

Short Writing Assignment

MMOGs

9/26/06

DUE: Friday, 9/29/06 to the class website

This week you read several accounts of MMOGs from the current emerging scholars in game studies: Constance Steinkuehler, Edward Castronova, Nick Yee, and TL Taylor. Each provided an account of their observations and analyses of MMOGs from their disciplinary perspectives—cognitive psychology and linguistics, economics, statistical psychology, and sociological anthropology. These readings are great models for the level of analysis I'd like you to attempt in this essay.

In particular, many of these writers talked specifically about what James Gee refers to as the “external design grammar” of games—the collection of activities that players engage with outside of and around gameplay itself. In a short essay, I would like you to write about your own game and its surrounding culture. How does the community talk about your game? Specifically, how would you characterize the nature of the player community surrounding your game? Critical? Analytical? Descriptive? Organizational? Inquisitive? How can you account for the community's character? How does it relate to the game and the way the game is structured and organized?

It is important here that you don't simply describe the player community for your game but that you also analyze it. Analyses require some sort of observations that go beyond simple descriptions: you should attempt to synthesize the patterns you observe, categorize them, talk about trends, conceptual ideas, etc. Descriptions can be used to support your analysis, but they should not be guiding framework for it.

Essays should be at least 5 typed, double-spaced pages, 1” margins, Times New Roman font. Please put your last name and page number on each page.

Electronic copies may be submitted to the course website, but file names should follow this structure: LAST NAME, DATE.

*Essays will be evaluated on the *depth of your analysis* and the degree to which you are able to *connect what you describe and observe to some sort of conclusion or account for why you think what you observe is happening*. In other words, if you write that your game community is largely critical, you should attempt to describe what it is about the game that you think enables and encourages this critical community to emerge.