

Female Representation in Video Games

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss lack of representativeness in female video game characters. This article is also continuity of the study "The Representation of Women in Games" published in the biennial "XVI Brazilian Symposium on Games and Digital Entertainment" now bringing an analysis of twelve female characters. By analyzing some characters, it was possible to show the stereotypes impregnated by the female figure and how much the reflection of this cause leads to the lack of female representativeness in video games. It was also possible to present characters that come out of the patterns of representation, showing that it is possible to have diversity and representativeness in video games.

Key words: game, women, representativity.

Resumo

O presente artigo tem o intuito discutir falta de representatividade em personagens femininas de video game. Este artigo também é continuidade do estudo "A Representatividade das Mulheres nos Games" publicado nos anais "XVI Simpósio Brasileiro de Jogos e entretenimento Digital" trazendo agora uma análise de doze personagens femininas. Ao analisar algumas personagens ficou possível mostrar os estereótipos impregnados a figura feminina e o quanto o reflexo dessa causa leva a falta de representatividade feminina nos videogames. Também foi possível apresentar personagens que saem dos padrões de representação, mostrando que é possível haver diversidade e representatividade nos videogames.

Palavras-chave: game, mulheres, representatividade.

1 Introduction

Games had been consolidating on the entertainment industry for some time. Since its beginning until contemporary times, games had evolved and passed through radical changes in both technology and audience. Electronic games that in its beginning had consoles and arcades as main technology also had as principal public kids and, mainly boys. Nowadays we have a large diversity of technologies associated with games, such as the public comprehends most of the ages and both genders.

Games success, nowadays, is connected to platforms diversity (computers, consoles, smartphones and tablets), great script elaboration and graphics. Players usually delight themselves with the game characters' reality and performance, feeling like they are part of the world represented in the game, because of the good story, plot and gameplay. Both gender and all ages are attracted to games, however, its target audience is still male gender, which is seen by the industry as their greatest consumer [1].

The games attract as an audience both genders of all age groups, but their target audience is still the male gender that is seen by the industry as its largest consumer [1]. In this sense, the target audience factor is an

example that ends up influencing the way women are represented in games. Negative stereotypes impregnated with the image of women, prove how games are produced for this audience excluding women as a player.

In this article through the literature review, the factors that drive women away or bring women closer to games will be addressed and discussed, factors that make them not recognized as gamers and especially the way in which female characters are portrayed through stereotypes and how they suffer from objectification.

The definition of stereotype is the generalization or assumption that people make about the characteristics or behavior of specific social groups, or types of individuals. Stereotypes are often negatively reflected because they generate prejudice and decriminalization because they are offensive to the groups they represent [1]. Objectification is related to the fact that the characters are not portrayed as subject, such as being portrayed in a hypersexualized way or not having functions in the narrative [2].

From this information survey, it is possible to think, reflect and create hypotheses about the questions raised about the importance of female representation in games. Thus, this work has as general objective to analyze the representation of some female characters in games in different genres, as well as to question the way the feminine is presented in this universe, presenting suggestions and proposals for the diversification of the representation of the female figure in the games. As part of the continuity of the study "Women's Representativity at Games" [3], some female characters will be analyzed to show how stereotypes manifest themselves and to find possible characters that might be considered representative.

2 Literature Review

This section presents the related studies that helped compose this study, as well as presents some elements that contribute to the understanding of the theme video games and female representation in this environment.

2.1 Related work

Studies on digital games and gender are present in studies from different areas of knowledge, often interrelating more than one area [4]. According to Deterding [5] games are not treated in literature as a single discipline but as an interdisciplinary field, and like most interdisciplinary studies, studies on games seek to answer new social and epistemic questions that arise with new technologies. Coavoux, Boutet and Zabban [6] add, according to their study, which analyzes some of the largest journals on game studies, which is a highly interdisciplinary field, bringing together academics from literary disciplines, cultural studies, sciences [6].

Much of this diversity is due to the complexity by which video games are composed that involve from the technologies employed in development the platforms that will run the game, as well as developers, players and advertising, thus allowing the studies on games explore different perspectives. Because they are a consolidated and still expanding media, according to Pérez Latorre [7] a type of study that the games provide, but that is still challenging at the methodological level, is the analysis of the discourse of video games due to complexity as media.

According to Pérez Latorre [7] cultural studies have also contributed greatly to the development of studies on video games mainly in areas such as the transmission of ideological values; gender discourses; strengthening or deviating from social stereotypes; and issues of race, multiculturalism and immigration. In turn, Dill and Thill [8] highlight the games as socialization agents mainly among young people who are the largest consumer audience. Games go beyond their platforms and are present in other media such as television, film, websites and internet channels aimed at exclusive content about games, not to mention events and competitions that attract thousands of players and even people who do not are so gaming enthusiasts. Thus, they highlight the importance of the approach to interdisciplinary studies as they cover a broader social context [8].

Within this diversity of possible studies, games provide the analysis of female representation through the narrative that becomes important to not only discover pre-existing cultural attitudes, but also because the narratives disseminated have significant social and cultural consequences [9]. However, the narrative in the games stands out from other media by the technology to which it is linked, since the player not only watches the narrative, but also experiences it and plays an active role within the story becoming the protagonist and this ends up causing in an emotional involvement of the player with game itself [9].

Still within this diversity of studies, we highlight the studies of Burgess et al. [2] and Near [10] that analyze female representation in video games through box arts analysis. Near's study [10] relates how female characters are portrayed in box arts with the sale of games. The study by Burgess et al. [2] focuses on the comparison between female and male representations. In their main results both highlight the fact that female characters are underrepresented, that is, they appear equally frequently and when they appear are subject to objectified and hypersexualized. Near's studies [10] also highlights that when characters appear alone in the game's box art it

sells less. When they appear along with male characters, but in the background, the game sells more. Thus, the study concluded that box arts with female presence are associated with weak games because it is still associated with the female figure with games with little action and violence. However, when they appear in the background in box arts with male characters these characters are associated with a bonus since the presence of male characters are associated with games with more action and violence and the figure of the female character hypersexualized is seen as an object of sexual desire [10].

Dill and Thill's study [8] analyzes the representation of female characters in video game magazines. The study uses two evaluation steps. One aims to analyze how the characters are portrayed in these magazines and the other with questionnaire application with adolescents in order to identify their perception of female characters. The results begin indicate that female characters are less portrayed than men and when they appear 80% of the time they are presented as sexual objects that wear tiny clothes according to an idealized body type represented a pattern of beauty. Even young people with low exposure to video games describe female characters in the same way [8].

The study by Perrault et al. [11] aims to analyze four female protagonists of the games awarded in 2013 by the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences (DICE). The focus of the study is to analyze the narrative of these characters. The results point to an evolution in female representation, because these characters play a prominent role in their games and are not stereotypes visually, however, some have still rectified conventional female roles such as women purer and more moral than men, personality and skills commonly associated with female gender such as motherhood, sensitivity and healing skills [11]. These results are also found in Kaanan's study [12] that aims to analyze the female characters of Final Fantasy XIII. The study by Jansz and Martiz [13] that analyzes twelve introductory game films also points to a greater prominent female participation in contemporary games, but highlights the super representation of white characters.

2.2 Game Elements

Games evolved along with the platforms, which are responsible for simulating the game environment. Through this, different worlds are represented. Fantasy, fictions and reality, which includes, from objects belonging or not to this world to actions and human behavior simulations. Characters histories, which were previously told in the game manuals, today are inserted within the game as a narration or dialogues between characters.

Games are categorized by genres, which are differentiated by a combination of theme-environment, presentation/screen format, player perspective and game strategies [14]. Some game genres, such as Action, exists since the arcades, are simpler and can be subcategorized as platform, shooter and fighting. They can also be hybrids, action and adventure, for example. This kind of game mix the principal characteristics of each genre to create a new distinct one. One example of this kind of game, are the third person shooter games, which incorporates narrative elements.

