

BioShock logo removed due to copyright restrictions.
Please see <http://www.2kgames.com/bioshock/>

LEARNING A WHOLE NEW WORLD: FROM DESIGN SPACES TO AGENCY

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CMS.600 - Video Game Theory & Analysis

OUTLINE

- Game Overview
- Key Concepts (Design Space, Agency)
- Examples
- Learning Process within BioShock
- Conclusion

GAME OVERVIEW

- Plane Crash Survivor
- Underworld Dystopia - Rapture
- ADAM/EVE
- Big Daddy/Little Sisters
- Gameplay

GAME OVERVIEW

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DESIGN SPACES

- Henry Jenkins
- “Environmental Storytelling”
 - Narrative v. Interactivity
 - Evoke, Enact, Embed, Emerge
- In BioShock, design provides basis
- User chooses to finish what designer started
 - Multiple Endings
 - Different Choices

AGENCY

- Theorized by Mateas & Stern
- Ability to affect narrative on their own
- In BioShock
 - Harvesting
 - Plasmids
 - Hacking
- Intersects with Design Space of Game

DESIGN SPACE

- Number of unique characteristics
 - No consequence for dying
- Overarching sense of fear
- Interactive part of game
 - Learning which route is better
 - Learning about harvesting
 - Learning which plasmids to store
 - Learning within game & about game design spaces in general terms
- Design Space contributes to learning process

DESIGN SPACE

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Plasmid

DESIGN SPACE

Route

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Ammo Type

AGENCY

- Created through the Design Space of the game
- Main choice - HARVESTING
 - Rescue Little Sisters (promised ADAM in end)
 - Harvest Little Sisters (receive ADAM now)
 - Moral ambiguity
 - Game ambiguity
- Other examples
- Learn & Discover how elements of Design Space lead to Agency and Overall Understanding of BioShock

AGENCY

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LEARNING PROCESS

- Discovering gameplay choices in narrative
- Inability to see things immediately
- Not recognizing the larger goals while in midst of game
- What I learn about playing BioShock mirrors what I've learned about games in general
- Patience
- Trial & Error

CONCLUSION

- BioShock brings together an environmental Design Space & Agency to teach user
- Goals for rest of game
 - Become better at first person shooter
 - See what my consequences are from my actions with Little Sisters/Big Daddy
- Questions