CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL REVIEW

In this chapter, the theories that will be used in this thesis will be discussed. Before elaborating the theories, the researcher will retell the synopsis of Deus Ex Human Revolution. The theories that will be looked at are: Interactive Fiction, Plot, Theme, Setting, Reader-Response theory, Postmodernism and Transhumanism.

2.1 Synopsis

Deus Ex: Human Revolution takes place in 2027. Adam Jensen, the protagonist is preparing the security for Sarif industries for the National Science Board hearing in Washington DC. The hearing is to show the discovery of a new way to install augmentations, prosthesis added to people to make people better, without using drugs that allows the body to adjust to the augmentations. Adam Jensen was meeting his boss, David Sarif, to report on the security preparations when Sarif industries were attacked by soldiers. In the attack, Adam Jensen was badly injured and was dying. Adam Jensen was given augmentations by Sarif industries for him to stay alive. Six months after the attack at Sarif industries, Adam Jensen was assigned by David Sarif to recover a prototype augmentation for the military at one of Sarif industries manufacturing plant. Adam was told that the manufacturing plant was taken over by a group of terrorists who are a part of Purity First, a group who hates augmentation.

Adam Jensen is then ordered by his superior to recover an augmentation from the body of the dead hacker who was part of the terrorist group that attacked the Sarif
manufacturing plant. Francis Pritchard, the head of security for everything related to networks analyzed the augmentation and detected that the augmentation was from a way
to control the hacker and was controlled by signal from a facility belonging to FEMA. After entering the facility, Adam Jensen confronts a mercenary, Lawrence Barrett, who was a part of the group who attacked Sarif Industries. After defeating Barrett and before committing suicide, Barrett told Jensen to go to a specific address at Hengsha Island, China.

Arriving at the address at Hengsha Island, the apartment building was under lockdown by Belltower Associates, a private military company. Inside the apartment mentioned by Barrett, Jensen finds out that the hacker, Arie van Bruggen was the hacker who controlled the deceased hacker who was part of the terrorist who attacked the Sarif manufacturing plant. Van Bruggen went to hiding and asked for protection from Tong Si Hung, a Triad leader. Jensen confronts Tong Si Hung and learned that Van Bruggen was hiding in a capsule hotel called Alice Garden Pods. Van Bruggen tells Jensen that he was working for Zhao Yun Ru who is the CEO of Tai Yong Medical, a company who is a competitor to Sarif Industries. Van Bruggen forges a pass for Jensen to enter Tai Yong Medical headquarters.

Inside the Tai Yong Medical, Jensen finds out that the Sarif Industries scientists had their tracking plant removed which Jensen believe that they might still be alive. Zhao Yun Ru also tells Jensen that Eliza Cassan, a famous news anchor is also involved. Jensen then goes to the Picus headquarters at Montreal. Jensen finds out when meeting Eliza that she is actually a hologram. Jensen follows the source of the hologram located in a basement of the Picus headquarters. Eliza is an artificial intelligence that is self-aware with a purpose to manipulate the media. Eliza tells Jensen that it was Isaias Sandoval who removed the tracking implants on the Sarif scientists.
Isaias Sandoval is the right hand man of William Taggart, the leader of Humanity Front. Humanity Front is a group against the use of Augmentation. Sarif reveals to Jensen that the plot against Sarif Industries was planned by the Illuminati. Jensen learns that Sandoval is the brother of Zeke Sanders, the leader of the terrorist group that attacked Sarif manufacturing plant. Jensen then confronts Sandoval who was hiding underground with the members of Purity First. Sandoval tells Jensen that he did not remove the tracking implant from the scientist but only made their frequency harder to track. Pritchard found one of the tracking implant which is located at Hengsha.

Back in Hengsha, Belltower personnel are searching for people with augmentations in order to fix a defect in augmentations. Tracking the signal of one of the scientists, Jensen finds the body of a Sarif scientist in the possession of Tong Si Hung. Tong Si Hung helps Jensen by directing him to a Belltower ship. Jensen boards the ship unnoticed and stow away in the Belltower ship.

