

# GENDER/SEXUALITY IN GAMES: SERIOUS GAMES, FEMINIST GAMES

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# DAILY AGENDA

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- Converting Feminist/Queer Discourse into Game Design
- Defining *Gone Home* and *Choice:Texas* as queer/feminist games
- Notes on Making Serious Games
- Queer/Feminist Discourse Focus: Embodiment and (re)Productivity

**RECALL: WHAT ARE SOME OF  
THE TENETS OF QUEER  
DISCOURSE AND FEMINIST  
DISCOURSE TODAY?**

# CONTEMPORARY QUEER/FEMINIST DISCOURSE

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- Performativity of Gender
- Rejecting Binary thinking
- Rejecting or Thinking beyond normative structures (gendered or otherwise)
- Embrace of Affect
- Imagining woman outside of “in opposition to man”
- Imagining futurity and temporality outside of “straight” norm

**HOW DO THESE DISCURSIVE  
TENETS GET ENACTED OR  
DESIGNED IN:  
GONE HOME?  
CHOICE: TEXAS?**

# QUEER / FEMINIST DISCOURSE AND/AS GAME DESIGN (1)

Narrative / Mechanic Design choice	Tenet(s)	Examples in practice
Stories of queer love / becoming	Narrative beyond normativity; thinking beyond a binary; performativity of gender; queer futurity;	<i>Gone Home</i> — a story of queer adolescence where everything works out
Stories of queer / female experience	Narrative beyond normativity; female outside of male opposition; rejecting binary thinking	<i>Choice: Texas</i> — a story of female reproductive health in Texas
Challenge S/Z's definitions/ characteristics of game design	Mechanic beyond game normativity; queer temporality in game; rejecting binary thinking	Remove "goal" Rules are not consistent Complicate discernibility / integration
Challenge cultural expectations for games	Thinking beyond normativity	Assumption that games should be fun; Playability as (inter)action

# QUEER / FEMINIST DISCOURSE AND/AS GAME DESIGN (2)

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Narrative / Mechanic Design choice	Tenet(s)	Examples in practice
Challenge arguments for game value	Rejecting structures of normativity	Embrace play; Resist need to be “productive”; Resist “games as art” Embrace glitches
Character Design	Gender Performativity; think beyond a binary	Characterization as play; Inconsistent characterization; Player is not the main character
Atmosphere / Game-Feel Design	Embrace affect; challenge normative structures	<i>Gone Home</i> and “horror” aesthetic, to put player on edge; Design for player emotion

# BEST PRACTICES FOR MAKING SERIOUS GAMES

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- Critically consider your own position: are you going to tell a story that is yours to tell?
- Consider the ethics of your design choices with the story you are telling. Do the tones match?
- Do your research;
- Consider your agenda and your (potential) audience;
- Neutrality may not be the best (or most ethical) option



# EMBODIMENT AND (RE)PRODUCTIVITY

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- Politicization of female and queer bodies;
- Challenge of mind/body separation;
- Normative structures of productivity (as such);
- Normative structures of reproductivity (specifically)