Knights of the Old Republic

Moral dilemmas in the Star Wars Universe
Presentation Overview

- Star Wars as a Semiotic Domain
- Light vs. Dark
  - Agency
- Moral commentary

Game Basics

- **RPG set in the Star Wars universe**
  - A long, long, long...long time ago
- **Quasi turn based battle system**
  - D&D style
- **Incredible narrative**
- **Morality system**
  - Dark vs. Light side
Semiotic Domain

- Jenkins is a baller, but Gee has some good ideas too
- Gee’s Semiotic Domain: Uses modalities like language or images to convey messages
- Design grammar

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This is Star Wars

- Feels like the old movies
- Incredibly in depth plot
- Visit planets from the series
- Aliens everywhere

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Bloodthirsty Droids

- Voice acting is incredible
- Your party is awesome
  - Back story
  - Personality
- Humor

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[http://www.waysoftheworld.net/main_artwork/fanart/swkotor/swkotor_party_huge.jpg](http://www.waysoftheworld.net/main_artwork/fanart/swkotor/swkotor_party_huge.jpg)
Holy crap, lightsabers!

- Game places us within a semiotic domain
- Ebon Hawk
- Lightsabers, etc.
- New elements
  - Computer skills
  - Droids
- Recurring themes

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Dark vs. Light

- Central question of the game
- Actions earn you dark or light side points
- Faced with choices throughout the game

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Agency: The feeling that your actions in the game have an impact.

In choosing light vs. dark, the player determines the narrative and changes the outcome of the story.

Two different endings
Man, that’s a lot of reading

- Range of responses in conversion
  - Light to dark side
- Different quests
  - Gain points
- Balanced material and formal constraints

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Environmental Response

- Carth is whiny
- If you mess with people, they get mad at you
- Opportunities lost and gained
  - Can’t do everything first time through
This is still Star Wars

- Understand Dark vs. Light using design grammars of Star Wars
- Jedi Council vs. Sith
- Appearance changes
- Force powers

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Moral Commentary

- Light vs. Dark provides a set of morals
- This is understood in the semiotic domain of Star Wars

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[http://mojoart.mixnmojo.com/original-art/sith-lords/wallpapers/sith-lords_a_1024x768.jpg](http://mojoart.mixnmojo.com/original-art/sith-lords/wallpapers/sith-lords_a_1024x768.jpg)
Yes, Jedi masters...

- Helping people and listening to your elders
- Positive reinforcement from NPCs
- Discount to supportive force powers
  - Cure, Force Aura, Force Valor

Fear leads to anger…

- Killing and betraying people
- Other people aren’t very happy with you
- Discount to Dark side force powers
  - Wound, Fear, Shock, Drain Life

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So which is better?

- Dark side is easier at first
  - Cool and strong force powers
  - Lots of money
- In the end, Light side is stronger
  - On the final level, your offensive force powers suck
- Meta Commentary from designers
Dark, but not too Dark

- Dark choices are uncertain
- If you are too evil you cut off opportunities
  - Traders won’t deal with you
  - Kill Juhani
- More meta commentary
Summary

- OMG, Star Wars
- Light vs. Dark
  - Let’s help everyone vs. Let’s kill bitches
  - These choices matter – Agency
- Meta commentary