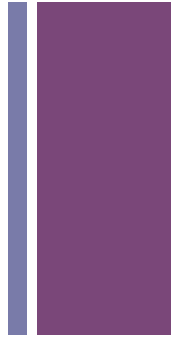


Empathy Game Design

By Lauren Romano

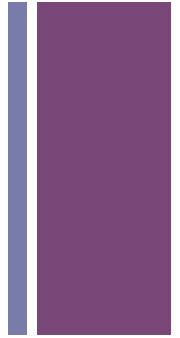
+ Empathy Defined

- According to the Oxford English Dictionary...
 - Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.



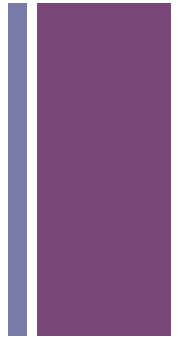
+ Empathy vs. Sympathy

- The Escapist Magazine:
 - Empathy you feel *with* a person
 - Sympathy you feel *for* a person



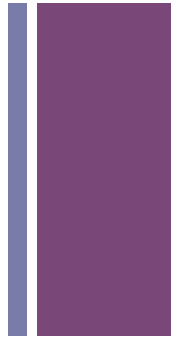
+ Empathy in Game Design

- Empathy often can either force or allow the player to feel emotion more personally and deeply
- Fear for yourself is often more significant than fear for a character...
- So how do you incorporate Empathy successfully into game design?



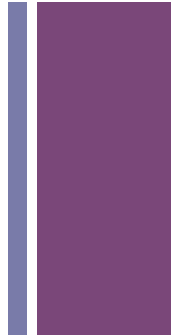
+ Empathy in Game Design

- Allowing players to inhabit the roles of other people in uniquely immersive ways.
 - Example: Darfur Refugee game
 - You can read about Darfuri refugees in the news, but imagine the intensity when playing as one.



+ Empathy in Game Design

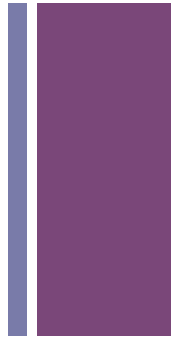
- Mary Flanagan and Jonathan Belman came up with four principles for the design of games to employ Empathy
 - **Principle One:**
 - *Players are likely to empathize only when they make an intentional effort to do so as the game begins. Without some kind of effective empathy induction at the outset, most people will play “unempathetically.”*



+ Empathy in Game Design

■ Principle Two:

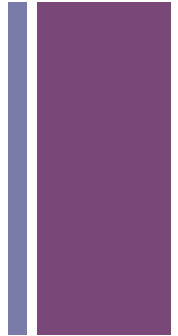
- *Give players specific recommendations about how their actions can address the issues represented in the game.*
 - If you don't give players a reason for their empathy, many will get frustrated and the game play will no longer be enjoyable.



+ Empathy in Game Design

■ Principle Three:

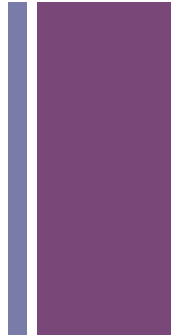
- *A short burst of emotional empathy works well if desired outcomes do not require significant shifts in how players' beliefs about themselves, the world, or themselves in relation to the world.*



+ Empathy in Game Design

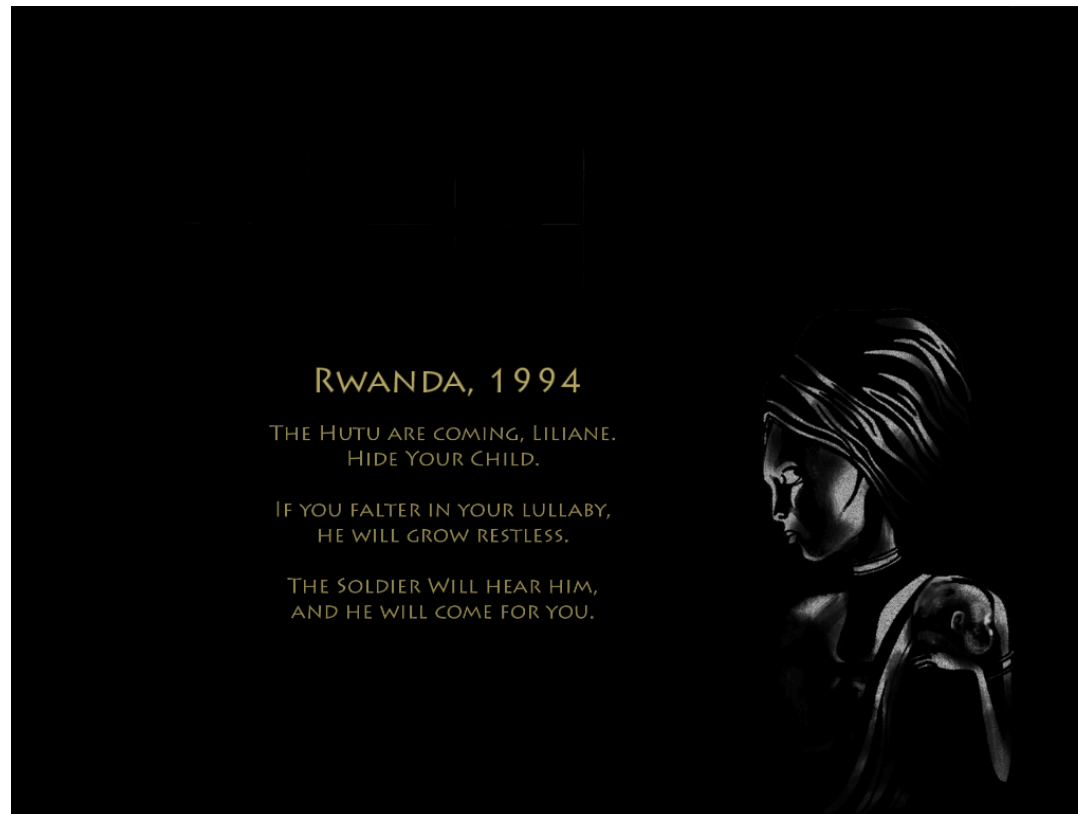
- Principle Four:

