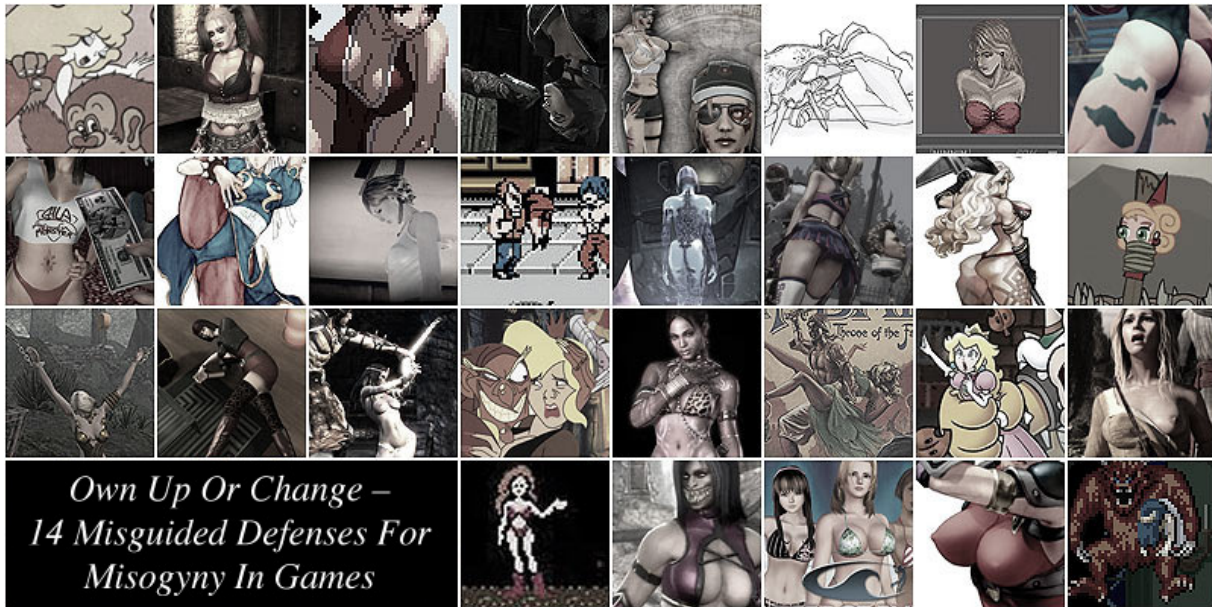


culture, debate, feminism [<http://howtonotsuckatgamedesign.com/?p=5954>] , June 13, 2012
[<http://howtonotsuckatgamedesign.com/?p=5954>] by Anjin Anhut.

This article is filed under [game criticism](#).



Save me, own me, help me, stare at me, gag me, bind me, dominate me, take me, touch me, pity me, earn me, win me, beat me.

Quick trigger warning: a collection of possibly disturbing screenshots and concept arts from AAA games below!

Preface

Misogyny in games is everywhere and almost as old as popular games are. I love games, I work in games, I play games, games are awesome, powerful and wonderful. But the way the games industry and community treats roughly 50% of the human population is a giant festering ugly tumor, right in our favorite cultures's face.

Considering the damage misogyny in games does to pop culture and to society at large (games are a large cultural force now), I find myself always flabbergasted at the concerted and massive efforts from gamers to keep things as disgusting as they are, whenever someone speaks up against it.

Instead of joining forces with people, who care enough to make games better for all of us and, yes, help women get a better standing in society, gamers get defensive. They play the victim, rationalize, become offensive and even resort to hostile attacks and vandalism.

This is not helping. It is generating additional damage to our culture, in fact. Whatever the aspect of games, the community or themselves it is, they get so protective about... they are completely poisoning and deforming it, by their own misguided actions defending misogyny in games.

Recent target of various forms of underserved vile by the thin-skinned heterosexual male gamer community is [Anita Sarkeesian](#). She must be a very very scary person for the male establishment, considering the massive amounts of preemptive warfare directed at her (including cyber attacks). Sarkeesian, a feminist popculture critic (and a very good one, I might add) is currently running a kickstarter project, which you totally need to [check out and support](#).

This article is kinda written in, at least mental, support for her. We need more Sarkeesians and [Borderhouses](#) to make people more media savvy and get the discussion going. And we need more reasonable and serious attempts at finding common ground from publishers, developers and gamers, instead of pro-misogyny apologetics.

Here are 14 common defenses, deconstructed and answered:

1. It's not misogyny.



Girlfriend with undefined personality, hanging as set decoration and plot point. Shadows of the Damned.

What is argued:

Misogyny is about hating women. Displaying scenarios, where you save them and appreciating the female body has nothing to do with hating them.

Reply:

Yes, it is.

Dismissing the term misogyny, when it comes to the overwhelming sexualization of women and the objectification of women, is just a result of you not knowing your definitions correctly. Here it is:

"Misogyny is a central part of sexist prejudice and ideology and, as such, is an important basis for the oppression of females in male-dominated societies. Misogyny is manifested in many different ways, from jokes to pornography to violence to the self-contempt women may be taught to feel toward their own bodies." – [Allan G. Johnson](#)

Basically, misogyny is not necessarily the explicit expression of hatred or even dislike towards women. Prejudice targeted at women is enough here. The default treatment of female characters as less, than male characters is misogyny. The frequent sexualization of female members of the community is misogyny. The casual use of gendered insults is misogyny.

It is understandable, that single instances of misogyny are sometimes hard to recognize as such. But looking at the overall picture, connecting the dots and recognizing patterns, makes it impossible to define misogyny out of existence here.

Own up or change.

2. It's just words and pictures.



Damage model design for the Sonya character from the fighting game Mortal Kombat. Punching and kicking damages her body tissue but also conveniently gets the clothes off of her.

What is argued:

The way women are depicted in games and the gendered language gamers use are just words and pictures. There is no actual harm in that. If people would stop being offended, there wouldn't be a problem.

Reply:

There is actual harm and damage resulting from derogatory words and pictures. Especially, when they are tolerated, accepted and even defended by a group.

This is some of what misogynistic language and imagery in games does:

– *psychological harm*: women get marginalized, humiliated and devalued by social peers.

– *trivialization of sensitive issues*: Issues like gender inequality, rape and domestic violence become elements of entertainment and slip into the realm of acceptable defaults. This makes it harder for the conversation about those issues in real life to be clear and productive. This is especially dangerous with issues like rape and domestic violence for example, where there are already tons of social barriers, misunderstandings and prejudices, keeping victims from pressing charges.

– *safe haven for real haters*: Truly committed women haters have an environment for their hate speech, in which they rarely get challenged and sometimes even get defended.

– *encouragement of abuse*: Men willing to physically dominate and abuse women get positive reinforcement of their values.

– *damage to culture image*: The games community displays itself currently as a misogynistic group of people. This makes it harder for games to be accepted as meaningful hobby, valuable field of work or form of art.

– *exclusion of 50% of the worlds population*: Misogyny and even just strongly male-centered content is alienating for female audiences, making games less attractive for women, hindering industry growth and development.

– *institutional discrimination*: When a group with identifiable values becomes big enough, the market responses and institutions start offering goods and services tailored to the identified values. Misogyny becomes a business strategy and **developers, publishers**, print media and **sites embrace it** to increase revenue.

The thing is, words and pictures are neither sent nor received in a vacuum. Your words have consequences.

Own up or change.

3. Some of my best friends are women.



Getting oral from identical twins, who are even wearing the same school uniform (power fantasy). Duke still has more attention for a video game than for the two women.

What is argued:

I don't have anything against women. I like women and nothing I do is meant to disrespect them. So stop calling me out for being misogynistic.

Reply:

Saying a gamer is misogynistic because of his behavior and saying one needs to be misogynistic to like how women are used in games is an assertion. Granted. Therefore it is a poor criticism argument. Granted. But here are the 2 buts:

But 1. The negative consequences listed under paragraph 2 are occurring as a result of your gendered language and your preferences towards misogynistic media as a consumer... not as a result of your inner feelings. You believing that you respect women does not offset the negative effects of you not treating women respectfully.

But 2. Once you are pointed towards the negative effects of your behavior (a simple "that's insulting to me" should suffice), you need to adjust your behavior. Or you need to own up to the fact, that you value the way video games and language between gamers currently are higher than the social well being of women and higher than the social health of games as a culture.

Either way, saying you don't meant to do harm, but deciding to continue to do so, do not go together.

Own up or change.

4. It's Freedom of Speech! So shut up!



Completely unnecessary display of abused, bound and gagged Harley Quinn (who lives in an abusive relationship with Joker). The player can decide to gag her again. Just for fun.

What is argued:

Stop complaining. I have the right to say whatever I want. You just can't handle the freedom of speech.

Reply:

Using this argument is completely missing the point of the discussion, missing the point of "the freedom of speech" and involuntarily self-ironic.

First of all, nobody is prohibiting you from speaking. When someone tries to force you to stay silent about an issue, either by physical force, blackmail or lawsuit... we can talk rights. As long as somebody is just criticizing how you exercise your free speech, rights are no issue.

Second of all, the first amendment of the US Bill Of Rights, where "freedom of speech" is defined, guarantees only that the government will not create laws that prohibit you from speaking freely. There is nothing about "You have the right to say what you like and everybody has to be cool with that." in this document or anything similar.

And third of all, telling somebody to shut up because there is freedom of speech is completely self-defeating. Whoever is criticizing you is just exercising his or her own freedom of speech.

It comes down to "rights" does not mean "right". The Constitution guarantees you the right to be mean, derogatory and misogynistic, if you wish. That does not make it okay.

