

Knights of the Old Republic

Boyum tells us that meaning is made by the reader with the help of cues by the author. Our response to a movie is primarily shaped by our own personal experiences, feelings and inclinations going into it. An adaptation, therefore, is “created” by the viewer in *combination* with the adapter.

What the Star Wars game **Knights of the Old Republic** does is take this idea of a theoretical “creation” and turn it into a very literal “creation”, where the person playing the game shapes almost every aspect of the character and story. This is achieved through the very unique style of game where the person playing the game is allowed to choose the dialogue, choose minor and major actions and decide how they will react to their consequences of their choices. As opposed to 99% of games where we find very linear stories and characters, with gamers merely controlling the *pace* of the game, KotOR lets the gamer control the *process* of the game based on his or her own ideas and inclinations in regards to the source text’s primary themes such as the conflict between light and dark sides, manipulating the Force for one’s own self-service, embracing or shunning one’s destiny, etc.

Boyum says that “we are all bound to have different responses” (44) to an identical film based on our own preconceptions and, in a similar way, no two people will experience the same narrative in KotOR based on the same basic premise, only in a much more literal way. What the people at Bioware have done is take full advantage of the medium, creating a highly unique game that allows for the ideas put forth by Boyum to be played out quite literally before one’s own eyes.



image: www.penny-arcade.com

Star Wars. Dir. George Lucas. Perf. Mark Hammill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, and Alec Guinness. 1977. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2000.

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