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[FEMALE AND EVIL: THE ROLE GENDER PLAYS FOR VILLAINS IN ADVENTURE GAMES]

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This research paper examines how female evil is represented in adventure games from 1982 till 2013 and how this representation of female evil can be understood in a cultural philosophical perspective. First, the philosophical growth of the term evil is summarized and the paper describes how media forms, such as art, literature and movies, have represented evil in the past. While these art forms focus on representation through images, sound and text, video games introduce interactivity as a new tool to represent, understand and occasionally even be evil. Observed is that female villains are represented through text, images, sound and extra diegetic material. By examining the female gender role of end bosses in digital games, the portrayal of evil is studied and it is shown that humanlike female end bosses become demonized oral villains as their representation is stereotyped with the use of symbols for evil. Only when the villain is a genderless being the female aspects of the end boss can be said to be of cultural importance.

Dear reader,

While the King needs to be put checkmate, it is the defeat of the Queen that causes the most relief --- Playing a game of Chess

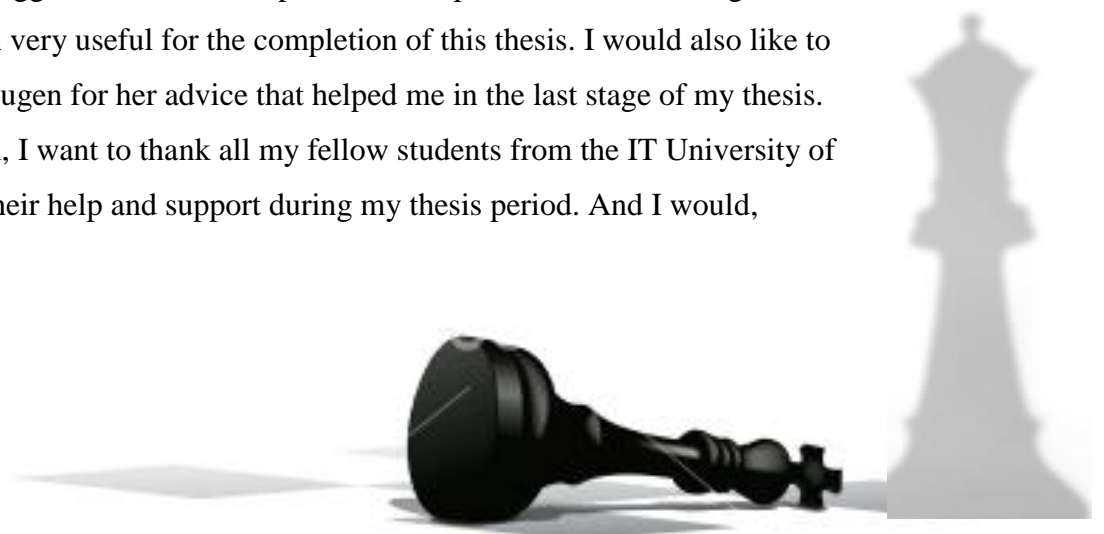
This thesis is written to conclude the master's degree Media and Performance Studies at the University of Utrecht. During the master program I went to the IT University of Copenhagen. At my stay there, and even a bit before in my first year at the University of Utrecht, games were studied from the perspective that a game is first of all just fun. Games are fun to play alone or together with friends and finishing a game often provides a sense of accomplishment.

Games though can also contain serious subjects such as, evil, racism and gender differences. With this as a focus point for my research during the two master years, I came to examine the game FABLE (2011). In this game the player can choose to play an evil or a good player character. Players often choose to play an evil character for fun, to do bad things in the game world that cannot be done in the real world.

Although I had not really considered the concept of fun before, I became more and more aware of it during my research in games. Still, not letting go of the subjects evil and gender which I find interesting, I combine the fun of playing games with a gender and evil perspective in this study. End bosses in digital games are known as the most powerful enemies or characters of the game. This thesis will identify the few villains that are female or have female attributes. Powerful female evil, as the queen in a game of chess, are still not common in the world of video games and may, therefore, be even more interesting to study regarding the role they play in society.

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Terry Guijt

Leiden, Augustus 2013

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Introduction

A boss is an enemy-based challenge (and a computer controlled opponent in such a challenge) which is found in video games --- (Burt, 2008)

According to Jean Baudrillard (1994), media are so prominent in our society that our thoughts and the way we act for a great deal come forth out of a media context. “Therefore, studying the media will not help us discover the causes of evil, but it will help us find out about the beliefs society has towards evil.” (Leurs, 2006, p. 3) Within adventure games, an end boss represents the evil the player-character must fight against. The end boss is often the last opponent that must be defeated to end the game. End bosses are significantly superior compared to the regular enemies within the game. This makes them harder to beat. Usually the end boss is the main antagonist of the adventure game and its story. This means that the end boss is not only present at the end of the game, but is seen throughout the story of the game when certain events happen. Introducing the end boss throughout the story of the game might build up the climax of facing the boss. But does this mean that every end boss can be seen as evil?

Western society often uses morally acceptable characters as heroes and morally unacceptable characters as the bad guys. The end boss of the game is usually someone or something ‘evil’ that threatens the player’s existence of the player’s game character(s), the characters friends and family or maybe the entire planet. However, when viewed within the concept of game play, all end bosses can be classified as evil. After all, the end boss is the final opponent that stands between the player and victory. While this description presents a simplified version of what the end boss in adventure games signifies, it can help us understand the beliefs society has towards evil. The popular media-discourse examined in this thesis is the field of computer games. To narrow this field of study, my research question is:

How is female evil represented in action-adventure computer games from 1982 till 2013 and how can this representation of evil be understood in a cultural philosophical perspective?

In action-adventure games, the story of the game plays an important role and can therefore fill in some of the game components, such as the end boss. Following Baudrillard, the representation of the end boss in a videogame can describe the beliefs society has towards evil. This research will focus on action-adventure games from 1982 till 2013. The year 1982

is used as a limit because in that year the adventure game *ULTIMA II* (1982) was published. This game is one of the first computer games in which evil is depicted by a female end boss.

This thesis will focus on ‘female evil’. Female evil in this thesis means end bosses or antagonists in computer games, which possess certain female characteristics. This can be represented with physical characteristics, such as a female body or voice. But also with a text description in the game’s story. As will be described in chapter one, the female or female characteristics are in philosophical theories described as a symbol of beauty. When philosophers try to describe beauty, a picture of a woman comes to mind. Also in artworks, for instance paintings, beauty is often represented by a young woman. In opposition, ugliness is used to represent evil. Chapter one will focus on the representation of evil throughout the ages in philosophy and art through the book *On Ugliness* (2007) by Umberto Eco.

Since the early years, computer games have changed immensely over the years. From a medium that existed on borrowed elements from other already existing media it changed to a fully developed, separate medium. A medium that has grown to be the biggest seller of Blu-Ray discs and CD-rom’s, and has beaten both movies and television.¹ The focus of chapter two will be the use of literary theory, film theory and game theory within the representation of characters or characteristics of the female end boss. Observed is that computer games borrow certain elements from other media forms to present the villain.

While game studies have become an academically identified discipline from the year 2000 and onwards, it is a relatively new field that remains open to other fields of study, for instance, the field of gender studies. Unfortunately, the computer games market is known to be dominated by male game developers and male players. Therefore, the combination of gender studies and game studies has provided a male-gaze point of view. Describing female characters in masculine terms such as, ‘eye-candy’ and ‘damsel in distress’. Chapter three will describe prior gender studies in the field of games. By examining the few female evil villains in adventure games, this study aims to break free of the male-gaze perspective and aims to answer the question: Is gender even a necessity in the construction of evil?

The last chapter focuses on evil female characters in a different form. Throughout the history of adventure games, cyberspace has been an interesting subject for game developers. It is a relatively unknown and constantly changing field. It is no wonder that humans, who have a tendency to fear the unknown, keep a wary eye on the ever growing capabilities of computers. Remarkably, in computer games, the artificial intelligence of computers is often

¹ *Ongeldige bron opgegeven.*

given female attributes. Chapter four will examine the gender aspects attributed to cyborgs and how this phenomenon can be explained from a cultural philosophical perspective.

Chapter 1: On Evil

Evil is not easily defined and not many images of evil women are found in society. When searching for the word ‘thieves’ on Google, pictures of angry men with tattoo’s are found. The basic icon for a thief, as portrayed on warning signs, show a man sneaking around with a flashlight. Yet not all evildoers are male and sneak around, wearing a mask and a large bag. This chapter begins with an analysis of the terms ‘evil’ and ‘ugliness’. What is evil and how is evil portrayed, are questions that will be answered before examining the medium itself.

Ungraspable evil

Umberto Eco gives an overview of ugliness in European art from the Classical Era till 1950 in the book *On Ugliness* (2007). He describes ‘ugliness’ as art expressions that are described as distasteful, abject, monstrous and abominable or abhorrence. Although Eco mentions that he cannot define ‘ugliness’, he relies on artistic testimonies to what kind of art expressions were experienced as ugly in society.

While ‘ugliness’ is not the same as evil, ugly images can and often do, represent evil as Eco shows in his book. The representation of ugliness has changed throughout the ages. It sometimes changed with the understanding of evil that the society of that era had. In the Classical Era, images of cyclops, Medusa and Sirens were seen as ugly. In that era, these mythical monsters were considered threats to society and society feared them. They were the unseen evil that had to be defeated as Eco describes in the first chapter; *‘Ugliness in the Classical World’* of the book. (2007, pp. 23-42)

In the Middle Ages ugliness was found in the depiction of religion. According to Eco: “The ugly, in the form of the terrifying and the diabolical, makes its entry in the Christian world with John the Evangelist’s book of revelation (the apocalypse).” (2007, p. 73) The Devil and other monsters from hell were the representations of evil of that time. The society of the Middle Ages feared the apocalypse, which is described as hell on earth. Artists imagined the apocalypse and portrayed this on paintings. This resulted in pictures of monsters that seem similar to those from the Classical Era. However, there is one considerable difference: in the images from the Middle Ages, humans are featured. The human in question is often a woman who gets carried off by a demon to the gates of hell. Also, these demons are not horned monsters anymore. They have more human characteristics. While in the Classical Era the monsters walked on four legs and had huge horns, the demons in the Middle Ages walked on two legs and had pointy ears instead of horns. An example is the statue ‘The

Demon who Carries a Nun' at the Chartres Cathedral, made in the 13th century. While the demon still has only three fingers, it lacks many other animal characteristics.

It is important to note that in both these eras, the images defined as ugly are representing something which society in that time classified as evil. The images can therefore be viewed as representations of evil. Both versions of evil seem to represent something that is not present in the real world. It can be assumed that even then, centaurs and demons from hell were not walking the earth. They come from the realm of fantasy and can be seen as ungraspable evil. From the Middle Ages onwards, it became more common for the demons and monsters to have more human proportions and male characteristics, such a broad torso and muscled legs and arms. Representations of evil got more realistic, or graspable, and less fantastical.

Middle Ages and human characterizations; the witches

In his book *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages* (1986), Eco describes that, in medieval art, the woman is seen as the personification of 'beauty'. For instance, in contemporary paintings, angels from heaven were usually depicted as females. Yet images of ugly women can also be found. "In the Middle Ages there were many portrayals of an *old woman*, a symbol of physical and moral decay, in opposition to the canonical praise of youth as a symbol of beauty and purity". (2007, p. 159) Aging was not seen as a normal process, and was even considered to represent the decline of moral ethics.

In the Middle Ages, an old woman who lived alone, because her husband had died and left her childless, was generally seen as an outsider. The term 'witch' was commonly used as an appellation for these women. The rumor was that they would come together to perform rituals for the Devil. These gatherings were called the Witches' Sabbath and many paintings show old women dancing around a fire and worshipping the Devil. An image of the Devil is usually seen in the fire. Yet there are also images of old women teaching the younger beautiful women how to perform a ritual. These pictures symbolize the good woman versus the evil woman, and this is presented as young versus old. The older woman is acting out a morally renounced deed by teaching the younger woman demonic rituals. The ugliness is derived from this act. In these art works, older women have grey hair, cataract marks in their eyes, a hooked nose, overly long nails and a curved back.

From these medieval paintings it seems that the realm of fantasy is being pushed to the background. This can be perceived not only in the way demons have more human male characteristics, but also in the fact that the evil witches are physically older women, who

stood on the outskirts of society. But the beliefs of society that evil has its roots in the supernatural still linger and are discernible in the association of witches with magic and demon rituals.

In western culture, witches were generally women as Clarke Garrett describes.

“In nearly every society that believes in witches, why are the vast majority of suspected individuals women? The stereotype of the female witch is as prevalent in Africa and Burma as it was in Europe”

(1977, p. 461)

Gender seems to play an important role when picturing this form of evil. An explanation could be that, during the Middle Ages, the women often outlived the men. They also lived at the outskirts of a community and so people saw them as outsiders. Furthermore, in art the woman is and was a symbol of beauty, which clashes with religion and the morality of Christianity. In the stories from the Bible, women are often cast in a bad light. Examples would be Eve, who took the apple from the tree in paradise and Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab of Israel, who worshipped Baal, the Devil. It was inferred that women were evil, merely because they were women.

