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The Values of New World

New World is an MMO, recently released by Amazon Game Studios and Double Helix Games on September 28, 2021. Deposited on the island of Aeternum after their ship was wrecked at sea, the player is thrown into a corrupted world that has yet to be conquered by man. The game forces the player to delve into the world of American Ideals, as it tells a tale about stumbling upon a new land and learning how to thrive there. As the player finds themselves thrown into this fledgling nation, torn by factions vying for territory control and corruption threatening to take over, they will experience colonialism and the values it reinforces first hand. *New World* takes a colonial spin on MMOs and immerses the player into a high fantasy take on the American dream.

New World takes a rather different approach to the way players can interact with the game servers. Servers are divided into regions(groups of servers tagged as the same “world type”). MMO’s generally allow the player to create a few characters and don’t limit them to certain servers. *New World*, however, only allows two characters per world type as well as only a single character per server. The limitations placed here generate a sense of attachment to the player character as the player will more than likely be spending their time on that singular character. As they experience all that the colonization of a new land and starting a new life has to offer, they will see the benefits of true freedom first hand. This ideal reflects the American Dream, that you can become whatever you want to be through time and effort. The only parts of the game that

transfer from character to character are store bought cosmetics, which don't take time or effort in-game to acquire. Not only do server limitations force the player to really focus on one character, it also gets the player more invested in the state of their server's world.

Player versus Player, or PvP, has a significant role on the Island of Aeternum. Even though one could theoretically play hundreds of hours of *New World* without ever putting thought towards fighting other players, they will still compete with other players in one way or another. The faction system is the largest scaled PvP system in the game. Very early into the game, the player is introduced to the three factions that fight for control of Aeternum. After a quick introduction to the ideals of each faction the player is expected to choose a faction to join. This forces the player to consider what type of character they want to develop before they get to see a good portion of the game. The urgency and lack of accumulated experience reflect the ideals of American education and career choice quite well. It is almost expected that a person should choose a path to follow by the time they hit 18, regardless of the fact that they have not even tasted the adult world yet. Both in American life and in-game, developing a strong sense of self is encouraged very early on. This sense of self stems from the cutthroat rush to obtain resources and power in a land ready to be conquered.

Resources are especially competitive in *New World* because they are only gatherable by a single player. For the game's natural resources, the resource will disappear after being harvested by the player and respawn minutes later. While the resources are technically infinite, they don't feel exploitable to an unreasonable level. The respawn timers and first come first serve resource system emphasize the mindset

of colonial Americans as they devise ways to maximise gathering efficiency without getting resources stolen by other players. Players who dare to flag themselves for PvP are capable of being knocked off of resources by other PvP enabled players, creating a space where resources are actually fought over. Since PvP enabled players gain 10% more experience points and PvP quests give larger rewards, the likelihood of running into other PvP enabled players is rather high. The game perfectly drives the player towards PvP just enough that it inspires a competitive spirit and highlights the American belief that competition is good. As stated on *USAHello*, “Americans can be competitive and often work hard to achieve their goals. Competition often leads Americans to be very busy. Many Americans view competition as a good thing.” This competition drives players to keep themselves busy in-game; gathering resources, crafting various items, running from quest to quest, etc., are all things I have found myself doing almost every second the game is open just to get an edge on the people who don’t.

The faction system also breeds contempt in players, both between factions and within them. Aeternum is divided into zones, most of which harbor a settlement and a fort. Each settlement has its own trading tax, property tax, and crafting tax as well as crafting stations of varying levels. Settlements, and their respective zones, are controlled by factions. Within the faction, the company (a guild of up to 50 players within the same faction) that originally took control of the zone from an opposing faction will be tasked with governing the zone and settlement while it is under their control. Controlling a territory provides significant advantages to all players of the controlling faction, and even more for members of the controlling company. Naturally, players will want to benefit from whatever bonuses they can. Tension arises between factions as they wage

war in an attempt to claim all of Aeternum, but it also rises in the factions themselves. There is a power struggle with the factions as companies argue and fight over who will wage war against the other factions and who is more fit to hold territory. All of these political points are reflective of American values. It would be ideal to see every American thrive, but it is most important that the individual and their people are as well off as possible. Players are railroaded into thinking about the politics of *New World* in some way or another, reinforcing the fact that politics in the real world are unavoidable as well.

Unlike most MMO's, *New World* features a classless character system. This allows the player to experiment with every type of playstyle instead of being forced to follow the style of the specific class their character is classified as. Following the ideals of the American dream, the player can turn their character into whatever they want just by putting in time and effort. A player can learn/unlock every single skill in the game without being inhibited. The only limitations on a character's skills being the amount of weapon abilities and passives allowed to be active at one time limited to 3 abilities and 17 passives/upgrades. Even with these limitations, a player is able to reallocate their character's weapon skills as well as their own stats with money or azoth(a magical currency system for specific game aspects). This reinforces the idea that no matter how a person got to their current state or how much time they spent doing so, they can always choose another path and work towards their next success.

Within all of this adversity, *New World* inspires unity as well. Something that can always bring people together is a common enemy, that's where the corruption comes in. While territories are able to be attacked by player factions for control, they are also able

to be attacked by corruption invasions. These invasions can cause serious damage to the settlements and their crafting tables if left unchecked. Naturally, most players won't want to let a settlement get weaker if they regularly visit it. Players of all factions can sign up and be chosen for invasion defence, where they can fight against the corruption together. In a post on *Psychology Today*, Steve Rathje states "Common enemies can also serve to unite people. After 9/11, many Americans reported feeling a heightened sense of unity and patriotism. They felt as if they could ignore divisions across party lines and unite against a common enemy." In this case, the gain each player gets from defending against and dispatching the corruption is mutually more beneficial than the differences being fought over between factions.

Dungeons are in the same boat as corrupted events, although the gain is more player oriented than world oriented. Players are able to group up and do dungeons together regardless of faction, although they cannot be PvP enabled while doing so. It is just easier to look for teammates who have specific skills over those of the same faction. Since factions don't gain anything major from players completing dungeons, there isn't much reason to reject a teammate based on faction alone. The American dream states that anybody is capable of finding success, and when the path to success means working with a rival, both people will give it their all in order to best the other. The competitive drive will benefit both parties rather than knocking each other down.

New World really brings the ideals of 17th century colonists to life as players explore Aeternum and learn how to utilize its many resources. Whether a player is trying to make a name for themselves, make bank trading, or just become a simple crafter, they will be able to find success in whatever aspect of the game they choose to spend

time pursuing. The American dream is deeply seeded in the colonial ideals, lasting far past the days of colonialism. These ideals are evident in the systems that Amazon Games have created in *New World*.

Work Cited

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