The ship ends up in Singapore and its cargo where Jensen is stow away ends up in Omega Ranch, a research facility. In the facility, Jensen searches for the signal for three scientists. With the help of the Sarif scientists, Jensen can go to more secure areas of the facility. Jensen confronts Zhao and tells her that Jensen knows the plan of the Illuminati to control augmented people by a device inside their augmentations.

Megan Reed tells Jensen that Hugh Darrow is planning to use the device during his press conference on Panchea, a facility to stop global warming. Before Jensen arrives at Panchea, Darrow already activated the device and every augmented people on the facility went berserk. Jensen then meets Darrow and Darrow reveals his plan. His plan was to show the world how dangerous augmentations can be. Jensen goes to stop
the device and encounters both Taggart and Sarif. Both of the men persuade Adam to broadcast their version of the truth which will be convenient to them. At the core of the facility lies a supercomputer called the Hyron Project. Zhao is plugged inside the computer. Jensen destroys the computer. Eliza contacts Jensen and gives him a choice on which broadcast to send the world. He can broadcast the confession of Darrow which will tell the truth of the dangers of augmentations and the Illuminati, Sarif’s version of the truth which is to blame Humanity Front which will allow for further research in Augmentations, Taggart who suggests to blame it on faulty medications which allows for more regulations. Jensen can also choose to destroy the facility which humanity must decide own their own.

2.2 Interactive Fiction

Interactive Fiction is a phrase that comes from two words, Interactive and Fiction. According to the Oxford Dictionary, Interactive is defined as “allowing a two way flow of information between a computer and a computer-user; responding to a user’s input”. On the other hand, Fiction is defined as “literature in the form of prose, especially novels, that describes imaginary events and people”. Thus, it can be concluded that Interactive Fiction is a literature in the form of prose that allows a two way flow of information between a computer and a computer-user that responds to a user’s input. An example of Interactive Fiction is Zork, a popular text-based adventure game created in 1977. In Zork, the players are given a description on what is going in the world through a series of text; it is up to the players to type in a command that will allow the players or readers to progress in the narrative.
According Alf Seegert in “Doing there vs. Being There: performing presence in interactive fiction”, Interactive fiction has three elements to “maintain a genuinely narrative frame”. The three elements are: “the interactor”, “the player character” and “the narrator” (2009, P.30). The interactor is the person who interacts with the interactive fiction. It can be said that the interactor is the same as a reader of a novel or an audience of a play. The player character is the “narrative persona(e) that you control”. The narrator is the one who explains the story to the interactor. Seegert explains how most Interactive Fiction work.

“The computer-controlled narrator discloses a string of text to the human interactor providing a description about the situation of the fictional player character. You, the interactor at the keyboard are called at the cursor prompt.” (Seegert: 2009)

From Seegert’s description on how the three elements of Interactive Fiction complement one another. The computer will show the player any necessary elements to narrate the story to the player. These elements could be in a form of dialogue found inside the interactive fiction.

Lee Sheldon in his book “Character development and storytelling for games” (2005, P.127) has given nine forms on how a dialogue can be delivered in an interactive fiction, which in this case, video games. The forms of dialogue are: Canned speeches, canned conversations, Mood meter, attitude chart, iconic choices, topic list, highlighted text and dialogue menu A canned speech is when the character that the player controls does not speak at all. Other characters found in the interactive fiction speak with predetermined words.
In this example of a canned speech, the player character Link does not speak at all. Here it can be seen that he is told by a character, Zelda that the character Adrian helped her escape from a wizard. Canned conversations are conversations that are predetermined by the interactive fiction but it is seen from the controlled character’s point of view.
Ramza, the character who the player controls is exchanging words to another character in the game. While the players can move the characters, the characters they control still interact and converse with another character found in the game without the player’s influence.

The two forms of dialogue, canned speech and canned conversation, do not give the players or interactors any form of interaction from how the characters converse with another character. Mood meter, attitude chart, iconic choices, topic list, highlighted text and dialogue menu are the kinds of dialogue that the interactor can interact with. Mood meter is a way on how the player can interact with the game. In choosing what mood the character is in, the player can modify a dialogue according to the choice of the player. Attitude chart is also another form of choice made available to the player that determines the mood or emotion of the character the player uses. Both the mood meter and attitude chart have not been used by game developers in favor of the simpler ways of delivering dialogue.