It also seems that when evil is summoned in secret, the female plays a part in it. While evil is fascinating and ungraspable, the female characteristics seems to make evil more glamorous. When pictures of witches, prostitutes and chaperons appear in art, the woman is always displayed naked or half-naked, usually displayed on a bed. The evil itself does not come from the woman, but usually from the Devil or demon that appears in her dream, on her bed or during rituals. The suggestion is that the women are performing witchcraft to summon a demon. Perhaps they dream evil things and, therefore, a demon appears in their dreams. Possibly, they are taught how to summon a demon during Sabbath by an elderly woman.² This may be because women who do evil deeds are creatures of the night, such as prostitutes or witches whose deeds usually took place during the night.

However, these concepts change during the Renaissance. The lady is no longer a sign of moral decay, instead the ugliness represented beauty in decay.

² See Chapter 8: Witchcraft, Satanism and Sadism of the book ‘On Ugliness’ (2007, pp. 203-240) from Umberto Eco. Paintings as ‘Witchsabbath’ from Francisco Goya (1797), ‘Histoire de Merlin’ (15th century) and ‘The lesson before Sabbath’ from Louis Maurice Boutet (1880).

“The Baroque period witnessed a growing taste for the extraordinary, for those things that arouse wonder and, in this cultural climate, artists explored the worlds of violence, death and horror (...). Hence even the theme of the ugly woman was seen from a different point of view: a woman’s imperfections were described as elements of interest, sometimes as sensual stimuli --- and we shall see how this attitude was revisited both in Romanticism and in Decadentism by authors --- just to give one example --- such as Baudelaire.”

(Eco, 2007, p. 169)

In the Baroque period the decay of the female body is conceived as something positive. In the poem *‘The Handsome Old Lady’* (1615) from Guiseppe Salomoni, grey hair is described as silver that shines brighter than gold and wrinkles are, thanks to love, trophies of beauty.

Growing old is inevitable and the conclusion is that someone who is old and ugly is not by definition evil. Compassion, often present in the Bible as a virtue of humans, was shown towards elderly women. Getting old is nature at work, not evil. The believe that women had supernatural powers slowly vanished after the Middle Ages. In periods that followed, witches became merely women without a family in society and who needed help from the other villagers to survive. The image of the witch disappeared from art and was replaced by portrayals of the beautiful old woman. The witch though did not completely disappeared as she was still portrayed as a symbol of evil in the realm of fantasy and were remembered in folk stories and myths that later became fairy tales.

Surprisingly, this change of perception is not present in the images of malformed children, which appeared more often in art works after the Middle Ages. These children still represented evil. They are the accomplices of the devil and there is no compassion for this group of people in society, even though it is shown towards elderly women. To categorize this evil, nature is the key. Growing old is nature at work, it happens to everyone. Continuously looking young can even be seen as evil at work, as in the stories of immortals walking the earth to slay humans. The power of immortality is given by the Devil. Contemporary society is trying to distinguish what is real and natural from what is unnatural and fantastic. Humans born with one leg or arm were uncommon and seemed unnatural. It was believed that the Devil had a grip on these children.

Glamorous evil

Gérard Philipe shows in the movie *Beauty and the Devil* (Clair, 1950) that the evilness of the Devil can also be found in something that is beautiful. In this movie the Devil is beautifully

dressed, his make-up is perfect and he speaks very refined, but the deeds he performs are abominable. With this example, Eco concludes with the statement that ‘ugliness’ cannot be defined, but can be studied. Therefore, it can be concluded that what the human mind finds abominable, is at the same time mysterious, ungraspable and fascinating. For example, during a distasteful scene in a movie, the viewer would like to look away, because it is disgusting. He or she should actually look away, because it is abominable. Yet they stay riveted because it is fascinating.

Mysterious, fascinating, indefinable, pleasurable; evil is not scary anymore. It is intriguing and might even be described as glamorous. Especially, in popular culture or art, evil is presented in a glamorous way. Carmen Sandiego (figure 1) is a thief who steals national treasures from all over the world. Her first scene in the game shows her in a mysterious outfit with a red hat covering half of her face. She is the ringleader of a band of thieves, enjoys eating tacos, has red-brown hair, brown eyes and is always portrayed in a long red coat. Throughout the game the player will never see more of her face than her lips and cheek. Several agents who attempted to arrest her have failed because of her charming appearance, which adds to the mystery that surrounds the villain Carmen Sandiego.

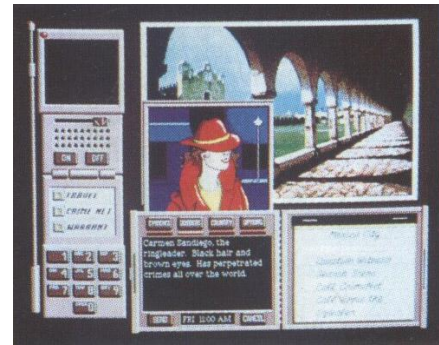


Figure 1: Carmen Sandiego

Carmen Sandiego is the mysterious female villain in the computer game *WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CARMEN SANDIEGO* (1985). She hides her evil deeds behind a mask of beauty and charm. She is displayed as a secretive and glamorous woman. Comparable to the glamorous Devil played by Gérard Philipe.

According to Terry Eagleton humankind should be aware of glamorous representations of evil. He warns by stating: “(...) the idea that evil is glamorous is one of the great moral mistakes of the modern age” (2010, p. 210). The meaning behind his words is that society should reject the thought of evil as glamorous. Moral evil should not get symbolic or iconic meanings that push the evil act itself to the background. The form of evil should not get meaningless because of the glamorous details surrounding the act. This is what Eagleton is afraid for in post modern society. He describes how evil is described in literature. He combines this with thoughts of evil found in philosophy. One of his descriptions of evil is: “Evil has no relations to anything beyond itself, such as a cause. In fact, the word has come to mean, among other things, ‘without a cause’.” (2010, p. 3)

It is comparable to Jean Baudrillard's opinion: "(...) where did evil go to in the society of nowadays" (1990, p. 92). Both authors question the display of evil in society. While in society itself more and more ungraspable evil deeds are happening. For instance, both use the terrorists' attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11th of 2001 as an example, of evil that cannot be understood. The authors state that the fascination for evil is growing in current society. In literature, Eagleton encounters the tendency of sympathizing with the evil character or antagonist of a novel. For example, the character Satan in the 17th century poem '*Paradise Lost*' (1667) by John Milton. Satan is described as a beautiful youth with blue eyes and blond hair. He is a charismatic person, who knows how to persuade people to do evil things. While Eagleton attempts to pinpoint evil by analyzing various books, he comes to the conclusion that this is not possible. Characteristics of evil are not clear, because evil '(..) is a condition of being as well as a quality of behavior.' (Eagleton, 2010, p. 152) He comes to a similar conclusion as Eco, that evil is fascinating and that this fascinating side is displayed in literature or other forms of popular culture.

Incomprehensible evil

The interactivity within computer games, is what separates this medium from other media. Sometimes game play is based on moral decisions, taken by the player. In the following research in philosophy, morality plays an important role. Intentions, actions and decisions are part of moral behavior. When it comes to the imagery of evil, the conclusion is that it is not definable. Evil is the most comprehensive expression of ethical disapproval. Evil is that which is against, or will destroy, that which is considered to be good in society. Evil is synonymous to extreme forms of moral wrong.

In early philosophy, evil is understood in the sense that it is the opposite of good. Benedict Spinoza explains: "By good, I understand that which we certainly know is useful to us. By evil, on the contrary, I understand that which we certainly know hinders us from possessing anything that is good." (1952, p. 424) With this dualistic approach it is still not known what evil is. What can be considered a good deed for one person may be considered as an evil deed for another. It all depends on a person's point of view. Evil remains incomprehensible, even when compared to that which is good. Not surprisingly, because what is 'good' in philosophy is also not an impermeable term. The philosopher Kant (1790) states that 'we may never understand why people do evil deeds because, like good deeds, it comes fort out of freedom.' (2002, p. 287) In philosophy, the discussion about what evil is stopped. Instead an attempt was made to describe the sources of evil. One example is Søren

Kierkegaard, who states that emotions, such as fear and doubt, represent the roots of evil. He describes evil as moral choices that have to be made and states that fear and doubt are usually the causes of evil deeds (2007, pp. 267-296). According to Susan Neiman's *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (2002), evil is not considered a subject anymore among the philosophers of the twentieth century. They do not discuss about evil explicitly, while in history this has been done by other philosophers.³ Neiman wants to resume the discussion about evil, because, through evil, a better understanding of the world is gained. She is, therefore, not trying to identify the roots of evil as Kierkegaard did, but she is trying to understand evil itself. She explains this with the earthquake in Lisbon in 1755 as an example. Neiman claims that this event started the beginning of modernity. From then on, moral evil and natural evil existed. Moral evil is evil caused by humans. Natural evil has a natural cause. The end of modernity is marked, according to Neiman, by the terrors of Auschwitz. 'It is the end of modernity because Auschwitz destroyed the possibility to react, the intellectual world was numbed.' (2002, p. 273) This event is chosen, because evil became ungraspable.

Philosophers are trying to understand the world by the ideas which manifest in the world. However, is the murder of a four year old child considered less evil than the mass murder committed in Auschwitz? Can there be thought about evil, when a definition or some sort of categorization of evil seems out of place? In philosophy, evil is an ungraspable term, but Neiman makes a distinction between evil with a natural cause and evil with a human cause. This distinction certainly does not define evil, but it does make it possible to categorize evil on a very small scale. When evil has a natural cause, for instance, a comet falling on a planet as is the main event in the game FINAL FANTASY VII (1997). However, it is interesting to examine whether these natural causes of evil are given female characteristics. In the game, the comet is summoned by the evil male villain Sephiroth, who has Jenova cells in his blood. While Jenova is known as 'the calamity that came falling from the sky' it is presented as a woman. Sephiroth addresses it as his mother, for whom he is casting the Meteor spell that summons the comet. His body is possessed by Jenova cells and some characters in the game state that it is Jenova acting and not Sephiroth himself. Although this relates to a fantasy story, sometimes natural causes in reality get female characteristics. For instance, the hurricanes in America mostly have female names. For instance, hurricane Katrina raged

³ Kant, Marx, Voltice, Schopenhauer and De Sade

through New Orleans in 2005. Why natural evil gets female characteristics is an interesting question. It seems that society does not think about it and just accepts the female names.

As mentioned before, there is also moral evil that is based on the decisions made by humans. Laura Parker writes the following.

“The emergence of morality in video games is arguably one of the most important innovations of the medium to date, giving players moral choice is a progressive development in games that adds more weight and substance to player decisions and is leading to a more immersive and satisfying experience.”

(2009, p. 33)

According to Mark J.P. Wolf there are four formal aspects of the videogame: space, time, narrative and genre (2005, p. 8). In early adventure games, evil is found in the narrative of the game, in the form of the antagonist. This usually has a very dualistic approach; the hero or protagonist of the game versus the evildoer or antagonist of the game. In FINAL FANTASY VIII (1999) the hero must defeat the evil sorceress who is planning to distort time and thereby destroy the planet. Worth mentioning is also the fight against the hero's inner self, his or her inner demons; characteristics a hero should not have but that makes him or her stronger. Examples are the dark prince the protagonist has to fight against in PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE TWO THRONES (2005) and the evil twin brother that comes alive in the protagonist's dream world in EVIL TWIN: CYPRIEN'S CHRONICLES (2001). In both games the player can make use of the abilities his or her dark self has to offer, but at the end of the game the player must defeat it, or walk away from it, to prove his or her good nature in order to finish the game. Morality was interwoven in the narrative of the game.

In general morality was not yet interwoven with the dimensions of space, time and genre. Nowadays, developers are using morals to immerge the player into the game. In these games players have to make moral choices and the outcome of these choices becomes part of the game. An example is the game BLACK AND WHITE (2001) where the player gets to play a God with a conscience. The choices made, such as whether or not to spare a rival's life after a fight, will determine what kind of God the player is at the end of the game. Whether he or she will be a good or an evil God.

Female and evil

To conclude this chapter, it seems that not all female evil per definition performed by females. Sometimes female characteristics are used as a symbol to define evil. Another part of female evil is the use of female beauty. This glamorous display of evil is seen from the Middle Ages

onwards and is strongly present in movies and television series in the postmodern age. While the female body comes forth from the realm of Beauty in art, this image is later blurred with evil and can lead to an demonic display. The role of gender is used to mix evil with characteristics of women, such as kindness, tenderness, beauty and intuition. While men are the symbol of rational evil, women are seen as irrational evil. It is instinct that is pushing forth strong emotions, such as hate. In postmodern times, evil also seems to be irrational. Feminine characteristics are used more often and the archetype known as 'the witch' is once again commonly used and accepted in popular culture.

But is this the end of the discussion? What about the moral decisions players can make in games nowadays. This change in game play might affect the image of female evil. If female evil is usually displayed as an exotic fantasy of evil, what happens to this image when players are interactively choosing to do wrong? This might be answered through the analysis of computer games which incorporate this feature.

Chapter 2: Presenting Evil

In the previous chapter evil was explained to be ungraspable. It was also shown that mankind has often created imagery to represent this ungraspable subject. This chapter will focus on the medium itself. The difference between computer games and other media, such as movies or literature, is interactivity. To see how this element of play affects the representation of evil, the game structure will be discussed. To understand the evil presented by female villains, the portraying of the characters in games will be analyzed and all additional background information will be considered.