Own up or change.

5. I don't like to be told, what to do.

What is argued:

Do not tell me what to do. I do not tell you what to do either.

Reply:

Social groups have rules. They have laws, conventions, etiquette and courtesy. You probably wait in line at a cashier, you pay for stuff you want to have, you say "thanks" and "your welcome" occasionally, you don't verbally insult your boss... you do all those and similar things to socialize, to foster relationships and to simply be treated with courtesy in return. (Assuming you are no misanthrope.)

In that regard, it is already sad enough that one has to tell you that you need to change your behavior towards women in games. But then also rejecting that demand clearly articulates that you do not see women worthy of your courtesy, which is misogyny.

Own up or change.

6. C'mon. It's just how video games are.



Very early Donkey Kong arcade flyers and recent Mario 3DS promo art. Nintendo like girls "to get stolen" in their story lines.

What is argued:

Video games have always been like that. Video games are stupid and silly. So why bother?

Reply:

No they have not always been like that. Before video games became a popular medium, in the early 80s, they were a playground for programmers and computer geeks. Around 1984, when the first movie licensed games and the arcades came up and games became part of popculture, suddenly marketers jumped on the one dominant demographic... men and boys.

There is nothing intrinsic about the medium itself, that makes it misogynistic. The culture is like that because people

make it so. Because companies market to male audiences and male gamers behave like they own the place. For decades.

Own up or change.

7. Sexism goes both ways. But do we complain?

What is argued:

Men are as much stereotyped as women. They get to be the violent musclebound guy with the big guns. But do you see us be up in arms about that? No we relax and enjoy games for what they are.

Reply:

Yes, men and women both get stereotyped in games. But there is 2 very important differences here.

First, muscles and guns represent power. When men get stereotyped they get stereotyped as the powerful dominant force. While when women get stereotyped, they end up as the damsel in distress, helpless, weak, sexually available, submissive.

Also the stereotypes for men and women play into the real world ideas of the patriarchy, we are living in. Elevating the men as the powerful deciding group and degrading women to something men need to handle. Video game stereotypes of men and women are reenforcing real life misogyny.

Stereotyping in and out of itself value free. Positive or negative depends on the preconceptions that get represented by a stereotype. So, yes, there are gendered tropes for male characters also, but the women definitely get the short end of the stick here.

Own up or change.

8. You sound like a broken record.

What is argued:

Yeah, we know, alright. You are not getting support, when you are so damn persistent. Give it a break.

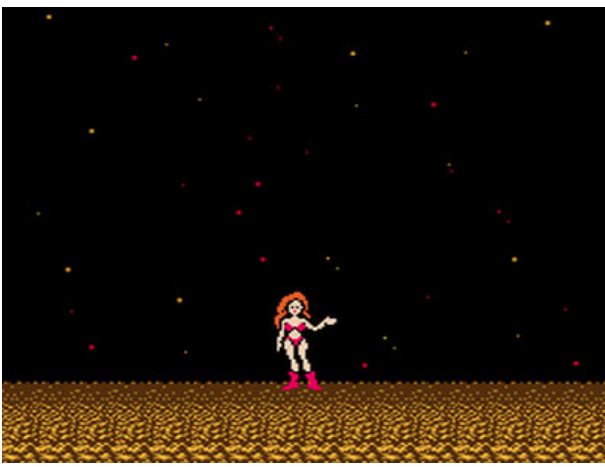
Reply:

This is as if you are telling the doctor not to tell you that you are sick. The diagnosis is not the problem... the problem is the problem. Sticking your fingers in your ears does not solve anything.

If you really are annoyed about the repeated criticism, you do not need to read the article or watch the video. As simple as that. There is no need to ask someone to cut it out, except if you want that person to stop expressing his or her views in general. Do not disguise your attempt at silencing a person with dishonest strategic advice, as if you share the expressed views and just want to help.

Own up or change.

9. You discriminate against men.



Questionably defined as a feminist icon. Samus rewarded players in her first appearance on the NES by revealing more skin, depending on how fast the player was in completing the game.

What is argued:

You hate men! You want men to look bad. You want to take our rights away and/or punish us.

Reply:

Yes, there needs to be privileges taken away for men to make room for more consideration for women. It's called affirmative action not discrimination and it is necessary to help an oppressed group get the footing they need to break free from that oppression.

There is no need to insert anger, revenge, grudge, envy towards men here. Feminism is not about punishing males. It is about empowering females.

Currently, heterosexual men have almost all the seats at the gaming table and some of those seeds need to be cleared, if women are to sit there as well. There is just no way around it. If you care about women in games, you will have to sacrifice a big chunk of male centered stories in favor of allowing female centered stories and IPs for example. Men are not the victim here.

Own up or change.

10. Can't we have a little fun?

What is argued:

We like sexy women naked in our games. We like sex in our games. We like violence in our games. You want to make all this go away. That's not okay. That's censorship!

Reply:

There is a room in misogyny in games as in any other popculture medium. Those rooms are called genres. There is porn, torture porn, horror, schlock, trash, exploitation. Tropes from these film genres are the default tropes for many video games. Your demand will fuel a market. You will get your stuff.

There is even a place for real life domination and violence against women. With a proper basis of trust and clear rules, there is the kink scene, where people consent to tie each other up, inflict pain, sometimes even tissue damage. All in the name of excitement, escapism, katarsis and fun. Also contact sports, where consenting adults engage in regulated fights.

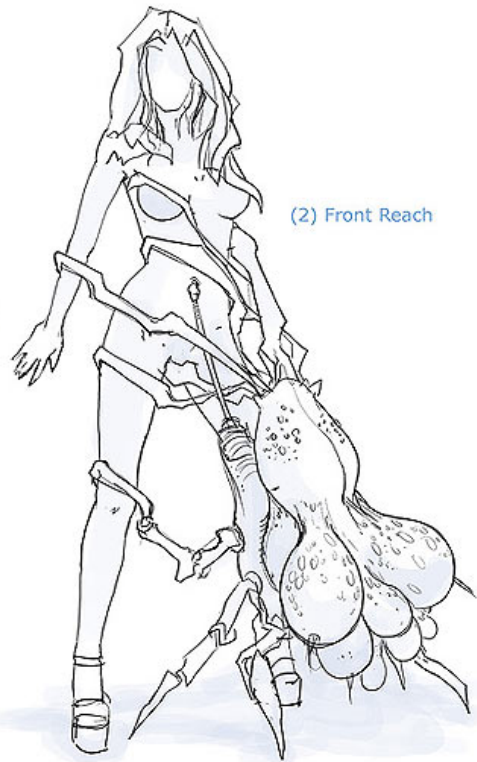
Misogyny should not be a default. When there is proper labeling, every desire can be fair game, when only involving consenting adults. Your fear is not, that you wont get what you want any longer. You fear, that your preferences in games will become the same niche interest like they are in other media.

Own up or change.

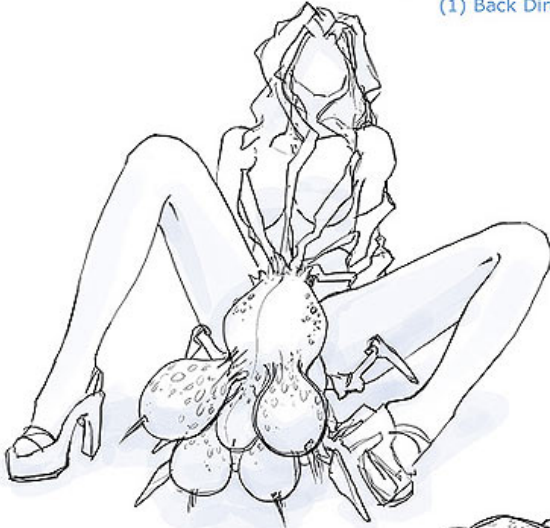
11. It totally makes sense in the story of the game.



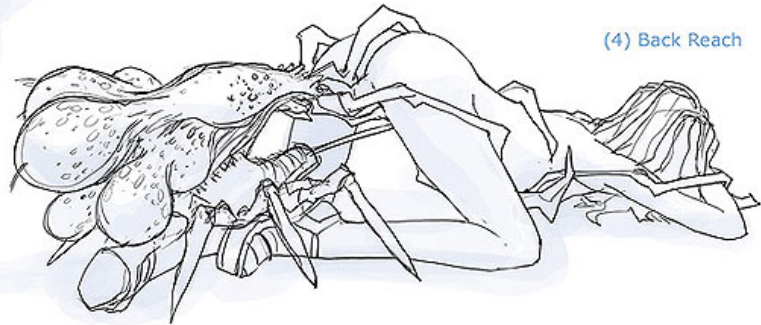
(1) Back Direct Input



(2) Front Reach



(3) Front Direct Input



(4) Back Reach

Feng Zhu 08-03

DNF - Impregnator Insertion Positions

Naked women in sex poses and high heels, getting raped and forcibly impregnated by alien creatures. Duke Nukem Forever.
Duke's comment "You're fucked!"

What is argued:

Nobody enjoys seeing women getting hurt or degraded. Displays that might seem misogynistic are added into games because they bring the story forward and enhance it. They need to be there. It makes total sense.

Reply:

Whatever story situation or context needs a display of a woman being objectified, sexualized, hurt or otherwise devalued, is created by the writers. Writers write stories and whatever happens in that story is prepared and embedded there by a writer.

Even with historic scenarios, where certain events are already defined, the writer can decide what to show, how long, how often and if he wants to add something to offset potentially questionable scenes. So, any scene that contains misogynistic messages is there, because someone wanted it to be there. There is always an alternative to misogyny in storytelling. Always.