When choosing the genre to which the game will be developed, is also defined the production style, which will determine the difficulties to be faced and the possibilities about the script, narrative, game space, standards and character rules [15].

Genres complexities vary from the simplest, such as puzzle games where there is no character to control or fight games that are developed in one single scenario where two players can choose between attacks or defense moves. The most complex ones, such as adventure and role-playing (RPGs), involve script construction, plot and narratives. The genre variety covers lots of public, since the ones that are looking for a puzzle game, to those that are looking to a challenger game, to provide immersion to a fantasy world [15].

The most interactive media existing today are games. The player interacts directly with the story, being able to decide its course several times in a different way. The immersion in a game is a key-point to establish a connection between the game and the player to create an experience that will bring pleasure, identification, fun and reflection to the player. Understanding a little bit about a game creations process is fundamental to understand that there is a complexity, mainly in the character creation, since they are the responsible to create the connection with the player most of times, promoting the immersion into the game's story.

2.2.1 Character Construction

Games are the combination of various elements in harmony to provide different kind of feelings and incredible experiences. A well-developed character is one of these elements. A character can be considered well developed by having unique elements, getting the players attention and admiration. Characters creation is not isolated from other elements, principally because it is directly related to the creation process at all, where there are analyzed

all the elements that must be organized in the planned context. Characters are built according to the following components that give a shape to the game as genre, player's quantity, platform, duration time and space in which the game happens [15].

The game's character has a fundamental role, create a link with the game and establishing an identification and connection with the player. Its importance is such as sometimes the narrative revolves all around the character.

Characters are subcategorized as playable characters that are controlled by the players and non-playable characters that are also known as NPCs and are controlled by an artificial intelligence. In a single game, there can be dozens of characters or no one, as is the case of the puzzle games. The player can control one character, which is called avatar or more than one character in a game as, for example, sports games [14].

The character construction involves its physical appearance, outfit, personality, skills and its history, which must present past (its trajectory), present (its current situation) and future (perspectives or goals to be achieved).

Characters themselves most times are complex and their creation process is not different. The following section will present how a character creation process is.

2.2.2 *Character Creation Elements*

Most times, the protagonist in a game is not alone and has connections with other characters. These relations are not static ones; they can change or be updated during the game story. According to Novak [14], there are two elements in the construction of developing relationships with other characters, which are character triangle and character arc.

In character triangle, there is a connection between three characters, normally the protagonist, antagonist and a supporting. This relation happens because two characters have the same interests that get them to the third character, as the case of the love triangle. There can be several triangles in a single game, not necessarily love triangles, but they are in a secondary plot in the story and will connect some way [14].

By Novak [4], characters arc is the process of growth and development of the character. He further states that the protagonist's evolution usually is connected to creating necessities and establishing relations with other characters that can help in this process of growth and establish the character values. In some cases, the protagonist will fight only for its interests or will join some group that has the same interests. The character's arc also shows lived experiences by the character, that made it better or worse [14].

Point of view is another fundamental element to be thought about in a game, after all, it will define on whose view the story will be told. On first person point of view the player is "the character's eyes", he will be able to see the avatar's hands and gun, making himself the game character. In this point of view, there is a larger immersion into the game because the player can feel like he is in the avatar shoes. However, he will not be able to create an image and a connection with the character, unless it is shown in the game's menu with an introduction about its story, not in the first-person view.

In the third person view, the player can see the entire avatar's body on the screen retaining a mental image of it. However, this weakens the sensation of being the actuating character at the same time it provides a greater identification with it. In this case, the character's look must be built in a unique way and must have some characteristics to make it memorable. The third person games can incorporate the character's movements in a linear way, bi-dimensional or in depth, or in a tridimensional way [16].

The character is also composed by social antecedents that include breed, religion, class, domestic life, education, occupation, skills, and relationships with other characters, political orientation and hobbies [14]. The personal evolution and story of the character are part of the game as a whole.

The first step to build a character is to write a description and create a documentation about it that, according to Arruda [15], must contain:

- Summary of the character's life: with main events of its origin.
- Breed/Kind: (fantastic/historic/animals/licensed)
- Identity: name, secret identity.
- Group: refers to some organization in which the character makes part, community, militia, heroes or villains.
- Relationships: characters it is related with, how this kind of relationship happened and how it behaves in the long of the story.

- Physical characteristics: Age, gender, height, weight, skin and hair color, main moves, main phrases, costume (what it wears), facial expressions, hits.
- Characters moves: moves it can make, attitude, grimaces.
- Communication characteristics: if it presents lines, how it speaks, voice tone, speech rhythm. If it does not speak, how the external narrative occurs.
- Weaknesses: on what it is not good at.
- Strong points: what it is good at.
- Special powers (can also be described by characters' force levels)

Another important point is the visual creation of the character because it carries the character image, lots of information about it. Before creating its image, it is essential to create its personality. The physical appearance also reflects other aspects as gender, age, kind of body, facial structure, skin color, anomalies, and health, physical and distinct characteristics. The clothing is way considered because it has to be according to the world in which the character is and the situations to be faced. The gameplay and playable characters are built simultaneously so some characteristics can be defined, such as the character function inside the game, that is, what it is able to do and its actions and skills.

More and more, there is being invested in characters' construction, since they are key pieces to the success or failure of the game, for giving support to the narrative. Good characters make not only the success of the game, but also generate revenue in the commercial market with figures sales and transposition to other media.

The character is not only a visual illustration, it brings with it a reason to exist, an essence, if it does not incorporate this, it becomes empty inside [17].

2.3 Women in Games

Of all studies about games and all discussed subjects about its ideological contents, women representation is one of the less explored themes. Either as a player, as a developer or as a character, women are part of the games universe. Despite all prejudice and negative stereotype in it, women still fight for recognition as gamers and for representativeness in this context.

Cultural reflections are common in electronic games, which ends propagating some stereotypes. Because of these stereotyped forms of the presentation of the feminine figure, there is the necessity of broader characters diversification in games to have new kinds of representation and identification.

In this chapter, the terms female, girl and woman are not restricted to age. When these terms are used, they refer to them as a whole, whether they are young or not. It will be discussed how the woman is represented in the game and the woman's morality is not in discussion.

Here also fits the explanation about the "gamer" term, which some time ago, was used to refer to individuals who played RPGs (Role-Playing Games). Currently, this term is for all people who play some electronic game [18]. Here, games are approached generally without restriction to gender or classification as casual or hardcore.

2.3.1 *The Female Figure and the Game*

The definition of what is feminine or masculine for some people is related only to biological differences, but many gender identity studies bring the concept that male and female behaviors are linked to cultural creations. A person recognizes himself as female or male regardless of his sexual orientation or biological sex. The individual will make a choice according to the identification with certain values aspects, posture and social conduct, which are culturally associated with a particular gender [1]. However, feminine and masculine are culturally linked to biological sex, and hardly seen as an identity that is independent of physical and biological aspects. Patterns of behavior are created for each sex where certain practices are defined as male or female gender, thus, a binarism with respect to sex-gender arises. According to Romanus [19], the feminine and masculine figures are characterized as being the opposite of each other to establish differences and power. It also affirms that there is a creation of standards regarding the feminine and masculine and those we know to distinguish these standards like differences to separate one from the other.

There are cultural expectations of the society with respect to each sex. Before the born of an individual, knowing the sex of the baby, parents already define their gender by imposing on them what is culturally defined for that gender as colors, tastes, attitudes and ideas that will be maintained by family, school and society. Also exists a market segmentation that tends to separate and reinforce the idea that there are distinct interests

according to sex. This segmentation tends to target a specific consumer audience with similar needs as age, behavior, gender, sex, etc. Our society has created and instituted various values in relation to the differentiation of "what is for boy" and "what is for girl". This difference is noticeable in toys, for example, toys for girls that are linked to the social construction of women in being delicate, to take care of household chores, to like fashion and so on. Consequently, dolls, mini kitchens and fashion goods for children are branded as girl's toys. According to Izukawa [1], this does not just happens in the toy market, but the games underwent a market segmentation in the early 1980s, when male audiences were targeted. The recession that would come in the following years, made the market to orient itself to this public to recover itself. Advertising campaigns were aimed at this audience, so the idea that video games were "boyish" was established. Games are not free of ideological content and reflect a lot as society organizes itself, putting in its characters, mainly in graphic design and gameplay parts, its cultural aspects [20]. An example is the oriental games that describe how that society works.

