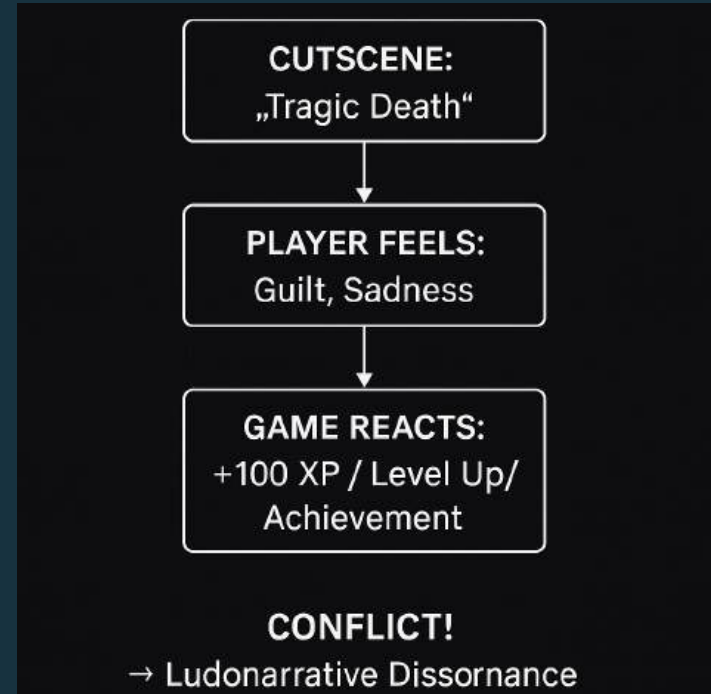


# **Ludonarrative Dissonance and Harmony**

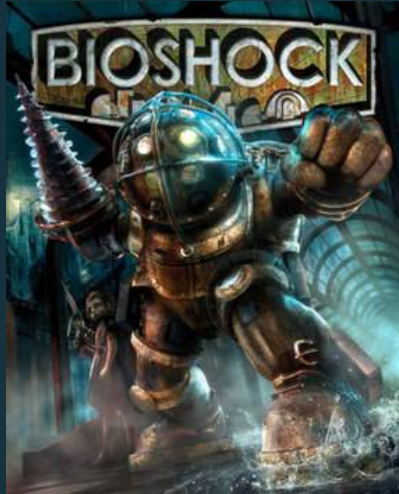
# Ludonarrative Dissonance

- When gameplay and narrative contradict each other



# Bioshock

**"The game's mechanics encourage selfishness while the narrative praises altruism."**



Clint Hocking. (2007, October 7). Ludonarrative Dissonance in Bioshock. Click Nothing. [https://www.clicknothing.com/click\\_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html](https://www.clicknothing.com/click_nothing/2007/10/ludonarrative-d.html)

# Uncharted

**Nathan drake is portrayed as a adventurous globetrotter but  
in gameplay terms he is a malevolent mass murderer**



# Story Meaning vs Dynamical Meaning

- Conflicts in game design
- Think about **dynamical meaning**



- "In games, interpretation extends past the visual art -- the dynamic system communicates something to the player, whether that is intentional or not."

Keynote of the 2008 Montreal Games Summit. rubbermuck (07.04.2011). Jonathan Blow: Conflicts in Game Design 2008 talk. Youtube. <https://youtu.be/mGTV8qLbBWE?si=AEgYtN-yo7OcXTCq> (18:30)

# Ludonarrative Harmony

- **Mechanics and story reinforce each other**
- **Mechanics are the story**
- **Enhances emotional engagement**
- **Character attachment**

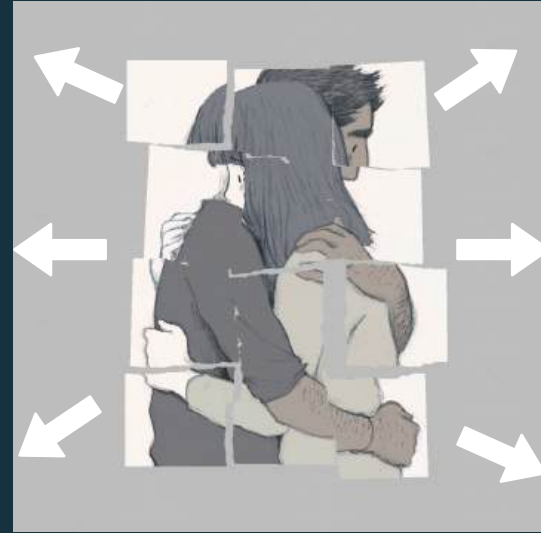
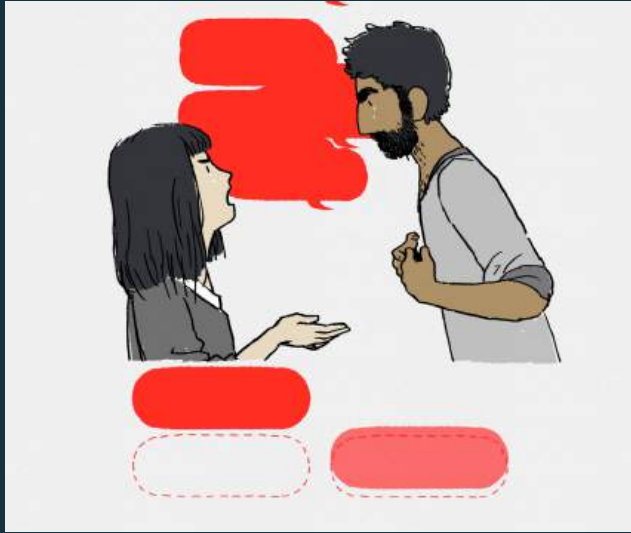


Jeremy Bernstein at GDC14. Game Developers Conference (11.03.2018). Creating Strong Video Game Characters. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/4mgK2hL33Vw?si=zXR2ftGjOE4NL73q> (23:30)

# Journey



**Use interactivity to convey meaning & emotions**





# Cognitive Ethical Friction

- The moment where narrative, ethics, and gameplay collide
- Reflect on your own choices



Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2. Activision 2009

Sicart, M. (2010). Values between Systems: Designing Ethical Gameplay. In Ethics and Game Design: Teaching Values through Play (pp. 1–15). IGI. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61520-845-6.ch001>

# Ludonarrative Discipline

- **Critical reflection during design**
- **Game rules can challenge or support narrative ethics**
- **The player feels moral weight through mechanics**



# The Player Mask

- **Players adopt roles or “masks”**
- **Dissonance occurs when mask is broken by game logic**
- **Design should respect player’s chosen mask**



# Conclusion

- **Ludonarrative harmony = deeper immersion**
- **Dissonance should be intentional**
- **Be aware of incentives & player roles**
- **Every mechanic tells a story**



# Analytical Play

**A) Though the Darkest of Times**

**or**

**B) Limbo**

**-> Discuss elements of ludonarrative dissonance and harmony**