Own up or change.

12. Aren't you used to it by now?

What is argued:

Why do you even bother? You know that you get hate mail and stupid comments. It is how it is.

Reply:

Most people actively dealing with misogyny are in fact used to too much of backlash and too little progress. But progress is there.

Questioning if the effort and backlash are worth the progress shows how little empathy you have with women and how hard it is for you to put yourself into their shoes. Misogyny is not an inconvenience.

Misogyny is a blocking force for women and girls in their own personal development and a driving force for oppression and abuse towards women and girls. It must be fought and it needs to end. You are in the privileged position of not having to fight against misogyny. You just need to change a few habits.

Own up or change.

13. Shut up and make me a sandwich!

What is argued:

Kitchen. Mouth. Penis. Sandwich. Ovaries. Time of the month.

Reply:

Sigh... go away. Thanks.

14. Vandalism and attacks.

What is argued:

This space is intentionally left blank.

Reply:

You probably belong into jail.

So, I hope this helps dealing with some of the stupidest apologies and those, which are just prone for misunderstandings on both sides.

Have you backed Sarkeesian's [kickstarter project](#) yet?

92 THOUGHTS ON “OWN UP OR CHANGE – 14 MISGUIDED DEFENSES FOR MISOGYNY IN GAMES”



Warlaan

on **July 3, 2013 at 12:19 pm** said:

While I agree I prefer to think about why we are turning in circles. I mean this debate has been going on for quite some time and I don't really see it leading somewhere.

Remember the debate about violence in games? It never lead anywhere, it just vanished when games changed and fps shooters were not the overly dominant type of game anymore.

So where does the resistance come from? Why do many men need this kind of image?

I think there is more to point 7 than meets the eye. On the surface the point is futile: Stereotypes for men are associated with positive attributes, so that's why men aren't complaining about stereotypes as much as women are.

On the other hand if we don't look so much at the prejudices about minorities but at the prejudices we have about equal rights the picture changes:

If I think about the term "equal rights" the first things that come to mind are strong leaders coming from suppressed groups, like Martin Luther King or Anita Sarkeesian. The next thing is the image of rallies for women's rights, african-american rights etc.. The third thing is the thought of rights that were granted to these suppressed groups.

So to sum it up: for the target audience of games (I am assuming caucasian male) the subjective image of equal rights is associated with strong characters that are unlike them, spectacular actions that they are not part of and achievements that are of no apparent benefit or even harmful to them.

When you think about it that's exactly the picture that women get when playing games. The strong characters are muscular men, the actions are performed by men leaving women behind and the achievements are quite often about male dominance and women falling in love and/or wooing them.

I think that the underlying problem is that many of those "privileges" that men have are not only privileges. Yes, it is a privilege to be respected in a work space and to be allowed to pursue any kind of career you like. But that comes at a cost. Still today it is widely accepted for a woman to decide to not go to college and just marry a successful partner. I think a man doing the same thing would face stronger pressure from his family and friends.

Just think how society would react to a woman wearing boots and pants and a man wearing high heels and a skirt. This may sound like a ridiculously meaningless thing, but just remember how burning bras and starting to wear pants was a big symbol for equal rights. Think how advertising tells us that women are special because the insane amount of attention they receive from the clothing and advertising industry. Hardly any boy or man will be willing to admit that they might want to be more “female” and get that kind of attention, but why would they not want that? Wanting to receive attention is not “female” by nature.

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that this justifies anything. I am not even trying to measure the one side against the other. My point is that these offensive men you are talking about in the article aren't trying to understand the other side either and are only seeing what they are not allowed and where they have to endure unequal rights.

We have to accept that in order to allow some people to assume a different position in society there will have to be others that move in the opposite direction. If we want “strong” women we have to stop telling men that they have to be stronger. So yes, I think that depicting muscular men as protagonists is just as bad for equal rights as the degenerate female image. It's not directly insulting one half of the society but it is teaching the other half that they have to insult the other one if they don't want to lose their identity.



admin
on **July 4, 2013 at 11:47 am** said:

True words.

I think what you wrote is an important additional perspective to point 7.



masterPain
on **June 30, 2013 at 2:09 am** said:

If you'll to criticize something do it from a neutral point of view and not a feminist mentality.

What you say in the point 7 is absurd.

“men and women both get stereotyped in games. But there is 2 very important differences here.”
There is no difference. You're just seeing what you want to see. The muscles are for women like breast for men. If you don't like that, grow up or change.

“First, muscles and guns represent power.”
Muscles represent sexy men. Guns represent violence. Not change things for convenience. If you can not give an opinion from a neutral point of view, you are not in a position to criticize anything. You are being very feminist. So, grow up or change.

“When men get stereotyped they get stereotyped as the powerful dominant force.”
Because that games are aimed at a male audience. You have a problem with that?

When they make games for a female audience, and the women have that powerful dominant role, the game the game ends in failure.

Examples?

Final Fantasy XIII and Final Fantasy X-2 are the worst Final Fantasy in the story and more criticized negatively. Is it coincidence? They are the only two Final Fantasy aimed at a female audience. And only liked a to a little number of female players.

“While when women get stereotyped, they end up as the damsel in distress, helpless, weak...”
Don't be absurd again. The stereotype of the damsel in distress was not invented for videogames. Already in children's old fables the nice prince need to rescue the pretty, weak, submissive and easy girl.

And thats not all. That kind of fables are aimed to a female audience.

So, i will tell you again. Use the logic and not your feminist ideology. Grow up or change.

And you can not criticize anything if you will do what do the video games that you criticize. What I'm talking about? I'm talking about that:

“First, muscles and guns represent power.”
“When men get stereotyped they get stereotyped as the powerful dominant force.”

If big breast are misogyny, scultural male bodies and muscles are misandry. And you are being misandry to defend that.

So... a man need big muscles to be powerful or stronger?
So... I'm a weak man for not having big muscles?

The intelligence can be more stronger than muscles. To create a good weapon you need a good mind, not muscles. The muscles can't do anything against a good weapon ;-)

Then... good. If we have not muscles, we are weak. The muscles is the most important in the men. Great!

Like it or not that's misandry. Oh wait, but you are an extremist feminist. That's the reason why you don't criticize that!!!

Grow up or change!!!

And for last...

Try to answer all comments, not just the convenient. No answer is to be agree with the person who commented. ;-)

So... grow up or change... or simply shut up :)



Moimoi
on **July 3, 2013 at 1:16 am** said:

Hey, you.

>Grow up or change

No and no. Giving critique to a large scaled problem on how women are (mis)represented in video games (and other aspects or storytelling outside of games, thanks for the pointer @ fairy tales) has nothing to do with being immature. Trying to change the image on how women are (mis)represented in video games is a good cause. So it's not the author who needs to change, but plenty for you and your distorted view on things. Let me take your comment apart. *rubs hands*

Yes, both genders are stereotyped. However, there is a vast and gaping difference in how they get portrayed. Being strong and empowered is a desirable trait. To be a good looking piece of dead luggage that only serves the purpose to be sexy around those said empowered and straight personas is not. It's degrading.

Imagine if it was the other way around. Imagine if we had mostly games where females are moving boulders of muscle, kick the enemy's ass, and next to them some skinny but sexy guys in exposing clothes which are sitting on the sidelines cheering on the gun-wielding boulder women and serve no other purpose than to be ogled at. How'd you like them apples?

And before you say "that is not realistic" – hey guess what, all of my female friends aren't useless things with tits to ogle at. They are people with personalities and skills, they're intellectuals. And that is how women should get presented as in video games.

The thing is people (males and females) want characters they either can or want to identify with. Why do you keep buying and playing games in which you play generic white male with muscles who kicks ass? Because it feels good to play a character like that. Would you want to identify with a character that is virtually useless and just there to be looked at? No? Well, I guessed so.

>>"When men get stereotyped they get stereotyped as the powerful dominant force."

>Because that games are aimed at a male audience. You have a problem with that?

Yes, because females make 46% of all gamers. That is half the audience, yet only a small percentage of games actually consider female players, and those who do are those generic pink bad pony riding games or other cutesy junk most females I know actually look down upon. They are a large part of the audience and deserve to be catered as much as males do. Period.

>When they make games for a female audience, and the women have that powerful dominant role, the game the game ends in failure.

It's not that hard to make a great and successful game which serves both genders equally. A great example is the recent zombie apocalypse game The Last of Us.

Ellie is a tough character, actually all female characters in the game are (like Tess). Sure, in the beginning it's Joel who protects her (as you play him), but eventually she kicks ass herself and Joel even has to rely on her/is the one being protected (when you get to play her). She's brave, she's smart, and she's sassy. In short, she's an empowered character. The Last of Us caters both genders equally well, has great mechanics, great graphics, a great story and some of the best character arches I have seen in any video games for a long while.

The reason why we don't have more games like this is because a lot of game devs haven't been trying to cater to both genders, and if they did, they were relying on old stereotypes and thus didn't really know what they were doing (see: those silly pony games)

I can't say a thing about FFXIII because I haven't played it yet, but FF X-2 wasn't aimed at females, get your facts straight. In fact, the game was aimed at a male audience and it's nothing but fanservice. The lack of male characters is part of that. The game didn't sell well because it was nothing but a big disappointment. I don't see any other game FF as often in a second hand store as this one and I even sold my own copy to buy a better game for the money. Any other FF is doing well and they successfully cater both genders, having both female and male characters with different attributes to please a vast majority of people.