Times of change; debates and adventure games on a side track

The earliest type of adventure games were text-based games in which the entire narrative was presented in writing. Connie Veugen in *'Here be Dragons; Advent and Prehistory of Adventure Games'* (2006) marks these games as the beginning of the adventure games. Veugen states that in early game literature the adventure game is often overlooked. According to her, this has several reasons.

"(...) firstly because this type of game originated on mainframe computers and didn't find its way into the living room until the arrival of the home computer (like the Apple II) in the early eighties. Secondly, as the original adventure games were text based they were not attractive for game Arcades. That's why they are usually not mentioned in game histories as these are often based on the hardware the games run on. Thirdly, in the West, adventure games, for a long time, were only played on home computers, unlike Japan, where games like ZELDA (Nintendo, first version 1986) and FINAL FANTASY (Square, first version 1987) that ran on game consoles were and are hugely popular."

(2006, p. 77)

The heated debate between narratologists and ludologists played an important role in the disregarding of adventure games. This debate occurred within the field of game studies and lasted from 2001 to 2003.⁴ During this debate, adventure games were disregarded as computer

⁴ The debate between ludologists and narratologists, that started with the publication of the first issue of the online journal *Game Studies* (Aarseth, 2001), with ludologist's claim that games and narratives are mutually exclusive, whereas narratologists not only claim that games have narrative dimensions, but also that gameplay can only be understood in relation to the narrative dimensions. After almost a decade of debate between ludologists and narratologists all participants acknowledge that the main problems of the interaction between narrative structures and the mechanics of gameplay remain to be solved.

games. In the article *Games Telling Stories* (2001), about the subject of time in games, Jesper Juul uses the term ‘interactive narratives’ to describe adventure games and their fundamental difference with “normal” computer games. Interactivity is the communication which occurs between a computer and a human player. It is this aspect which makes it different from all other media and gives the player the possibility to act. What was only possible by playing board games or games in the schoolyard was now possible on the computer screen. According to Juul:

“The article then explores three important reasons for describing games as being non-narrative: 1) Games are not part of the narrative media ecology formed by movies, novels, and theatre. 2) Time in games works differently than in narratives. 3) The relation between the reader/viewer and the story world is different than the relation between the player and the game world.”

(2001, p. 1)

He describes that the element of play lies in the aspect of time in games. This does not refer to the time the player needs to watch cut scenes and occasionally makes choices, ‘(...) but when the user can act, they must necessarily implode: it is impossible to influence something that has already happened. This means that *it is not possible to have interactivity and narration at the same time*. And this means in practice that games almost never perform basic narrative operations like flashback and flash forward.’ (2001, p. 8) Juul means the formal aspect of time and explains why a computer game is not the same as reading a book or watching a movie. Espen Aarseth (2004) states that regarding computer games as just another genre for telling stories does the new medium short. Players do not only play games for the story. Most players play computer games because of the interactivity.

The result of the debate was that the term ‘adventure game’ was deemed unimportant for the history of computer games, because they were seen as interactive stories. But as Veugen starts explaining: “(...) early adventure games, and the more modern graphic adventure games, can be termed interactive fiction because of their emphasis on the story-line.” (2006, p. 78) However, she also noticed a change in adventure games. Whereas early adventure games were usually a point-and-click adventure set in a game-world, the modern adventure games have become more action oriented. For instance, the TOMB RAIDER (1996-2012) and FABLE (2007-2011) series, caused a change in genre from adventure games to action-adventure games. Aarseth noted that in these games, quests are part of the game-play. ‘They drive the player through the game and its conclusion.’ (2004, p. 368) He does not

focus on the narrative aspect of the quest in the game, but on the quest (the narrative) as a part of the game structure. While in action-adventure games the story is still of some importance, the quests are divided into obligatory and optional quests. These quests usually give more background information on the story and its characters. This became an additional method to provide background information in games, besides the booklets and packages of games.

While these changes in adventure games occurred, the ludologists and the narratologists arguments became unfounded. The ludologists noticed that story telling can be an element found in games and that games are much more than a new medium that only offers story telling. The kind of game or genre depicts how great the role of the story is in the game. In adventure games the story is part of the game element and has an important role. Veugen observed this and described these changes as: “(...) the end of classical adventure games.” (2006, p. 93) The focus of the games industry changed from the story, towards action. It is more appropriate to regard it as a change of game genre, since the adventure elements are still present in the modern adventure games. For example, in *ASSASSIN’S CREED* (2009), it is part of the game-play and its story to assassinate enemies and to search for stolen objects and hidden places.

Presentation of the villain through text

In order to analyze evil as it is represented in computer games, some terms must be borrowed from the field of literature studies. Within this field, the term character refers to the image that is created in the mind of the reader. This image is created by text and provides information about the character’s appearance. Some authors are very precise in the depiction of a character. The reader knows everything, because everything is explicitly described. This is called block characterization. Alternatively, there is implicit characterization. Pieces of information are revealed little by little, throughout the story. The reader does not fully know what the character looks like or what his motivations are. While reading the story to its completion, everything might become clear. The ‘correct’ image cannot be formed before the story is finished. In the field of computer games, the appearance of the character as it is displayed on the screen is called the avatar.

Another division is that between round and flat characters. Complex characters undergo a development within the story and are called round characters. Flat characters do not, or barely, change during the progress of the story. Sometimes the antagonist is presented as a flat character. When this character is a typical representation of an expected concept, it is also known as a stereotype. For example, the Queen in *Snow White* (Grimm, *The Complete*

Grimm's Fairy Tales, 1812) tries to have her stepdaughter killed, because the girl is more beautiful than she is. This continuous anger and single minded advancing towards a goal, makes her an example of a flat character. This character can also be described as a stereotype, since she fits the concept of the evil witch or stepmother.

The term actor is a structuralist concept and refers to the focalization in storytelling. It is used to describe the narrator. It is the narrator's point of view which directs the reader's perception of the story. Mieke Bal (2009) calls this the focalizer. She makes a distinction between the internal and the external narrator. The narrator is internal when he or she is a character within the story that tells the reader about his knowledge of the events. This may be the protagonist, a companion or sometimes even the antagonist of the story. An external narrator is not a character in the plot and he or she provides a bird's-eye view of the story. Stories can consist of several internal narrators, or stories might switch between internal and external narrators. Another term for an internal narrator is a subjective view, because it is through his or her eyes that the player experiences the story. In games, the hero might speak to a computer controlled character and receive information about the villain. For example, in KING'S QUEST (1984) a character claims that the King's magic mirror was stolen by a witch. The protagonist now assumes that the villain is both a witch and a thief.

Game structures and enjoyment

For a player to be able to interact with a game, it must be programmed with a predetermined set of rules. In order to win or lose the game, the player needs to obey these rules. There is one rule which is present in all computer games and that is 'in a computer game there is a conflict and a goal to which we have to go.' (Klevjer, 2006, p. 7) Jesper Juul explains that obeying the rules should be a voluntary act, because then 'the accomplishment of winning brings more joy.' (2005, p. 55) This implies that the game is more interesting when the computer alters its responses according to the player's input and the player can adapt his or her responses to the game.

In computer games there are two possible basic structures which guide the player through the game. The first is emergence, which is '(...) the primordial game structure, where a game is specified as a small number of rules that combine and yield large numbers of game variations, which the players then design strategies for dealing with. Emergence games tend to be re-playable and tend to foster tournaments and strategy guides.' (Juul, 2002, p. 324) The focus in emergence games is based on the experience the player has in the game world, where the story is part of the game world. By fulfilling tasks or moving on in the game, the player is

able to send his or her character to other places inside the game world. Progression is the second structure. This relates to:

“(...) the historically newer structure that entered the computer game through the adventure genre. In progression games, the player has to perform a predefined set of actions in order to complete the game. One feature of the progression game is that it yields strong control to the game designer: Since the designer controls the sequence of events, this is also where we find the games with cinematic or storytelling ambitions. This leads to the infamous experience of playing a game "on a rail", i.e. where the work of the player is simply to perform the correct pre-defined moves in order to advance the game. Progression games have walkthroughs, specifying all the actions needed to complete the game”.

(2002, p. 324)

Generally, progression games have a scoring system, which keeps track of the player's game statistics. It might show the player how many enemies have been defeated, a percentage with the player's progress within the game or how many more points are needed before his or her avatar gains a new level.

Juul states that adventure games mostly fit the structure of progression. He claims that this has led to a pre-ordained experience for the player. However, it could be argued that this hypothesis is untrue. An early adventure game series that shows the emergence structure is the KING'S QUEST SERIES (1984-1998). In these games, the player's avatar can walk freely through an open world and the player can select in which order he or she wants to solve the puzzles to reach the end of the game. This means that each player has a different game experience. Juul's phrase 'on a rail' might be better fitted for other types of progression games, such as single player Role-Playing Games (RPG's), stealth games and even some First Person Shooter games (FPS's). These game types use several elements of the basic structure of progression and have come forth from the adventure genre. Some games within these genres are also called adventure games, since the game play is focused on solving puzzles, exploring the game world and experiencing the narrative of the game. It is true that some of these games move from one cut-scene to another and that the action in between, continuously utilizes the same game play. Aarseth (2004) explained this as the quests in games that need to be completed in order to end the game. The motivation and fun for players to play these games is to beat the end boss quickly. A noticeable development within these genres is that, nowadays, the games contain fewer mandatory quests and progressively more side-quests.

This gives the player more freedom of choice within the game play. The basic progression structure is mixing with the emergence structure by presenting the game world as an open world. Yet besides these side quests there are still the mandatory quests that tell the narrative of the game.

What keeps the player motivated? Two different game structures.

While in literature the author is responsible for the structure of the story, in a game the designers are responsible. The game designers create the structure of the computer controlled characters, the space of the game and the events of the game. They create the rules and the player is required to commit to these rules. One of these rules is the end boss. The end boss needs to be defeated at the end of the game. A progression structure can be of use in order to explain the end boss's significance. Especially in action adventure games, the end boss's powers are often enormous. The progression structure's role in this is that the player's avatar develops over time by gaining points and skills. The end boss is the player's motivation to level up and play through the game. At the end of the game the defeat of the end boss is the ultimate measurement of the player's built up skills. The powers that end bosses can utilize are usually extravagant. They can conjure super novae, create black holes or summon meteors. These end bosses use excessive forms of evil. With their (often magical) powers, they can kill millions or destroy entire planets. The end boss has significant strength and is put forth as the final obstacle against the player. As Michael Stone (2006) presented a scale of evil, where the evil deeds ranked from mild to excessive evil, in most computer games the evil is expressed in excessive forms. Computer games are not real and to express the evilness of the evildoer in the game and to communicate towards the player the evil really needs to be defeated, it is observed that excessive forms of evil are used in games. As Juul (2002) explains, the end boss needs to be stronger than all previous obstacles in order for the player to feel satisfied when it is defeated. Since the player is already undertaking an adventure and passing many small obstacles, the end boss needs to be a challenge.

Sometimes, when the play element of the game is more focused on solving puzzles, the end boss does not have enormous powers. It might be the game world that the player is playing against and the end boss is manipulating this world. The final battle may occur in their secret hide-out or home. These end bosses use the game world as a weapon. It then becomes more a matter of the player's skills than of developing the character. Yet those skills are still learned throughout the playing of the game.

The early adventure games were text based or 2D graphic games. In these, the end

boss is inevitable presented through text. The graphics were relatively poor and the visual intentions of the game were pure conjecture (figure 2). The game ULTIMA II (1982) has a typical hero – villain plot: the hero, controlled by the player, needs to save his home planet by defeating the villain. The function of the villain is narrative in the sense



Figure 2: Minax (bottom left) in her castle

that the goal for the player in the game is, to destroy the villain and finish the story by saving his home world. What makes this game special is that it is one of the first action adventure games with a female villain. From the game's story the player learns that the sorceress Minax, the lover of the late dark wizard Mondain, is threatening Earth through disturbances in the space-time continuum. Mondain died at the hands of the game's hero in ULTIMA (1981). Minax is using the space-time disturbances, to send her evil minions to different times. Using her dark powers she is disturbing the fabric of time and influencing mankind, so that they will eventually destroy each other. All this information about Minax can be found both in and outside of the computer game. In early adventure games it was common to have information about the game added within the package. Usually, in the form of a small booklet with the game's back story and sometimes supported with images of the environment or characters. Mark J.P. Wolf explains that this extra-diegetic narration can be found in books, manuals and magazines. The extra-diegetic narration often contains detailed back stories of the characters, giving a brief history and motivation of why they fight. (2005, p. 101) The information received about Minax can be found in the computer game ULTIMA (1981), the back cover of the game, the twenty page book that is delivered with the game, and the game story told in the introductory mode of the game. During the game, the player's point of view is that of his or her avatar. The extra-diegetic information in the form of previews, marketing tools, packaging and booklets show a different perspective. While this is background information and is not needed to play the game, it may convey useful insights on the villain and broadens the picture in the player's mind.

Cut scenes; the 'death of play' or narrative element of play?

