The advertisements also followed many typical advertising conventions, such as the use of certain distances, angles, and structures (such as the Given and The New) that depicted the product and the concrete knowledge as separate pieces of information. As mentioned above, only Figure 2 broke this model of framing by giving the product information and the concrete information as separate elements. This was done due to the information overlapping as it provided information regarding both real life information such as the title of the game as well as in-game information such as the revealing of the game's protagonist.

Finally, it was discovered that modality was used in a variety of ways. In Figure 1, naturalistic modality was low; this showed in the overarching darkness of the image that highlighted the unnaturalness of the game world. In Figure 2, modality was used partially in the same way by having a low naturalistic modality with the background that had a strongly contrasted red triangle and was otherwise ethereally white. The background contextualized the game and provided a sense of milieu, which then was presented as unnatural or supernatural. Opposingly, the participant had high naturalistic modality with her portrayal having pictorial detail and natural use of colour which then highlighted her naturalness. This then created a juxtaposition of naturalness and relatability of the protagonist against the

supernaturalness of the game's world. Figure 3, once again, had low modality because of its heavy use of black and white which highlighted and captured the essence of a film noir pictorial style.

As far as it is known, the findings of the present study are the first of their kind. There are no previous studies on advertisements of video games, nor are there previous studies focusing on the multimodal aspects and communication of video game advertisements.

The findings of the present study yielded nuanced findings on how meaning is created and communicated in printed advertisements with video games as the product. It can provide valuable information on how video game advertising design decisions are shaped by the product's unique characteristics, such as its interactive nature and the similarities with other visual media, such as films. This can be seen for example in the use of distance in the advertisements that took into consideration the interactive nature of games. It can also be seen in the way the product was presented as either replicating the visual tropes from film genres or portraying the game world and characters as the product. The advertiser also managed to implement traditional advertisement structures such as the Ideal and the Real or The Given and the New with a relatively new media and product in video games.

The present study and its findings can work as a preliminary foundation for new commercial studies focusing on new media and especially video games and the relationship of advertising design and meaning making. Possible future studies around the topic of this thesis could include an interview study of viewers' attitudes and views of the games after seeing the advertisements and what they make of the games content. This could provide information on what viewer's make of the advertisements; what information they gather from the ads and how they feel about them. Another possible study could be to evaluate the effectiveness of video game commercials in terms of different forms of ads and designs. The study could have printed ads and video advertisements with different design choices. Their effectiveness could then be compared by interviewing people on the information they received from the ad and which ones would likely lead them to a purchasing decision and why.

In game studies one could use the same framework of analysis as the present study and then focus on the difference between game genres. The study could have advertisements of games from different genres and then compare their design decisions and break down the influence

of a certain genre and target audience. For example, it would be interesting to compare the advertisements of a horror game, a children's game, and strategy game and analyse their similarities and differences. Additionally, in the field of game studies it could be interesting to conduct similar research with video advertisements where the additional modes of audio and certain camera angles and cuts could provide even more detail into how meaning is communicated. Finally, it could be interesting to compare the impact of understanding the target audience by for example asking gamers and non-gamers about their interpretations of the advertisements and then comparing how much the target audiences' level of knowledge plays a part in the interpretation and understanding of information of these advertisements.

The limitations of the present study included the relatively small scope of the study. The amount of data was small, limited to only three images. The limitations in scope also affected the decision to focus on a less modern form of advertising, the print advertisements. Video advertisements would have been a more modern and richer and even more multi-modal target for analysis. However, that type of study would have required extensive scene by scene analysis and thus it would have forced me to delimit the amount of data even more. That said, print advertisements are still used making the topic of this thesis still very valid.

Additionally, another limitation of the study comes from the ambiguous nature of multimodality and the subjectivity of the interpretations. Making sense of multimodality varies across individual people, and cultures. Due to this, people make sense of the signs depending on their individual background and societal environment which in turn could result in different conclusions.

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