So saying FFX-2 was aimed at females and thus a failed game because it's aimed at that audience is invalid. Even if it was aimed at female gamers, there is more behind that than which gender a game is aimed at. There are plenty of titles which were aimed towards a male audience and yet had disastrous sales. So what does this prove? Nothing. There are bad games and there are good games. The reason why games aimed at females turn out bad might be because perhaps game devs don't have a clue what female players really want. Because just like you, they don't try to put themselves into their shoes, but just think of things on top of their head that 'females must like' (like pony games)

>Don't be absurd again. The stereotype of the damsel in distress was not invented for videogames. Already in children's old fables the nice prince need to rescue the pretty, weak, submissive and easy girl.

Take a guess by whom most famous fairy tales were written by. Can you take that guess yet? Hmm? Can you? That's right: males! And fairy tales originate from a time where women were seen as second-class humans with little to no rights. We've

come a long way from that, but when stumbling upon people like you I figure we still need to go a long way, because you just don't get it. It's you who needs to change. So again, your argument is invalid, and change needs to happen. it's the only logical conclusion.

So how about YOU sit back, shut up, and LISTEN.



Rukumouru

on **June 23, 2013 at 8:53 pm** said:

While I agree that the generous display of women as sex objects in games isn't appropriate as the default (this has caused me to not enjoy many titles I might otherwise have), conveniently ignoring "masculine muscled freaks" as "male power fantasy" is not doing your argument any favors.

My heroic role model is an intelligent, lean, lithe and agile man who is able to manipulate his environment or traverse elegantly through it in order to get his way. Someone who overpowers by intelligence, class and agility, not brutish manners, pure strength and gigantic macho-muscles.

This "heroic role model" also applies to women protagonists. If I can play as a woman with these characteristics that isn't necessarily a big-breasted supermodel with boob-physics and latex-tight clothing, I will. And I will feel empowered, regardless of my character's gender!

I feel as uncomfortable when seeing a half naked woman for absolutely no adequate reason as I do when I am forced to play as an impossibly buff guy who has an "animalistic" approach to masculinity (which does not resonate with my own masculinity at all).

As for portraying women in more submissive roles than men, this is not the default of the industry. Play fighting games, any Tomb Raider, any RPG/MMORPG... There is a PLETHORA of games out there that portrait women in active, dominant roles. They are simultaneously portrayed as sexualized supermodels at the same time, yes, but please go back to what I said about "buff macho men" and how uncomfortable it makes me feel.

I do not speak for every man, but I am a man. If that idea of "masculinity" makes me uncomfortable, and does not resonate with any "power fantasy" or "role model" of mine AT ALL, it's bound to make many other men feel the same way. Too many videogames portray men as stupid animals. Isn't that exactly what feminists complain about? Portrayals of women that make the average woman uncomfortable?

Do not simply ignore the very real objectifying of the male persuasion in today's videogames. It makes a lot of people uncomfortable. I don't say "ignore the female problem", I say "look at both, dismiss neither".



Feminism doesn't EQUAL equality

on **June 2, 2013 at 9:27 pm** said:

You'll never be satisfied until you sterilize gaming completely. Honestly, if you want to change something you have to CREATE an alternative and prove that it sales. If I'm not mistaken the was an attempted by a company called Purple Moon..it failed. HSN is trying the same thing using the same worthless data. You make 44% of game consumers and haven't manage to do nothing but complain about games female(except for Anita) and male gamers have played. Yes, men have been objectified in not only games, but in you romance novels, porn(33% of female watch..2% purchase), Advertisements aimed at women(to purchase products for both themselves and their men), etc. If your honest about it, you know you wouldn't have bought into a majority of items if didn't gratify you in some way. Also, there's nothing wrong with A danzel in distress. It repeat what men are hardwired to do..PROTECT. God forbid, the male protagonist do it out of a feelings of love,remorse or compassion. Also, other than Samus there are examples of heroic deeds by female characters like Zelda from the N64,Gamecube, and the Wii. The same Princess Peach Anita mocks has a DS game that has her rescuing Mario and Luigi. I'd also say that it's pretty ignorant to think that women should be wounded or otherwise damaged in a action or survivor game. It would ruin the little realism it has. Also, Anita and other such commentators haven't objectively (not that they have anyway) addressed the stories and full characterization Female protagonists. Specifically, Beyonetta that she raged about (just based on commercialism in JAPAN and powers used) and the New Tombraider. Lara Croft in the latest Tombraider is somewhat conservative in comparison to Beyonetta and she doesn't let her RAPE keep her from being an excellent female protagonist. Though Rape isn't the only means they could have use to express overcoming hardship but it was a very strong way of doing so. But I guess overcoming hardships won't be excepted if it doesn't have a feminist stamp of approval. Anyway this blog doesn't address anything on a truly objective and open manner to where both sex will be satisfied. At the end of the day it's a fantasy and a form of escapism..not real life. The thing is that most male gamers know and enjoy this fact...why can't you?



admin

on **June 2, 2013 at 10:09 pm** said:

HEy, ...

I'm not in the mood to go through your comment and reply to your points here.

So, I will let your empty assertions about men, women, the games industry and feminism stand here as a second opinion, as unsupported by fact as this opinion might be.

Cheers.



Rick Yorgason

on **April 25, 2013 at 5:29 am** said:

I see that this is primarily just a rant and that you're not exactly trying to raise the level of discourse with this article, but number 11 probably deserves to be completely rewritten. There's cogent arguments to be made against number 11, but yours is completely wrong.

You say there's always an alternative to showing misogyny, but how would you have written this article without showing misogyny? Showing misogyny in a story doesn't make that story fundamentally misogynist any more than showing misogyny in this article makes this article misogynist.



Ymedron

on **May 3, 2013 at 11:25 am** said:

You must display what you are criticizing/commenting. Just like when you make a film review you have to tell the audience the film's name and some of the plot points.

If you are making commentary and criticism on misogyny doesn't mean it has inherent importance to a story that isn't about social justice.



Ms. Elizabeth

on **April 9, 2013 at 7:19 pm** said:

I love the things you have to say. It would be easier for me to love this article if your grammar wasn't so bad.



admin

on **April 9, 2013 at 7:31 pm** said:

Well, thanks for the kind words,... I guess.

And I know that my grammar makes my articles hard to love, but I appreciate the extra effort you put in to do it.



machinaheart

on **July 6, 2013 at 6:59 pm** said:

As a non-native who spots your grammar and spelling mistakes, I feel the need to say that they do not undermine your meaning and for me your article is not hard to read/understand at all. While I might understand that others see this differently, I hope you will never feel self-conscious about your writing because of these issues :)



Joush

on **April 9, 2013 at 1:28 pm** said:

I'm not disagreeing with parts of the basic message, but the grammar in this page is awful. Also, 3, 4, 5, 8, 13 and 14 aren't defenses for misogyny in games. Just being a reply to someone told about misogyny in games, even a negative or disapproving response, does not make something a defense. If you try to tell someone air is normally about eighty percent nitrogen and they say that you are boring and annoying, they aren't refuting your statement, they are calling you boring and annoying.



Mark

on **April 9, 2013 at 6:01 am** said:

Have you even played Arkham Asylum? If so, you sure don't act like it. He didn't have her tied up because she's a woman. He had her tied up because she is Harley Quinn and she is bat sh** insane, and LETHAL.



Yoshi

on **April 9, 2013 at 5:06 am** said:

Thank you! This is a very well done article, and you've gained a reader at least. As a (hopefully soon to be published writer) father, I see this every damn day. I admit i've had to go over some of what i've written and re-write it, adjusting for the sexism. It is difficult for me to see the sexism; I benefit from it after all. But articles like this DO help. As a reminder, as a way (at least for me) to pause and step back. And really LOOK at things.

In regards to Harley Quinn, the whole scene is bullshit. If Batman were serious about keeping this super villian (who, supposedly has the strength and stamina of an olympic athlete.) out of his way, he'd have used zip strips. As it is, she could be out of that in five minutes. Which plays into so many cliches it's not even funny.

And yes most of the comments are proving your point. Kinda like how all the cyber attacks proved Sarkeesian's point. We have a long road ahead.

Own up or change? I'll do both.



Marigold

on **April 8, 2013 at 8:17 am** said:

I am a woman who games, and have played games since I was tiny. I really appreciate the efforts that some are taking to bring awareness to these issues and to help stand up for women in the gaming industry. Kudos to you for taking a stand.

Unfortunately, the industry does a poor job of empowering female gamers from the get-go. Look at Super Princess Peach or My World, My Way. Sure, the heroine is the main character, but look at the attributes of the lead role. Princess Peach: she uses mood swings in order to battle; Elise: she has dedicated "Pout Points" she uses to change the environment and get her way. Both are hugely negative and damaging stereotypes on what could have been empowering and cute games for younger girls. Instead it reinforces that if you cry hard enough or pout long enough, you can triumph. That is absolutely *not* a message girls should be receiving. I'd much rather see a game that encourages and rewards the gamer for problem solving and thinking, even in simple terms (for younger gamers), than rewarding the players by succumbing to degrading stereotypes.

Although I loved the Mass Effect series and feel Bioware did a good job at creating a lead character who was not defined by sexual parameters, they still exploited women in that game. Miranda. You know exactly what I mean – the particular camera angle that showcased her butt in the white jumpsuit. The female characters were all quite busty. For anyone who knows anything about bra sizing (and I do), I'd guess they were all in the 34 F or G range (that means that the ribcage circumference would be 34 inches around, and the letter is how many more inches the bust measures, so an F-cup would be 6 inches greater at the fullest point). Jack may have been smaller chested, but she also certainly had less clothes covering her breasts as well. And don't get me wrong, I was put off by the scene in ME3 where Shepard watches Vega do the pullups and it focuses on his chest. Sexualizing the men doesn't make sexualizing the women any better. Games can be made where the story line is not impacted by the gender identity of the player.