The search for the female audience in games occurred in a stereotyped way. This is evident when we look back into the 80's and see how the classic Pac-Man game was created to the female audience. First, the idea came from the fact that children and women liked to eat [21]. Then the creation of Ms. Pac-Man, the first female character in a game and her romance with Pac-Man, something that is also set up as the female preference for novels.

In the 90's, the pink games for girls pop up, which represented stereotypically feminine activities. One example is Barbie Fashion Designer's game, which has been very successful, in addition to the purple games that are aimed at the female audience. These games reinforce the idea that "games for girls" and "games for boys" exists, not taking into consideration the differences and similarities of interests of each individual [1]. Gender-based limitation reinforces stereotypes and limits options for girls by giving them a unique form of identification. According to Romanus, [19] the imposition of something influence on the choices and the creation of an identity, it is sought to maintain the standards in order to maintain an order.

The choice option is a strong allied to the breaking of the behavior patterns imposed on individuals, men or women. Since there has been a change in the female role in society, it is important that this change be assimilated so that this new figure is accepted.

Technology and games are becoming a medium of cultural expression, since countless people are studying, creating content, and reflecting about their favorite characters. Everything is more visible due to the number of events focused on technology and games that attract thousands of people. Many players see their favorite characters as references, even trying to look physically or characterize themselves in order to participate in cosplay events.

The woman's representativeness in games aimed at empowerment and protagonism is a way of breaking the paradigms attributed to their image and behavior, in order to give more choices to girls, showing that they can belong and explore this world. However, having a woman as a character in a game is not always synonymous of representation, as will be seen later.

2.3.2 *Women as Gamers*

Since the emergence of computers and games, both are seen culturally as a male activity, however both sexes are interested in games, it is still tagged as a "toy" for boys [21]. In the course of time, women have been trying to gain space and recognition whether in the job market or even as gamers. In the XXI century, women still suffer much from prejudice and have to constantly prove that the labels used to the female sex are not real and that their gender does not limit their behavioral characteristics and their choices.

In the year of 2016, the Game Brazil Survey, [22] whose objective of work was to describe the profile of the Brazilian player, pointed out for the first time the feminine public as the majority of the players. The research showed that the female audience is the largest consumer of electronic games in Brazil, but when the Game Brazil Survey [22] was published in March 2016, it ended up generating a great repercussion in social media and discussion forums about games on the Internet. A lot was debated about whether there really was all that women playing games and whether they really could be considered "real gamers." Unfortunately, the prejudice has had an absurd dominance in these discussions, for example, from the point of view of some people, they cannot be considered gamers because they prefer smartphones as platform. Other used arguments are the claims that women do not know how to play, do not understand anything about games, or that women play because they want to please their boyfriends and the simple fact of not knowing a woman who likes games is enough to confirm with conviction that few woman play games. On the other hand, many women who like to play also presented their opinions, saying that they like to play and understand games and reported how difficult it is to have to endure all this prejudice, which is even more difficult in Massively Multiplayer Online

(MMOs), where harassment and prejudice are constant. The Game Brazil Survey [23] of 2017 confirms the increase of interest of the female audience for games, as shown in Figure 1, has been growing since 2013.

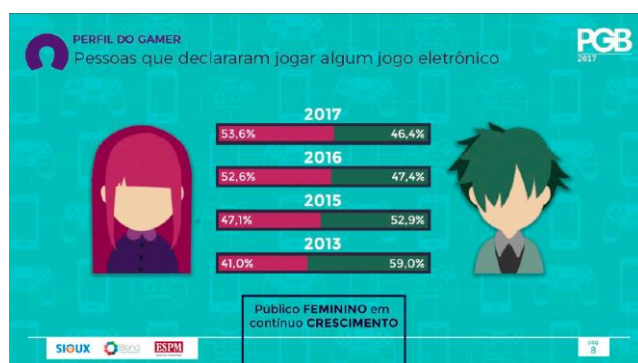


Figure 1: Game Brazil Survey Brazil 2017 [9]

According to Fortim [21], for a long time it was questioned why women did not play and through the literature, she explains that these factors were related to biological reasons linked to sex difference. She also states that the characteristics of the biology and nature of each sex were put in check, where women were considered to have fewer skills and motor coordination, as well as preference for verbal and analytical strategies. The social motives related to gender differences were also taken into account and pointed out as the main factor by some authors, who believe that gender differences are socially constructed, and the definition of being a man or woman is related to race, social class, culture and other factors which reinforced the idea of electronic games being considered masculine toys [21]. Another factor mentioned would be the lack of female representation in games due to the stereotypes impregnated for the male figure, which is represented by the extremely strong hero driven by revenge and who likes violence and the woman being represented by the fragile docile and / or hypersexualized damsel.

The mystification that woman does not play video games, is linked to numerous stereotypes and to their motivations. One of them is the possibility of a greater social interaction that some gaming genres allow, as is the case of MMORPGs, where it is alleged that women who play this game genre play because their boyfriends do, so they want to keep company and stay more time together or play simply to get a boyfriend [1]. There are still other stereotypes, as for example that a beautiful woman does not play games and women who likes to play are lesbians. The explanation as to why women play games or not can be the difference between sex and gender, but it is strongly linked to social, cultural and personal aspects. In this case, it is not possible to generalize and point out a predominant factor, and it is normal for a woman not to like electronic games since not all men like this type of entertainment as well. The age group greatly determines the taste for a particular type of game, just as over the years the interest in electronic games can change. Interest may awaken in childhood and prevail for the rest of life or not, as it may awaken in adolescence, youth or old age. Presently, we can affirm that there is an increasing number of women who play games, which still face a lot of prejudice, but there is a greater resistance of them by being part of this world.

Prejudice and harassment still alienate many women from gaming. Being a gamer is having to constantly prove that you are a good player. It is having to know countless games and prove that you play hours on end. Just like men, women merely want to have fun, compete or relax without causing any estrangement, discrimination, offense or harassment.

In the gamer's universe, there are those who feel threatened by the empowerment of women in games. However, having women play helps the raising of the number of players making the market extremely competitive, dynamic and innovative, which shows that there are only advantages and no reason to have prejudice.

This increased interest in games by women can be explained by their greater contact with technology, which are playing for longer and showing a greater interest in more violent and competitive games like FPS (First Person Shooter) [24]. This greater contact with technology can be explained by the massification of smartphones and technology in general. Nowadays, there is a demystification that technology is a masculine activity because women already consume technology as much as men do.

The interest in geek culture and its popularization can also be a factor that is increasing the female audience's interest in games. Women are not only playing more, they are also creating game contents like blogs,

sites and channels on YouTube aimed at the gamer public, addressing the most diverse subjects on the universe of electronic games. Having more women in the media talking about games contributes to other girls becoming gamers and also helps lessen prejudice and stereotypes with women in that environment.

2.4 The Representation of Female Characters in Games

The word representativeness has the meaning that represents the interests of a group, class or nation. It takes shape through the action, adhesion and participation of the represented. In games, representativeness is inserted in the context of representing the minorities or the excluded, that are women, afro-descendants, homosexuals and others, in a proper way, reducing stereotypes and offenses. The main objective is to stop the propagation of prejudice and to reduce the negative stereotypes related to these minorities. The lack of representativeness will be discussed in order to show its consequences and how greater representativeness can help to bring the female audience closer to the game and contribute to its acceptance as a gamer, either by themselves or by the male audience. The main point to be discussed is not to present an exemplary model, but to reflect in our games our diversity breaking paradigms and giving greater choice of models for the presentation of the feminine figure, models that can vary from defenseless damsel to sexy heroine, to others that fall outside the stereotypes [1].

