

Game Narrative Review

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Game Title: Cyberpunk 2077

Platform: PC, PS4/PS5, Xbox One/Series X/Series S

Genre: FPS Action-Adventure RPG

Release Date: December 10, 2020

Developer: CD Projekt RED

Publisher: CD Projekt RED

Game Writer/Creative Director/Narrative Designer: Gabriel Amatangelo, Marcin Blacha, Tomasz Marchewka

Overview

Cyberpunk 2077 follows the story of a mercenary, V, struggling to survive in Night City. During a mission, V accidentally bonds the consciousness with a legendary rock star, Johnny Silverhand, forcing them to share the same body. Since V's life was threatened, the pair must seek a way to save V, making them involved in conflicts between the Arasaka Corporation, gang warfare, etc.

I believe one of the greatest significance of a game is the emotions it evokes in players, since emotions provoke thought, and experiencing emotions is itself a pleasure. The main thing I will discuss in this essay is the game narrative's impact on players. In general, as the story progresses, players gradually witness Night City's corrupted structure: corporations exploiting lives, the powerlessness of the underprivileged, the weakness of individual will against the system, and so on. This causes players to experience psychological unease and pity with every choice. My analysis will focus on how *Cyberpunk 2077*'s narrative delivers emotional and psychological impact. Crucially, these emotions are based on immersion – defined as the player feels as if they are inside the video game, and they forget they are playing. Immersion allows players to empathize most deeply with the game's content and absorb the emotional weight to the greatest extent.

In the following sections, I will first introduce the characters. Each role is richly designed on its backstories, distinct personalities, and complex experiences. The depth of designs matters because these characters may thus have features that resemble people around the player, or

similar to the player themselves, allowing for easy empathy. Simultaneously, the crafted immersion in the game creates authentic experiences, making interactions with characters feel like real-life connections, encouraging emotional attachment. Then, in the breakdown session, I will highlight memorable settings and plot elements within the game, focusing on analysing the emotions they evoke and the reflections they inspire. Most of the characters in it are introduced in the character section. The strongest element will be how the multiple imperfect ending fosters a sense of frustration. Then, I will discuss how the game's sense of incompleteness, as the unsuccessful element, weakens the player experience. In the highlight section, I have chosen one of the game's endings to explore how its beautifully crafted narrative precisely conveys a wave of intense emotion to the player.

Characters

There are so many richly developed characters in *Cyberpunk 2077*, but it is helpful to highlight the ones who interact to demonstrate the players' feeling they bring. I will break down and introduce the characters' backgrounds, personalities, and plot experiences.



- **V** – The protagonist that the player controls. V can be varied and diverse, with different backgrounds and appearances depending on the player. In the story, V begins the story in three different settings. Regardless of the player's choice, after the prologue, they begin their life as a mercenary in Night City. V's core traits have a blend of resilience and sensitivity. They can maintain rationality in a gunfight, while showing sincere compassion for those around them.



- **Johnny Silverhand** – A flamboyant rock rebel, and the game's "second protagonist." Fifty years ago, he tried to raid the Arasaka Tower with his friends, including Rogue, who is now a fixer, aimed at rescuing Johnny's ex-girlfriend Alt, who was kidnapped. Unfortunately, they failed, and his mind was captured by Arasaka, the company stored his mind in a relic as a prisoner. The relic was an experimental device designed to achieve immortality for old Saburo, CEO of Arasaka, to store the consciousness of dead people, and revive them by taking over another person's body. Johnny awakens within V's consciousness after the relic is implanted in V's brain following a headshot.

The relationship between him and V went from initial hostility to seeking collaboration with V. At first, his consciousness was still stuck at fifty years ago, unable to accept the fact that he had failed and been reborn into the mind of an unfamiliar mercenary. Later on, however, he witnessed in V an unshakable resilience, unwavering loyalty to friends, and an integrity untouched by corruption. This seemed

to make him reflect on his own past self, who rebelled against authority, and evoked memories of his own unfulfilled idealism. Gradually, his bond with V deepened until they became irreplaceable confidants.