I want to play a compelling story line. I don't mind a game that challenges my preconceived notions, that puts me in the shoes of someone who I don't immediately identify with. Many other gamers feel the same. I also don't want the development and goal improving of physics engines to strictly be making more realistic breast jiggles. Yes, build physics engines to support and give realistic body movement, but do it for the whole body – ragdoll physics is a win in my book. Frankly, I'd love it if they spent more time making hairstyles that didn't look like plastic pre-fab wigs. Make the physics engine practical to the entire character.

I read an essay by an artist I really respect on women in hip-hop. It parallels greatly the idea of women in gaming to me. I highly recommend reading it, and supplant "gaming" and "gaming developers" for "hiphop" and "rappers" and it delivers much the same message as you read here.

<https://www.facebook.com/dessadarling/posts/10150578918286905>



ian parsons

on **April 8, 2013 at 6:52 am** said:

lol shit people like you who make these complaints are just fucking awful, specifically complaint number 4 is ridiculous, a comic book character who just so happens to be a women.... AND A SUPER VILLAIN MIND YOU, is tied up and you have the option to tie up her mouth.... thats wrong? what makes you think shes getting tied up for being a women... AND NOT A MOTHER FUCKING SUPER VILAIN! and also, theres no sign of her being abused by joker in the arkham game continuity...



Mark

on **April 9, 2013 at 6:02 am** said:

Glad someone sees it my way.



ian parsons

on **April 12, 2013 at 11:20 pm** said:

thank you mark!



Preston

on **March 25, 2013 at 11:55 pm** said:

I'm only mentioning this, because I want the world to be a better place. So, the only way to do this, is to stop critiquing the portrayal of anyone or anything in a form of media. Get over it. I'm serious. So, the woman in the game isn't dressed properly.

You know what? I don't really like that the male characters in the games are bulked up freaks! You don't see me writing about it, wasting not only my own time I could be using more productively, but not wasting a readers time on a topic that isn't going to change anything.

I'm sorry, but I'm really tired of being linked articles like this, and I'm even more tired of knowing that they exist. You know, it's a freaking game. Yeah, girls are used as a plot device. Get over it. The save the princess thing is a classic, and it used to be a good thing. Now, thanks to liberal try-hards, God forbid a hero saves his princess.

As for the sexuality/nudity and what-not. Yeah, there really is no excuse for it. Fact is, it sells, and that is all businesses/corporations care about. You'll have to work really hard to erase millions of years of evolution to wipe out the desire for sex. Good Luck.



Jim Hague

on **April 7, 2013 at 1:41 am** said:

All those points are addressed in the article. Thanks for proving them correct.



admin

on **April 7, 2013 at 1:45 am** said:

:)



Anan

on **April 8, 2013 at 10:58 am** said:

Damn I wish there was a +1 right about now.



Jay
on **April 8, 2013 at 10:03 am** said:

"You know what? I don't really like that the male characters in the games are bulked up freaks! You don't see me writing about it"

Maybe you should. If you don't take a stance, nothing will ever change.



Leander
on **April 9, 2013 at 1:55 pm** said:

"Maybe you should. If you don't take a stance, nothing will ever change."

Love you for that sentence!



admin
on **April 9, 2013 at 2:33 pm** said:

Word!



Belloc
on **March 7, 2013 at 6:46 am** said:

I'm getting sick of people stating that Samus's outfit at the end of the first game "proves" she's a sex object or that she was just a reward for the player.

1) It's not like they teased it for the player all through the game, or she did some stripper minigames to get the morphball. Samus being a woman was an afterthought, just like the Justin Bailey code and the space bikini.

2) She wasn't really posing to the player or teasing with her body. The swimsuit was really just to emphasize she was a woman through NES hardware limitations.

If Samus wants to kick off her armor and lay around the ship in a leotard after a long day of blowing up pirates, more power to her.

I really don't see how this diminishes her. The most thing about her is that she's a bounty hunter. Nothing about the post-game sequence makes her look weak, and she's not striking a sexy pose.

Honestly, It wouldn't have been all that different was had she been wearing a Hillary Clinton pantsuit. The big message of Metroid was that "the robot you were playing as was a woman the whole time" not "if you beat the game quick enough you'll see her in a bikini."

It was an incidental gimmick from the first game. The character's moved on and (Other M aside) became rightly identified as one of gaming's greatest icons.



Depest
on **January 12, 2013 at 3:14 am** said:

Well, to be honest, nothing in this article is anything new. This is not the first time we've read these sort of articles and it's probably not the last. It's not that people aren't listening, it's just that it gets boring reading the same thing every week with no new argument whatsoever. I totally agree with you that "sexualization" of women in video games is not

needed and it's quite frankly very immersion breaking when a woman who's supposed to be a fighter is wearing a skimpy outfit not fit for combat. I love playing strong female characters who are just as good as any man and gets the job done. But I still hear from self-proclaimed feminists that these characters are sexist and that the "unimaginative male writer" has to change. A writer's inspiration comes from everything that has happened in his/her life, therefore I think it would be quite reasonable to believe that a woman would be the creator of the best female character. A life time of experience being female would at least help a bit, no? That's why I think it would be great with more females creating games, but I am not seeing a great lot of them. Why is that? According to some there are "powerful, woman-hating men" everywhere in society and they work to keep women down. Now correct me if I'm wrong but this sounds an awful lot like those kinds of people thinking there's a secret organisation called the Illuminati that controls everything but it also sounds a lot like "I'm not happy with where I am today, better blame it on something." Another issue is the whole "I'm offended" thing that I would consider the biggest threat to artistic integrity and creativity as of today. So the thing you said "it should be enough that someone is offended and you should change or be labeled as a misogynist pig." it's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. So all it takes for me to change your article is to claim that it offended me? Of course you can't say whatever you want without being consequence but to claim that you're offended and then demand the person to change is complete madness. If you take a joke seriously then you're missing the point.

It's late and I've lost my train of thought but basically you can say the same thing over and over, calling gaming and gamers sexist and misogynist while wanting them to change and support your cause or you could encourage other women to start working in the industry. Sure it would probably be harder for a woman in the gaming industry at first because it's been male dominated for so long but after a while it would be just as normal to be a woman game designer as it is being a man game designer. It surely beats waiting for the people whose hobby you've just insulted to agree with you. The problem with the first option is that people instantly get defensive when you accuse them of something and they will simply pass off everything you say as bs. Not only that but it will also put off a lot of people that would otherwise agree with you. Could you just imagine a charity commercial going "LOOK AT ALL THESE POOR KIDS, THEY HAVE NOTHING AND YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU SELFISH PIG. SEND THEM MONEY, IT'S YOUR DUTY."? No, neither could I. Goodbye.



Mathilda

on **January 12, 2013 at 2:02 am** said:

This isn't a flamey post, though it might be a bit "scathy". If you can exhibit the mental fortitude to read something that doesn't agree with you, then well done, you're all grown up.

How does it feel to be such an inept writer that you feel you need to rely on nerdbaiting to, I can only assume, "kickstart" your journalism career? I say kickstart because only a budding amateur would bring themselves down to the level of hacks such as Patricia Hernandez or Anita Sarkeesian in their quest for attention – which describes Games Journalism quite nicely, people selling out to the god of Page Views before they've even started. Of course I say nerdbaiting, I forget that this sort of subject is also excellent if you seek pats on the back from fellow opinionated people, ruled by their impulse to agree with people similar to them regardless of if they're actually... you know, rational.

That or you are yet another misguided feminist thinking their opinion matters outside your inclusive "academic" (haha) circle, or the romantic fantasies of White Knights. The kind that, like your average religious nutcase, picks an idea and then spends the rest of their life just ignoring evidence to the contrary, driven to root around in as many places that golden nugget of what they deem confirmation of correctness. Cos, you know, fuck science, fuck actually making sure what you say is correct by scrutinising it to near death, that doesn't make you feel good does it? It could just be this is a personal piece, but even that in a way is sad, too.

No use complaining about "demeaning" portrayals of women when you demean yourself by picking the low hanging fruit of modern day sensationalism. But that is the most common aspect of these crusader women, especially the opinionated ones – they want to seem mighty, then play the victim the moment anyone presses them. They of all people are the quickest to subvert the Strong Women trope, ruining their self-worth and convincing themselves that it's fine to be dishonest if it's for "a good cause".

Or perhaps you truly believe you are a social crusader for equality? Of course that comes with the smallprint: women are more equal than men. Depicting men as disposable is fine, depicting men as forced to take the roles as society's risk takers against their will is fine, depicting the ideal men with an unattainably body form is fine. It doesn't matter how often you try to hammer these equally sex-prejudiced notions into the heads of people, they'll just ignore it or pretend it doesn't exist – and then turn around and make the exact some kind of complaint back for the other sex, and with a completely straight face.

Both men and women are "oppressed", forced by society to take on roles they may not choose, and video games enforce this too, to some extent – it would actually be interesting to have a real gender perspective on the subject, but instead it's just "look at those non-existent women teaching boys about RAPE CULTURE!!!!!!!" or some equally asinine fearmongering. All it really says to me is that men can deal with demeaning pop culture depictions and move on, whilst women have nothing better to do than whine like babies until they get what they want.