Iconic choices are options given to the players in a form of icons related to the dialogue. The icons given to players on the screen relate to the choice the player wishes to choose given in the game. Topic list are also options in which players can ask characters in a game and the characters in the game will respond to the character. The Topic list is sometimes keywords that the players can choose in order to know in depth on the choice they have or will make. Dialogue Menu is dialogues that are given as choices to the player. The dialogue choice given to the players are usually in a form of phrase or sentences which are appropriate to the context of the dialogue.
Here is an example of a topic list dialogue found in the video game Morrowind. Here the player is currently engaged in a dialogue with another character in the game. He has the choice of asking words highlighted in the dialogue for additional information.
This example of Dialogue menu shows the choice of what the character will say in accordance with the player choice. Here the player is presented with three choices. He is only given a phrase and depending on the choice, the character the player controls will say and act out the choice the player has chosen.

Armando Troisi who was Bioware Lead Cinematic Designer and current Narrative Director at 343 industries (http://ca.linkedin.com/pub/armando-troisi/2/369/50a) held a talk on “Interactive Narrative Design in Mass Effect 2” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-opEshcecMY) at Game Design Expo 2010. He points out in his presentation on the perspective in video games. He describes perspective as “point of view from which the player interacts with the story”. He then continues on to point out two kinds of perspective in video games stories according to Bioware, subjective and objective. In subjective video games, “the player is the avatar”. The Mirriam-Webster dictionary defines avatar as “an electronic image that represents and is manipulated by a computer user as in a computer game”. In subjective video game stories, the dialogue between the player and characters in the video game are verbatim. An example of this form of dialogue can be found in Fallout (Interplay Entertainment, 1997)
In this dialogue, the choice of dialogue between the player and the character in the game. The player have four choice prompted on the screen in order to respond to the character in the game. The lines the player chooses will be “spoken” by the player and the character in the game will understand what the player has said following all words in the line. This is to reinforce the notion that the player is as if he or she talks directly to the character in the game.

On the other hand, an objective video game story according to Armando Troisi, the player is not the avatar of the game. He also points out that the avatar of the game has his or her “own voice and motivations”. While in subjective video game stories the dialogue is verbatim, in objective video game stories, the dialogue is not verbatim. Here is an example of a dialogue choice in an objective video game story.
In this dialogue which can be found in Deus Ex Human Revolution, the players are given three keywords describing the tone or how the player wishes to talk to the character. When the player chooses “advise”, the lines which the character the player controls will speak to the character are prompted on screen. The difference between the subjective and objective dialogue is that the player has no choice on the words that will be spoken to the character in the game.

Armando Troisi proposes on what he calls “The Agreement” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=1RhXAgq00Qg#t=219s) which is an agreement between the players and the developers in accordance to the story presented in the game. He proposes four points in “The Agreement” which are “Interface for choice is predictable, Choice produces results the player expects, Give the
player the choice they want and it’s the player’s story.” The first point he proposes is more of a design issue where the interface of the game have to be able understood and not to confuse the player. The second point is to give the players the result of the choice the player has chosen. The third point is to “Give the player the choice they want”. The last point is “it’s the player’s story”.