His charm lies in his rebellious spirit and profound empathy. As the story progresses, Johnny's figure is constantly reinterpreted, evolving from a symbol of legend into a vibrant, compelling soul. Originally, his image was the legend told by others, a hero who sacrificed himself in the raid of the Arakasa Tower. Later, however, witnessing the current state of the world and the situation of his friends, he reflected deeply on himself. He reflected on his past behavior toward his friends, admitting he had been a selfish bastard back then. He reflected on his former stubbornness, acknowledging his blind determination to raid the Arakasa Tower without concern for the consequences. Johnny confided these thoughts to V, breaking the symbol of the legend and revealing the fragile mortal beneath. This moment defined him as one capable of acknowledging mistakes, caring for others, and willing to pay the price for his mistakes.



- **Goro Takemura** – Former guard of Arasaka, strict, disciplined, and loyal. He tracked down V after Saburo, the boss of Arasaka, died, but faced a sudden betrayal, and fled with V. Though fundamentally good-hearted, Takemura remained fiercely loyal to Saburo because of the gratitude that stems from how Saburo had selected and saved him out of the slums, granting him a life of ease. His relationship with V oscillates between suspicion and dependence.



- **Solomon Reed** – An FIA agent in *Cyberpunk 2077*'s DLC, Phantom Liberty. He was abandoned by the new American government's president, Myers, for 7 years due to a mission failure and he knew too much about the inner workings. He was called back when Myers faced difficulties, taking charge of a secret mission that had gotten out of control. During this mission, his former student Songbird, who has a unique physical structure enabling high-level hacking, was forced to become a critical weapon in political maneuvering. Pushed to the edge of physical and mental collapse by high-risk hacking, Songbird was still ordered to obey commands and undertake potentially lethal roles. Reed fully understood that Songbird was being exploited by the system and witnessed her pain and desperation. But he never truly resisted his superior's decisions. Facing the orders from the President, he repeatedly convinced himself that "this was a necessary sacrifice," even if it meant pushing his student into the abyss. He is calm and steady, but these features ultimately became a form of avoidance, escaping moral responsibility through obedience.



- **Kerry Eurodyne** – Former member of the Samurai Band, Johnny’s friend. Male V can develop a romantic storyline with him. After Samurai broke up, Kerry became a singer on his own. He organized the band's final performance with Johnny. Beneath his hot-tempered exterior is a gentle heart.



- **Panam Palmer** – Former member of the nomadic Aldecardo family. Male V can develop a romantic storyline with her. She was introduced to V by the powerful fixer Rogue, and she later assisted V in kidnapping the relic maker. As the story unfolds, V gradually comes to understand her connection to her nomadic tribe. Panam temporarily left the tribe because her values contradicted the current leader's. She is radical, willing to fight for her tribe's interests, while the current leader, Saul, is more conservative for the tribe's survival, willing to bow to the corporation. Yet behind the conflict, Saul and the tribe have always cared for her, accepted her, and will always be there to help her when she's in trouble. She is impulsive but perceptive, and has a sense of duty to her tribe.