So enjoy your views, your sympathy, enjoy living in your self-maintained delusion that a media form is bad because it doesn't cater exactly to you needs. All we egalitarian gamers can hope is that some other media trend comes along for the social crusaders to latch on to. If that doesn't happen, we can at least hope the medium does manage to purge the genuinely offensive stuff from the mainstream, relegating the sexism and racism to cult titles or far away altogether (I say "genuinely offensive" stuff, by which I do not mean anything depicted as happy to possess breasts).

I feel however that the increased sophistication will only happen through the fostering of creativity – people don't want

the tired offensive stereotypes mostly because they're boring and overdone, and creativity allows those stereotypes to be enhanced or subverted. If we start telling people what they can or cannot depict, creativity dies, and the exciting future of an artistic industry.

That, and you could just ...you know, make your own game, instead of expecting others to change theirs. Ever thought of that?



name

on **January 12, 2013 at 2:00 am** said:

preachy arguments against a bunch of strawman

way to tell it like it is



LN

on **January 12, 2013 at 1:51 am** said:

Gee where have the women all been the last 15 years?

Oh right. Laughing at "boys" who cant kick their childish videogame habit.

I see your blog makes the assertion that it has something to do with game design.

Hate the way women are so "maligned" in gaming? Make your own game then.

If Miss Anita was really so concerned about it, maybe she would have kick started her own game to bust cliches and establish new conventions. Instead she scammed a bunch of gullible people into giving her mountains of cash to do nothing she hadn't already done.

But go ahead, by all means, continue to make us out to be awful women-haters because we play videogames. Nothing you people say will ever make me actually think I in any way am misogynistic or some how by playing videogames I am being complicit in the exploitation and degradation of women, regardless of how I actually feel and act towards them in my life (that is to say, with the utmost respect, because my father would have had it no other way and neither would I.)

Find another scapegoat.



Rook

on **January 12, 2013 at 1:48 am** said:

There are a few serious issues with this article. The worst of these is that your article is based on an opposition to discrimination in itself, and later you not only advocate affirmative action (Also known as positive discrimination) but act as if it is a universally agreed upon (And proven successful) means of combating discrimination, when in reality it is an extremely controversial one. What you are ultimately supporting *is* discrimination against men, with the aim of providing an equal situation for women. There is a HUGE difference between being opposed to discrimination and being opposed to inequality. You are opposed to the latter, not the former. You also take several serious points against your position and deliberately misrepresent them into childish nonsense. I mean, really, why are comments such as 'You discriminate against men' alongside 'Shut up and make me a sandwich'? Why have you taken a point about fundamental human rights and worded it as 'It's Freedom of Speech! So shut up!'? You even respond to 'So shut up!' like it's part of the actual argument. Also, the games you've selected as examples don't reflect gaming as a whole in general. There are a couple that do, such as Mario, but many others you've specifically selected extremely blatant sexism in an attempt to give the impression that sexism in games is much more blatant than it actually is, when in reality, it rarely gets much worse than the Mario level. All in all, you make some decent points, and I don't even fully disagree with you, but this is not in any way an unbiased, objective and honest argument against discrimination as you seem to think.



Nico

on **January 12, 2013 at 1:17 am** said:

I find it hilarious everyone mindlessly defends this, white knightin'g much? I genuinely don't see why a select few of you women have to be so god-damn sour about it all, better yet, pretend to speak for the entire female population. This happens in movies, books and guess what, it happens in real life.

If I make a game about a serial killer who is all about killing and abusing women, well sorry, it's actually something that could happen in real life. Does that make it ok for men to do this? Of course not, but it's still realistic whether you like it or not.

If you want true equality, tell next time you really annoy a man to the point where that big vein on his forehead starts to throb to punch you right in the face, because that's what men would do to other men. The next time something like the Titanic happens, I don't think children AND women should be allowed to escape first, no, survival of the fittest fight your way to your escape.

Nitpicking is such a horrible thing, yes, the world isn't perfect, but no, these points annoy you personally and I know many gamers who happen to be female who don't care at all that women in video games are portrayed in a sexy manner. I'm still waiting for my fat male protagonist, but oh wait, that isn't an important stereotype.

Some women love to display their femininity, if you don't, deal with it, it's a different view on life and stop trying to bloody force yours down everyone's throat.



Sofia McClaghornpangle
on **January 12, 2013 at 1:17 am** said:

Cry about it.



ShingoEX
on **January 12, 2013 at 1:13 am** said:

The word "objectification" is just an ugly version of physical attraction. It's a natural part of human biology, so it's rather upsetting to hear women throw around the term when they're the same ones who swoon whenever Brad Pitt takes off his shirt.

POINT: I would have no problem with men being portrayed in the same manner, as it's just fantasy, so why is this argument so one-sided and full of double-standards? The term "beefcake" is VERY objectifying, and I'm fairly certain that term doesn't refer to women. I don't have a problem with it. Why do you?

It's just an excuse to lash out and victimize yourself. STOP IT.



Wenslingburg
on **January 12, 2013 at 1:11 am** said:

What's wrong with being sexy?



Buddha
on **January 12, 2013 at 1:02 am** said:

The examples given ruin the whole point of the article the same way it happened 8/15 with Anita, you just don't have a cultivated enough opinion on the matter. Metroid is one of Nintendo's most loved series, and it is a prime example of a complete lack of offenses against women, and yet you quickly generalize from Mario, maybe Zelda, that "Nintendo like girls 'to get stolen' in their story lines.". And on that matter, the end game screen is so far from trying to be a reward that the example just comes out like a complete straw man argument; it was meant to be the awesome surprise that you were playing as a woman the whole time, but no, Nintendo was giving us a "sexy reward". If you'd researched one of the easiest companies to find info on, Nintendo, and researched the series that arguably deals with women the most, Metroid, you'd know what happened with Metroid Other M, a game that took the empowered,

respectable Samus character and turned her into a complete caricature of a lady in need; then you'd know about the huge, massive backlash that came from fans, who despise the game and consider it a mistake to be forgotten for just that reason, because they made Samus become a bad representation of women. I don't even like Metroid/Nintendo and I know that. You also use examples from Duke Nukem Forever, a game that people absolutely despise and consider a joke, and criticized for its crude, cheap humor and offensive depiction of a lot of things, not just women. Again, you can't make points dealing with the depiction of women as a whole by relating them to videogames through the thinnest, most unrepresentative arguments you can think of.

Finally, there's a bunch of spelling and grammar mistakes and the last 2 or 3 points just make this really, really hard to take seriously.

I apologize if my redaction is hard to understand, English is not my native language



John Doe

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:37 am** said:

Speaking objectively, I have to ask: What is your solution? I see these arguments and counter argument on Tumblr everyday with no end in sight. What do you do about how the situation is now? What about the 20+ years of games that have spurred on this course of action?

And slightly non objective: Do you equally care about both the treatment of fictional characters in video games and real life oppression of females in other countries due to culture?



Jack

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:14 am** said:

As with most commentary on games like this I just have one overall conclusion: what would you do to change it? Yet this is rarely answered.

You are suggesting to own or up change, but not really saying what you would do in the situation. So how would you fix the things you see wrong in games now? I am not necessarily disagreeing with most of your points either. I just find that social commentary is easy to make, but actually suggesting what to do is fairly hard.

Even Anita Sarkeesian rarely puts up any effort in doing this, at least in most of her videos I have seen. Even her kickstarter gave out stickers with Zelda in links armor and Peach in mario's clothes. Is this what she is suggesting? ref: <http://www.feministfrequency.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/stickers2.jpg>

Long story short: There is a lot of pointing at whats wrong, but very little at pointing whats right.



Lucas

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:12 am** said:

Let me tell you something.

Do you know why it's called the videogame industry? Because it's an industry. It runs on money. And how to get money? You make games.

Which games? The ones that appeal to the largest possible audience: MALES.

Big developers aren't a bunch of teens playing around making games for fun. They are working, making a game to get their wallets filled with enough money for food and living at the end of the month. So what do they do? Appeal to males.

Porn sells, men like boobs, water is wet, money is good. Big developers aren't going to change with the attitude feminists/females in general have. Instead of pledging around for changes, you should prove that you aren't just a group of people who "want changes because their feelings are hurt", but instead a market that they can sell their products to (which you really aren't doing). Meanwhile, your only option is to make your own games, or bitch to indie developers, but those aren't sexist because they really aren't trying to sell a game en masse, but just make it and have some profit (There are some exceptions).

Oh, about japanese games, don't even try. No girl in japan plays games. The only thing remotely aimed at girls over there are gay VNs, and that's pretending the protagon is you instead of a male.

Remember i'm talking about AAA titles like Skyrim, CoD, ME, etc. Those need to be aimed at the biggest audience or

they won't profit.



Lucas

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:43 am** said:

Wait, sorry, small correction.

Those games ARE aimed at the biggest audience for maximum profit.

Yeah that's more like it. Thanks.



PiSquare

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:05 am** said:

I somehow understood the first few arguments, but then you just started playing dirty, and started posting arguments a 5 year old would make. I could go and counter pretty much every argument you made, but that would make me a misogynyst now would it?

Also when it comes to arguments its neccesarry to be clear on the definition of the words and their meaning. And as far as i know misogyny means hatered and/or aversion of women. And that means i can hate someone no matter what sex he is for any reason as long as its not based on their sex and it wont make me a misogynyst.

I realize this is a fairly popular toppic at this moment, but i am saddened to see that so many uneducated people are jumping on this hate train without understanding it.