2.4.1 The False Representativity

The vast majority of the characters in the games are still male figures who play the role, gaining greater prominence and repercussion. The figure of the woman has been inserted in the games for a long time, but it is not representing the existing feminine diversity. The lack of representativeness is visible in physical appearance and behavior, when women are presented mostly in a visually stereotyped fashion, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: "Sexy" female characters in games¹

The woman image ends up being often hypersexualized with voluminous breasts, surreal curves, showing the woman's body covered with practically no clothes, being very inadequate for the situation in which the character is in the game, such as situations of battles. The significant improvement of game graphics also contributed to the woman's body being represented in a more realistic way.

A classic behavior of the female characters in games is to be submissive to the man, who is represented by the hero, while the female character has little narrative development, being forgotten in a good part of the history, fulfilling only with the social construction imposed to the feminine gender, which is to be prone to care for and assist in the development of something [1]. Usually it is just the motivation for immersion, giving the sense and necessity of action within the game, this is the famous formula "save the princess" used in many classics like Super Mario and The Legend of Zelda.

Although women are represented as strong characters being present as protagonists of the story, they still run the risk of being stereotyped, as is the case of the characters in Figure 2. A strong example is the character Lara Croft shown in Figure 3 below, of the Tomb Raider game, released in 1996, that has several sequences and has become a symbol of female representation in games.

¹Source: <http://www.gameblast.com.br/2014/10/personagens-mais-sensuais.html>



Figure 3: Lara Croft - Tomb Raider: Underworld (2008)²

Lara is a fearless character, intelligent and strong, but also seen as a sex symbol and muse of the games, which raises the question of how much she is present in the game to be a representation of the female figure or just a pleasure to the eyes of the male audience. The same goes for Samus Aran, from the Metroid saga, released in 1986, that became known as one of the first female protagonist in a game, and not suffer any prejudice as to their abilities to hide their identity.

Throughout the game, Samus is using an armor, implying that she is a man and the game manual itself makes this clear. According to one co-creator of the series, there was a concern to represent the femininity of Samus without a sexual appeal [20]. However, the player only discovers that she is a woman at the end of the game, implying that she is a prize to the player. This becomes clear when one discovers that there are some conditions for such a revelation. When the game is finished in a very badly way, its identity is not even revealed. The first condition for revealing the identity is to end the game in a bad way, taking around 3 to 5 hours, when his armor flashes and his helmet is removed showing his face and his long brown hair. When finished, in less than 3 hours her armor disappears showing her only with a pink leotard. In addition, finishing the game in less than 1 hour she appears only in a bikini, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 : Samus Aran – Metroid 1986³

Hypersexualization and sensuality of women becomes a problem in games when it is appealingly out of context and creates a unique pattern of beauty and power, excluding other types of beauty. This pattern stands out and hides other characteristics such as personality and ability, making it clear that there is a woman's objectification in games in order to be a strategy to please her target audience. As the gaming industry targets profit, it soon calls for this type of strategy by creating market segmentation. As long as there is an audience that consumes this kind of representation, they will still continue to be made.

2.4.2 *The Woman as an Object in a Game*

The role of women in society and the inequality between women and men are increasingly discussed topics and still need to be addressed and debated. The objectification of the woman image in the media in general is also a recurring theme to be discussed, due to the consequences it promotes, such as stereotyping and the establishment of unrealistic aesthetic standards. When we speak of objectification, we refer to the trivialization

²Source: <http://www.gameblast.com.br/2014/10/personagens-mais-sensuais.html>

³Source: <http://www.techtudo.com.br/listas/noticia/2016/04/saudades-de-metroid-veja-curiosidades-e-polemicas-da-franquia.html>

of woman image, where appearance becomes more relevant than the aspects that define it as an individual, in other words, it is not treated as a subject but as an object. Games have been characterized as a way to propagate the objectification of women.

The objectification of the female characters in games, is not attributed only to the prominent characters, but also to the NPCs, who are less participatory characters in the narrative. In this case, the objectification is explored in the abusive sensuality of the characters, who became a disposable sexual object in the narrative to be used by the main character of the game. This exploration is visible in games such as *Custer's Revenge*, made for the Atari 2600, which caused a great deal of controversy, as the plot involved the rape of an indian girl who was tied to what was considered a prize to the player. The eroge genre games, which use eroticism such as *Rapelay*, allow other simulation modes of rape against girls. Prostitution is also frequently used and is present in the classics *GTA* and *Duke Nukem 3D*.

According to Izukawa [1], the objectification is worrisome because the electronic games are an interactive media where the player passes from spectator to participatory agent in the objectification of the woman. As believed by her, it is possible to define objectification based on the philosopher's theory Martha Nussbaum, who defined some characteristics for the detection of the objectification of women in games and in the media in general, which are:

- Instrumentality: The character is an instrument to be used by other characters acting only in the presence of these.
- Mercantilization: the character as in the item above is an object and serves as a bargaining chip or a commodity to be sold.
- Permutability: in this case, the character can be exchanged for another character or object without altering or generating any loss in the narrative.
- Viability: The game allows the character to be raped and sexually abused, sometimes generating rewards to the player or a common act within the game, even serving as a prize.
- Disposability: besides being all that was quoted above, they can still be discarded without entailing in any way the narrative of the game, being present only to satisfy the desires of the players.

The woman image is also used to promote some games and has not changed over the time, as shown in Figure 5, which features games of the 70's, 90's and latest games of the current decade.



Figure 5: Computer Spaces Machine advertising, Sega Saturn console and Catherine game cover [1].

Some games try to explore the sensuality of the characters to the maximum, even if it is not explored in the foreground, some techniques try to highlight the sensuality or let it appear somehow. The movements animation is one of these forms. The way the characters walk with exaggerated rolls, breasts movement and other movements that do not match the situation, demonstrate how sensuality can stand out and become appealing to the point of hypersexualizing the character. An example is *Bayonetta*, which presents movements and posture that do not match the situations she faces in the game, being totally out of nexus, as shown in Figure 6. Some characterize it as a satire of the representation of women in games by fact that his posture is so exaggerated that it causes strangeness even in men. However, the fact is that even though she is a very powerful character, her sensuality ends up gaining a great prominence.



Figure 6: Bayonetta - Bayonetta 2, 2014⁴

The same happens with the camera when it is not controlled by the player or in the so-called cutscene, which is intended to interrupt the gameplay to show information, insert new characters or reinforce the development of the main character. In the cutscene is at the discretion of the developer the control of the camera and what will be shown to the player. In this case, the camera is often focused on displaying the character's body to hypersexualize. In the game, it is possible to perceive this already in the introduction of the story when the camera focuses excessively Bayonetta's body. Clothing is also a form of hypersexualization and objectification, as it is part of the construction of the character offering the first impression and reflecting some of the personality and posture of it. When we talk about the image representation of women in games, the first problem to be pointed out and remembered are the inappropriate clothes for the situations they are exposed to. This inadequacy is noticeable when in a battle environment there is a man character with his whole body covered in a way to be a protection while the woman shows minimal clothes and high heels. The most of the clothes are tight to highlight the surreal curves and glittering necklines, exploring the sensuality in the foreground hiding their strong personality and their abilities. The physical size is also presented in an erroneous way, since many characters are inserted in environments and situations that require force, but their bodies do not present this type of physical preparation.

A strong example of inappropriate clothing and physical bearings according to the situation is the character Quiet, of Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain. Despite she is not the protagonist, she is a strong and important character in the game, but passes a good part using a bikini while fights and shoots against other characters. The explanation for her to walk down this path would be the fact that she has a parasite that gives her some powers and makes her just breathe through her skin. However, the excess in animation and cutscenes make it hypersexual, raising the question if this explanation was not just an excuse. Figure 7 shows the difference in clothing compared to another character in the game who goes through the same situations as her.