- *Emphasize points of similarity between the player and people or groups with whom she is supposed to empathize, but beware of provoking defensive avoidance.*



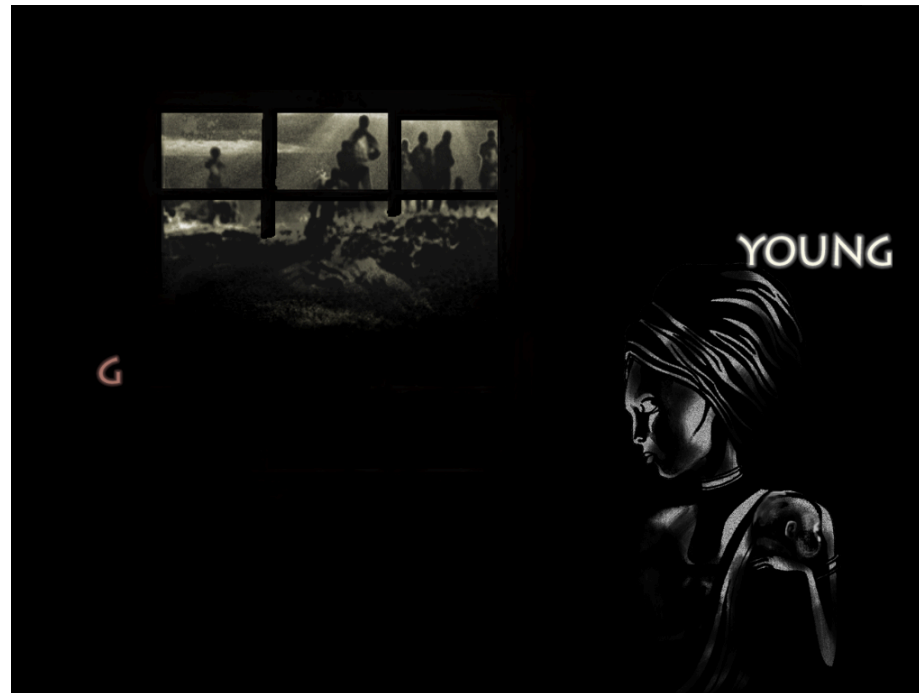
+ Hush by Jamie Antonisse and Devon Johnson

- Hush begins with a screen prompting us to take the perspective of the player character, who is a Rwandan Tutsi mother hiding in a shack with her baby during the genocide of 1994. This message appears:



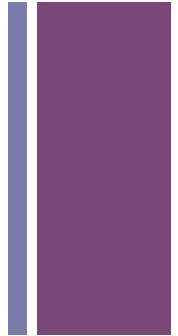
+ Hush by Jamie Antonisse and Devon Johnson

- The player is immediately addressed as “Liliane”
 - Automatically increasing the empathy in this game, as this eliminates the emotional distance that usually separates a player from what happens on screen.
 - Follows Flanagans and Belman’s first principle of Empathy in game design.



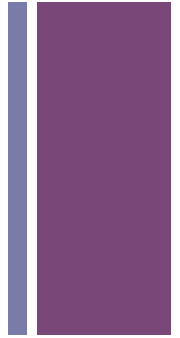
+ Peacemaker by ImpactGames

- Peacemaker allows the player to choose the role of either the Israeli Prime Minister or Palestinian President during a particularly volatile period of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.
- The goal is to create conditions in which a “two-state solution” to the conflict becomes viable.
- Relates back to principle three
- <http://www.peacemakergame.com/video.php?v=gameplay>



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QUESTIONS?



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