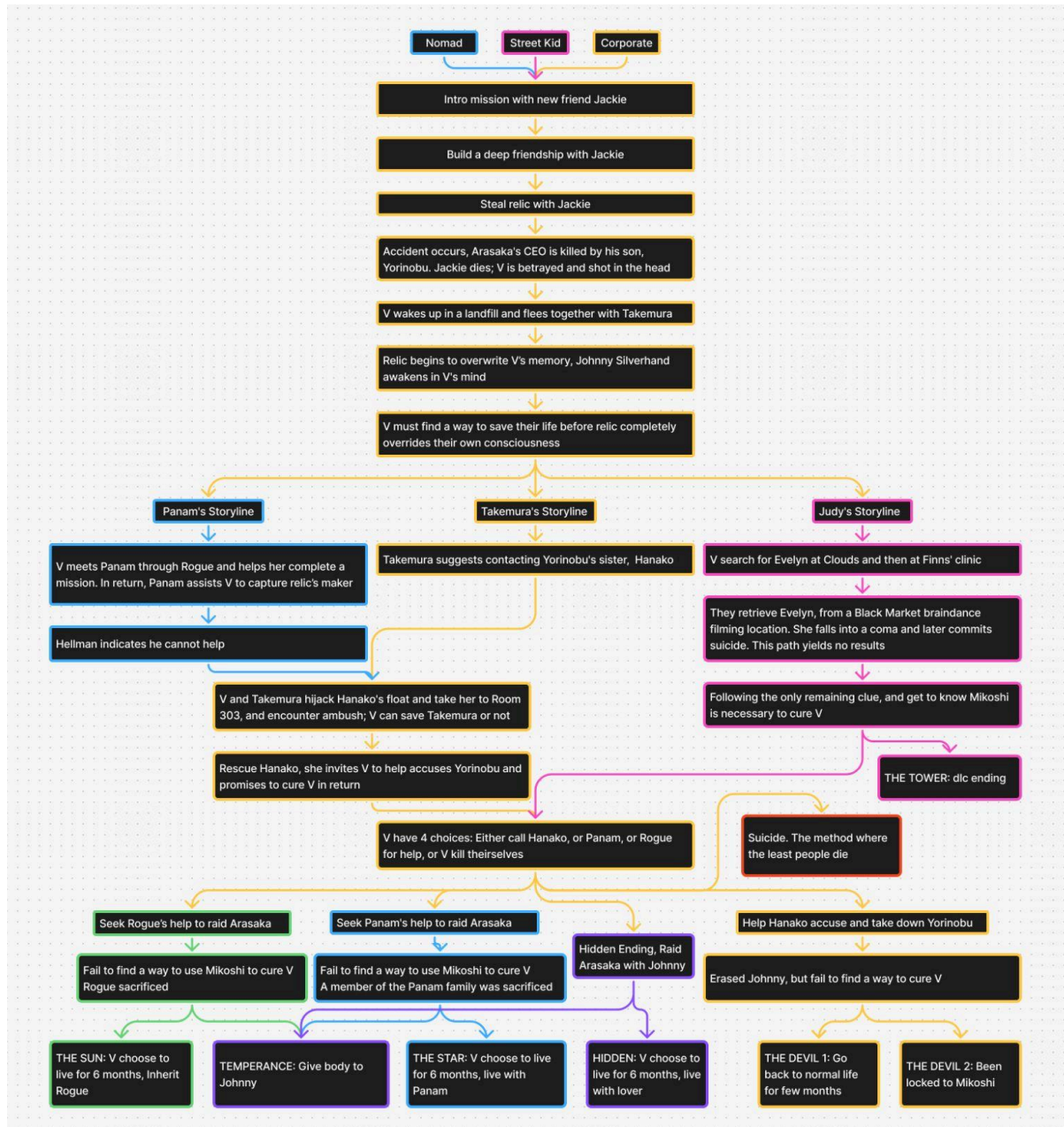
- **Joshua Stephenson** – A key figure in a short side story, but unexpectedly profound. He is a murderer seeking redemption through filming a Braindance sacrifice, he encountered V by chance and regarded V as the confidant to whom he would confess in his final moments. Ultimately he could be crucified by V himself. He is portrayed as foolish but faithful.



- **Viktor Vektor** – V’s closest doc friend and one of the few genuinely good characters. He is warm-hearted and steady; he offers V unconditional support and truly cares about V. His presence tells players that even in Night City, kindness still exists.

Breakdown

The vast world and rich main & side storylines of *Cyberpunk 2077* itself and DLC make it impossible to summarize the plot in a few simple paragraphs. Instead, I will use the following flow chart to comb through the main storyline, and then discuss some narrative elements following this map in the next few paragraphs.



Evolution of the Bond Between V and Johnny

Behind every point in the storyline map is the relationship between the player as V and Johnny Silverhand, who is arguably the most crucial supporting character in the game: from their initial opposition, through compromise in their interactions, to eventual resonance. The

hidden ending is closely related to Johnny, specifically requiring the player and V to have a heart-to-heart conversation with Johnny.