Figure 7: Venom Snake and Quiet - Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain, 2015⁵

The female characters still tend to have a greater dramatic charge that influences the character's narrative development. In some cases, in order for the character to be fearless, there is a need to explain her origin,

⁴Source: <http://collantsemdecote.com.br/games-precisam-parar-de-perpetuar-a-cultura-do-estupro/>

⁵Source: <http://www.techtudo.com.br/tudo-sobre/metal-gear-solid-5-the-phanton-pain.html>

clarifying that she acts in this way because she has suffered some trauma or loss and she ends up being moved by that feeling. In many cases, the woman is only the variation of the male character, as it was with Ms. Pac-Man, Amy Rose (which is the female version of Sonic), among several other characters. The means used to represent this character as feminine is the use of elements that refer to the feminine figure, for example, ties, makeup, long eyelashes, hearts, high heels, and pink and lilacs colors.

According to Sarkeesiam [25] in these simple representations are placed very specific, socially constructed and strictly forced meanings, propagating that there is a totally artificial and social division built to differentiate man and woman as two distinct and separate classes of human beings. She also says that in using this form of representation, the male characters are freer in their designs, managing to convey a greater variety of personality, while the female characters only pass the information that they are women and not more than that. They end up being defined by their gender, with a tendency to have a one-dimensional personality, which consists of superficial stereotypes about the feminine, such as futility, bad mood, excess of affection or irritation for anything. The negative consequences are formed from this monolithic form of representation, forcing a single model to be identified as feminine. A strong example of how there is a separation between feminine and masculine is when a male character uses props like heels, make-up and is seen as a homosexual joke [25].

2.5 Identification as a Key Point

Classifying a woman's identification with a character is difficult because of the lack of diversity, but even with few choices, it is still possible to identify her preferences. In Fortim's and Monteiro's work [24], when tracing the identification of the players with their favorite characters, the main factor taken into account are the psychological characteristics like personality, that include intelligence, determination and independence, followed by physical and magical abilities, being physical strength the most cited. This shows that there is a preference for well-developed characters that can make a difference within the game. The identification with some character, in some cases, is what makes it a remarkable game. Because there are more women playing games than men, do not mean they do not care about how the characters are portrayed or that they stop playing because of it. The games still portray a misogynist universe, where it is impossible to fail to notice how the woman is stereotyped, objectified, hypersexualized and little recognized as a gamer. In some cases, they are even extravagantly represented, causing estrangement not only from women but from men as well.

Taking into account Izukawa's article [1], players do not fail to reflect on what is shown, nor do they begin to think that all women are like that, games reflect the way women are seen. "For the players, the characters have a personality, which will reflect on their physical form, and this is one of the ways designers define the character" [1 p. 14]

The industry is blamed for the excess of stereotypes impregnated to the characters, by reflecting the culture we perpetuate and are embedded in, helping to shape cultural attitudes and opinions.

According to Bezerra and Ribas [26], this intense repetition of stereotypes ends up reinforcing the dominant gender paradigm, where men are aggressive and authoritarian and women are subordinate and dependent. For there to be a change in games, a cultural transformation is also necessary.

This cultural reflex is not only seen in games, but in the media in general, as cinema and television, which often suffer when they leave cultural standards. The fear of rejection causes the games industry to focus on the stereotypes they sell, but it cannot be stuck to this fact, as there is a growing female audience and a call for better representation.

An electronic game is the media that provides more interaction and has great power of influence, by the fact of the player is in control of the character. This experience of control provides a greater identification with the character and allows the player to project and put yourself in the situation, having a greater sense of participation. The game universe still allows you to play with all the cards, play with the possibilities and live experiences that cannot be done in real life. With all this power and a diversity of the public, games have the necessary resources to propagate changes in cultural patterns and become reference of new forms of representativeness.

The game deconstruction as a boy toy also gives the possibility of greater contact of girls with technology, in order to give the opportunities and essential tools for them to develop their potential and in the future, may become interested and enter the area of game development or Information Technology, reducing the present inequalities in these areas.

3 Research Methodology

Writing about feminine representation in games is presenting real facts about the way it is shown, reflecting about how this poor representation is portrayed and how it affects the gamer community. Bibliographic and exploratory researchers will be the methodologies used.

The exploratory research aims to understand the game's universe and women's participation in it. This kind of research objective is to provide better familiarity with the problem, trying to make it more explicit or creating hypothesis [27].

Bibliographic research is done from the survey of theoretical references, analyzed and published in both writing and electronic medias, as books, scientific articles, and website pages [27]. The references used are selected from subjects that approach and propose to discuss women and their representativity in games thematic. From the obtained information, it is possible to think over and create the hypothesis about the questions got by the importance of feminine representation in games. Therefore, this article has the general objective to analyze women figure representation in games, as well as questioning the way the feminine is presented in this universe, introducing suggestions and proposals to the diversification of the representation of women figure in games.

As shown in the literature review, the female figure despite the little representation is already present in the most diverse types of games and platforms. As a consumer, there is a bigger increase in online games, mobile and casual devices, but they are also consumers of the most classic model that are console and computer games. It is on these platforms that are the big companies and are the best-developed games. On these platforms there is the highest representation of gender, due to the higher quality of graphics and the possibility of a history, and can give greater diversity to representations.

The problem raised are the stereotypes present in the representation of the woman's image, as well as the lack of protagonism and little narrative development. The intention of the research is to present how stereotypes manifest themselves in female characters in different genres. In this way, 12 video game characters of some genres will be analyzed, and there may be more than one character per genre.

There is also a hypothesis that is within the concept that women are playing more and influencing the diversification of games, thus seeks to find characters that represent diversity containing as little as possible of the stereotypes mentioned so far, showing that it is possible to have diverse characters without stereotypes about image and narrative clichés.

The search for the representation of the characters will take into account games of console and computer platforms, presenting specific characters from some specific genres. First will be presented the characters starting with the genre of the game to which the character belongs where will be presented a brief introduction on it, then the name of the game to which the character belongs, its developers, year of release and indicative classification. Right after the character's name, there is a description of your participation in the game.

The criteria for analysis will be aesthetic aspects and their importance in the narrative. The aesthetic aspects analyzed will be physical appearance and clothing, how much they corroborate with the environment in which they are inserted, the representation and importance of the character are affected. The importance in the narrative will be analyzed as the participation of the character takes place in the game as, protagonism, skills and psychological characteristics.

4 Analysis and Results

In this section will be presented the 12 characters analyzed, as well as the analysis of the stereotypes in their representations and present the contributions and discussions raised in this study.

4.1 Presentation of female characters.

The presentation of the character will be made through the genre and game in which it belongs and general information of this game. Its general characteristics and role in the narrative will also be presented.

4.1.1 Action – Adventure

According to Novak [14], the Action - Adventure hybrid genre is a distinct genre that merged the main characteristics of the two genres to consolidate in the market. He further states that the element of the player's reaction to the obstacles encountered, a common feature of the Action genre, and the narrative elements combined with the player's freedom of choice, build the adventure environment, providing great challenges and fun. In this genre, it is possible to construct interesting and diverse narratives, shaping solid characters.

Tomb Raider - developed by Core Design (1996-2004) Crystal Dynamics (2006-present) had its first game released in 1996, rated M (Mature).

Lara Croft – It is impossible to talk about female characters without mentioning Lara Croft. Tomb Raider was released in 1996 and belongs to the Action-Adventure genre. The game was responsible for presenting us that would be the most significant character in the gaming universe. Lara broke many of the narrative clichés until now explored. She is the protagonist and a fearless, audacious, brave and adventurous archaeologist, considered the "Indiana Jones" of the games. Explorer of the most diverse scenarios is always in search of old artifacts, traveling to inhospitable places. Containing all these characteristics, she is also considered the muse of the games due to its appearance that draws attention by its sexual appeal. Lara has always generated doubts about her representativeness for not presenting clothes that match the situations that are exposed and for having surreal body proportions, contesting whether it would not only please the male audience. In 2006, the Guinness Book of World Records nominated Lara Croft as the "Most Successful Game Heroine". The record recognized the character for "transcending games barrier and becoming a recognized figure in mainstream society." In addition, Lara starred in various advertisements and films, starring Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie [26].

