



Populous – The first game that lets you play ‘god’

Video transcript: clip from *Games Britannia*, Episode 3, first broadcast on BBC Four on 21 Dec 2009

BENJAMIN WOOLLEY:

Populous had broken the mould by giving players a taste of ultimate power, but also responsibility.

Both Populous and its offspring Black White offered a new realm in which you could play with a living, breathing world. It became known as the God Game because, as in a board game, the player has god-like powers to move the pieces and choose their fate.

VOICE FROM GAME:

Are you a blessing or a curse? Good or evil? Be what you will, you are destiny.

BENJAMIN WOOLLEY:

The godfather of the ‘god’ Game is Peter Molyneux, one of the most influential games designers of our age and an indefatigable evangelist of the potential of computer games.

So, this is Black & White. You have got an incredibly rich environment here.

PETER MOLYNEUX:

Much richer isn’t it than the original Populous isn’t it. But there are similarities. You know, look at the view that we are looking down on. It is not too dissimilar. We can still see villages, we can still see little people moving around. OK, there is a big creature now. Ehm but we have got this little... We’ve got this... in Populous, this little hand, in Black & White, we’ve got a big hand, and you could...

You know I really wanted to give the feeling that you could reach down into that world and pluck someone out. You can throw rocks and squash people and you can save people from drowning, and you can... In Black & White, famously, you could say, you two are going to get married.