Gradually the technique of cut scenes became available in games. A cut scene is a short film

scene, which interrupts the game play. The player can do nothing but watch. Better graphic cards gave the game developers more visual freedom. The use of cut scenes became a popular method of storytelling and extra-diegetic materials, such as booklets, became less important. Game designers aimed to create games which gave the player the complete experience, without the use of extra-diegetic content. Even the game controls were explained within the games through tutorials. Cut scenes were used to introduce the characters and to extend the plot. As the graphics of games have become more complex, detailed and photorealistic, '(...) a greater number of cinematic elements are being incorporated into video games.' (Wolf, 2005, p. 82) Wolf refers to the opening and ending scenes within games, but also to the interludes in games. Sometimes these interludes are used, instead of a loading screen, when the computer has to load new information. In these interludes designers can decide to show a scene unfolding the story. However, not every game uses interludes to prevent the sight of a loading screen. Games which intentionally hop from one cut scene to the next are termed interactive movies. Some RPG's, for instance, the Square Enix series FINAL FANTASY (1990-2012) have this structure. The cut scenes are used as a storytelling element and players often choose to play this kind of games purely for the story. Juul (2004) describes this development as the 'death' of the game because the interactivity between the player and the computer disappears. Juul states that this element of play, which sets a computer game aside from other media, is gone for a brief moment, resulting in the 'death of play'. The game FINAL FANTASY XIII (2010) got much criticism from gamers due to this style. Many reacted negatively to the linear progression structure of the game. The magazine GamePro described the gameplay as "a long hallway toward an orange target symbol on your mini-map that triggers a cut scene, a boss-fight or both." (Glasser, 2010, p. 57) Square Enix took this criticism seriously and released a sequel, FINAL FANTASY XIII-2 (2012). This game presents an open world structure, where the player can choose his or her own route in the game. Yet the opening and ending sequences remained the same. Although seven different endings could be found in the game, the end boss and final fight are the same and the cut scenes show story elements that build up to this last fight. Defeating the end boss of a game should be the ultimate challenge. Therefore, the end boss is incredibly strong and often has special attacks, but there are also some narrative elements present to make the end boss more intimidating, usually in the form of a cut scene.

Ultimicia

"I am Ultimicia. Time shall compress... All existence denied."

--- Ultimicia in FINAL FANTASY VIII (1999)

In a movie, the image of a character is not imaginary, but explicitly reproduced on the screen. The mise-en-scene, which encompasses everything a director can influence within the frame, can be used to add to the narrative. (Thompson, 2004, p. 200) Costumes and make-up can strengthen realism and fantasy. A little girl will/might look even cuter in a frilly dress. The bad guys of old were known to wear black. The use of costumes can create a more realistic representation of the time-period in which the movie is set. Costumes make use of conventions in order to give the audience a frame of reference with which to understand the mise-en scene. The black raven feathers worn by the Queen as presented in a scene in the movie *Snow White and the Huntsman* (Sanders, 2012) are generally accepted as a negative symbol and indicate her dark soul. All these effects help an audience to become involved in



Figure 3: Cinematic cut scene, showing Ultimicia as Edea.

the narrative. Acting is another important element to portray a film character. It is not just a matter of reading the lines from a piece of paper. The manner in which the lines are spoken is of great significance for the narrative and the credibility of the characters. Body language as well as intonation and timbre of the voice play an important part. A whispered word can suggest something mysterious is about to happen, while screaming can indicate a more alarming scene. While the voice of an actor cannot physically change, actors sometimes learn a different accent to complement a part. The voice is also used by the audience to read the characters emotions. In computer games, voice acting was not always possible for much the same reason as visual representations. Technology had not yet advanced enough. The villain Ultimicia in FINAL FANTASY VIII (1999) had no voice and was only showed in two cut scenes within the game. At the beginning of this millennium, it was not possible to incorporate many cut scenes in a game. It would take up too much space on the game disc. FINAL FANTASY VIII came out on four discs and had a total of 58 minutes of cut scenes throughout the game, while it would take the player approximately 50 hours to play the game from start to finish. The cut

scenes which showed Ultimicia did not even depict her as the person she actually was. She possesses a woman called Edea, who is from a future time (see figure 3). The use of a cut scene is, in part, a display of the powers the evil villain has. Edea is known as the nice stepmother of the game's protagonist, who took care of the orphanage where he lived. However, Ultimicia possesses her and changes Edea's appearance and in doing so makes her the female evil of the game. In the cut scene she is shown with an evil glare in her eyes, horns on her head and make-up which accentuates the eyes and lips. At the end of the cut scene she has gained the power to throw icicles at the protagonist to keep him from harming her. Possessing another human being signifies to the player that he or she is dealing with an evil of significant power. By not showing her true form in the cut scene at the beginning of the game the player gets an even more frightening image of what Ultimicia can do.



Figure 4: Interlude cut scene before the final battle showing Ultimicia

While the cinematic cut scenes in the game span only 58 minutes, there are other forms of cut scenes present. These are scenes presented in the same graphics as the game-play and are termed 'interludes'. For example, before the start of the end battle the scene shows a conversation between Ultimicia and the player's characters. This is an interlude where the player cannot interfere, but which is not presented as a cinematic cut scene. In this game, there is no difference between a cinematic cut scene and an interlude, aside from the graphics (see figure 3 and 4). In both these cut scenes the player can only watch what is happening and there is a temporary death of game-play. Ultimicia, as a character, shows that when the narrative proceeds through cut scenes, the representation of evil is that of a woman. The horns she has on her head shown in figure 3 are part of a carnival and not a physical feature. However, they already allude to her demonic self. The interlude in figure 4 shows her with horns and black wings. During the final boss battle she calls forth her demon helper and later merges herself with this monster. The female has gone and a demonic monster remains.⁵

With the evolution of the computer technology the interludes of games have changed. It became possible for the player to provide some input in these cut scenes. For example, choosing which question to ask the villain between sentences or interrupting an attack to

⁵ Final Boss Battle of Final Fantasy VIII: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7CjkAV3LRr8>. At 7.13 the merger of Ultimicia with the demon Griever takes place.

perform a counter-move. The interludes increase in importance, because they still possess some element of interactivity between the gamer and the computer.

Evil Incarnate

Another interesting change in computer games is the ability to play the villain yourself. Incorporating moral choices in computer games is becoming more popular. The player is both the protagonist and an evil entity in the game. The game protagonist is the main character, whose qualities and characteristics can be shaped by the gamer. Qualities such as strength or dexterity and characteristics such as doing good by helping non-player characters, or doing bad by killing innocent non-player characters. It is this character that the gamer sympathizes with and who is shaped by the experiences in the game and its stories. This creates a subjective view on the game world and its experience which is called immersion.

The game world the player is immersing him- or herself in, is not as unlimited as the real world. It is, after all programmed and, therefore, has certain rules. A player that decides to make his or her character evil is also limited by these rules. It is controlled by the developers of the game, since they cannot offer the game infinite possibilities. Searching for these limits is an attractive aspect of playing games. Choosing right or wrong can sometimes affect the avatar's appearance or the appearance of the game-world. In the structure of adventure games, the game gives the player feedback on his or her evil doings. In the FABLE series, this is done by changing the avatar's appearance in the game. But there are other manners of presenting evil in these types of games. For instance, the player will notice that the environment begins to appear darker in colors.

While the interactivity of computer games is growing, the narrative element of play is also becoming more complex. This may be an attempt to stand out from other media. The technique for relaying a narrative increasingly derives from the interactivity present in computer games. This sometimes means that what can be found out about the end boss, is what the player finds out in the game world him- or herself. Some gamers prefer to talk to every computer controlled character in the game world, while others do not and will find less information. It is interesting to see how this influences the image the player has of the villain. Nonetheless, there are still many games which are structured in a linear way, with an abundance of cut scenes, so that the villain is well explained. In the next chapter, I will analyze this evil together with the question if there is a difference noticeable between a female character and a male character performing evil deeds.

Chapter 3: Gender and Evil (part one)

The previous chapters discussed which forms of evil there are in society and how the medium interfaces evil towards the user. This can be done by giving the game a narrative and introduce the evildoer as an antagonist. A new form of game play in which the player is able to perform evil deeds. It has also been noted that the forms of evil in games are often excessive. Whole planets are destroyed and many people die. Especially in adventure games the end boss's powers are enormous. However, this is explained by the progression structure of games. The player's character grows over time by gaining extra points to level up. The end boss is the player's motivation to level up and play through the game. At the end of the game the defeat of the end boss is the measurement of the player's build up skills. In this chapter the female gender role in games is discussed and examined through the analysis of end bosses in adventure games. The main question is: "Does the gender role effect the evil representation?"

From a hero to a villain perspective

The gender perspective used within game studies is in general taken towards all female characters presented in video games. Some gender critics argue that this is done because of the lack of female characters, the market place and gender prejudices towards computer games. As, Justine Cassell and Henry Jenkins declare: "Too often, the study of computer games has meant the study of *boys* playing computer games." (2000, p. 18) Playing computer games is in general a male activity and has also been studied from a male point of view in the early years. Too often the design of computer games for children has meant designing computer games for boys. (Cooper, 1987) A study covering a hundred arcade games shows that 92 percent of these games contain no female roles and of the remaining 8 percent, 6 percent had used females to play the role of the damsel in distress. (Provenzo, 1991) Furthermore, a study on the cover art of video games found similar findings. This study examined forty-seven video games currently on the market. Provenzo discovered that the representations of men in games outnumbered the representations of women by a ratio of thirteen to one. While Provenzo stated that twenty men were found in dominant poses, described as men showing off their muscles, there were no females found in these poses. The portrayal of females is used as eye-candy and is, therefore, a marketing tool to target male gamers.

These numbers are from early video game history, the 80's and 90's. In 2000 Cassell and Jenkins introduced a new academic approach. They investigated women as players of

computer games and women that have jobs in the game industry. This approach is openly feministic in two senses.

“First, we concentrate on the representation of women in computer games--- both their cultural representation (how they are portrayed as characters and the options women are offered as players) and the proportional representation of women in computer game companies (as entrepreneurs or programmers, producers or CEOs).”

(2000, p. 18)

This research concentrated on the representation of female protagonists and the role of the damsel in distress. Especially, the female protagonist's of the KING'S QUEST SERIES (1984-1998) are mentioned as the first female heroines that play a leading role in video games. They praised the game designer Roberta Williams because ‘she dared to give a leading role to a female character’. (2000, p. 21) However, it is interesting that they did not mention the evil villains in these games, who are also female characters.

The villains of the KING'S QUEST series

Although the KING'S QUEST SERIES (1984-1998) brings forth heroines it also displays stereotypical evil as end bosses to defeat. The stereotypical form of evil is displayed in the form of witches. Dahlia, Hagatha, Lolotte and Malicia are presented as the villains, see figure 5. In KING'S QUEST (1984) the goal is to retrieve three sacred treasures of the land Daventry. One of these treasures is a chest filled with gold that is stolen by the wicked witch Dahlia. The witch Dahlia is a shape shifter and tricked King Edward into marrying her. On their wedding night she stole the chest with gold and brought it to her ginger bread house. In the original version of the game she is not called Dahlia yet, her name became Dahlia in the sixth version of the game in 1987. In the first game she was described as wicked witch. The description of

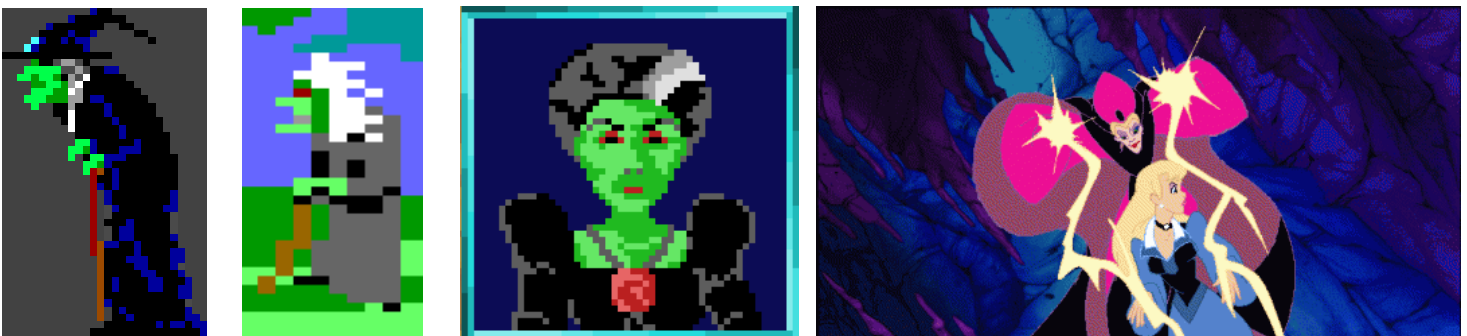


Figure 5: From left to right; Dahlia (KING'S QUEST), Hagatha (KING'S QUEST III), Lolotte (KING'S QUEST IV) and Malicia (KING'S QUEST VII).

wicked witch refers to ‘The Wicked Witch of the West’ known from the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (Flemming, 1939). Furthermore, the Wicked Witch of the West is characterized by her green skin color and this feature is also used in the game.⁶ Another reference the game makes is that of the ginger bread house. The witch in the story of *Hanzel und Gretel* (2009) from the brothers Grimm, lives in a ginger bread house. This story is used in the game to offer players a solution for killing Dahlia. For instance, players can sneak into her house and push her into the oven, which also happens to the witch in the story of Hanzel und Gretel.

