A Comparative Study
Dungeon Master and Child of Light

The purpose of this Study is to observe and understand the similarities and differences between Dungeon Master (1987) and Child of Light (2014) that were conceived 27 years apart and classified under the RPG Genre. The study will mainly be focused on the Mechanics, the Objectives and how each of these games enable the player to attain these objectives.

We will also be looking into how these games enable Character Progression, Resource Management etc.

Characters

Dungeon Master gives the player a brief idea of of who the player character is and what predicament he is in at the beginning of the game.

The player then enters the game and comes across quite a few portraits. These portraits enable the player to choose what characters she wants accompanying her on her journey.

The player is allowed to choose up to four characters from a pool of 24 and can choose whether to resurrect or reincarnate them. Resurrecting them means that they will have with them all their skills and attributes while Reincarnating them will allow the player to completely wipe their memory, rename and customize them.

Each of the characters are differentiated into classes (fighter, ninja, wizard, priest etc.) with each class having unique skills, attributes and abilities.

This makes the player feel that the decisions she makes through her character are important and makes her character feel in-charge and important.

Similar to Dungeon Master,in **Child of Light** the player/the main character has a certain number of characters accompanying her throughout the game but the player cannot choose the characters who accompany her, rather, the player comes across these characters as they progress through the game and the story. Each of these characters have unique skills and abilities some of which complement each other. Each character also has a separate Skill tree and experience gain system.

The Plot of the game keeps emphasising that the Main Character needs to return to the kingdom in order to save it all all its inhabitants. This is how the game makes the character is indeed very important and how the game revolves around the actions of the character.

Mechanics

Interaction

Since **Dungeon Master** is more of a Point and Click RPG , most of the interactions with objects (Food, Weapons, Portraits etc.) take place with a simple mouse key clicks.

In **Child of Light**, the player is able to interact with her surrounding by simply walking up to anything that is intractable like people, objects etc. The player is also able to use her mouse in order to control once of the characters, in order to solve puzzles, gain access to resources, attributes etc.

Movement

Movement can be considered as a main element of any RPG as it is what enables the player to explore and uncover new areas and work towards their objectives. In **Dungeon Master,** this is handled by enabling the player to move in a grid based system when she clicks on the directional movement buttons essentially providing the player with 4-Directional Movement.

Child of Light provides the player with basic platformer movement abilities. The player is also able to swith with other characters in order to move in a certain she otherwise could not.

Resource Management

Dungeon Master has quite a few Resources that the player has to manage including Food, Water other than the traditional Health, Mana and Energy. These resources have to be managed for each of the four characters that the player controls.

Each character also has limited inventory spaces which can hold any kind of item such as food, scrolls, special items , clothing etc. The player also has to manage the inventory spaces for each of her characters in order to use them to their maximum potential. This also involves throwing away items that the player might not need.

Each Character also has limited equipables including armour, weapons etc. which also has to be managed if the player comes across better equipables, the player should probably eqip these items for maximum efficiency.

Child of Light does not have as much as resource management as Dungeon Master does but the player still needs to manage the Energy costs of all her characters while using abilities and also wisely manage her experience points in order to make skill upgrades for each character.

Combat

Each character in **Dungeon Master** has special attacking abilities, spells or weapons with which they are able to fight enemies, deal damage and eventually kill them. It is completely up to the player to decide which character or ability she wants to use for combat. Using these abilities take up a certain amount of Mana or Strength. So the player has to keep this in mind during combat sequences.

The player can also make use of the movement mechanics in order to dodge enemy attacks during combat.

When the player comes across enemies in **Child of Light**, the game switches to a turn based- combat system with real time elements. The player can choose up to 2 of her characters for combat and switch between them whenever she wants. She is also able to

use the mouse pointer to collect mana and other resources that drop for the course of the combat sequence. She can also use this to slow down the attacks of the enemies.

The combat ends when either all of the characters or the enemies die.

Progression

Dungeon Master gives the player a sense of progress by giving the player better weapons, abilities , stronger opponents etc. at regular intervals. Attaining Key items and uncling certain areas also gives the players a sense of achievement and progression.

Child of Light gives the player a sense of progression through story, by providing the player with new characters that accompany the player through her journey. The experience system and Skill tree also makes the player feel like all the characters are growing stronger and more powerful.

Objectives

Dungeon Master does not reveal clearly its Global Objective to the players at the beginning of the game. Rather, it explains to the the player some of the backstory , through text, about who the player is actually playing as at the beginning of the game and vaguely tells the player what she will be doing or what she will have to do throughout the game.

Once the game starts the player is made to move around and explore the surrounding environment. This is where the player comes across Portraits where she is able to select the characters she wants to accompany have accompanying her throughout the game.

The player then comes across doors which require keys to unlock, enemies, food items , weapons etc. Finding these items are some of the local objectives that the game offers to the player and are required in order to progress through the game or just to gain an advantage while making progress . We may say, to some extent that the local objective of the game is just to explore for which the players are rewarded appropriately.

Child of Light is very linear and the global objective is basically to return to the kingdom, back to her Father, the King. Having said this the game occasionally provides the player with side quests or objectives which the player can choose to do or ignore. They are rewarded with experience and additional story sequences for performing these tasks.

The other local objectives involve things the player has to do in order to progress through the game.

Attaining these Objectives

As discussed previously, in **Dungeon Master**, the player is able to achieve their objectives simply by exploring which grants the player access to certain items or abilities which in turn enable the player to progress and achieve her objectives.

Child of light allows the player to achieve these objectives by simple following the storyline and going where the game tells you to go. The only incentive the player has to break this route is for the optional quests.