2.3 Plot

All form of fiction has plot in them. According to Kennedy and Gioia in their book on Literature (2010, p.13), there are elements that “arouse and sustain our interest” (p.14). The elements are: dramatic situation, exposition, complication, suspense, foreshadowing, crisis, climax and conclusion. Dramatic situation are shown as the situation of the story. It is from “the opening sentence of the tale, we watch the unfolding of a dramatic situation”. The story starts with an exposition. Exposition is where the story “introduces the main characters”. It also gives us insight on what is happening in the story. A story can also start with a “in media res” which according to Kennedy and Gioia is “first presenting some exciting or significant moment, then filling in what happened earlier”. A story needs complication. It is when a story introduces to the audience a new conflict to the characters. Suspense is also another element that happens in the middle of a story. It is where “the pleasurable anxiety we feel that heightens our attention to the story”. An example of suspense in a story might be found in the movie Jurassic Park. In the movie, Dr. Grant, Lex and Tim have to return to the visitor’s center in order to leave Jurassica Park. What creates the suspense is their need to survive against the Dinosaurs who have roamed free.
A plot of a story can contain foreshadowing. Foreshadowing is what the writer indicates to the audience on what might or will happen. In the play *Macbeth* there is an example of foreshadowing. In the play, Macbeth is told that he cannot be killed by those who are born from a mother. In the last act Macbeth was killed by Macduff who was actually born by caesarean section. Foreshadowing can also be called Chekhov’s Gun, named after the Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. Anton Chekhov wrote a letter to a fellow Russian playwright Aleksandr Semenovich Lazarev saying which translates to “If in the first act you have hung a pistol on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired. Otherwise don’t put it there.” What Anton Chekhov implies is that when an element is introduced or foreshadows, the element must be explained. A device that can help a writer in explaining a background of a character or other element in a story is called flashback. It is a “scene relived from a character’s memory”. Crisis and climax are two elements in the story which are moments of high tension of the story. The difference between Crisis and Climax is that a climax is “the moment of greatest tension at which the outcome is to be decided”. The result of the climax is called the resolution or conclusion.

2.4 Character

Kennedy and Gioia state in their book on Literature a character is “an imagined person who inhabits a story” (2010, p.77). A character in a fiction can be described in many ways. To define the characters it has to be seen in many ways. The first element that can define a character is their motivation. A motivation is what drives the character to do what they do in the story. For example, D’Artagnan, the protagonist in the Three Musketeers, his motivation is to join the Musketeers. For that reason he would do
anything to prove to the three musketeers that he is worthy to join the musketeers. Kennedy and Gioia used E.M Forster’s definition of characters (2010, p.78). English novelist E.M Forster has divided a characters’ definition into two, Flat or Round. A flat character “has only one outstanding trait or feature”. This means that one thing that the character is interesting. Cinderella’s step mother for example in the fairy tale Cinderella is an example of a flat character. She is very mean to Cinderella and no other trait can be seen from her. The opposite of a flat character are round characters. Round characters usually have two or more traits.

A character can also be defined by either being static or dynamic. Static characters are characters that do not change from the start of the story to the end. On the other hand, dynamic characters change from start to finish. An example of dynamic character is the character Luke Skywalker from the movie series Star Wars. From the first movie he appears, A New Hope, Luke Skywalker was a naïve farmer boy and to a calm Jedi knight by the end of the final movie, Return of the Jedi.

Characters can also be a stock character, which are characters that are “known by some outstanding trait or traits” (2010, p.77). Stock characters range from the dashing young knight to a evil wizard or a naïve princess. Stock characters are characters that everyone often knows what their traits are. A character can also be an allusion. Allusion is “a reference to some famous person, place or thing in history”. Ahab from Moby Dick is an example of an allusion. The name Ahab comes from the Old Testament who was a tyrannical king who is similar to the character Ahab in Moby Dick. Antihero is also another kind of character. Antihero characters are “protagonists conspicuously lacking in one or more of the usual attributes of a traditional hero”. Antihero characters are
usually characters that do actions that are not heroic such as killing people in cold blood, mugging and other actions that heroes would not do.

2.5 Theme

Theme is a part of a literary work. Theme is “whatever general idea or insight the entire story reveals” (Kennedy & Gioia, 2010, p.183). The theme of a literary work is not clear to the audience. Themes are not always the author’s message to their audience but what the story is all about. There are two ways to describe a theme of a story. Generally, a theme is worded in a form a sentence. For example “Redemption can be found if one can accept one’s past and look forward to the future” can be a theme of a story about redemption and facing ones mistakes. Moral of a story can also be taken as the theme of story. Another way to describe a theme of story is by phrases. Phrases such as “Death is inevitable” or “Actions define the person” are samples of themes of a story.