The representation of the witch Dahlia is borrowed from stories used in other media. This ‘borrowing’ of story elements from other stories is done based on a semantic perspective. Images known in culture, stories told to children and fairy tales invented by story writers create a discourse that people from the same culture share and understand. Michel Foucault (1970) describes discourse as ‘an entity of sequences, of signs, in that they are enouncements.’ An enouncement (statement) is not a unit of semiotic signs. It is an abstract construct that allows the signs to assign and communicate specific repeatable relations to, between and among objects and statements. In popular culture as literature, movies and video games, the image of the witch is re-used in the same style. Usually, characteristics as a green skin color, having demonic powers, a hook nose or a curved back are used to define a witch. For instance, the paintings of the Middle Ages portrayed a witch as an ‘old’ and ‘ugly’ woman with supernatural powers. Also, after the Middle Ages this statement of a witch has been used in different media, including computer games. The characters Hagatha of KING’S QUEST III: TO HEIR IS HUMAN (1986) and Lolotte of KING’S QUEST IV: THE PERILS OF ROSELLA (1988) are both examples of portrayals based on repeated enouncements. In computer games of the early ages, repeated statements are often used to define the villain and the evilness of the villain. The villains are, therefore, often presented as flat characters in these games.

The villain Malicia though, in KING’S QUEST VIII: THE PRINCESS BRIDE (1994), is presented as a round character. For the first time in the KING’S QUEST series is a witch not presented as a stereotype with a green skin color. Malicia has her own unique characterization, based on the story-line presented in the game. The narrative describes her as a person that has accomplished nothing in life, unlike her sister who has everything. Therefore, Malicia seeks revenge on her sister Queen Titania. More information about Malicia and her emotions is found in the game. While playing, the player finds out that

⁶ That the skin color of a witch is green is not taken over from art or fairy tales about witches. The green skin color is an open metaphor that can represent any sort of difference or feeling of alienation. **Ongeldige bron opgegeven.** What Boyd does not mention is that the green skin color can then refer to the fear society has of outer space. The growth of the thought that we are not alone in space existed from the 1900’s onward.

Malicia is living in a house in a swamp and that despite being evil, and conniving in her plot to hatch revenge, Malicia is also very vain and narcissistic. Malicia is the first evil villain of the series that can be described as a round character because of the background information that is provided in the game. She is a specified character that needs to be defeated at the end of the game. Her character develops during the game in accordance with the principle of 'life by time', which is also found in novels. (Dyer, 1998) To explain 'life by time'; while playing through all the seven chapters of the game more and more is revealed about the character Malicia.

An improvement in technology is noticeable between the first and the last KING'S QUEST games. The enhanced graphics can explain the change in representations of the villain. In the last game the villain gets more story time and, therefore, more background information is presented to the player in the game itself. However, this does not result in a less stereotypical portrayal of the evil deeds from the evildoer. Malicia still lives in a swamp and is out for revenge. The improvement in graphics makes the evildoer a more round character by developing her story throughout the game, but the deeds of the evildoer remains one-dimensional. Attributes of female villains such as, the possession of supernatural or demonic powers, attacking the hero of the game from afar, and being driven by one strong emotion, which is often revenge, are associated with the image of a female evildoer.

Larger than life

The manifestation of the evil character is linear as examined in the KING'S QUEST SERIES (1984-1998). Often, evil is represented by witches with their magical abilities as a weapon. They are often driven on one strong emotion. The evil characters are introduced at the beginning of the games to make it clear that they are the villains that must be defeated. In the course of defeating the villain at the end of the game, players must defeat the evil minions they come across in the game. All these common aspects keep returning and make that the evil character become 'larger than life' a term borrowed from Strate (1990). The character can be seen as what Strate describes as an 'oral hero' that originated from oral cultures.

"Needed to be both economical and memorable, oral heroes tend to be predictable, characterized by clichés and formulas (e.g., clever Odysseus, brave Achilles, etc.). They also tend to be impersonal, generic, or type characters, as details relating to individual idiosyncrasies would tax the storage capacity of collective memory and are not essential for cultural survival. Moreover, to enhance memorability, the stories of oral heroes are dramatic and conflict-oriented, characterized by contests and

combat.”

(p. 342)

Memorable and economical, the villains of the KING’S QUEST SERIES are. Therefore, the next villains can be described as oral villains. The first female villain in computer games, Minax of ULTIMA II (1982), is also displayed as a female with magical abilities. The difference between Minax and the villains of the KING’S QUEST SERIES is that Minax is an original character and is not borrowed from other forms of media. Though she is established through extra-diegetic material, she is not a stereotype. With Minax’s return in a later installment of the ULTIMA SERIES (1981-1998), called ULTIMA VII PART 2: SERPENT ISLE (1993), Minax proves to be memorable and economical. In this last game it is known that she has written a poem that describes her passionate behavior:

*Through darkness and despair
The land was bare
Looking for Thee, Mondain
Alas, but in vain
My soul and mine heart
Pierced by Cupid's dart
Will never heal
Without Mondain's will
Love is a desolate land
Unless Thou, Mondain
Takest me by the hand
To thy youth fountain*

-- Minax

She was in love and driven by her passion. Her passion for Mondian was the essence of her soul at that time, and that unbridled passion lead her to chaos. Passion should be focused and directed in order to do good. But she fell into evil ways and warns the player character of the game that (s)he should choose wisely. From evildoer, being conquered and regretting her deeds, Minax becomes a silent warning to not let passion overrule emotions.

To present an evildoer as ‘larger than life’, videogames from the 80’s and 90’s often used extra-diegetic content. The story of the evil voodoo witch Tetelo in the game GABRIEL KNIGHT: SIN’S OF THE FATHERS (1993) is told in a graphic novel that came within the package

of the game. The story in the graphic novel happens 300 years before the story of the game.⁷ While Tetelo has no visual character in the game, the description of her background story in the graphic novel makes her a round character. Tetelo's behavior is predictable in the game because it is a narrative about revenge. That she is a witch is explained in the graphic novel with the description of her as a foreigner with strange rituals. At the end of the game, her powers are reflected in the ability to possess another character of the story.

Tetelo is an example of a 'larger to life' villain, and can be described as an oral villain instead of an oral hero. Just as Minax and the witches of KING'S QUEST are oral villains. Strate (1990) stated that villains can also be described in the same predictable manner as heroes. Clichés, stereotypes and formulas are also used to describe the villain. The cliché is the fact that a female villain is driven by revenge. The stereotype is that the presentation of the villain is comparable with the presentation of the witch that is borrowed from other media. The formula of how the female villain is mentioned in computer games is that of possessing magical abilities, attacking from afar and using evil minions to attack the hero or heroine of the game.

Visualization is another method to make a character 'larger than life'. Scotia is the evil witch from the game LANDS OF LORE: THRONES OF CHAOS (1993). She is the spitting image of an ugly woman with all the 'enouncements' a witch needs to have (see figure 6).



Figure 6: Scotia on the game cover, Scotia in a interlude of the game and Scotia in a cut scene of the game.

For instance, she is portrayed with a hook nose, warts, yellow eyes and wears a black robe. Furthermore, she is in the possession of supernatural powers and is able to cast lightning bolts as the image shows. These characteristics mark her as an one-dimensional villain. A memorable representation of a witch is used to define where the evil comes from in the game. The image is defined by the social discourse of witches known in our culture. Borrowed from

⁷ Link to the graphical novel: <http://www.agamesroom.com/library/extras/Gabriel%20Knight%201%20-%20Graphic%20Novel.pdf>

the image of witches out of the Middle Ages and still present in fairy tales. This shows how strong compact concepts, like the definition of a witch as old and ugly, demonic and evil, are present in our society.

Modern games also display female villains one-dimensional in the form of a demon in human form. So has the game heroine Lara Croft an archrival. This archrival is Jacqueline Natla who encounters Lara Croft in several games throughout the TOMB RAIDER SERIES (1996-2012). While, usually shown in her human appearance, she displays demon wings and demonic powers when fighting against her (see figure 7).



Figure 7: Jacqueline Natla in TOMB RAIDER : UNDERWORLD (2008)

Studying the one-dimensional appearance of the evildoers in the previous games is important because ‘namings for otherness in fantasies betray the ideological assumptions of the author and the culture in which they originate.’ (Jackson, 1995, p. 55) Although simplified, they are still monsters when the moment is there to deal with them within the game. Witches in the Middle Ages were supposedly known for their supernatural powers which they did not possess. The monsters or demons in the games do have supernatural powers. This is the fantasy that is added to the image of the evil characters. This image is believable because the concept of demonic powers already fitted the image of the witch that exists in society. While knowing the women in the Middle Ages were innocent and powerless, the fantastical concept of the witch persists and is still an active concept in society.

Gender in relation: from eye-candy to identity

For gender studies the portrayal of male and female is the object of many studies conducted. What is recognized in game studies is that ‘female video game characters tend to suffer from

a particularly extreme manifestation of the male gaze.’ (Malley, 2011) Examples are female fighters that fight on extremely high heels and the objectification of sex appeal with the use of ‘jiggle physics’, such as the bouncing of a female character’s large breasts.⁸ This all makes media researchers wonder if the female character does even exist, if her presence does not in some way only entails the sexual pleasure of male consumers. In this case, the female characters are used as eye-candy with the purpose of pleasing the male players. As explained before, this is not the only relationship that is made when it comes to female characters in games. When female characters are evil it is often represented with ugly traits. And even when the antagonists are portrayed as beautiful women, they turn into demonic monsters before the battle begins. Do they turn into demonic monsters because of the notion that it is wrong to attack a woman? This does not seem logical, because in fighting games, for instance in the *TEKKEN SERIES* (1994-2013) and *DEAD OR ALIVE SERIES* (1996-2013), it is possible to fight with or against female characters. Therefore, another explanation might be that it is considered unnatural for females to use such excessive forms of evil. Only witches that are already stamped as supernatural beings from fantasy stories and demonic monsters are able to do that sort of evil. The gender role of the innocent woman is for these end bosses pushed to the background because the attributes that signify evil are blend with the representation of the villain. Furthermore, female characters play the role of the princess or the damsel in distress. The characteristics of these characters are innocent, looking cute and they often represent females that need to be rescued by the hero. This, while heroines of games are cunning, exploration oriented and smart. Towards these female characters in games the player does not need to built up a grudge, such as is needed against the villain, they are even allowed to build up an relationship towards these characters. It is not the game component that needs to be defeated at the end of the game.

Judith Butler explains in *Gender Trouble* (1990) that there are two ideas in gender studies present at the moment. The first one is the metaphysical idea of gender, meaning that the term gender is determined and fixed. It is the metaphysical unity of sex, gender and desire. It is assumed to be truly known and expressed in the differentiating desire for the opposite gender – that is, in a form of heterosexuality. It is a construction based on opposite elements

⁸ In fighting games the jiggle physics and fighting on high heels has been normal for female characters from the beginning of the genre. An announcement of the new *TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT* (2012) game shows women fighting against each other and it is an achievement in the game to get every female characters beach outfit. Watch trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljTcRd3XqY8>. Recently, though, the heroine Lightning of the upcoming game *FINAL FANTASY XIII: LIGHTNING RETURNS* (2014) has gotten larger breasts from the game developers to also incorporate the jiggle physics effect (Ashcraft, 2013).

such as masculine and feminine. It sees the body as a passive instrument and, therefore, the differences between a female and a male body determines the gender. It is a fixed construction based on binary oppositions which exclude each other and are, therefore, known as being different constructions and therefore different concepts. The second idea is that a body 'comes into being'. (1990, p. 8) It is not a fixed construction from the start but stands in relation with many other different concepts and attributes and is a growing concept. Gender, therefore, is part of the relational idea of what that person is, like age and hair color is. The gender does not define the identity of a person, it is standing in relationship with other aspects of that identity. Gender, therefore, is not a specific attribute but a changing concept. For example, the 'larger than life' concept of the witches that is often used in computer games. It is not the gender that defines the evildoer. It is the cultural accepted concept or archetype of the witch that is visualized for the players of the game. In this concept, the gender role female is an attribute, next to having demonic powers or being old and ugly. Other relationships incapacitated in a later stage of this concept is the green skin color, a reference to make it clear that it is a creature standing outside of society. This concept, though in popular media or even in media such as newspapers, are simple, well-known in society and have created an identity as being the evildoer.

The evildoer Carmen Sandiego though does not fit the image of the witch or demon. She has an own identity. What defines her as the evildoer is that she is the ring leader of the gang V.I.L.E (Villains' International League of Evil). A gang of thieves that are stealing national treasures. This is the attribute of her identity that states she is evil. That she is a female, with good looks, who always wears a red coat, are attributes that shape her character. Just as the fact that she makes jokes about her outsmarting the detectives every time is part of her identity. While a part of her identity definitely expresses that she is evil, her evilness is not as excessive as that of the other end bosses. Stealing is, compared to destroying planets and killing many people, a milder form of evil. This difference can be the key for the acknowledgement of her other aspects. A murderer would get a higher punishment than a thief, because it is morally more wrong to kill than to steal. Also, the puzzle element of the game does not put the attention on Carmen Sandiego as a thief, but as an intelligent person that outsmarts the player. The satisfaction for the player to win the game comes forth out of outsmarting the villain. Her mysterious look, intelligence and jokes are, therefore, noticed. Her evil powers are also not supernatural and therefore cannot be linked with that of demons or witches. Carmen Sandiego's identity was chosen by the developers of the game to attract both girls and boys towards the game. Her good looks are appealing to boys but is at the same

time not too sexy, so that girls can identify themselves with Carmen Sandiego. The first game became so popular that more games, books and television series were published.