- Initially, V and Johnny's first encounter is tense and distrustful. Johnny's invasion after V's body broke down triggers them to yell and even fight with each other. As Roger Sperry's Split Brain Experiments revealed, two separate brains that are originally one could not even communicate well with each other; then it is reasonable for two completely different minds, V's and Johnny's, to not instantly get along. The fear and madness of one's mind invaded by another aligns the player's emotion with V's hostility and rejection towards Johnny. Through avoiding rushing the plot by not immediately portraying V and Johnny as allies, the game's narrative carefully maintains the player's immersion.
- In the second phase, through gradual interaction, V and Johnny begin to understand and change their impressions of each other. V witnessed Johnny's guilt of using his ex-girlfriend Alt as a hacker, but was unable to protect her, and his complex feelings towards Rogue, his companion while raiding Arasaka. Johnny observes V's bond with Jackie, Judy, Panam, and others. They started to see each other's humanity beyond assumptions based on appearances. Through brief conversations between Night City missions, players come to realize that beneath Johnny's cynical exterior is a kind and sensitive heart, allowing players to feel a soul with depth. At this point, respect and understanding have begun to grow between them.
- In the next phase, if the player has the opportunity to go through Johnny's side story — helping him to resolve past regret, reconciling with his old friend Kerry, hosting his final concert, and having a heart-to-heart conversation at the oil field — their bond reaches a true turning point. At that time, Johnny sheds his sharp edges, acknowledging his selfishness and loneliness. Throughout the journey, the narrative slowly shifts players into accepting their bond and relationship with Johnny, as V and Johnny seem more complete due to each other's presence: V's persistence in friendship has softened Johnny's selfishness, while Johnny's rebellious spirit has changed V's naivety; their values merge and make each other stronger.
- After that, when reaching the ending part, if the prerequisites for the hidden ending are met, Johnny will be willing to raid Arasaka's building alone for V. Ultimately, whether V willingly gives their body to Johnny, or Johnny sacrifices himself for V's remaining lifespan, the survivor feels profound reluctance. Their relationship extends beyond friendship or romance. The player's feeling of Johnny shifts from feeling invaded to viewing him as a "life partner," making any ending with only one survivor incomplete.

The part of *Cyberpunk 2077* that remains most special to me is how a game made me genuinely perceive a virtual character as real for the first time. As I worry and feel apologetic for the characters, I feel as if I truly lived within Night City. My immersion in this game stemmed from its gradual narrative progression, as mentioned earlier, and its creation of

characters' duality, making them close to humans with real emotions. By those features, millions of players overlook minor flaws and immerse themselves in the narrative and gameplay.

Immersion Through Choice and Personalization

Another way *Cyberpunk 2077* immerses players into the game is through player agency, which is the player's sense of control and impact within the game. As mentioned earlier, the hidden ending is only unlocked when the player makes the right choice in a special conversation. This means that, without relying on guides or spoilers, each player reaches a unique and personalized ending shaped by their own decisions. *Cyberpunk 2077* extends this level of customization beyond its endings to every dialogue interaction. Players can express their attitude on nearly every single line of dialogue, and the game responds accordingly. This ability to display emotions and receive unique responses aligned with the player's mindset helps deepen their emotional immersion in the game.

Beyond choices in dialogues and endings, players can define their character's gender and appearance, significantly expanding the freedom of the game. In my two playthroughs — one as female V as a street kid, and one as male V from the corporation — I've discovered that even the origin of V will affect feelings; a background of street kids gives a sense of naivety, while a corporate background gives a sense of arrogance. The romanceable characters also differ between male and female V. These subtle distinctions based on origin and gender craft the most fitting experience for each player.

Cyberpunk 2077 skillfully uses phrasing and personalization to create a deep sense of synchronization between the player and V. According to Szolin and colleagues, virtual avatars serve as templates for the "ideal self," strengthening the emotional bond between users and their avatars, which means avatars are not merely tools for play but also a means for users to shape and present a more refined, idealized self-image within the virtual world. Take my first playthrough as an example: I personally preferred the city over the wilderness, and I don't consider myself elite, so I started with the street kid origin. I styled my appearance as my ideal self, with striking jet-black shoulder-length hair. Through character customization and creating a character with my personality as an ideal self, I felt fully immersed in V's voice and rhythm, which gradually forms an illusion: V's choices are my choices, and my personality leaves a mark in the story.