Over the years, Lara's image has been changed due to evolutions of the new 3D modeling techniques and by the female gamer who has been an active voice as a consumer. Figure 8 below shows the evolution of Lara.



Figure 8: Lara's evolutions according to new 3D modeling techniques [19].

The big change over her physical size and clothing occurred in the 2013 version of Tomb Raider, where Lara leaves the shorts and appears in a realistic fashion, with a proper physical size as shown in Figure 9. This image of Lara was maintained in the most recent version released this year.



Figure 9: Lara Croft Tomb Raider 2013⁶

The Legend of Zelda - developed by Nintendo, had its first game released in 1986 and has several sequels, having E rating (Everyone).

Zelda – It is a classic character and one of the most notorious princesses of games that despite being in the title of the game, is not the playable character. Link is the playable character, protagonist and hero of Zelda. She is strong and has wisdom as main characteristic, but suffers from difficulties in the narrative, which is usually abducted at the beginning of the game and appears only at the end, or abducted during the course of the game.

⁶Source: <http://latinoweekllyreview.com/?p=290385>

In The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Zelda increases her participation by being disguised as Sheik, as shown in Figure 10, in which you can see how the clothes change the posture and attitude of a character.



Figure 10: Zelda in her princess costume and dressed as Sheik.⁷

Zelda's disguise raised many questions whether it would be a male disguise or Zelda would have become a male character because of this. The fact is that Zelda is just wearing another outfit. In The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, in the skin of the pirate Tetra, Zelda also appears strong and warlike, but in both cases, she is still kidnapped. The character Zelda is a strong example of how an idealization is created from an assumption. Zelda is a princess, soon everyone expects her to act like a "princess". Her development as a character shows how she fell into the cliché narrative of "being a princess" and to leave it, she needs to disguise herself or be in the shoes of another character in order to protect herself and show unexpected attitudes.

Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater - developed by Konami Computer Entertainment Japan, released in 2004 with M classification (Mature).

The Boss – A featured female character in Metal Gear, a game that is set in wartime scenarios involving action and investigation. The Boss, shown in Figure 11 below, is a soldier and sniper, mentor of the protagonist Naked Snake and considered the "mother of American special forces."



Figure 11: The Boss in Metal Gear Solid 3⁸

In its history, The Boss is the fearless, faithful and loyal founder of an organization, having the goal of achieving world peace. To fulfill all of her duties, The Boss makes various sacrifices, such as going to the battlefield while being pregnant, pretending to change sides in the war and letting herself be killed by the protagonist and her student, Naked Snake, taking the burden of being considered a traitor and later being the burden of Naked Snake when he discovers she was innocent.. The Boss certainly is an example of a strong and complex character, but just like all other female characters in Metal Gear, she is present to support the narrative of the protagonist to create certain motivations within the game and evolve as a character. Metal Gear is a game that has strong female characters, but fails by hypersexualizing all of them with inappropriate clothing, the way they are animated and in the cutscenes.

⁷Source: <http://www.themarysue.com/zelda-playable-game/>

⁸Source: <https://player1world.wordpress.com/2015/08/26/os-cinco-maiores-viloes-da-franquia-metal-gear-solid/>

The Wonderful 101 - developed by Platinum Games, released by Nintendo in 2013 with a T (Teen) rating.

Wonder-Pink – In *The Wonderful 101*, the game allows the player to control several characters with the task of fighting aliens who want to destroy the planet. The game has the look inspired by the Japanese series where there is a group of superheroes and each has a specific color where the red is always the leader, followed by the green, blue, yellow, black and pink, that is always a girl. Wonder- Pink, in addition to dressing pink, as shown in Figure 12, has a whip as a weapon and a very stereotyped personality. She has constantly futile anger attacks [25].



Figure 12: Wonder-Pink⁹

4.1.2 Adventure

The adventure genre has as main characteristic the power of choice that instigates the player to reason. It also involves exploration, item collection, puzzle solutions, maze orientation and message decoding [14]. The player has the mission of guiding the protagonist of the game in his adventure, making decisions using logical reasoning. This type of game gives a greater emphasis to the plot, but it does create good characters.

The Walking Dead - developed by Telltale Games, had the first episode released in 2012 with M (Mature) rating.

Clementine - Character of *The Walking Dead* Game, Clementine is a child in an apocalyptic scene full of zombies. The *Walking Dead* games portray her as one of the game's main characters as well showing her growth and maturity. In this scenario, Clementine is forced to learn to defend herself and to be strong. In the first game, she does not gain so much prominence and is present to aid in the narrative of other characters, besides not appearing to be so fearless as well. In the following sequences, she starts to protagonize the game and have more attitude, knowing how to deal with the environment to which she is inserted, being able to make important decisions by making other characters learn from her. She not only fights, as she knows the importance of helping and maintaining the union with other characters. Figure 13 below shows Clementine that has a very realistic appearance, with no stereotype present, portrayed as a child should be.

⁹Source: <http://the-wonderful-101.wikia.com/wiki/Wonder-Pink>



Figure 13: Clementine¹⁰

Life is Strange - developed by Dontnod Entertainment, released in 2015 with M (Mature) rating.

Max – Protagonist of the Life is Strange game that is divided in chapters, Max is the protagonist who discovers to possess the power to go back in the time. She discovers this power by preventing the death of a girl she soon discovers to be Chloe, her childhood friend. Together, they live adventures and discover the consequences of changing time. Max is a well-built and realistically portrayed character, with no sexual appeal as shown in Figure 14. The game does not have much action, but impresses by the intense narrative of choice and consequence and by addressing issues such as uncertainties of adolescence and homosexuality.



Figure 14: Max¹¹

4.1.3 *Fight games*

In the martial arts fever of the 80s and 90s, many companies took advantage of the opportunity and launched some games that would become classics, like Street Fighter, Tekken, Mortal Kombat, Art of Fighting, among others. They all feature strong female characters, who fight on equal terms with men. The Eastern games reflect the use of symbolologies of the oriental culture in the construction of the graphical elements. For example, karate is one of the martial arts explored in Art of Fighting that represents this fight in the blows and costumes of some characters. However, the karate uniform (Karate-gi) is poorly represented in the female characters and is practically the vesture of all male characters [28]. The female characters end up using another type of clothing, which tends to show and evidence the female body in a sexualized way, which tends not to corroborate with the physical size required for this combat situation as shown in Figure 15.

¹⁰Source: <http://collantsemdecote.com.br/jogos-com-mulheres-protagonistas/>

¹¹ Source: <http://collantsemdecote.com.br/jogos-com-mulheres-protagonistas/>



Figure 15: The contrast of the female and male [17].

Mortal Kombat II - developed by Midway, released in 1993 with M (Mature) rating.

Kitana - In fighting games, many characters are known not only for their abilities but also for their sensuality, which is the case of Kitana, in Mortal Kombat, that takes place in a fantasy world. Even being a princess, she does not fall into the cliché of damsel in distress. She is 10,000 years old with the appearance of 20, as shown in Figure 16 below.

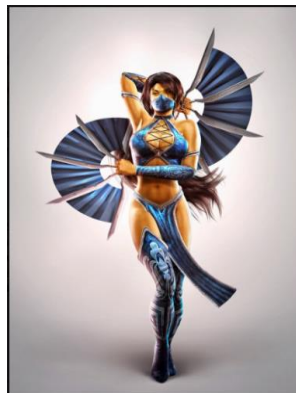


Figure 16: Kitana¹²

In her history, there is a turnaround when the same one goes from villain to heroine. Her narrative is complex and well developed, despite being an excellent fighter handling different weapons, her appearance gains great prominence by presenting few clothing, which is not suitable for the situations she faces. There are options to change costume, but one requires an unlock and another can only be purchased by buying. These characteristics are not unique to Kitana, because in Mortal Kombat all characters are stereotyped.

