

Knights of the Old Republic

Moral dilemmas in the Star Wars
Universe

Presentation Overview

- Star Wars as a Semiotic Domain
- Light vs. Dark
 - Agency
- Moral commentary

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<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Kotorbox.jpg>.

Game Basics

- RPG set in the Star Wars universe
 - A long, long, long...long time ago
- Quasi turn based battle system
 - D&D style
- Incredible narrative
- Morality system
 - Dark vs. Light side

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Please see:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Kotorbox.jpg>.

Semiotic Domain

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Please see any photo of Henry Jenkins,
such as [http://www.gamesforchange.org/
conference/2008/jenkins.jpg](http://www.gamesforchange.org/conference/2008/jenkins.jpg)

- Jenkins is a baller, but Gee has some good ideas too
- Gee's Semiotic Domain: Uses modalities like language or images to convey messages
- Design grammar

This is Star Wars

- Feels like the old movies
- Incredibly in depth plot
- Visit planets from the series
- Aliens everywhere

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Star_Wars_Logo.svg

Bloodthirsty Droids

- Voice acting is incredible
- Your party is awesome
 - Back story
 - Personality
- Humor

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Please see:

http://www.waysoftheworld.net/main_artwork/fanart/swkotor/swkotor_party_huge.jpg

Holy crap, lightsabers!

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http://image.com.com/gamespot/images/2003/xbox/kotor/0715/k_screen121.jpg

- Game places us within a semiotic domain
- Ebon Hawk
- Lightsabers, etc.
- New elements
 - Computer skills
 - Droids
- Recurring themes

Dark vs. Light

- Central question of the game
- Actions earn you dark or light side points
- Faced with choices throughout the game

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http://image.com.com/gamespot/images/2003/xbox/kotor/0715/k_screen019.jpg

http://image.com.com/gamespot/images/2003/xbox/kotor/0715/k_screen022.jpg

Obligatory Agency Slide

- Agency: The feeling that your actions in the game have an impact.
- In choosing light vs. dark, the player determines the narrative and changes the outcome of the story
- Two different endings

Man, that's a lot of reading

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http://image.com.com/gamespot/images/2003/xbox/kotor/0715/k_screen096.jpg

- Range of responses in conversion
 - Light to dark side
- Different quests
 - Gain points
- Balanced material and formal constraints

Environmental Response

- Carth is whiny
- If you mess with people, they get mad at you
- Opportunities lost and gained
 - Can't do everything first time through

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http://mojoart.mixnmojo.com/original-art/swkotor/wallpapers/swkotor_carth_1024x768.jpg

This is still Star Wars

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[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:
Star_Wars_Logo.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Star_Wars_Logo.svg)

- Understand Dark vs. Light using design grammars of Star Wars
- Jedi Council vs. Sith
- Appearance changes
- Force powers

Moral Commentary

- Light vs. Dark provides a set of morals
- This is understood in the semiotic domain of Star Wars

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Yes, Jedi masters...

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<http://starwars.wikia.com/wiki/Image:JedCouncil2.jpg>

- Helping people and listening to your elders
- Positive reinforcement from NPCs
- Discount to supportive force powers
 - Cure, Force Aura, Force Valor

Fear leads to anger...

- Killing and betraying people
- Other people aren't very happy with you
- Discount to Dark side force powers
 - Wound, Fear, Shock, Drain Life

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http://image.com.com/gamespot/images/2003/xbox/kotor/0715/k_screen029.jpg

So which is better?

- Dark side is easier at first
 - Cool and strong force powers
 - Lots of money
- In the end, Light side is stronger
 - On the final level, your offensive force powers suck
- Meta Commentary from designers

Dark, but not too Dark

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Please see:

<http://starwars.wikia.com/wiki/Image:Juhani%21%21.jpg>

- Dark choices are uncertain
- If you are too evil you cut off opportunities
 - Traders won't deal with you
 - Kill Juhani
- More meta commentary

Summary

- OMG, Star Wars
- Light vs. Dark
 - Let's help everyone vs. Lets kill bitches
 - These choices matter – Agency
- Meta commentary