In order to find the theme of a story, the following questions needs to be answered (Kennedy & Gioia, 2010, p.185):

- Does the title indicate something to the reader?
- Does the protagonist change throughout the story?
- Is the author making assumptions on how he views life?
- Any kind of symbolism, allusions or analogies in the story?

These questions when reading a literary work is how one can find the theme.

2.6 Setting

Setting is an element in fiction that describes the place and time the story takes place. It can either take place a fictional or non-fictional time or place. According to
Robert Chisholm in his book “Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook” (2006) on page 26, Setting has three dimensions: Physical, Temporal and Cultural. A Physical setting can either be “Geographical and/or Topographical”. An example can be the story is set in Tokyo or in the Caribbean islands. Temporal setting is when the story is set. In can be either in the past, distant future or in a time different from the real time. Cultural setting is the culture norm in the story. In the movie “Planet of the Apes”, Primates are the superior race while humans are thought to be uncivilized is an example of a cultural setting.

2.7 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is one of the new literary movements. According to the “Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature” (2007), the description of postmodernism:

“Term applied by some commentators since the early 1980s to the ensemble of Western societies in the aftermath of artistic Modernism. (...)postmodernity asserts itself from about 1956 with (...) the huge cultural impact of television and popular music”.

From this description it can be seen that Postmodernism is a literary movement that proceeds after the Modernism movement. The Modernism movement is a movement from the late 19th to the early 20th century that rejects the notion of Realism, which itself is a movement that tries to be close to reality as possible. Peter Barry in “Beginning Theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory” refers to Jeremy Hawthorn, written in “Concise glossary of contemporary literary theory” on the difference and the similarity between Modernism and Postmodernism. The first similarity is that Postmodernism and Modernism is that both “give great prominence to fragmentation as a feature of twentieth-century art and culture”. Fragmentation inferred by Hawthorn is to not follow what is the norm. The difference between the Modernism and Postmodernism
is that Modernism fears fragmentation while Postmodernism embraces it. Another difference between Postmodernism and Modernism is Postmodernism “rejects the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ art”. Postmodernism also favors “random play rather than purposeful action, surface rather than depth.” This implies that the Postmodernism movement is more chaotic and does not follow any kind of rule compared to other literary movements.

Postmodernism does not only concern literature. It can also be applied to any other studies such as psychoanalysis, linguistics, anthropology and international relations. Mark Leffert in his article “Complexity and postmodernism in contemporary theory of psychoanalytic change” (2008) said that

“Postmodernism is deeply concerned with the relations of the self to the social and historical matrix in which it is embedded. The nature of those relations and the degree to which the self is separable from its matrixes are subjects for hot debate within postmodernism.” (p.528)

In psychoanalysis, Leffert argues that the postmodernism influence how our inner mind works and how people interact.

Barrett pointed out that “Postmodernists brought out our attention the political nature of language, deconstructed essences such as culture in order to expose the underlying power relations and alerted us to the vested interests intrinsic to the practice of representation.”(Postmodernism’s brief moment in history, 2011). Barrett also added that according to Knauft (2006), a new anthropology called “anthropology in the middle” which is a study of anthropology that focuses on the current theories rather than “pay homage to any specific theoretical or methodological approach, dismisses the past,(…) and jumbles together the local and the general, and objectivity and
subjectivity”. Barrett article shows that with Postmodernism, new ideas emerge with the help of postmodernism.

Postmodernism also has input in the way on how people think in International relations. In the article “Daring to deconstruct”, published in the Harvard International Review (2010), there are two aspects of how postmodernism concern in International Relations. The first aspect is how “postmodernism holds distrust for singular “metanarratives” (pg.33) or those stories that we tell ourselves in order to justify one theory as preferable to another. In the example given by the Harvard International Review is about a cross-border conflict and the facts surrounding it. Rather than choosing a single theory which we consider the best one, instead turn to the metanarratives to see the cross-border conflict as a whole. The second element of postmodernism that can be applied to International Relations is how “postmodernism is the rejection of the idea that there is a singular logic to history” (pg.34). This explanation continues how histories developments “were wholly contingent upon the specific individuals which made them possible”. This means that with postmodernism, how events move are not always a straight line and fixed.