“In its premiere season the program's audience reached over six million viewers, mostly between the age of 8 and 13. According to research data: Carmen has been extremely successful in reaching its target audience. Nielsen's audience profile shows that 73% of the show's viewers are younger than 18, with 53% between the ages of six and 17 - an age group that seldom tunes into PBS. The data also shows that Carmen is equally appealing to boys and girls.”

(Borse, 1995)

Carmen Sandiego is a rare example of a female villain with an own shaped identity where her gender role, being a female, helped the success of the franchise. She became on herself ‘larger than life’ and became the star on which the franchise is based.

Identity making and shaping

Building an own character is a well-known concept in computer games. Players can choose the gender of their game character, hair color, eye color, even possible tattoos. The goal is to let the players feel more identified with their game character and, therefore, to get more immersed in the game. A game that offers the player this character building, but also focuses game-play on making moral decisions that are or good or evil, is the game FABLE III (2008). ‘Besides developing graphically, characters had to develop personalities if they were to establish an identity.’ (Wolf, 2001, p. 96) In other words, this game allows players to create an own identity, a good or an evil one. The game does this by manifesting evil in the rules of the game, where players can choose between different options. Players can choose to kill, taint or steal within the game. The choice between good or evil is directly noticeable with a change of appearance of the game avatar.

The adventure begins with a non-specified character that develops itself throughout the game. Therefore, the avatar can be seen as an round character. What is interesting in this game is the option for the player to choose which personality the character will have. But this identity is shaped by the game designers in the way that they programmed how and when the avatar changes from appearance. Again, all the elements of a fantasy narrative are used to express evil. For instance, red eyes, red flames around the body, devil horns on the head and wings growing on the back. The evil character become ‘larger than life’ and represented also an oral villain. While the character develops over time because of the choices made by the



Figure 8: Display of the female character turning evil from left to right in the game FABLE III (2008)

players during the time of playing the game. The development of the character is shown in a one-dimensional image and resembles, therefore, the appearance of evil villains (see figure 8). More importantly the avatar carries out the ideology of the game. When players decide to do evil things, not only the appearance of the avatar becomes evil, the game will also describe the character as an outsider of society.

In the game evil becomes fascinating because of the option to play an evil character. Furthermore, the appearance of the avatar changes over time into a demonic image. It is a fantasy narrative that visualizes the demonic aspects that in early folk stories symbolized the ‘otherness’ of our society. In the game, players can walk around as supernatural beings with extraordinary powers that can be used for evil deeds. The meaning of being the other refers to being an outcast of the society. While in real life, players of the game will probably not kill people, beat their dog or taunt their neighbors because there will be a (severe) punishment for it, in the semi-realistic society of FABLE III everything is possible. And what is your punishment? The fun of watching the altering of the characters appearance. This into a demonic appearance like in the art of the Middle Ages. The ruler of Albion is a supernatural being, different than the humanlike non-player characters that live in the society of Albion. The player is the Other. This is the idea behind the evil appearance in the game FABLE III. When you do evil deeds you become an outcast of society. In the game your reputation follows you to every village and the appearance you have may attract or scare people away. The demonic appearance of the avatar and the becoming of the ‘other’ in the society of Albion, relates to how in our own society evildoers are perceived. When a person living in our village or city is known as a rape suspect, our children are not allowed to play in front of the suspect’s house. People from our society will avoid these suspects, not because they look evil, but because they have performed an evil deed. Therefore, such persons become an outcast of society. This might happen because of rumors, because they are convicted for a crime or just because they are different than most people. They are the others of society. The game FABLE

III shows within a game environment, the reaction of society on someone who is perceived as being different.

The game world portrays a similar idea of evildoers as is done of evildoers in society nowadays. When reading the newspapers or watching the news on television society often speaks of monsters. For instance, Marc Dutroux is in the Netherlands known as the monster of Belgium.⁹ Furthermore, Joran van der Sloot is in the United States known as the monster that killed Natalee Holloway.¹⁰ When people commit such evil deeds, which are far beyond society's norms and values, the concept of evil becomes very distant for most people. To cope with evil events, society tries to 'un-distant' it by simplifying it. An example of this is naming evildoers 'monsters'. This naming makes it easier to understand and cope with this form of evil. The concept of simplifying evil is also observable in the communication manner of the popular media discourse, such as adding enouncements of certain characteristics. A transparent concept as evil becomes more transparent when the concept is simplified. In all the games, evil is visualized in such an understandable manner; it is not outstanding, questionable or indefinable evil, it is evil in the way that society understands. As a demonic monster.

A demonic monster

Boldly said, when considering evil, gender is not the attribute that defines the evilness of the character. In computer games evil is symbolized by horns, demonic powers and evil deeds. This evil can be committed by both woman and man. The evil is made understandable by presenting a one-dimensional image of the evildoer. This image resembles an oral villain that is memorable and economical. Memorable, because the image relates to the memories society has of witches and, economical, because it can be described as a stereotype that can be used over and over again. The discourse for female evil villains in computer games, therefore, becomes one-dimensional and is derived from the archetype known as the witch. This can be explained by examining the genre most adventure games are operating in. Often, the adventure takes place in a fantasy or medieval environment which makes the reference towards female evildoers as witches, more understandable. But in the games that resemble a more realistic world, evil is also shown with the use of demonic traits. This to compile to the

⁹ There is a documentary named '*Marc Dutroux – The Monster of Belgium*'. The documentary is a part of a series of documentaries names Serial Killers. (Europe, 2010) Accessed on 27-01-2011, Url: <http://documentaryheaven.com/the-monster-of-belgium/>

¹⁰ Article on Aolnews.com: '*Anita van der Sloot: Joran not a monster, but must be punished if involved in the Peru killing*' (Quinoses, 2010). Accessed on 27-01-2011, Url: <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/joran-van-der-sloots-mother-punished-involved-peru/storynew?id=10986211>

image of a demonic monster. It seems that the archetype of the witch, which is purely referring to females being evil, is the only archetype available for representing female evildoers. When examining newspaper articles the term monster is often used as a reference to male evildoers. Female evildoers are not common in the press and are usually not one-dimensionally presented as evil. The ex-wife of Marc Dutroux, Michelle Martin, is not described as a monster in the media. She is described as a woman who was sick, had a weak character and was completely dependent on her husband.¹¹ In short, she is described as a victim of her evil husband. Also, articles about mothers that kill their children, do not picture the mother as a monster. The mothers are often described as women that are psychologically unstable.

¹¹ Article on NRC.nl: '*Ex-vrouw Marc Dutroux wordt vervroegd vrijgelaten*', (Boon, 2012). Accessed on 8-4-2013, <http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2012/07/31/ex-vrouw-marc-dutroux-wordt-vervroegd-vrijgelaten/>

Chapter 4: Gender and Evil (part two)

The previous chapter explained that the computer game industry is based on a male audience and that female characters are used as eye candy or damsel in distress. However, when presenting female villains, either the iconic image of the witch is used or the antagonist is a female portrayed with demonic traits such as horns or wings. A one-dimensional representation of evil is presented. As discussed in chapter one this representation of evil is commonly used in art history. How evil is represented in games and art history is often similar. Identified is that mostly ancient stereotypes are used when it comes to the representation of evil. With the one-dimensional representation of evil in games, it does not matter whether the evildoer is a female or a male.

However, often female attributes are shown on neuter gender characters or beings such as cyborgs. This chapter will examine the gender perspective in games regarding cyborgs. The aim of this chapter is to provide an answer to the question: Why cyborgs are presented with female aspects in games to reflect evil and/or inflict fear?

Embodied machines

With the advent of neuter gender characters in games a change in gender perspective can be observed. Mostly because these games often are from the modern age, a time period marked by the emergence of feminism. One of the strongest voices in feminism is that of Donna Haraway. As a result, in games of the modern age feminism is intertwined with the philosophical approach of machines and cyborgs. A discussion about an aspect with which computer games are familiar with, artificial intelligence, is the beginning of the explanation of this philosophical phenomenon.

Without artificial intelligence it is not possible to create a simulated game world and, therefore, computer games could not have existed. The concept of artificial intelligence has also been the center point for new philosophical debates. Artificial intelligence, known as the computer model of the mind, has received scientific interest as to replicate human brain capabilities within machines. This study affects several disciplines; for instance, psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, anthropology and philosophy. Artificial intelligence is based on the principle of understanding the mind as a working (computer) system. The mind is based on rules and logic. For instance, when eating an apple the brain identifies the taste, smell, structure and more, and sends signals to other parts of the brain. From system to system the

brain works with the data that is provided. This aspect of cognitive science caught the interest of many people through the media. Computer games, the Apple-computer environment and science fiction series on television are acting as amplifiers, beyond the circle of the scientist or philosopher. The technology used for these forms of media has caused a transformation regarding the scientific exploration of the mind:

“(...) for millennia human beings have had a spontaneous understanding of their own experience – one embedded and nourished by the larger context of their time and culture. Now, however, this spontaneous folk understanding has become inextricably linked to science and can be transformed by scientific constructions.”

(Varela, 1991, p. 6)

Just as this folk understanding of the mind is now scientifically linked to the artificial intelligence of a computer system, it came to mind that not only humans are subjected to evolution, but also technical individuations are evolving. This because of technical innovation. Regarding the evolution of technology, Simondon has studied the path from an abstract object to a concrete object. Inventors discover and produce new technical objects to facilitate or make a process more efficient. Then, once inventions enter a socialization process, and are released in society, they are either accepted or rejected by the community. But, in order for an object to be considered as concrete, it must accomplish an evolution in both functionality and aesthetic direction. This is achieved when it can coexist with humans in the sense that they work together or benefit from each other in an equal manner.

Creative industries bring forth these kinds of objects. In general, media can be seen as a technical object that coexists with humans. Marshall McLuhann (2010), considers the different media types as extensions of men. However, media of nowadays are not only extensions of men, they are also tools that shape the society of today. Especially, intellectual media technology that calls forth virtualization. An example is the Kinect device for the XBOX360 to illustrate how virtualization is embraced in technological objects. This device is an existing object; that occupies a matter and form in space and communicates with the game or XBOX 360 interface. This object is able to track the movement of the player and when it is connected with the XBOX 360 it supports virtualization. Most of its primary functions have been designed as software. This allows virtualized players to interact with the game without using hardware, such as keyboards, but by using their body movements. For instance, when the player moves his or her hand, the avatar will also move its hand in the game. An important part of virtualizing human senses and capacities is done by gesture

recognition and the graphical representation of body and actions. In the case of game avatars, they are designed in accordance with these features. However, avatars are only actual outcomes to a creative process that goes from blurry ideas to cultural objects, a passage that Simondon (1980) called 'concretization'. In their primitive state, these objects are limited to function as designed by the designer and their structural functions are not yet well defined. Once the process reaches a mature stage, the object is confronted to other users, players and communities, and may be redesigned to better cope with functions and intentions. For example, players might change the appearance of the avatar for identification purposes. Or even develop their own avatars as is possible in MMORPG's (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games). The cultural processes of avatar development in games show that the virtual state of being is not a state that opposes itself to the real, but that the virtual state of being is also real and it extends senses and capacities of humans. To summarize, media is not only an extension of men, but society and media technology live in co-existence with each other.

Evolution and fear

Within the cognitivist view, the mind is seen as a system that is based on rules and is driven by logic. The brain is subjected to interactions from the environment and the ensuing behavior is labeled as cognitive. There are certain brain structures and changes in these structures that manifest themselves in behavioral and experiential alterations. While focusing on these internal processes inside a human's brain, and in particular on the 'computation' of the brain, cognition is understood as a passive retrieval. This while, indicating human experiences as passive, takes away the possibility of humans to make decisions based on morality.

Especially, when considering the moral and immoral behavior of evildoers, which is often explained as an instinctual behavior. With the evolution of the machine in mind and extending the idea that the computer system works as the human mind. The question arises what if the computer system creates a brain of its own?

While artificial Intelligence is modeled and will only react on the given input, in the modern age a new fear is born, a fear for the evolution of technology. Not only the resemblance technology seems to have with the human mind, but also the invention of machines that are able to take over the work of humans, for example, the automation processes in the car industry, institutionalize this fear. Technical objects are seen as living beings and according to Simondon (1980) technical objects are indeed 'alive'. The object that exists comes forth out of ideas and ideas can grow on their own. The rapid growth in artificial

intelligence technology is accompanied with defects that become myths and even fear. For instance, in the year 2000 the problem of the millennium bug emerged. This was a problem for computer-related storage data that would change the year 99 to 00 and sometimes would not represent the year 2000 but the year 1900, because of the change in the last two digits. While it did not lead to situations such as train and plane crashes or other forms of disasters there was a lot of fear in society. The fear did not become real, but the technical defect made the thought more real among people that technology can be ‘evil’ for humans. Often myths and fantasies are expressed about machines with an own intelligence and after system failures at world banks and government leaks, these myths became more real for society. However, they still remain myths, because logical reasoning makes it clear that a computer system cannot begin to think for itself. It is programmed by humans and reacts on input that is given. Still, the thought in the Middle Ages that humans could possess supernatural powers was also illogical, but this thought still became a cultural belief and a fear.

The science fiction genre consists of narratives that deal with the impact of imagined innovations in technology and science. This genre is widely spread among popular media such as television series, movies, comic books and books of fiction. The difference between computer games and other media is that the villain in those games, the machine or system, is always represented with some female characteristics. Therefore, gender plays a role in the representation of cyborgs in computer games. By examining SHODAN and GLaDOS this thesis will show how gender plays a role in the building of their character and evilness.

