



PLAY DAY #2

Hi all, time for our second opportunity to do a bit of playing and then talk about it. As noted, we do several of these during the semester, each with different goals and subject matter. See below for the assignment this time around!

Play Day #2 assignment:

In Weeks 5, 6, and 7, we've covered the following topics about music, sound, and video games:

- music/rhythm games (*Dance Dance Revolution* and *Guitar Hero*)
- thinking about genre (racing games and survival horror in *Silent Hill*)
- thinking about how we access games—mobile and handheld games

1. I'd like you to select a game to play that focuses on one of these topics.

- What do I mean? I mean you could play a music/rhythm game, you could play any game and think about what kind of genre that game might be and how the music/sound compares or contrasts with other games of that genre, or you could play any mobile/handheld game (especially considering some of the things we discussed on Thursday October 14). Because we talked about it so extensively already, I'd prefer you not play *Guitar Hero* unless you have some specific goal in mind.
- How to get your hands on such a thing? You might already have access, depending on what you've already got at home. But if you don't already have an obvious game to try, **feel free to be creative here**. If you don't have already have access to such a game yourself via some sort of device or console, **feel free to use a friend's or borrow something from someone across the hall or a neighbor (in safe covid ways...); feel free to partner up with someone else in this class; see if someone you know has a device they can lend for 30 minutes**.
- Basically: **DON'T** spend money to do this.
- If you're having ANY problems figuring out what to play, just let me know and I'll happily help you out.

2. Play the game for around 30 minutes. Don't worry about playing longer than that, though, unless you really want to.

3. As you're playing the game, listen carefully to sounds and music. What do you hear? What do you notice? You will likely want to take some notes.

What are some things you might want to think about while taking notes ?

These questions will be more or less relevant depending on which route you take (music rhythm game, genre, mobile game, etc).

- What game **genre** is this?

A game genre usually has a set of established conventions behind it, such as First Person Shooters, adventure games, real-time strategy games or Role-Playing Games. Establishing the game within a genre can help determine, for instance, why it is like other games of the same type, or what is innovative about it. While genre is a wiggly/messy concept—as we discussed in class—you're welcome to go poke around Wikipedia if you're struggling to understand some relatively typical ways game genre is applied to certain categories of games (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_video_game_genres)

- **Technological context**

What platform(s) was the game developed for? It is important to note which version of the game you are playing. The technology will determine, for instance, the length of the game or whether there is an ending (think of arcade games in the early 80s, where games typically did not end).

- **Socio-historical context**

When was the game made? It's different to analyze a game from the 70s, when videogames were almost exclusively played in arcades, than a recent game. Where was it released?

- **Description of Gameplay:** what do you do in the game?

Focus on the core mechanics: what are the most recurring actions in the game? You can think of this in terms of verbs: what are the main verbs of the game? For example, in *Super Mario Bros.* the verbs would be run, jump, pick up, slide down, stomp. In *Tetris*, the verbs would be rotate, drop, clear. What kinds of sounds accompany these?

- **Aesthetics: general gameplay experience**

This section is a tricky one, since your experience will likely be different from other people's. Your skills or game knowledge affect the way you play the game, and that is fine!

- **Audiovisuals: visual design, sound design, music**

What is the audiovisual style of the game? Does it evoke / imitate the style of other media (e.g. painting, photography, cinema, classical music)? What is the color scheme? How do these audiovisual elements contribute to the fiction of the game? How do they contribute to the mood of the game?

- **Physiology:**

Notice anything about how your body feels when playing?

4. Please write for me—informally, shouldn't be a research paper, just a reflection on your 30 minutes of play—**about 1-2 pages (double-spaced, 12 point)** of what you heard and how it functioned in the game. This is *not* a review of the game—it's an informal essay on your own experience and analysis of what you heard.

5) Upload your written page to Moodle by next Thursday morning, October 21, 8:00am (needs to be up before class).