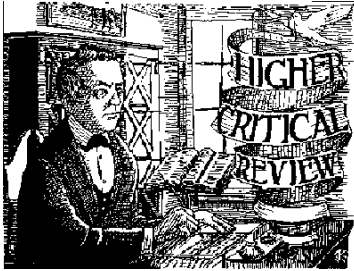


Mediating Identities Critical Review

chid 250 / sec. C / autumn quarter 2012-13 / chang



This class takes up as its central preoccupation: the unsettledness of identity and its intersections with and co-constitution by technology. In other words, how might we imagine and define a “technological identity?” What are the relationships between identity and technology? How does technology shape our identity or identities and vice versa? To this end, we have spent the quarter looking at scholarly and academic texts, fiction and literature, and everyday practices and technologies, including video games. How might we think about video games as a “cyborg technology” or a “cyberspace technology?” How do video games—both in content and in form—participate in the narratives and

ideologies about technology, self, and embodiment that we have been looking at all quarter? And how might think about and play video games in critical, analytical ways?

Review of a Text

For this assignment, you must select a video game, one that we have **not** substantively covered in class. The video game could be a web-based flash game, an indie game, a mainstream blockbuster, even a nontraditional “video game,” text, or film. Select a game that you believe fits the theme and goals of the course, a text that you must argue belongs in a class called “Mediating Identities: Technologies of the Self.” An **outstanding text** will engage the inquiries and grinding edges of the course in multiple ways and will speak to the other texts included in the syllabus. When picking a text, avoid the obvious, the superficial, the fun-for-fun’s sake; a **creative risk** or **interpretative leap** might be to choose a text that is not obviously fit the course goals and outcomes but might be read against the grain or in the same vein as typical texts.

You must play the game. Consider the theoretical and interpretative questions we have been asking and trying to answer all quarter. Then write a short **500-750 word** critical review of the text explicating and expressing why the text would make a strong addition to the course syllabus, particularly as part of the last two weeks of the quarter. Use the following questions as guidelines and jumping off points:

- What kind of game do you want to review? What kind of game would fit well within the scope of the course?
- Who is the game by? How would your game help illuminate the whole of the course, but in particular, the readings of the last two weeks?
- What makes the text about “mediating identity”?
- What features and qualities make it ideal for the class?
- Most importantly, what does the text tell us about technological identity? About culture? About our world? What are the critical questions the text asks, complicates, and answers?

Your critical review must be more than just a descriptive ‘book report.’ Plot, characters, setting, themes, and gameplay will be a necessary portion of your review, but the majority of your writing will be **analyzing** and **articulating** why the text befits the course. You might want to take a look at book or film reviews in a scholarly journal, in the *New Yorker* magazine, or the *Washington Post* or *The New York Times*. Your critical review should offer specific arguments and concrete details drawn from the text itself.

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 500 to 750 words, typed, no title page, single-spaced, block format, proper heading posted to the class Tumblr, use the title line: “CRITICAL REVIEW: <your title> by <your name>” include bibliography, useful links if necessary

Due: by the end of the quarter
no later than Monday, December 10