Identity and Gender

Cyberpunk 2077 gently challenged stereotypes and discussed the topic of identity. The well-paced narrative slowly introduced LGBTQ+ characters, as players gradually yet naturally accepted the characters' sexual orientations. Therefore, these characters would not be considered as a mere showcase of diversity. In this game, no one expresses surprise at

anyone else's uniqueness. There can be fierce female boxers and delicate male docs. Female V can shave her head and walk in the streets, while male V can wear a bra during any mission.

This casual narrative approach has proven to be effective. It does not treat diversity as a theme requiring loud proclamation, but exists as naturally as air, allowing players to unconsciously take this inclusivity as it should be. *Cyberpunk 2077*'s brilliance in stereotype is that it doesn't give lectures; it simply shows.

Game Mechanics and Narrative Integration

I noticed *Cyberpunk 2077*'s dialogue skip feature is ingeniously designed. When players press the skip button on the controller or keyboard, conversations will be accelerated, accompanied by glitchy effects. When skipping the no-conversation driving part, the screen goes black with glitch effects. This not only preserves immersion better than direct interruption, but also mimics human memory. I reached this conclusion because people tend to forget inactive periods in their recollections, just like a blurred screen erasing a memory segment, only recalling key actions.

Corruption in Night City

Night City, through scattered narratives, is a corrupt city. Countless direct or indirect examples illustrate this. The poor die on the streets, being ignored, while the wealthy receive care from the Trauma Team, a specialized medical services corporation, within three minutes for even minor injuries. The Night City Police Department (NCPD) turned a blind eye to street assaults, yet while company interests were harmed, armed forces appeared quickly. On one side, dazzling billboards promise a colorful life, and on the other side are filthy streets and cyberpsychosis.

Most crucially, tragedies, like Judy's powerlessness to rescue the Clouds or the Panam family's struggle for survival, aren't caused by personal choices but rooted deep in corporate monopolies and greed, treating living beings as disposable materials, as most people in Night City are born into a lifetime of hardship.

Fortunately, our world isn't Night City. We don't face huge discrimination based on origin, and far more people than in the game are willing and able to help the vulnerable. As a horror game lover, I find that the terror allows players to explore harm from a safe position, fostering reconciliation. *Cyberpunk 2077* isn't formally a horror game, but isn't it the same principle, while amplifying humanity's vices and corruption within a city worse than reality, leaves players trembling and unforgettable at its tragedies, provoking thought, ultimately making us treasure our life more deeply.

Yet even though our world is a far better version than Night City, there are still plenty of villains, violence, and injustice. By presenting an exaggerated world of conflict, the game provokes resistance to darkness, empathy to tragedy, and appreciation for our own reality.

The Moral Dilemma Behind Characters

In *Cyberpunk 2077*'s Night City, every character is complex. Specifically, I want to explore two figures: Solomon Reed and Takemura Goro. These two characters never intersect in the game, but they form a compelling contrast.

Reed has always been fully aware of his actions but also deeply troubled by them. On one hand, he understands Myers' cold decisions and understands SongBird was being pushed to a tragic situation. But on the other hand, he was accustomed to a life of obeying orders. This system, as his comfort zone, gave him security, preventing him from truly take any action to rebel. He knows he is being taken advantage of by Myers, but he still chose to continue the mission despite the regret. As a result, his suffering forms a cycle: awakening -> regret -> self-comfort and self-repression -> awakening again. His moral dilemma comes from the sense of knowing yet being unable to change.

Takemura remained fiercely loyal to Saburo Arasaka, CEO of Arasaka, because of the company's favors, but failed to recognize that it was the company that brought his fundamental predicament. Player's conversations with him on a high building next to the Arakawa Industrial Park reveal how thoroughly he had internalized this system: he accepted its rules, its hierarchical obedience, and everything about Arasaka. This is irony, since this system cost him a bright life, freedom, and independent judgment.

