



No-Fun Games

and their connection to queer
narrative



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1: Fun vs No-Fun

Designing For Fun

- Fun as a guiding principle for designers and consumers
- Fun as a metric of success
 - No fun = failure?
- Moments of no fun as a stepping stone for future, overarching success
 - Ruberg argues that moments of no fun are themselves valuable

The Harm in Fun

“Fun as a focus for video games is problematic in part because fun itself is not a natural and invariable experience. It is culturally specific and personal.”

“Fun as an experience is deeply personal, yet fun as a construct is unavoidably political.”

Paradox of Failure

- Why continue doing something only to face consistent failure?
- Jesper Juul's *The Art of Failure: An Essay on the Pain of Playing Video Games*
 - Failure as a critical part of a game experience
 - Hinges on assumptions that players enjoy winning and hate losing- end point of fun
- Jane McGonigal *Reality Is Broken: Why Video Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*
 - Presents failure as not failure at all: reminder of agency

2: Artistic Value

Nuances of No-Fun

- Fun obscures the unpleasant: the disappointment, distress, anger, etc
 - May not be 'fun,' but still contain meaning
- Nuance even in happiness: wonder, immersion, etc
- Emotional depth!

Games as Art

- Is fun a necessity?
- The defense of games as fun and positive- an escape from reality
- Clash between fun and emotional challenge

3: Queerness

Contemporary Queer Theory

- Not simply looking at LGBTQ representation in game media and communities, though this is also important
- Queerness as a way of designing, playing, and feeling
- “Being queer is about being different and desiring differently”
 - Bringing difference to discussions about games
- No-fun as rebellion

Failure and Masochism

- Masochism as a form of queerness- a rejection of standard models of pleasure
 - Positive self destruction? The embrace of pain to upset power structures
- Ruberg's "kinky disturbance": "willing, playful embrace of pain and 'game over'"
- Play seen as something that can be done drastically differently

Masochism in Games

- Ruberg's examples of alternate methods of play:
 - Repeated loss in Super Hexagon with no improvement
 - Driving continuously into quicksand in Mario Kart 8
 - Morbid fascination in Stair Dismount

4: Categories

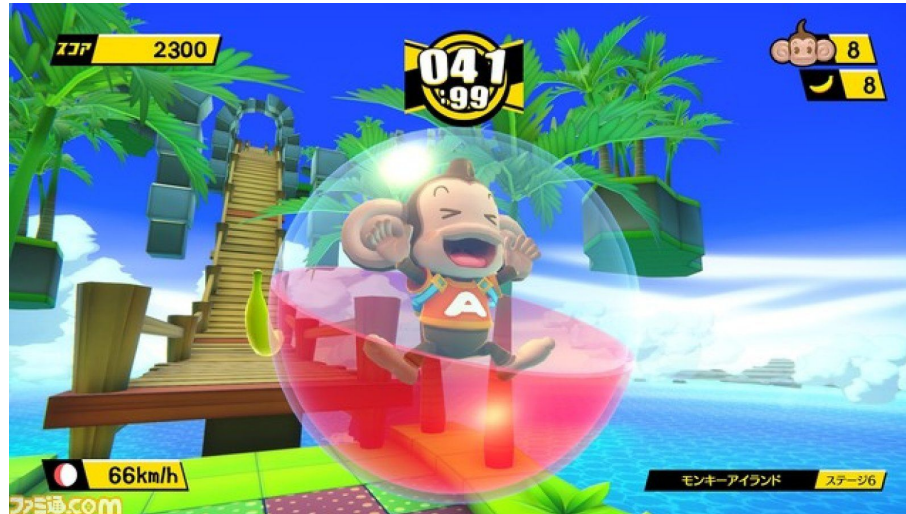
1: Disappointing Games

- May not be offensive, or completely terrible
- Fail to live up to a standard, or are incredibly underwhelming



2: Annoying Games

- Can often happen by accident, as with several other categories
- Create frustration in the player



3: Boring Games

- Created through a refusal of the game (or player!) to engage



4: Alarming Games

- Contain content that is considered offensive
 - Highly dependent on individual moral codes
- Often when actually played can prove to make the player ignore the problematic parts through gameplay



5: Sad Games

- Sadness does not need to be the opposite of fun
 - Games that do incite feelings of sadness are not often discussed with sadness as a focus
- No fun games are different from empathy games



6a: Games That Hurt (by design)

- Create suffering intentionally with the end goal of success
 - Suffering within rules
 - Playing around with dynamics of mastery and submission



6b: Games That Hurt (by player choice)

- Emergent gameplay can twist the original intention of games
- Creating a new brand of painful behavior done intentionally