Different philosophers have different ideas on what they believe what postmodernism is. In “Postmodernism: The Key Figures” (2002), Douglas Kellner stated that according to Jean Baudrillard, “we live in the “hyperreality” of simulations in which images, spectacles, and the play of signs replace the logic of production and class conflict as key constituents of contemporary societies”(page 51). Hyperreality according to Baudillard is where “entertainment, information, and communication technologies provide experience more intense and involving than the scenes of banal everyday life, as
well as the codes and models that structure everyday life”(page 53). This shows Postmodernism according to Baudillard relies on technology that creates new world to the people in order to create a new reality in postmodernism. Baudillard also adds that “individuals flee from the “desert of the real” for the ecstasies of hyperreality and the new realm of computer, media and technological experience”. This implies that the use of new technology to escape reality is a part of our postmodern culture.

Another figure in Postmodernism is Jean-Francois Lyotard. Hans Bertens has quoted Lyotard’s description of Postmodernism. According to Lyotard, Postmodernism is “incredulity towards metanarratives” (2002, p. 245). Metanarratives are “global explanations of how the world or relationships in general work” (Leffert, 2008). An example of a metanarrative can be “Many feminists hold that the patriarchy has systematically oppressed and subjugated women throughout history” (www.megmitchell.com/course_docs/). This example shows how women are believed to be oppressed because of the patriarchy not because of other factors. Lyotard argues that postmodernism has made people lost their way and accept what is presented to them rather than question it.

A genre that is influenced by the postmodernism movement is the genre Cyberpunk. The first use of the word cyberpunk comes from the short story written by Bruce Bethke titled Cyberpunk (http://www.brucebethke.com/articles/re_cp.html). A definition of cyberpunk can be found in Karen Collins' article “Dead Channel Surfing: the commonalities between cyberpunk literature and industrial music” (2005). In the article, Collins cites Istvan Csiscery-Ronay’s definition of cyberpunk (2005, p.165), the first one being a portmanteau of two words, cyber and punk. Cyber comes from the
word cybernetics which is “the study of information and control in man and machine”, while punk is a music movement origination from the 1970s which advocates freedom from societies’ norm. The other is “the ideal post-modern couple: a machine philosophy that can create the world in its own image and a self-mutilating freedom that is that image snarling back.” It can be said that cyberpunk is postmodern genre because it incorporates two different movements, seeking freedom while relying on machinery and technology. Many of cyberpunk literature comprise of a dystopian life while relying on technology and machines. An example of a cyberpunk work is the movie Blade Runner, directed by Ridley Scott in 1982. The movie is based on Phillip K Dick’s novel, “Do Androids dream of electric sheep?” In the movie, the main protagonist, Rick Deckard is a Blade Runner, a person who has to hunt down Replicants. Replicants are robots that look and act like humans.

2.8 Transhumanism

In C. Christopher Hook’s article “transhumanism and posthumanism” in Encyclopedia of bioethics 3rd edition (2005), he cites Bostrum for the definition of transhumanist. Bostrum defines transhumanism as “the intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by using technology to eliminate aging and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities”. Hook also quotes FM-2030, a futurist, saying that transhumans were “the earliest manifestation of new evolutionary beings”. The article, “transhumanism and posthumanism”, also points out the fundamentals and characteristics of transhumanism. According to Bostrom, the two fundamentals of transhumanism are “rejection of the assumption that human nature
is constant” and “there is nothing sacrosanct about nature in general or human nature in particular”. These two fundamentals show how transhumans reject the notion of nature. The article “Transhumanism and posthumanism” also points out two criticism against transhumanism. The two criticisms are “they are unnatural” and “they engage people in activities that should be the sole purview of the deity”. Transhumanists disagree with the criticism because they feel that “most of what human beings do with any technology is unnatural, yet these uses are accepted as benefits, not harms”. Transhumanists according to the article are mostly agnostics and atheists.