These two characters reveal that *Cyberpunk 2077* isn't about simple "good vs evil," but a lot of neutral areas, and rather, how the system drives people towards entirely different moral paths: some know the truth but dare not escape, while others are brainwashed into blindness.

The Dilemma of Another Character

If everyone needs to recall the most vivid memory from the game, mine would be undoubtedly Joshua's story. This is a side story that is not largely connected to the main storyline, but remarkably rich. It tells the tale of V, commissioned by Bill, to seek revenge by killing Joshua, but then Bill is mistakenly killed by the police. Joshua regards V as a lifeline, telling them that as a former murderer, he has embraced religion in prison and is determined to repent his past sins. He plans to sacrifice himself by participating in an Illegal Braindance to awaken the conscience of the numb society. During this mission, players can choose to nail Joshua to the cross on their own. This sheer darkness is precisely where the narrative tension and stress lie.

The brilliance of this side story is illustrated in its exploration of multiple conflicts and paradoxes:

- Joshua humbly and sincerely repents for his past crimes and longs for forgiveness. Some of the victims' family members accept his apology, while others do not.

However, his posture carries a sense of emotional blackmail, as if to say, “I’m repenting so sincerely, why can’t you forgive me?”

- Secondly, Joshua appears rather indifferent to the police's accidental killing of Bill. This feels incongruous: why does such a repentant man remain silent about the death of another victim’s family member? I suspect he attributes Bill’s death to the police officer who killed him. While Bill’s death at its core is because he tried to make Joshua receive the punishment he deserves, from Joshua’s own moral standpoint, he isn’t the “primary agent” responsible for this “repentance.”
- The medium Joshua chose to spread his message is essentially the opposite of the spirit he aims to convey. While he views his sacrifice as sacred, the audience for Black Market Braindance simply watches it out of morbid curiosity. His actions may merely have fallen into a commercially successful film rather than a call for spiritual awakening. This forces players to consider that, in a world where even “sacrifice” can be entertainment-oriented, does pure redemption exist?
- The coldness during filming sharply contrasts with Joshua’s anxious state. The director repeatedly emphasizes “viewership ratings,” focused solely on profit, seemingly indifferent to an oncoming death, and unconcerned with the message Joshua seeks to convey. She once stated that she valued not Joshua’s spirit, but his fervent yet mindless devotion.
- Joshua’s own motives may appear not entirely pure. Just as he repeatedly seeks V to verify his values, he himself isn't entirely certain about this action. Moreover, his filming of the Braindance comes primarily from self-redemption, turning it into a personal confession rather than a noble call to awaken humanity.
- Additionally, after Joshua is nailed to the cross, the amount of time it took for Joshua to bleed to death feels uncomfortably prolonged. Players can only watch — without anything they can do. This extended moment is created to let players catch their breath and process the shock.
- Ultimately, the system’s indifference is irreversible. No matter how sincere Joshua's sacrifice was, Night City resumes its routine the next day as if nothing occurred. The tragedy of Joshua’s story lies in the fact that he has given everything, but failed to create even ripples.

This side story impacted me more profoundly than the main storyline, because it used the most straightforward way to tell: in Night City, sincerity may be valueless, and sacrifice may be meaningless. The game did not try to offer answers of any value, instead giving the paradoxes back to the player, leaving them to decide what to believe.

Strongest Element

One of the most compelling elements in *Cyberpunk 2077* is when players reach an ending they dislike, choose another path, repeat, until they realize: no matter which route they choose, there is no “perfect” ending!

Looking back at the flow chart, Rogue dies in the Sun ending, V has only six months left to live. In the Star ending, freedom only lasts a short time. In the Temperance ending, Jonny cut ties with everyone, abandoning V’s friends to go far away. The Devil ending is the most frustrating, since V betrayed their friends and was controlled by the system. The Tower ending sacrifices V’s selfhood for an extended and weak life. Even the hidden ending merely avoided the death of V’s friend, with nothing else changing.

