


Class 10b

Do Violent Texts & Games
Make Us Violent?



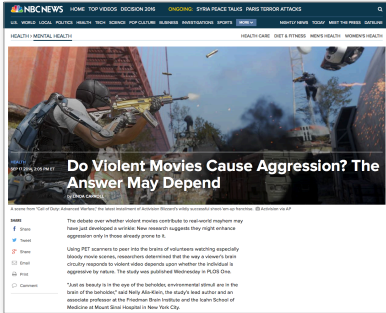
Outline

- Mimetic violence in rituals & games
- The magic circle
 - definition, examples
 - liminality
 - three interrelated concepts
- Video games and religious rituals
- Sacred and profane spaces

μίμησις

- Mimesis = imitation; representation or imitation of the real world in art and literature.

Mimetic Violence in Rituals & Games



Mimetic Violence in Rituals & Games



The Magic Circle Definition

The Magic Circle

Examples

- What "magic circles" do you enter?
- What are the special rules that obtain there?
- What act do you perform there, and what does it accomplish for you?

Liminality

- A state of being "in-between," "on the edge"
- The magic circle is a liminal space
 - social boundaries are temporarily transgressed
 - *communitas* is formed
 - taboo acts are legitimized in that safe space
 - social tensions are released, allowing return to "real life" and to social conformity
- But what if someone rejects authority and structure in real life? What role does the magic circle play then?

The Magic Circle

Three Interrelated Concepts

- Play
 - an act that mimics real life but is separate from real life
- Procedural Rhetoric
 - term coined by Ian Bogos (video game theorist)
 - rhetoric = power of persuasion
 - process =
 - procedural rhetoric =
 - Bogos thinks the processes matter more than the images; they more vividly mimic reality and shaping our interpretation and worldview
- Forbidden Play

Procedural Rhetoric

Examples

- Select a process or ritual in which you participate regularly
- What process is involved in your performance?
- What is the underlying ideology of the process? That is, what "truths" of ideas does it repeat, reinforce, perform?

Video Games & Religious Rituals

Similarities & Differences

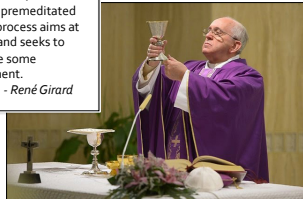
Video Games & Religious Rituals

Both mime violence

The original act of ritual is unique and spontaneous. Ritual sacrifices, however, are multiple, endlessly repeated. All those aspects of the original act that had escaped [human] control—the choice of time and place, the selection of the victim—are now premeditated and fixed by custom. The ritual process aims at removing all element of chance and seeks to extract from the original violence some technique of cathartic appeasement.

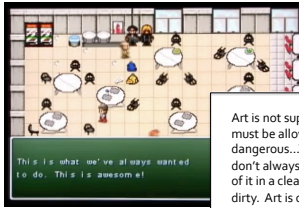
- René Girard

Pope Francis I celebrating Mass



Video Games & Religious Rituals

Both mime violence



Super Columbine Massacre RPG!

Art is not supposed to be comfortable...Art must be allowed to be disturbing and dangerous...The world is a messy place and we don't always, or even often, get to make sense of it in a clean way. We have to get our hands dirty. Art is one way to help us to do that.

- Ian Bogost, game theorist

Sacred & Profane Spaces

- The construction of sacred space [may be viewed] as a human-initiated religious orienting experience.
- We use these spaces to
 - make order out of chaos or random experience
 - to enact our desire for meaning
 - to express our hope that there is a sacred, a transcendent, a real beyond or through the experienced world
- Our real sacred spaces are thus already virtual "icons"
- In the postmodern period, we must choose what makes a space sacred; we must choose where the magic circle begins and ends