Anon

on **January 12, 2013 at 12:02 am** said:

Where's the option for "I don't care, it's just a video game"?



nonya

on **January 11, 2013 at 11:53 pm** said:

the fact you bra burning nut jobs care this much about videos games not even made for you is fucking hilarious, you don't see straight white men bitching about the content of gay/trans homoerotic porn, because if they did it would be stupid, its not for them, games are made for men in most cases, if females want more representation in games get off the pulpit and make some fucking games that represent what ever you want, stop forcing your shitty opinions down everyone's throat, I could give less of a fuck if you think games are offensive, its not your place to tell us what we can enjoy.



Autumn

on **January 11, 2013 at 11:48 pm** said:

Wow! Usually people just use a sentence or an image to strawman ignorantly, but you made a whole site? Kudos!



Jake Hamelin

on **January 11, 2013 at 9:24 pm** said:

the Gaming Industry isnt going to change...EVER!...and here's why:

1. SEX SELLS
2. MOST...not all! males have a dominance issue, hence why most action game characters are male
3. most games where the player has to save the "defenceless princess" are not outright sexist, the princess is seen as the "prize" at the end of the game...
4. the female characters seem "flat" or "personality-less" is because, companies have budgets and deadlines to meet, you can only delay the release of a game so long...so by the time the deadline is near they've spent 98% of the budget on fancy graphics, the actors and every person that helped put the game together....so there's no time to flesh out secondary or background characters because they have no extra time or budget left over to do those things

hate me all you want, but I speak the truth....



admin
on **January 11, 2013 at 10:26 pm** said:

I don't hate you. You made my day.
Your comments are just way too facepalmingly absurd and unintentionally funny to make one build up any anger.



Caleb
on **January 5, 2013 at 11:09 am** said:

Wow,you rant a lot,stuff with gearbox president and this,frankly i just wanted to see the "criticism" but jesus,you get some good points but out of the 14 points you based on them what one,two games ? Sex sells,in most games its a great way to boost sales. Its like hiring a beautiful actress,and how many games you know that show violence against women ?

Anyway if you keep going like this,you should rename your blog to something else,cause i cant find a single thing about game design or a game you worked on,or any credible thing about your game design background.

So its really hard to take you seriously about anything....



admin
on **January 5, 2013 at 1:05 pm** said:

Hey, Caleb...

Thanks for your suggestions. I have thought about renaming my blog quite often actually. Here is my shortlist:

-praiseanjinforbeingsmarterthananybodyelse.com
-yousuckyousexistfuckandanjintellsyouhowitis.com
-calebdoesnttakeanjinseriouslysoanjincriesinthebathtub.com

.. not sure which one to use. What's your favorite? Or do you have other ideas for a fitting blog title?

Thanks and Happy New Year.
Bye.



ShingoEX
on **January 12, 2013 at 1:14 am** said:

Wow...that's one way to show how incredibly immature you are. Thanks for that.



Davy Jones
on **January 12, 2013 at 2:23 am** said:

Hey, Anjiny...

How about
-howtosuckattalkingaboutgamedesign.com

You're welcome and Happy New Year.
Bye.



Juli

on **December 9, 2012 at 12:06 pm** said:

Admin note:

This comment was rejected by admin.

Hey, Juli. I don't know if your comment is supposed to be satire or if you actually have these vile and logically unsound ideas in your brain. It's not like I haven't talked to people who were sincere and used similar wording. Anyway, this blog is not a stage for hateful language like that.

Normally I would just trash a comment like your's, but since you spent sooo much time on writing it, I thought you deserve an explanation.

Cheers.



Idunn

on **December 4, 2012 at 7:45 pm** said:

I know this was posted a while ago, but I have to put in my opinion. (Don't we all.)

In the past 10 years I have seen some of the classics get changed. Cookie monster is no longer obsessed with cookies because a child assumed that is all he had to eat as well. Barbie became more 'correct' in her anatomy because some girl thought she had to look like Barbie. I grew up playing with Barbie. A toy which (at least when I played with her) fit the description of misogyny. I never once thought I should (or wanted) to look like the doll. She was just a toy I used to express my feelings/emotions when no one was around. (Take that Godzilla!)

Sorry, I think a lot of the blame for this trend in video games (granted, I do enjoy some of these games that display misogyny) is on the parents and the lack of parenting they tend to do. My nieces, as an example, loved playing Grand Theft Auto when they were little. My husband and I would only let them play it after they could tell us what parts of the game were not acceptable in real life. If they ran into something 'new' they had to tell us about it and why it wasn't acceptable in real life. They were reminded, constantly, that what is 'acceptable' in a game has no reflection on what is acceptable in the real world.

There have been a few games made that I enjoyed and were not misogyny in nature. Monkey Island has a very much strong female character. The second Monkey Island game keeps her character strong. So good stories are very much possible without falling into the 'standard' formula for games. But it is a hard habit to kick so late in the (pardon the pun) game. Thus why it is important for parents to make it clear to their kids early that, "Just because it is in a game (or movie, or show) does not mean it is acceptable to imitate in the real world".



Harley Quinn

on **October 17, 2012 at 12:17 am** said:

I am personally am not against it and am a woman but then again that is part of the problem.



Geoffrey

on **June 23, 2012 at 7:11 am** said:

I've been looking into this topic recently, and there's one thing I'd like to hear that I haven't yet. Maybe you can answer this:

What are good examples of women in games?

Most, if not all, of what I've seen are examples of bad cases, and explanations of what not to do. But I'd like to see examples of what works, something positive to follow. Even if they're not perfect, if there's something that's on the

right track.

Basically, how do you want the gaming community to own up or change (and are those really mutually exclusive? I would think "own up and change" to be a better line)?

Other than that, I mostly agree with your points.

Oh, and if it matters at all, I'm male.



Phil O.

on **June 20, 2012 at 10:42 pm** said:

1 & 3 The word you mean IS "Sexism". All most of that stuff is sexist. A lot of them are NOT indicators that the person who okays it hates women.

If you call someone a Misogynist you are accusing them of hating all women you are doing nothing but vilifying people. If it's unfair to accuse you of hating men, don't accuse them of hating women.

Does Feminism mean "hatred of men"? No, the word for that is Misandry, its the opposite of Misogyny. It doesn't matter how you misinterpret a quote by some guy, lets look at how the rest of the world defines the word.

Merriam-Webster:

Noun: A woman hater.

Adjective: Reflecting or inspired by a hatred of women.

Synonyms: womanhater – woman-hater

Wikipedia:

Misogyny is the hatred or dislike of women or girls.

Most people are sexist to differing degrees and most of them probably even think they're not sexist.

MOST of them don't hate women.

Your points 1 and 3 are incorrect being based on an incorrect definition.

4 & 5 are basicly the same point, a truely non-sexist society will treat both genders with equal politeness.

2, 7, 9 & 10:

There is a test you've probably heard of called "the batman test", which tests if something is ok for a women character by seeing if it still works with a male in that role.

If you are serious about being genuinely non-sexist, you have to go the further step of placing a women in all the places we put men and see if it's still ok too.

If there's a town of villagers it will be gender split down the middle like normal, people of all kinds.

Most people in the average game are the badguys though, the people who you're supposed to be fine about killing.

The main reason why "there are so few women in games" is that a most people don't want to go around killing an entire army of women.

If you want genuine equality in computer games you'll actually have to put in more women for the player to kill and maim, it's just that we're so desensitised to killing men that we notice the few women.

If we put the Batman test into full effect to a stereotypical game we will have a musclebound or wise cracking woman protagonist or thin acrobatic male protagonist.

This character will go around killing thousands of armed women in violent bloody ways because they're all trying to kill you or at least keep you from your goal. There will be lots of otherwise normal looking women who are all apparently 'bad' and 'should be killed'. Others are especially evil because they don't look normal in some way, they're mutated or monstrous or just plain ugly, and of course that means they all mean you harm and should be killed.

Maybe the point isn't that women have too much violence inflicted in games but that men arn't sexualised enough?

They already look like hollywood models with good looks and muscles but we don't assume they're sexualised like we'd assume from an equally modelled female character.

To some extent I think this is projecting values we get from society in general onto games that are potentially less sexist than that society. Our society connects nakedness in women to sex and nakedness in men to work or fighting. These are all sexist attitudes that need to be dispelled. Violence happening to naked people *should* be equally as bad no matter the gender if we are truely not sexist.

9. The only real point I disagree with strongly is the idea that "there needs to be privileges taken away for men to make room for more consideration for women". There are two forms of equality and you're confusing them.

Negative equality where you restrict people equally and positive equality where you release people from restrictions. At no point in time do you ever have to place restrictions someone if your goal is for everyone to have equal freedom, only if your goal is to keep both sides restricted.



DrKhaos

on **June 20, 2012 at 2:24 pm** said:

To be honest. This list is really good and shows us whats wrong with the games industry but also with our society. You can't deny anymore that games also have a strong impact on us and that every person who is making and playing such is responsible for how we see games today. Some might argue about a few of the statements but thats really good because this way we can open the discussion a bit more. For Example #4 digs not really deep into the whole relationship between Joker and Harley and shows us only a single excerpt from it. But still i can agree with that.

Awesome article and i hope that it gets more attention.

P.s. Add a Flattr button cuz this here is really worth it :)



someone

on **June 20, 2012 at 2:02 pm** said:

Where do I even start?

Sigh...

Though you begin with classical, but nonetheless righteous, arguments in the first points... your rethoric degrades inevitably and... abysmally through this post.

did you really have to paint the people who argue against you as uncompassionate, egoist, idiots, outright sexists and criminals?