Tekken 4 - developed by Namco, launched in 2001, with T (Teen) classification.

Christie - There is a Brazilian representative in the Tekken game. Christie Monteiro is a skilled capoeira fighter who, unlike other Brazilian characters and capoeira fighters of the game, does not present an Afro appearance, but rather the idea of a tropical Latin American sensuality, with a light brunette skin and brown hair, as shown in the Figure 17 [29].

¹² Source: <http://www.gameblast.com.br/2014/10/personagens-mais-sensuais.html>



Figure 17: Cristie Monteiro¹³

Christie does not wear clothes suitable for capoeira games, which have white T-shirts and white pants that are preferably wide for greater mobility. Other characters in the fighting genre, such as Chun-Li (considered the first female character in fighting games) and Cammy, both of Street Fighter, and Mai Shiranui of Fatal Fury / The King of Fighters, does not present such a delicate posture and possess more appropriate physical size, but still like Christie, are physically stereotyped.

4.1.4 RPG

Inspired by Dungeons and Dragons game series, which had as a game tool pencil and paper, the RPGs migrated to the world of electronic games. The main characteristic of RPGs is the representation of roles, as well as elaborate narratives. The evolution of the character is well worked out in this genre, as it tries to develop the player's involvement with the character through his improvement throughout the game. According to Novak [14], the narrative is developed to generate a heroic journey where the character can battle to gain experience, strength and money to buy new equipment, with the theme "saving the world" one of the exploited ones. In genres like RPG, it is possible to work hard on the character and create heroes making it one of the most propitious to represent women.

Child of Light developed by Ubisoft, released in 2014 with E rating (Everyone).

Aurora - Aurora has a very feminine appearance having a pink hair and a delicate posture as shown in Figure 18.

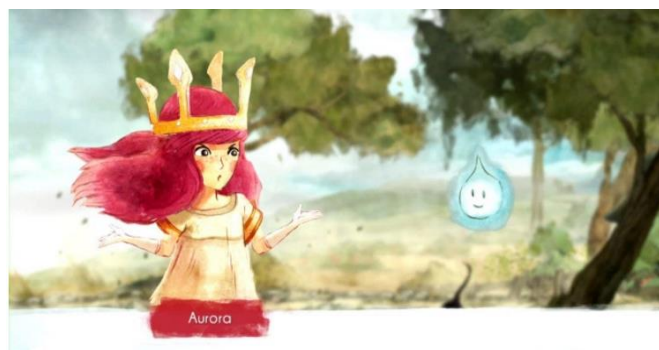


Figure 18: Aurora and your partner, Finn.¹⁴

Even featuring these characteristics, Aurora is not a helpless princess and is the protagonist of the game. Her goal in the game is to return home, after waking from a coma in a fantasy-filled continent called Lemuria. She

¹³Source: <http://www.gameblast.com.br/2014/10/personagens-mais-sensuais.html>

¹⁴Source: <http://collantsemdecote.com.br/jogos-com-mulheres-protagonistas/>

must help these people defeat the Black Queen, who stole the sun, moon, and stars. Child of Light is a fairy tale, but it shows Aurora as a child who is maturing and learning to defend herself by wielding swords. This is an example of a narrative that places a female character as the protagonist in a fairy tale, but does not fall into the cliché of the helpless princess.

Muramasa the Demon Blade - developed by Vanilla Ware, released 2009, RP rating (Pending).

Momohime – The character Momohime of the RPG game Muramasa the Demon Blade is the opposite of Aurora, the only similarity are the feminine aspects related to the shown image in Figure 19.



Figure 19: Momohime confronting Izuna Jinkuro [1].

Momohime has her body possessed by the spirit of a man named Izuna Jinkuro, a Rogue Samurai in search of power and redemption. All the acts of the character are made on the command of the spirit, reaffirming that she is only present to "lend" the body to him where the narrative itself makes clear that it is a story about Izuna Jinkuro. That is, the controlled character is a man who has a feminine appearance, where Momohime has no influence on the narrative, being left out.

Mass Effect - developed by BioWare, launched in 2007, with M classification (Mature).

Commander Shepard – Mass Effect it is a game that explores the future, where you can easily travel and explore other galaxies and get in touch with other races in the cosmos. The game allows customization of the protagonist, allowing the player to change the appearance, psychological profile, skills, classes and choose the gender of the character. The choice for the female gender does not lose anything for the male, either in strength or in trajectory within the game. There is a single difference as for the female representation that adds more in interpretation compared to the male. Even with the possibility of avatar customization, the entire advertising campaign was made with the male character, highlighting only the female Shepard in the last game of the trilogy. Putting a featured character, as it happened in this case, is because it is the default choice, which ends up giving the impression that it is better than the female representation. Figure 20 below shows a form of female representation of the protagonist.



Figure 19: Female version of Commander Shepard¹⁵

¹⁵Source: <http://br.ign.com/retro/7486/feature/as-19-mulheres-mais-poderosas-dos-games?p=2>

In Mass Effect 3, was given the option of turning the cover of the game to show the female character on the cover, as shown in Figure 21.



Figure 20: Different covers of Mass Effect 3 [1].

All these possibilities of customization and marketing over a character open up margins for questioning. According to Izukawa [1], the possibility of choice reveals that the company realized that it is something important to be considered since there is a variety of audience, however, it is visible how the woman is a variation of man.

Mass Effect Andromeda, released in 2017, already presents a different approach in the choice of the protagonist. The protagonists gain name, which is Ryder, and the same is not the different version of each other, because they are brothers. The choose options continues, but regardless of this, the not chosen character exists in the game in other missions and the player can follow what happens to him

Horizon Zero Dawn - developed by Guerrilla Games, released in 2017, RP rating (Pending).

Aloy - Set in a thousand years in the future, in a post-apocalyptic world where technology has taken over, the game Horizon Zero Dawn presents us a heroine as protagonist who through his skills and courage faces robotic dinosaurs. Aloy is a hunter and an independent protagonist who was born in a tribe called Nora, who has poor technological knowledge. Aloy was denied by them and raised by another renegade who considers her as a daughter and teaches her everything about hunting and survival. In addition to her abilities, Aloy has a great interest in technology, which is also disapproved by his tribe. She possesses a strong personality, even having a connection with her tribe, she is moved by discovering her origin and the secrets of her civilization. Horizon Zero Dawn also impresses by its ethnic diversity presented in the game. Aloy uses appropriate garments and posture with the situations she faces as shown in Figure 22. She is an example of diversity and representativeness.



Figure 22: Aloy¹⁶

4.1 Character's profile analysis

The small sample of female characters existing in the world of games points us to some stereotypes and the attempt to create different characters from the others presented. All the presented characters have as main characteristic the strong personality and different abilities according to the context that they are inserted.

¹⁶ Source: <https://www.playstation.com/pt-br/games/horizon-zero-dawn-ps4/>

According to what was presented regarding stereotypes and lack of narrative development, will be presented a classification by some criteria found in the analysis pointed out by the problem and hypothesis.

With regard to aesthetic aspects, there are some stereotypes, they are:

- Stereotype about the **hypersexualization**: the characters wear clothes that are not appropriate to the situations they need to deal with. Their bodies are unrealistic with exaggerated curves, prominent breasts and suffer from objectification by clothing, animation and camera control and/or cutscenes.
- Stereotype as a **design element** characterized by differentiating masculine from feminine: it is present in the characters who wear clothes in pink or lilac colors or stereotyped personality regarding the behavior considered feminine.

With regard to the importance aspect in the narrative:

- They play a **leading** role: they are central characters in the narrative.
- **Narrative** problems: characterized as supporting the male protagonist.

