World of Warcraft: the Burning Crusade

Within the Game

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
It will eat your life

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Narrative!
There’s just so much of it!
Environmental Storytelling

“Spatial stories can evoke pre-existing narrative associations; they can provide a staging ground for when narrative events are enacted; they may embed narrative information within their mise-en-scene; or they provide resources for emergent narratives.”
Evocative Spaces

The “World of Warcraft” is digitally rendered

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Warcraft_Orcs_And_Humans_-_Box_Art.jpg
http://whiggles.landofwhimsy.com/funbag/wc3review-2.jpg
Evocative Spaces

• Many of the structures and spaces within the game evoke general “adventure game” aesthetics and emotions
• Specific series references evoke particular user-responses.

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Please see:
http://frozenthrone.sonokong.co.kr/undead/image_tech/undead_tech_ziggurat.gif

Ziggurat = Undead + Base + Danger
Specific images from earlier parts of the series reoccur throughout the WoW world

Archimonde vs. Draenei

Main villain from WC3 is a Draenei, visual associations add a foreboding sense to the race in WoW, even without explicit reference to the character. Later in the WoW story-progress, we indeed encounter more fallen Draenei.

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http://www.wowvillage.com/jimages/draenei.png
Enacting Stories

• Over-arching plot, subplots, etc...
• Multi-faceted quests available to different races, classes, and allegiances throughout the game
• Choice as to number and type of quests pursued by an individual
• Others respond to your quests (“Reputation” allows you to buy stuff or prevents you from entering particular areas).

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http://images.amazon.com/images/G/01/videogames/detail-page/questlog.jpg
Emergent Narratives

- Choice over degree of narrative experienced. Can just grind to 70, or turn on the fast quest text option.
- Can create your own narrative with your friends, RP, PvP, RPPvP servers are available.

Some factions will be hostile to you, while others will become more friendly over time depending on the way you design your particular character narrative.

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Please see:

http://vnmedia.ign.com/wowvault.ign.com/images/NewFactions.jpg
Emergent Narratives

A Dranei and Night Elf in Elwynn Forest, the human starting area

Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see any screenshot of Elwynn Forest.
Embedded Narratives

- Alterations to the world infer or reference player actions
  -Skeletons in a town or area imply recent bloodshed
    - Sizes of the skeletons can tell specifics about the races fighting and the winners and losers
  - Flag-capture based objectives in an area shed light on Horde vs. Alliance performance and player activity
Embedded Narratives

Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see any screenshot of world map.
Embedded Narratives

- Auction houses tell a narrative of what players are willing to do, and unwilling to do. Prices and objects for sale talk about server progress and the interest of groups of particular players.
Beyond the Narrative

“The experience of playing games can never simply be reduced to the experience of a story.”

Cite as: John Rogosic, course materials for CMS.600 / CMS.998 Videogame Theory and Analysis, Fall 2007. MIT OpenCourseWare (http://ocw.mit.edu/), Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Downloaded on [DD Month YYYY].
Game Interface

- Customizable interface with multiple skill bars, hotkeys, and methods of skill selection

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http://ui01.gamespot.com/64/wowscrnshot052308214514_2.jpg
Freedom of Choice

Inclusion of many extraneous options to allow for diversity of experience, while not affecting gameplay or the narrative in any way

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http://www.burningcruadeskills.com/images/tailor.jpg
http://www.wowwiki.com/Elekk
Freedom of Choice

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Game Mechanics

• Extra-narrative code decisions about the way in which the world works affect all levels of game play.

  – Fall mechanics in WoW are percentage based on a character’s statistics. There exist “lethal” falls regardless of the character’s relative power in combat.
Images removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see any screenshot of characters falling off a cliff.
Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see:


CREDITS

http://www.carlsguides.com/pictures/warcraft3screenshot4.jpg
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http://www.ongamenet.com/war3league/race/undead/image_tech/undead_tech_ziggurat.gif
Blizzard for making a great game
Fraps for existing
Henry Jenkins for being right
My girlfriend for not killing me for playing WoW
CMS.600 for being a fun class