

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Old Pixels, New Ethics: Analyzing Gaming Culture for College Scholars

Deconstruct ludonarrative dissonance, the mechanics of procedural rhetoric, and the sociopolitical implications of algorithmic bias in modern digital environments.

1. In the context of Ian Bogost's 'procedural rhetoric,' how does a game like 'Papers, Please' primarily construct its argument regarding systemic bureaucracy?

Answer: B) By forcing the player to internalize dehumanizing rules through repetitive mechanics.

Procedural rhetoric argues that games make claims not through images or words, but through processes and rules that simulate systemic behavior.

2. The tension that arises when a game's narrative themes of pacifism or empathy are contradicted by gameplay mechanics requiring violence is known as ____.

Answer: C) Ludonarrative dissonance

Ludonarrative dissonance occurs when the 'ludo' (gameplay/rules) and the 'narrative' (story) of a game work at cross-purposes.

3. The concept of the 'Magic Circle,' as defined by Johan Huizinga and later applied to gaming, suggests that the boundaries between game-space and real-life values are increasingly impermeable in the age of pervasive metaverses.

Answer: B) False

Scholars argue the 'Magic Circle' is increasingly porous as real-world economies, social identities, and politics bleed directly into digital play spaces.

4. When examining the 'Gold Farming' phenomenon in MMORPGs like 'Runescape,' what does the practice reveal about the intersection of digital and global economies?

Answer: B) It highlights the exploitation of labor in the Global South to benefit players in the Global North.

Gold farming often involves low-wage workers in developing nations performing repetitive tasks to sell digital currency for real money to wealthier players.

5. The 'Indie Game' movement of the late 2000s, exemplified by titles like 'Braid,' is often analyzed as a response to ____.

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Answer: B) The creative stagnation and risk-aversion of AAA 'blockbuster' development

Independent developers utilized digital distribution to bypass publishers, allowing for more experimental, personal, and auteur-driven game design.

6. In the study of 'Critical Play,' Mary Flanagan suggests that games can be used as tools for social subversion by embedding subversive values within traditional game structures.

Answer: A) True

Critical Play focuses on how artists and activists use game design to challenge societal norms and engage players in political or ethical reflection.

7. Which of the following best describes the 'Gamic Gaze' in relation to feminist film theory applied to video games?

Answer: B) A participatory mode of viewing that often objectifies characters through both camera control and gameplay objectives.

Unlike the passive cinematic gaze, the gamic gaze involves active participation in the observation and often the commodification of the character's body.

8. The use of psychological triggers like 'Variable Ratio Reinforcement' in loot boxes is a primary concern for regulators because it mirrors the mechanics of ____.

Answer: C) Slot machines and gambling behavior

Variable ratio reinforcement provides rewards at unpredictable intervals, which is the same psychological foundation used to design addictive gambling devices.

9. How did the 'Modding' community for games like 'Half-Life' change the industry's approach to intellectual property?

Answer: B) It demonstrated that players could act as co-creators, leading to the development of new genres like the Battle Royale or MOBA.

By providing tools to players, developers tapped into a massive creative labor pool that birthed entirely new commercial genres (e.g., Counter-Strike began as a mod).

10. The term 'Dark Patterns' in game design refers to the use of aesthetic choices like low lighting and horror elements to increase player immersion.

Answer: B) False

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Dark Patterns refer to UI/UX design choices intended to trick or manipulate players into spending money or time against their best interests.