

## Gender and play

January 20, 2005

## Menu

- Team assignments and Wiki pages
- Debrief -- what did we learn last Tuesday about gender and play?
- Tavis, Cassell, and handouts
- Assignment 1 - Game observation experiment

## Debrief play observations

- What did you expect ?
- What did you find ?
- How do your observations inform us about rules games culture ?

What are the interesting questions?

## Why women are not inferior to men

- Does it make sense to you that we even have to make this argument?
- Flip the question, and make it "strange": why is it generally assumed that men are superior to women?
- The Myth of the Normal Man

## The Ideologies of Normalcy: bodies, psyches, and brains

- A world without men ...
  - Would have no crime and fat, happy women?
- Why the obsession with ideal form?
  - Association between femininity and incompetence
  - Desire for control
  - Changing body shapes, changing ideologies: Diet is the modern "opium for the masses"

## Ideologies of normalcy

- Health/psychological parameters are based on research on men or male rats
  - Healthy maturation: independence, autonomy, separation
  - Straight arrow career paths
  - Female research objects: different patterns, different values
- We are used to seeing women as "the problem," "different," and "deficient"

## How, Why and What

### How

- Do differences in behavior become “naturalized,” and solidified as “fact”?

### Why

- Is everyone so interested in differences?
- Are differences from “the norm” regarded as deficiencies?

### What

- functions does the belief in these differences serve?
- Is their effect?

## Bruner et al: Evidence for difference

- Fantasies about technology:
  - Women wrote stories about technologies that integrate personal and professional life; facilitate creativity and communication
  - Men fantasized about melts and bionic implants that free us from the earth, from social problems, possibly from humanity itself

## Gender Stereotypes

Social constructions that, by inhabiting them, we make real

## Introduction to play observation and testing

- Objective: learn to organize and carry out play testing. Through this exercise you develop a set of skills that helps you gain insight in how players experience a game. What do game players desire, why do they like (or do not like) certain aspects of games and play, and how can you mobilize these preferences to build “better” games? It will also force you to think through what a “better” game might be, paying particular attention to gender differences in game playing. Your report will inform the next exercise.

## Team assignment 1: Game observation experiment

Today: fine-tune observation parameters; explain and brainstorm assignment

1a Tuesday 1/25 LAB: experiment proposal; test run of games and experiments; assign logistical tasks

1b Thursday 1/27: hand in an analysis of your experiment; debrief game/experiment selection

1c Weekend: teams test-run experiment; report

Tuesday 2/1: iron out wrinkles; nail down questions/parameters

Tuesday 2/1 LAB: EXPERIMENT

1d Thursday 2/3 report

## Evaluation -- written work

- Proposal: select a game and a set of observation parameters
- Present and hand in analysis of your own experiment
- Test run observations and suggestions for improvement
- Report

You are responsible for keeping records of those four parts of the assignment; these records form the basis of your (team) grade

## Assignment

- Individual: Read Rules of Play sections 7 and 22
- Teams: Select game and design an experiment
  - What do you want to learn from this exercise
  - select game with this question in mind