Understanding for Games (TED talk)

I definitely agreed with games being an extension of our culture. I thought that it was particularly interesting that many people design the narrative to their games based on experiences that have happened in human history. Perhaps, that it makes for a more compelling story and drags the players in through targeting their emotions and backgrounds. I definitely have heard stories about the USA Olympic hockey team that the beat the Russians in the 1980’s from my dad as well. I couldn’t fully grasp the emotion of the story but figured that it was something like Notre Dame scoring a touchdown at the last second winning the National Championship title. So, what? it was just a hockey game. To many of the people watching it at the time no it wasn’t just a game. It was a way for the people of two great nations that hated each other to battle it out without spilling each other’s blood on a real battlefield. It was a rivalry and that is something that most of us understand. For me I grew up in northwest Ohio. To me it’s the Ohio State vs. Michigan game the greatest college football rivalry ever. I hate Michigan. However, I digress.

Targeting a player’s emotions through heritage and background makes for a more interesting and moving game. Moreover, not every game target’s every player at all or the same way. I’m not much of a hockey fan nor are many other people, but I am American like many other people. Thus, making it more likely for us to watch the USA Olympic hockey team vs. the Soviet Olympic hockey team. This just comes to show that not all games rely on interesting gameplay nor intend to. Sometimes the narrative of the game is the underlining purpose of the game and not the gameplay. Some games intend to tell a story and teach a lesson and the game is just an avenue for the story. Much like in the video when the speaker’s daughter had to sort the people in the boats and decide who lives and who dies. Of course, no one wants to make that kind of decision. Most people don’t want to separate families from each other nor play god. This isn’t the point though. This kind of decision in a game reveals the humanity of the player and forces the player to make a decision that he or she doesn’t want to make but has to make for the purpose of winning the game. One could make the moral argument of the how someone could win at enslaving people to begin with but that isn’t the point either.

The point is that the players emotions are conflicting with the logical judgment of player and creating a self-made obstacle in the game that doesn’t truly exist. But does anyway in that the player is therefore blinded by story of the game instead of winning the game itself. Calling into question the very purpose of the game. At the end of the game it doesn’t matter who gets to America, in the end the people are slaves and going to be treated as such they have no value in the rules of the game. However, they have value to the little girl in that she sees herself and her family in them. To the little girl she only cares about keeping the families together even though she doesn’t choose who goes on the boat in the first place and has kill some of the people that do later on. And that is the purpose of the game. The purpose is to teach the player that the lesson that the slave traders during the “middle passage” never learned nor cared too. Why play the game at all. This game’s rules and narratives conflict with our societies own moral rules. Moreover, the narrative is the main reason for why people play the game and not the game itself. This just comes to show that the narrative of a game a useful tool, and the what you are doing in a game needs to be just as important as the why you are doing it.

CANDY LAND

Can we just start with the fact, that is game is nearly 80 years old. What! That’s crazy. I’m sorry this women was ahead of her time. Introduced a game for children to be played in hospitals while the children were struck with polio, all I’m picturing is a candyland tournament in the quarantined ward of the hospital. Just kidding time to get serious. The game that Abbott created definitely as I see things affected the morale of the children in the quarantined areas across the country. I couldn’t even imagine being in many cases paralyzed. But, this game like many others no matter how simple the game may be processes a key component that is important to know. Games immerses the player in a world that gives the player certain abilities that they may not have in our real world. In this case mobility. I think that it is a touching idea especially because it deals with diseased children who are dying. But more over teaches me that empowering the player can be an awesome advantage both from a life and game designer perspective. It reminds me of why I love some of my favorite game myself.