CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

Session 16 – **PERSUASIVE GAMES / VALUES IN SYSTEMS**

Readings

Ian Bogost, Persuasive Games (Ch. 1)

Flanagan et al., Values at Play

Concepts/Keywords

- Procedural rhetoric

- Persuasive games (v. serious games)

- Serious games

- abstraction

(Continuing from previous class)

What is simulated and what is not (can)indicate an ideology

Frasca mentions how The Sims allows same-sex couples; a conservative game may not allow it (or simply admit that sex exists)

ABSTRACTION – What is fundamental; <u>selective</u> <u>modeling</u>.

- PROCEDURAL RHETORIC: using processes persuasively

- making/understanding arguments with computational systems

- a simulation of an economic system

- low input simulation (Crawford's Balance of the Planet)

- a board game-level

- games like the ones we played (McDonalds' Game, Sweatshop)

Q: Are the games by PETA Procedural Rhetoric?

- "Graphical Skins" (Bogost) → topics are tied to representation, not the process → Abstract process is not coupled with topic

- Point made in cut scenes, not actions

SHOW OCCUPY WALL ST. PONG http://vimeo.com/32169063

Q: Why are games suited to make arguments?

- Expensive medium

- Understanding process, causality
    - Simulations allow exploration, trial-and-error

- CHOICE

- System still has an ideology, but lets the player reach their own conclusion→ The Landlord's Game
    - simulation gap – the player must interpret, subjectivity is part of the process

Persuasive games:
- make arguments about how systems work in the material world
- strive to affect or change player opinion <u>outside</u> <u>the</u> <u>game</u>
- move from game world into material world → "magic circle" is poked

Serious games (according to Bogost):
- educational, institutional, try to confirm values (vs. exploration/undermining of institutions possible in persuasive games)

Q: *Were the games we played <u>persuasive</u>? Did they change anybody's mind?*

- *How is September 12th an example of Procedural Rhetoric? What is the argument? Why is it important that it is interactive?*

VALUES

When making games, systems embody values (what is rewarded, what is prohibited)

Sources of values that can affect the design
- purpose of the project
- ideology of developers
- stakeholders
- users

What is given preference in the design is also part of the values one wants to transmit

Values are always there, even if the game is not persuasive or serious:
- the gender / ethnicity of the characters (Williams/Consalvo)
- what is rewarded – Civilization III
- the goals of the game
- what is left out

As players (and designers) we must reflect on what is going on

GROW-A-GAME CARDS valuesatplay.org/game-tools –l

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