Honestly, when I first reached this point, I was tilted: Is this game messing with me?

However, after more reflection, I realized the developers of *Cyberpunk 2077* had deliberately designed the narrative in this way. The absence of a good ending isn’t being cruel just for being cruel, but an extension of Night City’s core: it is a corrupted city that destroyed everything. In contrast with the massive city and the system, one person’s power could not change anything: thus, a perfect ending solely achieved by V would feel unsuitable.

That’s why *Cyberpunk 2077*’s ending leaves players unable to let go for a long time after finishing the game. Reflecting on the journey, every choice made, and the bond with characters, players realize that no matter how hard they tried, V’s fate was irreversibly sliding towards tragedy. This profound sense of helplessness perfectly aligns with the developer’s goal for Night City’s design — to cast a deep shadow in players’ hearts, leaving them with an unforgettable experience.

Unsuccessful Element

After playing the game for a while, I learned that *Cyberpunk 2077*’s marketing didn’t match the actual product in the beginning. The company originally planned to add more content to the game, but due to scheduling and other reasons, they could not finish it before the release date. This nearly caused every disappointing element in the game.

- First, the diversity of NPC behaviors was promised in marketing, but it turns out to be extremely limited. NPCs are mostly stiff and unresponsive. The pedestrian NPCs only have a handful of animations and react very minimally to V. Even when talking to main characters, if V stops responding, these characters only have very few lines of reaction, unlike any real conversation, and thus may break immersion. Additionally, romance with characters feels soulless once the story and conversations end.
- Some relationships progressed too rapidly, and some stories ended with poor resolution. For instance, River’s romance develops too quickly compared to other

romances, and the relationship between Jackie and the street V feels somewhat abrupt. Moreover, the Peralezes' story ends hastily. The conspiracy behind Mr. Blue Eyes could have potential, but it remains unresolved.

- Furthermore, while players can express opinions through dialogue choices, most have no impact on the main storyline. Regardless of which lines players select, the outcome remains unchanged, making narrative immersion feel inconsistent sometimes. Admittedly, not every game requires extensive branching paths, but given *Cyberpunk 2077*'s background, suggesting each choice could alter destiny, there could be a sense of disappointment when the results turn out that only characters' emotions changed.
- Moreover, the absence of the romance route for Takemura is recognized as a significant failure by some players. Although I previously noted that nearly every ending in 2077 carries a sense of regret, each player still holds their own preferred ending. For instance, those who prioritize the fates of friends tend to favour the hidden ending and give body to Johnny, and those who prefer Judy and Panam see the Star ending as a somewhat imperfect comfort. Nearly every character receives a significant closure. Only Takemura, this distinct, ambiguous figure who both opposes and coexists with the player, lacks continuity. An ending where Takemura and V stand together against Arasaka and potentially develop a romantic relationship was proposed but cut due to time constraints. This loss isn't merely a missed romantic path; it also leaves out a crucial exploration of the theme that "corporations are not all bad guys and they can awaken too." For some players, the game lacks a branch they truly accept.
- The different background of V could develop many more mechanisms, but ends with just a few different lines with characters.

Highlight

The most powerful and unforgettable highlight in *Cyberpunk 2077* is in "The Tower Ending," when V wakes up and returns to the street. V receives treatment, their life is extended, and able to walk in the sunlight once more. The camera angle is clever, showing V's shaved head until now using a third-person perspective, which gives a comical and faintly tragic sight. The street, the neon light, the crowds seem to remain, but the world now feels distant. V, who once effortlessly jumped and ran on the streets and dominated gunfights, now finds themselves powerless to resist while bullied by gangoons, and left no legendary reputation for others to admire. Two years were enough to transform Night City beyond recognition. Panam is likely dead, former friends have grown distant, and Johnny has completely cut ties. V has finally succeeded in saving themselves, the price, however, was utter isolation.

This ending makes players feel that returning to normal life somewhat feels more like a loss than death. V ultimately becomes a normal person, but loses everything that defines them as V. This weird calm brings the ending with a desolate feeling, making it mature and sharp.