The **representation level** it is intended to make more visible how much that character is representative and expresses diversity or not. When the + and - symbols appear together, it means that the character has potential but presents some problems with visual or narrative stereotypes. Two -- symbols mean that the character is not representative. If two ++ symbols are present, it means that the character it is a good example of representativeness and diversity. Table 1 below shows which elements are present in the presented characters.

Characters	Aesthetics		Narrative		Representation level
	Hipersexualization	Design elements	Protagonism	Narrative problems	
Lara Croft	X		X		+/-
Zelda		X		X	--
The Boss	X			X	--
Wonder-Pink		X		X	--
Clementine			X		++
Max			X		++
Kitana	X			X	--
Christie	X			X	--
Aurora					+/-
Momohime		X		X	--
Commander Shepard			X	X	+/-
Aloy			X		++

Table 1 – Feminine characters profile analysis

When analyzing this table it is clear that most of the characters, being most precise, nine of them, suffer from stereotyping or problems regarding the narrative development. Only three characters play a leading role and do not present any of the stereotypes or narrative problems cited. Five characters have problems with stereotypes and narrative problems.

The raised hypothesis regarding the change and new forms of female representation it is present in Lara Croft for the adaptation and body modification that has suffered over the years. As for the narrative changes, we have Lara Croft, Aurora, Clementine, Max and Aloy who have strong personality and narrative development for keeping themselves, without dividing the protagonism or being the support for another character and for not being titled the female version of a male character. These characters represent the diversity and representativeness expected in the games.

Mass Effect brings us the question about the customization of characters and avatars, if it really is valid when it comes to representativeness and diversity. In Mass Effect, it is possible to choose a genre and customize the psychological and facial profile. The customization of this game is well diversified to both psychological

and facial profile. The option to choose is in the player's hand, who can opt for what they like and feel represented. However, such games are not free of stereotypes.

According to Izukawa [1], games that allow the avatar customization according to the physical and psychological characteristics of the player provide greater identification with the character. He also says that customization allows you to see yourself in different ways. The problem of customization is because it is still limited. In *Mass Effect*, for example, it is not possible to customize the body of the character only the facial profile. There are some games in which it is possible to make the general customization, but they do not yet have diversity, since men are still limited to having broad shoulders, and women are thin and curvilinear.

Another worrying point regarding the feminine representation is in the games destined to the children. In these games, there is a poor diversity and greater distinction by color, design, and presence of narrative clichés like "save the princess". It is worrying, since it is the children's phase that is most conducive to the construction of new ideologies, regarding gender diversity and equality.

4.2 Discussion and contribution

The development of the present study made it possible to identify that one of the main factors, the lack of female representation in games, is due to the industry, which identifies the male audience as the largest game consumers. This lack of representativeness and diversity ends up excluding women as game consumers, as well as generating prejudices and negative stereotypes.

The lack of representativeness was proven by showing some characters and how their stereotypes manifest themselves, proving that the games are made for a specific audience, the masculine audience.

Even though there is a growing number of women playing games, they still face biases, not being recognized as gamers and not feeling represented in games. This lack of representation does not only have negative effects on women, but the male audience itself encounters these types of stereotyped representations and ends up creating stereotypes such as "woman does not know how to play", "beautiful woman does not play", "it is humiliating to lose for women", because they end up becoming accustomed to playing games where women do not play a leading role or are objectified.

The lack of representation diversity is also because there is a pattern where most of the characters suffer from hypersexualization, objectification and lack of narrative development, not having a seriousness in the character development, portraying them often in a surreal way. This lack of consideration affects how the woman is represented within the game, how the gamer community sees the female gamer and how she sees herself.

When these points are raised, it is evident how important it is to have more well-developed female characters, expressing the existing feminine diversity, seeking to recognize that women should be part of games and how much they deserve respect and representation. It is also clear that the increased female audience participation contributes to changes in the way it is represented in the game. However, it is important that all gamers are active voices in the requirement for diversity in character representation.

The major problem with the presentation of the female character is the fact that there are few models that are identified as female. Usually, they are the female version of the male character, which uses some prop to show the existing difference and be recognized. They are also defenseless or have a poorly constructed personality. Another form of representation are the sexy killers, who stand out for their curvilinear bodies, instead of their abilities and personalities.

Clementine is an example of a character who falls outside these patterns of representation and surprises even more by being child and girl. In her style, she does not use any "girl" accessory or clothing, as shown in Figure 23. She can express her femininity only by her facial structure and verbal communication. She is a good example of a well-built character, for presenting a history that influences the plot of the game. Moreover, she has a well-developed body movements and appropriate expressions in relation to the faced conditions and situations.



Figure 23: Clementine.¹⁷

By showing this example, it is possible to prove that there are diverse ways of building female characters without falling into stereotypes or clichés. It is important to emphasize that greater female participation in games is essential to give equal representation and diversity.

Characters like Clementine are still minorities and do not appear in the most respected games. The "damsel in distress" cliché is widely used as a plot.

From the moment that the character documentation is made and its gender is defined as feminine, some questions can be asked to help in the construction and representation, for example:

- How will she be visually displayed?
- How will the character be used?
- Will she be animated? How?
- In which angles will she be seen?

For a strong and representative the character construction, all responses should contain as few stereotypes as possible. If she is not a protagonist, she must play an important role within the narrative in order to be participatory, and preferably have her own narrative arc regardless of the male character's story. Your look should be in accordance with the situations and environments that she will go through, without needing to appeal to props, colors and delicate physical size for distinction and recognition of your sex or gender. If she is animated, it should be in a normal way without highlighting the breast movements and buttocks. The angle at which it will be seen should also avoid highlighting the body appealingly or focusing on specific parts.

A well-built character does not have to be a visual appeal to conquer any particular group of players, because your personality and well-crafted skills coupled with the game's entire development win all audiences.

A well-built character must be strong in the sense of being dense, possessing a function within history, and own goals, failures, internal reasons for acting and abilities. The feminine representation must go beyond stereotypes.

5 Conclusion

This article sought to analyze the way women are viewed as gamers and how they are portrayed in games. As we look at the electronic games trajectory and all the transformations it has undergone, we can see how it has become one of the entertainment leaders. However, the fact that a game is still culturally seen as a male activity influences how a woman is represented in that environment and how she is viewed as a female player. This way of portraying women in a stereotyped way reinforces that there is a single model to be followed, not allowing the representation of the existing diversity. Because of this fact, it is important to have more female characters as a way to show that games are not exclusive to male audiences and as a way to end existing prejudices with the female figure and the woman as a gamer.

As presented, the game development is a very complex process, and involves several technical aspects, especially when it comes to character building. When analyzing the process of character construction, it is perceived that the same must be in harmony with the game proposal, whether in the historical context that is inserted, in the way it is animated or how its clothing must be according to the situations it faces. However, when it comes to female characters, they are stereotyped and hypersexualized most of the times, being out of the context proposed by the game, having a poor participation in the narrative.

¹⁷Source: <http://www.pcgamer.com/interview-the-walking-dead-season-two/>

By complementing the study “Woman Representativity in Games” [3] through the analysis of some characters, it becomes apparent that stereotypes can manifest themselves in different ways across different game genres and different characters. The fact that there are characters that do not have negative stereotypes shows us that it is possible to construct female characters in different ways, with a rich narrative, being recognized by their abilities, personality and even their appearance. However, this type of character is still rarely seen in games, compared to the countless others that are stereotyped. In this work, it is not possible to label the games that present women in a stereotyped way, because they make part of the diversity and will continue to sell because there are people who like and appreciate these games. We can appreciate and like them, but it is important to have a critical look at how feminine representation occurs and how important it is to change.

The way that women are presented visually and the narrative clichés are also cultural reflections of how women are viewed in society. The struggle for gender equality and the breakdown of the fragile sex paradigm has been going on for years. Because they are a great and influential media, games are supposed to include, present the diversity and accept the existence of women as gamers.

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