Sentient Hyper-Optimized Data Access Network

SHODAN, is a fictional artificial intelligence and the main antagonist in the games SYSTEM SHOCK (1994) and SYSTEM SHOCK 2 (1999). SHODAN is voiced by actress Terri Brosius and characterized by her chaotic, megalomaniac and discordant speech. When addressed or shown (s)he is portrayed in the image of a green and grey female cybernetic face (see figure 9). Her actions in the game are observing players through security camera’s, staring at and harassing players from screens and monitors and sending threats and messages over e-mail. For instance, in SYSTEM SHOCK 2 she harasses the player by stating: *“Do you feel the fears inside that bag of meat of yours.”* Her purpose is to obliterate the human race. Donna Harraway (1991) explains that a cyborg is not innocent,



Figure 9: SHODAN in System Shock

because a cyborg is a machine and a machine always has a goal towards it strives. The machine does not exist without this goal and in the science fiction genre, this goal is usually to eradicate humankind and regenerate itself to be the only being that exists. As Seven of Nine states in her first meeting with captain Kathryn Janeway in the popular television series Star Trek Voyager: *“We are the Borg. We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own. Resistance is futile.”*¹² When it is clear in fiction and its storyline that regeneration is the motive for cyborgs to end humankind it is concluded that the cyborgs get female characteristics. To symbolize regeneration the female gender role is used as a symbol, which comes forth out of the significant cultural acknowledged differences between men and women. Women are in charge of giving birth to newborns and are the only ones who can do this. A cyborg could be ‘genderless’, but motive-wise, this is seldom done. The evil idea of regeneration, born from a motherly instinct, is symbolized in computer games with the portrayal of female body parts. These female body parts, therefore, become symbols of evil that are attached to the real evildoer, the cyborg.

In the magazine *Blistered Thumbs* (2011) they wrote the following comment about SHODAN:

“While the ‘take over the world villain’ has, of course, been done to death, SHODAN is able to rise from that tired trope and make it work in her favor. Her subtle refuge in gaining the players trust, manipulation of events in both SYSTEM SHOCK games, and unrelenting taunting throughout the horrific endeavor makes her a dangerous, and downright terrifying, adversary, one that is still remembered to this day.”

Judith Butler theorizes that all of gender is performed and ‘(...) is instituted through a stylized repetition of acts.’ (1990, p. 392) While SHODAN’s performance as end boss of both games pushes her to act as the villain that needs to take over the world, such as most end bosses described in this thesis perform this act, her act is structured by female threats that possesses meaning of evilness. SHODAN is spreading a network that controls everything.

In reality, computer systems and female characteristics are also intertwined. When referring to the core of a computer we call this a ‘motherboard’. The definition of a motherboard from the Oxford dictionary is: ‘a printed circuit board containing the principal components of a computer or other device, with connectors into which other circuit boards can be slotted.’ From this definition we can extrapolate that the motherboard gives ‘birth’ to

12 Star Trek Voyager: Episode: Scorpion Part 2

other circuits for the computer. The motherboard makes it possible for other devices to be plugged in and used. An example is the mouse. You need to plug this into the motherboard and install it before it works, or in Simondon's (1980) term 'come to life'. The term motherboard is a culturally accepted term that is referring to the characteristic of the female gender, being a mother. To conclude, SHODAN does not only portray female body parts as signs of evil, but also incorporates an accepted definition of a computer system. To explain the cultural significance of the term motherboard and what it entails, a cyborg that only has a female voice and no female body parts to resemble the female gender role, is examined.

Black humor, sadism and glamour versus empathy for female behavior

Genetic Lifeform and Disk Operating System (GLaDOS) is a computer system and the antagonist in the games *PORTAL* (2007) and *PORTAL 2* (2009). GLaDOS is responsible for the testing and maintenance of the Aperture Science research facility. In the game, GLaDOS is a simple voice guide that guides the player through the lab, to a location where she is able to kill the player's character Chell. GLaDOS is presented as narcissistic, passive-aggressive, sinister and witty. While she is a character that is known

from the start of the game, it is not known from the beginning of the game that GLaDOS is the villain. GLaDOS is a round character and while the player progresses in the game he or she learns more about the evil intentions of GLaDOS. Those intentions are discovered by the gamer



Figure 10: GLaDOS in PORTAL (2007)

through the game-play the game has to offer. The player's goal is to detach personality cores in the test lab to weaken GLaDOS's functionality. Figure 10 shows GLaDOS as a machine without any observable female characteristics, but the voice of GLaDOS is female throughout the entire game. The voice and taunts of GLaDOS in the game is what attracted most players and critics of video games. The voice becomes more feminine after detaching some personality cores and it is revealed that the main core of GLaDOS is based on the personality of Caroline. A researcher in the lab and responsible for programming a part of GLaDOS's testing program. GLaDOS, just like SHODAN, operates from afar, but also more close by sending taunting text messages to the player. Design director Cliff Bleszinski of Epic Games stated: "(...) that GLaDOS's temper can be confirmed with my ex-girlfriend's temper, her text messages went from friendly, to aggressive, and finally to apologetic, just like GLaDOS's messages." (Totilo, 2008) Female behavior is observed as a characteristic of the villain.

GLaDOS is also known as one of the hardest villains to beat because of the Stockholm syndrome. This syndrome describes the phenomenon where hostages bond to their captors and experience feelings of empathy and sympathy towards them. While the player is being held captive by GLaDOS, the game manages to activate a feeling of sorrow due to the idea that it is not her fault that she got implemented with evil personalities. In part two it becomes clear that the core personality of the system is also designed to be evil and sustain evil. While the player removes personality cores, the voice of GLaDOS becomes more sensual, more feminine, and the game portrays female behaviors as symbols of evil. At the same time though, these female behaviors lead to the fact that sympathy can be felt from players towards the villain, which plays a major role in the conception of GLaDOS.

The humor of this game makes it easy to sympathize with GLaDOS. For instance, within the game GLaDOS makes promises, such as: “after the next test you will receive a cake!” This has a sense of humor because the game cannot produce a cake, only an image of a cake. The humor continues, because the player will never receive the cake or an image of it, and throughout the game text messages appear on walls stating ‘the cake is a lie’. Another example is the promise of “the next test will be easier.” This never happens because, while the game proceeds, the tests will become more challenging. As this is one of the basic structures of computer games, the progressing structure. It is this kind of humor that makes this villain glamorous and intriguing.



Figure 11: The game protagonist Chell

GLaDOS is funny and witty in her outbursts and at the same time supportive towards the player to reach the end goal. The humor provides another reason for the player to continue with the game, because of curiosity about the next funny statement of GLaDOS.

Typical for both games is that the player character Chell is female and the villain has been given female characteristics. Because of a female protagonist and antagonist and no other characters used, the game PORTAL (2007) and PORTAL 2 (2011) are a display of feministic strength. The usage of the gender determines the humor, evil and acting potential of the game. Figure 11 shows Chell in an adventurous outfit and with a sportive female body. She is a silent protagonist and does not speak in the game. Because of the lack of speech it is GLaDOS that has a stronger presence in the game. GLaDOS displays several voices determined by the different personalities. Christopher Williams wrote that the addition of an ‘intelligence

dampening sphere' performed by scientists on GLaDOS before the events of PORTAL (2007) represent the "(...) response from men to what they perceive as the "misbehavior" or "irrational thinking" of women". (2011) The different voices and the different personalities of GLaDOS in the game, are in the eyes of men similar to the acts of women in society.. The different moods and ways of thinking are expressed in the behavior of GLaDOS. Williams also wrote that: "(...) the effort to "dampen" intelligence becomes a rather literal manifestation of labeling women as "dumb" or "irrational" and the need to control such "poor" behavior". (2011) Describing all the personalities of GLaDOS as stereotypical female behavior brings women in discredit and is not correct. GLaDOS is an icon of feminism because, while she is bound by the science lab and the tasks she needs to perform, GLaDOS is not a computer with an unemotional robotic behavior, she is also sympathetic, vulnerable and a victim of herself. This becomes clear in the second game, where GLaDOS and Chell need to work together to defeat the robot Wheatley. Wheatley is a robot with male characteristics such as a male masculine voice in contrast with GLaDOS's sensual voice. The presence of Wheatley makes the difference between 'her' and 'him' evident.

GLaDOS describes Wheatley as a tumor. *"It was YOUR voice. Yes. You're the tumor. YES YOU ARE! YOU'RE THE MORON THEY BUILT TO MAKE ME AN IDIOT!"* The second game reveals that GLaDOS is engineered by Cave Johnson. He wrote a diary and the player finds pieces of this diary throughout the game. In the first few pages of these diaries Johnson prides his wife Caroline for her compassion, support and her patience towards him and his first love 'science'. He engineered GLaDOS basic personality core to the image of his wife. After a while, the diaries report that he is not so fond of his wife anymore, because she is interacting with his research and changed some of his data. Therefore, he created Wheatley, a program that is able to undo all the changes Caroline did to GLaDOS's main program. GLaDOS, therefore, defines Wheatley as a tumor that would make her dumb. In PORTAL (2007) GLaDOS is definitely a sadistic character whose only goal is, getting the player killed. She acts as a mad woman without morals and borders. In PORTAL 2 (2011) the reason behind her madness is revealed, showing the bound woman that wanted to break free but is denied the growth of her true potential. This because of the plans the engineer had for the project and the human struggle between men and woman.

Fear of machines and women in control

'*The talent of women is not enough employed*'¹³ is the translated headline of a Dutch article about the emancipation of women's rights in business. In January 2013 the Netherlands tried to stop a European law that states that 40 percent of the board members in companies on Dutch ground should be female. In the Netherlands the law states that 30 percent of the employees in companies that have a board need to be female. The Netherlands did not succeed to prevent this law and women are getting more opportunities and more similar rights in business as men. Although, salary differences between men and women in business still remains a heated debated throughout Europe. While the characters SHODAN and GLaDOS display the fear of humans for technology, the game story around the character GLaDOS also represents a story of a bound woman that is trying to break free. The competitive and aggressive behavior of GLaDOS to succeed in her mission can be interpreted as a reflection of how a modern woman strives to be independent in society. Nowadays, women have careers in business, academic and politics. Margaret Thatcher is an example of a strong lady, also known as the Iron Lady, because of her leadership style and uncompromising politics. When she died in April 2013 a Facebook group started a campaign to get the song "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead" from the movie *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) at number one on Britain's music charts.¹⁴ Eventually, the song ended up reaching number two. However, a rival campaign advertised the song: "I'm In Love With Margaret Thatcher" and ended up at number 35. She is not only known for her good deeds and political decisions but also for her harsh acting towards English society. As this example presents, a woman in control of every aspect of life is not an image that is accepted by all people. Female emancipation or feminist movements started growing from the 1960's. Abbot describes modern feminism as the '(...) women who wants to break free of the society that is constructed on gender roles.' (1996, p. 380)

GLaDOS is portrayed as being in control of every aspect in the game. While bound, it is the strength of the machine that gives her this power. Through her functionality as an operating system she has access to all machines present in the test lab. Combined with GLaDOS's distorted character, she becomes a stereotype of the modern woman. Witty, intelligent and passive aggressive behavior is used to symbolize the modern female. While for the player it is known that GLaDOS is evil, her evil forms are not as one-dimensional as it

¹³ 'Vrouwelijk talent wordt te weinig benut' an article on nu.nl (Groot, 2013). Accessed on 17-5-2013: <http://www.nu.nl/economie/3477287/vrouwelijk-talent-wordt-weinig-benut.html>

¹⁴ An article describing the popularity of the song after the death of Margaret Thatcher. (John, 2013). Accessed on 31-7-2013: <http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/04/12/ding-dong-the-witch-is-dead-bbc-responds-as-anti-thatcher-campaign-pushes-song-up-the-charts/>

is for witches in computer games. GLaDOS displays a different form of evil because of the gender role that is signifying her. However, how to interpret the symbol of strong women in society is unknown. Sometimes strong women are used in a positive context and other times in a negative context. This confusion, however, does signify how important the display of the gender role is in computer games. SHODAN and GLaDOS perform evil deeds through their mechanical capabilities. The battle between human and machine can be seen as a one-dimensional sign of evil. However, the fear of the machine is less pronounced because of female behavior and humor that takes place in the game. Another form of evil is presented by the distorted personality cores or speech. This represents evil in the form of a twisted mind with aggressive talk and vulgar behavior. When an evil character, for instance GLaDOS, is combined with the representation of a strong woman, the evil in the game is experienced as more substantial. This game symbolizes the growth of feminism in society. Though, feminism is not known as evil, it was not accepted by all in society. The rise of feminism has started the discussion on gender roles and this is also shown in the game.

Discussions

As examined in the previous chapters there are two forms of female evil present in games. Female evil is presented in the form of a witch or as a cyborg. Furthermore, female villains are used in all the four formal aspects of computer games; time, space, narrative and genre. For instance, the villain uses time when s(he) is introduced throughout the story with the use of cut scenes, interludes and loading screens. When the player is able to play with the evil villain and to perform evil deeds, the formal aspect of space is used to represent the evil actions of the player. The narrative of the game introduces the female villain, usually in the form of the hero versus the villain plot. And the genre of the game depicts whether the villain is a witch or a cyborg. This thesis did not examine all the female end bosses of computer games, nonetheless, a good selection has been made. This part of the thesis will discuss the what the future might bring for the portrayal of female villains.