Critical Reception

Gamespot, by Kallie Plagge (December 15, 2020) - 7/10

Plagge's review is relatively old, posted before the extended maintenance of the game. She points out that the bugs of *Cyberpunk 2077* are annoying. Many characters were well crafted, and she particularly likes the character design of Johnny Silverhand. However, she also pointed out that many side stories are even more interesting than the main storyline, which shows that the main storyline is a bit rushed.

Hookedgamers, by Nathan Rowland (January 20, 2021) - 70/100

Rowland states that this game did bring fun, but the glitches and inconsistencies makes the overall experience not so good.

Jimquisition, by James Stephanie Sterling (July 13, 2025) - 9/10

According to James Stephanie Sterling from the Jimquisition, *Cyberpunk 2077* created its Night City and surroundings with depth through its narrative, and an abundance of quests and optional encounters, most of which are all thoughtfully structured, making these side contents worth exploring.

Kotaku, by Luke Plunkett (March 1, 2023) - None

Plunkett stated that *Cyberpunk 2077* initially was in a terrible state since the numerous bugs made the game unplayable. However, after several years, fixes and updates made the game's reputation turn around. His current view of the game is complex, that he is disappointed by the overly rushed main storyline, but he describes the later side stories as "a second *Cyberpunk 2077*", which he likes a lot. Overall, he believes the game is far more playable than its initial. While it still disappoints in many areas, the side stories stand out as excellent.

Lessons

- **Multiple conflicts and paradoxes can provoke deep reflection.** Like Joshua's story, the relatively short plot is filled with numerous contrasts, and the overall tone leaves a sense of sorrow, naturally sparking prolonged contemplation.
- **Mission names can be quite playful.** In *Cyberpunk 2077*, many mission titles match specific rock song names. For instance, Johnny's introductory mission is called "I Love Like Fire," which comes from Generation X, 1979. Joshua's storyline has a mission "There Is a Light That Never Goes Out," which matches with a song by The Smiths, 1986. These names offer a delightful surprise to those familiar with the songs and provide an entry point for curious players to discover them. This feature introduced me to what is now my favorite band. Even more impressive is *Cyberpunk 2077*'s excellent localization. As a Chinese player, I originally played the Chinese version, and this version maintains rock songs in mission titles. Examples include "黑梦" (directly translated: "Black Dream") when waking up in the junkyard and "再见杰克" (directly translated: "Goodbye Jackie") upon Jackie's death, mirroring the

existing Chinese song title. There are countless similar examples, making utmost players have a chance to experience this delightful surprise.

- **Character depth comes from contradictions.** Johnny is prideful but thoughtful, Takemura is kind but works for villains, and Reed sees through everything but remains hesitant. These elements build richly layered characters.
- **The multiple ending's diversity of multiple endings can be profound.** Players can go to the end by their own choice, which personalizes the ending for players, letting them feel they are joining the game instead of watching a film.
- **Skipping dialogue can serve as a narrative mechanism.** *Cyberpunk 2077* has techniques like glitchy screens, which imitate memory loss or a lapse in consciousness.
- **Games can tell the story through indirect dialogue.** The corrupt Night City did not declare itself corrupt from the start. Instead, its corruption shows naturally through the environment and the plot.

Summation

In summary, *Cyberpunk 2077*'s compelling narrative delivers an incomparable gaming experience. It describes both the bright and dark sides of Night City, portrays complex character relationships, and tells thought-provoking mission stories that gradually build a brutal but authentic world. Each element intersects within the game, forming a contradictory and deeply layered unit that offers players plenty to consider. On a macro perspective, Night City's worldview, social structure, and street scenes constantly emphasize the conflict between capital and individual destinies. On a micro perspective, even mission titles and dialogue phrasing tell their own stories. More specifically, the game's numerous planting of contradictions ensures that every character and every mission compels players to consider and judge different moral choices, rather than merely experiencing a simple narrative story. In conclusion, despite some regrettable unfinished aspects in the game's development, *Cyberpunk 2077* remains an unforgettable masterpiece due to its deep theme, rich character development, and powerful emotional resonance.

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