The portrayal of female villains in the future; flat and INDIE games

What is examined in the four chapters of this thesis is that the portrayal of the female character is intertwined with the technical evolution of the game as medium and how society thinks of women. The female villain became a round character, though she did not become less evil. In general, female evil is not displayed as eye candy for the game audience. The female villains are usually shown as ugly women in the game or are presented as less beautiful than the other women present in the same game. The heroine or the damsel in distress of the game is more beautiful than the female villain. For instance, the game ICO



Figure 12: Yorda and the Queen of the game ICO

(2002) portrays the damsel in distress Yorda, who the player finds locked up in a cage inside a castle and tries to help her escape. The evil villain is just known as the Queen, that is trying to disable the player to free Yorda by sending her evil minions, known as shadows in the game.

At the end of the game the player has to defeat the Queen in order to free Yorda. The portrayal of both Yorda and the Queen is put in contrast of each other, by using the color white for good versus the color black for evil, that it is instantly clear to the player who needs to be rescued and who needs to be defeated (see figure 12). While the Queen is not an ugly woman such as Scotia for example is, the make-up around her eyes and on her lips resembles that of both the evildoers Malicia and Ultimicia as examined before. Her evilness is portrayed with the use of shadows around her body, which form horns on her head. The Queen is a flat representation of evil in the game.

The flat representations of witches is not completely pushed to the background. While portrayals of the witch was commonly more used in the early years of the adventure games, due to the technical evolution of the medium, there is a recent change in the game market that alter this. A new game market that has become popular among gamers for the last three years, and which is known as the INDIE game market. Within this game market the games are produced by small game companies, usually companies consisting of not more than five employees. Or the company's main employees are students that work together and develop games against a small budget. These games are different than the games described in the previous chapters, because they have less play-time and the graphics are of less quality. This is also the focus point for many game developers of the INDIE games. The focus of the game market in general lies on the evolution of graphics. But using high quality graphics in games results in high production costs and makes it difficult or even impossible for new companies to enter the market. Also, as an effect, many game companies went bankrupt. Therefore, the INDIE market provides a solution. Developers from these studios and graduated students entering the game market started to develop small games that focus on the game-play of the game.

Universities consisting of game students, organize game jams to bring together students and game developers. A game jam usually starts with an introduction of a successful game developer from an INDIE company. This designer sets the theme of the games that the students must develop during the jam. A game jam usually last three days and at the end of the third day the games that have been made are presented to fellow employees or students. The best game will win a prize. This is chosen by either a jury or a vote from the audience.

From the 25th till the 27th of January 2013 the IT University of Copenhagen organized the Nordic game jam. The theme for the game was grotesque. One of the teams present on this

jam made the game JUST ANOTHER DAY (2013).¹⁵ The game features an old lady that is preparing a soup (see figure 13). The player can only perform little actions within the game and needs to perform all these actions linear, therefore, the game can be seen as an interactive narrative. The team consisted of five students; Andrew Borg Cardona, Astrid Sønderby Lamhauge, Katja L. Søborg, Peter Ølsted and Przemysław Krowiński. First, they discussed the theme of the game jam, grotesque, and then some ideas arose. One of the ideas that was mentioned was the idea of an old woman that eats babies. The team considered this a taboo and, therefore, wanted to make this game. How to picture the old lady led to more discussions. While the eating of the baby should be a surprise for the players at the end of the game, they found it difficult to make the old lady look devilish from the start of the game. At the end of the discussion everyone agreed to present the old lady with some inefficiencies on her skin. Also, they put a small smile on her face that can be interpreted as a happy smile. A happy smile that could be interpreted as that she found the baby and was taking care for the baby by making food for the baby. However, at the end of the game it becomes clear that she was happy because of the thought of her evil act.



Figure 13: The old lady in JUST ANOTHER DAY

For the past three years the INDIE game market grew popular among players and more games are developed for this market. Also, the ability to buy the games through digital market places, such as Steam, Playstation Store, Appstore and many more, boosted game developers to develop more of these small games. With this development it is foreseen that the villains introduced in these games are flat representations and, therefore, stereotypical female villains, such as the witch, will be present in these type of games.

The portrayal of female villains in the future; female CEO's

The growing amount of adventure games with as genre science fiction from the 90's and onwards can change the portrayal of female villains in adventure games of the future. As described in chapter four, these games already represent female evil in a leading role. The female villains, though, are only portrayed as a machine. A game where human augmentation begins to enter the mainstream of human life is DEUS EX: HUMAN REVOLUTION (2011). The

¹⁵ The game can be played through this link:
http://itu.dk/people/aboc/NGJ2013_JustAnotherDay/Build_Web.html

antagonist of the game is Zhao Yun Ru, CEO of Tai Yong Medical. She is put in a powerful position and introduced at the beginning of the game with a deformed voice. While she has a human form throughout the entire time of the game, at the end of the game she merges with the Hyron project. Which turns her into a killing machine. What makes Zhao Yun Ru special is not the fact that she merges with a machine to get extraordinary powers. This is discussed in the previous chapters as becoming the demonic monster at the final boss fight of the game. She, though, is a CEO from the start of the game onwards. Females in high positions are seldom found within adventure games. While this game is published two years ago, maybe from now on more evil women in high positions will be encountered within adventure games. An explanation for this can be that more female players are entering the game market.

Female villains that become stars

GLaDOS and Carmen Sandiego both received a star status. GLaDOS has become the number one villain of all computer games according to game sites as IGN.com, 1UP.com and gameradar.nl. She has a signature song called 'Still Alive' which is heard during the end credits of the first game and is featured in several games. A fan produced a GPS voice of GLaDOS which can be downloaded in the Appstore. Shirts with her image are released in the VALVE shop and her voice is used in the movie *Pacific Rim* (Toro, 2013). However, while GLaDOS is a game character from a recent game, Carmen Sandiego reached this star status in the early '90's. Carmen Sandiego's popularity started film series about her mischief's and a comic book. It was even considered to produce a movie starring Jennifer Lopez as Carmen Sandiego, however, this idea was rejected by the film company due to lack of resources.

The similarity between GLaDOS and Carmen Sandiego is, that both are present in games that are completely driven by a puzzle mechanic. In the PORTAL SERIES (2007 AND 2011) the player needs to solve puzzles as a test, which is similar to the games that display Carmen Sandiego as the villain. Both are games where puzzles need to be solved to progress in the game. The emergence into these games is believable because the tests and puzzles are getting harder and the player wants to meet the antagonists in the game. Player's of both games have argued that it is kind of sad to defeat the villain. Both GLaDOS and Carmen represent the end bosses of their game and need to be defeated by the player. However, when players feel compassion it is not a battle anymore against a one-dimensional sign of evil.

Compassion towards the villain does not only inflict the popularity of the game character, but also changes the game character. Carmen Sandiego, as well as GLaDOS, are in spin-offs of the games changed from an evil villain to a character that occasionally does good

deeds. GLaDOS develops a good personality when most of the personality cores are detached and in the second is helping Chell to escape. In the television series about Carmen Sandiego it is hinted that, despite her thieving ways, she still has some goodness left in her. While never depicted as turning good, she does not seem to have the conscious to kill agents or other people. Both these characters, though, later on turned evil again with the display of excessive forms of evil. Nevertheless, this shows that the female role can never be pure evil.

Conclusion

This study examined the representation of female end bosses as an evil which the player must defeat in adventure games. Therefore, end bosses, also called villains or antagonists, were studied with regard to female characteristics, as a display of evil. Female evil can be represented with physical characteristics, such as having a female body or voice, but also by means of a text description in the game's story. Another aspect examined in this study is the use of female attributes on neuter gender characters or beings to express evil, for instance cyborgs. This study aims to explain what the role of gender is in portraying female evil. The research question is:

'How is "female evil" represented in action-adventure computer games from 1982 till 2013 and how can this representation of evil be understood in a cultural philosophical perspective?'

The adventure games published between 1982 till 2013 were observed to incorporate the evolution of this medium. This study began with a philosophical perspective on the term evil and examined how evil was represented throughout this period.

In early art, evil was often depicted as something that was ugly. During the Classical Era, monsters and demons were often portrayed in paintings as symbols of evil. In later years, representations of these demons became more humanlike and mostly based on male characteristics. From the Middle Ages onwards, it became common to also show many portrayals of old woman as a symbol of evil. Throughout the years, western culture changed its perspective of evil from an ugly witch to a beautiful sorceress. According to Umberto Eco, females have long been associated with beauty and goodness. Evil, he says, was often connected with ugliness. In the Middle Ages, ugly old women were persecuted as witches. The belief that older woman were witches slowly vanished after the Middle Ages. The ugly witch became just an old woman again, beautiful because of the natural aging process. The image of the witch disappeared from art and was replaced by portraits of beautiful old women. The witch did not disappear completely and is still portrayed as a symbol of evil in the world of fantasy. Female evil became more mysterious, fascinating and glamorous. In literature and film, female beauty is often used to hide evil or evil may be used to distort female beauty.

Games with a linear, or progression, structure have been around almost since the beginning of the medium. With the advent of the non-linear, or emergence, games the medium has undergone a fundamental change. In both structure types, interactivity is the most important element. It gives the player the freedom to act out scenarios which are impossible or immoral in society. However, emergence provides the player far more freedom to experience hers or his own version of a game. Although, this did not affect the excessive forms of evil from the end bosses that comes forth out of the progression structure of the game. The end boss is a test of the skills which the player's character has build up. Therefore the end boss is extremely powerful, often so powerful that (s)he has the possibility to destroy worlds. The change in game play from emergence to progression structure in adventure games did not change the representation of evil as one-dimensional. When an antagonist is female she already is or becomes a supernatural being at the final boss fight.

The games market is generally aimed at a male audience. Beautiful female characters are used as eye candy or damsels in distress, whereas the ugly women are represented as evil witches. Yet evil does not need to be male or female. By demonizing the image, both can represent similar expressions of evil. A female personification of evil is not a common occurrence, even today. When a woman is used as an end boss, her evil nature is generally represented by demonic attributes, such as horns or wings. The fact that she is indeed a woman is hardly ever taken into account. The woman is, therefore, easily interchangeable with a man, without causing any consequences for the rest of the game. In action-adventure games, female evil is represented as non-human evil.

Demonizing a human to make him or her evil is a simple way to create an end boss. However, a modern fear of something new, unknown and seemingly intelligent can also be used as an antagonist. Technology, and especially artificial intelligence, is more often used to represent evil in games.. Yet, often this genderless concept is given female attributes. This form of female evil in games usually has the goal to destroy mankind and let technology take over the world. The female attributes seem to symbolize a woman's task to reproduce. Furthermore, . the emergence of feminism plays an important role in the time period of these games. Although, feminism is not known as evil it was not completely accepted in society. Female evil in these games often reflect strong but bound woman. This symbolizes that both the evil villain in the game and women in real life want to break free from the structure they are bound too. Although female evil is represented as non-human, genderless evil is often represented as female. This indicates that gender plays an important role when portraying evil with regard to artificial intelligence. The cyborg becomes a representation of a cultural

phenomenon with an evil connotation.

For future representations of female villains, it is suspected that the upcoming of the INDIE game market will bring flat characterizations of the female villains back in adventure games. This, while the science fiction genre present in adventure games, will cause that female characters will be presented in high positions and only turn into a machine during the final boss fight. When female villains become stars, they change their role from evil to good and then back to evil.

Limitations and future research

This research did not discuss all action-adventure games that use a female end boss. Although there are not many female end bosses in games, I started this research with a western philosophical perspective on evil. Further research might address philosophy and evil in other countries, for instance, Asia. The game market in Asian countries, and especially for adventure games, has a longer history because of the popularity of arcade halls in Asia. While I started with the perspective of western evil and the portraying of evil in western art, I was unable to match any of my findings with female evil end bosses used in Asian adventure games. The FINAL FANTASY series is from origin Japanese, but the company which produces



Figure 14: Dahlia Hawthorne

these games has a worldwide vision. The FINAL FANTASY series has often received Japanese critics because the game characters are portrayed in accordance with the American culture. Still, there are many more game companies producing only games for the Asian market. The Asian philosophy of evil could be used as a perspective and as a starting point to analyze female end bosses in Asian games.

While the history of the medium is longer in those countries it might also be the case that the evolution of the medium has undertaken more steps than the evolution of the medium in western countries. As a starting point the arcade halls could be examined. Also examining which structure, progression or emergence, is more favorite in Asian games could help to elaborate on the images of evil. What is known of the arcade halls in Asia is that these are equally attractive towards

boys and girls. Of Asian culture it is known that it is not as male dominated as the game market is in western culture. The effect this could have on gender roles can be very interesting. For example, in the game ACE ATTORNEY: TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS (2004)

portrays Dahlia Hawthorne in the role of the villain (see figure 14). This seems surprising considering her pretty looks. Is this because of the acceptance of females in the game market? Or is there another cultural reason for this representation? Are there other forms of evil that are portrayed in Asian culture which are unfamiliar in western culture? As the cyborgs display a cultural thought of emancipation, maybe villains from Asia are portrayed differently and express a different cultural behavior. Therefore, the Asian game market opens up a new research field that could be interesting for new findings about the portrayal of evil in these games and the cultural significance of it.

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