Your analysis should have stayed on the "high" part of the debate not the lowlives aspect. As a consequence, it feels like you mix up everything, that you must resort to abusive rethoric to prove your point.

It's a gamble, if the audience fails to see the abusive rethoric you win, but when it don't, you look like you're just plain wrong.

That's why, you're not helping your cause. Or at least that's what I think.



Juergen Mayer

on **June 19, 2012 at 12:04 am** said:

@E. R.

No, I would like to play much more male characters in stockings or high heels. But I'm no realist either: stereotypes can only be a problem in realist media and, ideologically speaking, mainstream video games are thankfully not very realistic at all. At least not yet. Just like science-fiction novels or comic books.

I agree that there is a problem with body representation in video games where female characters show more skin than males while males are much more portrayed in armor for example. But the armor may be their sexiness and I guess that has much more to do with homophobia than misogyny.

Dante in the new "DMC" for example. There's partial nudity in the E3 (2012) trailer and I was very glad to see that. It's a metrosexual character. Maybe because Ninja Theory's chief designer Tameem Antoniades is a very progressive guy, and he was heavily attacked because of the more feminine new design of the character. It's misogynistic too, that Ubi obviously thinks that a female lead in the "Assassin's Creed" franchise is obviously only good for a spin-off (Liberation). It's misogynistic that there are no female avatars in "Call of Duty"-multiplayer, in spite of its worldwide popularity. It's misogynistic that there are so few female authors or creative directors in this industry. It's misogynistic that most females occupied in this industry are working in art design or marketing departments.

The whole video game industry is quite sexist. Like the rest of the world too. That should be out of the question BUT what's happening here is that (male, heterosexual) fantasies are attacked because they are (male, heterosexual) fantasies. And you, you say it yourself, you don't want to be confronted with them. That's fine, that's your right. But my right is to say that there are far less fantasies in that regard: I can only name "Onechanbara" and "Dead or Alive". "Tomb Raider" to me, is much more "Prince of Persia" with a female character I most of the times don't find very attractive. Therefore it has only little sexual attraction to me: "it", the game, not, "it", the female character. And, most importantly: there is no object which I find sexual attractive, not in the sense of Eija-Riitta Eklund-Berliner-Mauer. I'm no objectivist either because I'm handicapped and therefore Ayn Rand is no political option to me. I'm always attracted to people, women, females or other people/characters who look like females. If I'm looking at bodies I'm always looking at some sort of attractive expression, behavior, mannerism or ideals. The reality is in fact always vanishing in that process. To the point that reality is even not there.

What people mean when they say objectification of women is much more use or abuse of women. Men who think they can possess women. Like objects. To me, calling that "objectification" even downplays misogyny in the sense that

misogyny or sexism is at its core much more like other forms of racism too. Misogyny is not about hating women as objects but hating women as women, female beings. And that's the big problem of this world which makes me, for example, a feminist. Like other forms of racism are making me anti-racist too, because women are human beings like I am. And cause I'm a heterosexual male I even couldn't live without (representations of) females.



Wai Yen Tang

on **June 19, 2012 at 12:00 am** said:

Interesting posts and some of the comments touched on what I'm going to say and repeat. I'd like to take a step back away from gaming and frame it according to my nascent knowledge of gender issues.

First, to Jac: Please read Roy Baumeister's book "Is There Anything Good about Men? How Cultures Flourish by Exploiting Men". Gleaming just a little part of what I read in that book. You were right that men are disposable and nobody in successful cultures cry about the loss of men as they are worth less than women in terms of bringing babies to life. Historically however, courting the most attractive women means being the alpha male and fighting against other men requiring ability and motivation, the latter very important. The reward is great for the male winner, but there's only one or few winners, most men don't get sexual satisfaction, but hey culture, as a system, needs to motivate the men to get their rewards. This battle between men would result many successful people are mostly men, but failures are also mostly men. This male ambition to outgun, outwit and outlive created cultures that we live in today. Unfortunately, thinking like Dr. Baumeister, a tradeoff resulted in inequalities across society and that needs to be dealt with. Videogames can be thought of as another system to inspire men's ambitions for attaining success (without mentioning the rate of failure...)

Second, the term "hegemonic masculinity" is not mentioned anywhere in this post. I'd like to mention it as it pertains to videogames, but only as a subset of culture. My thoughts are that hegemonic masculinity is prevalent across cultural institutions reflecting both inequalities to women and men, especially those that do not conform to the majority (white heterosexual males). Videogames were being mainstreamed into society and has been made to follow the terms set forth by hegemonic masculinity. The result is that its sexual content are similar in other media. I, myself, have started reading up about masculinities and, yes men, do have difficulties, including male stereotypes. But I must say, women nor men are worse off than the other (I must say it can get quite difficult to quantify), they are dealing with different problems.

Third, Michael Kimmel's "Guyland: The perilous world where boys become men" is an interesting read and it made me think that videogames is only a part of the misogyny problem along with binge drinking, pornography, music videos, lads magazine among others. Also see mediaed.org "The Bro Code", recurrent themes of misogyny shows in other media.

I heartily recommend reading these books and I can't well articulate the authors' idea, unless I cut-and-paste their every words.



Oliver

on **June 18, 2012 at 2:56 pm** said:

And here is the problem. There is no evidence that these games would sell. Yes most of these games have these stereotyped characters but the same goes for every other media and they are like that because that's what the main audience wants. If you don't like that sure no problem but don't try to force it on other people. Just because gaming has become more mainstream should not mean that it needs to change completely.

In fact it already changed a lot in terms of the view of woman in video-games. Look at games back then these games had even more stereotyped than today. In today's industry you find many women that are strong Take Maisie Paige for example or the new Lara Croft or Elena from Uncharted. Today these female characters have much more personality than back then. They talk back, they fight back etc.

Also Sex sells you will never see a "fat" woman in videogames just like you won't see them in many movies as well. Also you won't see Ugly man because a sexy Nathan Drake also appeals to many women just like sexy men do this in Movies.

Also one more thing. which you also can't really deny. MANY women in the real world love to look sexy. They wear short skirts or tops with a huge décolleté because they want to look good and sexy and not because it's hot. Women have a huge advantage about men and that's their sex appeal and many women know how to use it in various situations. Many of them even do it unconsciously because it's in their nature.

Just because women often wear less clothes in games or movies does not mean they are weak or they are being discriminated. They look like this because it sells copies as well. So if you want to change all this you need to change the whole society and video-games are the totally wrong way to do this since every media is adopting to trends, and the overall social opinion.

PS: excuse me for my bad grammar and language but my native language is not English^^



Juliet

on **June 18, 2012 at 11:49 am** said:

I am a woman and this article made me hate women. What a bunch of whiners.



E. R.

on **June 18, 2012 at 4:41 am** said:

@Juergen Mayer

The argument against sexualization isn't that it's a fantasy, but that it's a stereotype, often an objectifying one. In video games, women are, for the most part, required to be sexual, to be viewed through a sexual lens, or to serve the function of a sexual fantasy and nothing else. This is firstly unfair to gamers who either aren't sexually attracted to females or want to identify with a female character but find it difficult because the female character is presented as the object of a fantasy and not a human being. It's a fantasy that is directed at heterosexual men, and which assumes that they are the default gamer, and only their fantasies deserve to be catered to.

For those who want to find fault with the complaints about the portrayal of women – imagine if in the majority of games the male characters served only sideline functions, wore nothing but speed-os, and were portrayed in over-the-top sexual ways, posing submissively or stretching to display their bodies, having gratuitous shots of their asses, etc. Not just some of the time, but almost all of the time. So that you really had to hunt to find a game with a male character you could even vaguely relate to. Wouldn't you find that obnoxious, ridiculous, and a bit insulting?



Matt

on **June 17, 2012 at 6:37 am** said:

"If you care about women in games, you will have to sacrifice a big chunk of male centered stories in favor of allowing female centered stories"

What a load of crap. This is such a false dichotomy it's not even funny.



EroBotan

on **June 17, 2012 at 4:53 am** said:

I don't watch batman so I don't know that Harley Quinn get abused by Joker ...

duh .. she should just dump him and date batman or robin .. or better, batwoman!



Francis Araneta

on **June 17, 2012 at 1:51 am** said:

Why bring up the topic of videogame misandry in an article about videogame misogyny at all? They are two different things. I get the feeling that the commenters here who went with this route is saying either (1)"Misogyny? What Misogyny? It doesn't exist at all! But Misandry does! Look at me, focus your attention to me and my problems!", or (2)"What, you think the women have problems? HA! The males have it worse," like it's some sort of Woe-me-I'm-being-opressed pissing contest.

Genuinely thinking that misandry in videogames exist doesn't mean that you have to ignore or downplay the issue of misogyny. Misogyny in videogames is real, and if you refuse to see that you are blind and ignorant.



joefigaro
on **October 20, 2012 at 5:25 am** said:

The article brought up misandry and mostly dismisses it, so commenters are reacting to that.



liitu
on **November 1, 2012 at 10:22 pm** said:

possibly because misandry doesn't actually exist.



cappe
on **January 11, 2013 at 11:59 pm** said:

I'm pretty sure that your comment pretty much is the very definition of sexism.



Jesus
on **January 12, 2013 at 2:02 am** said:

There are people who actually believe this.



Lark
on **June 15, 2012 at 9:26 pm** said:

Wait, so we can't save women in video games. But we can't also fight them if they are villains. So unless they are the main character it sounds like you are saying they should be left out of the game. I guess, I dunno. I agree with a lot of this article. The over sexualization of women is bad but unless you are playing as Samus Aran or Laura Croft, you know, female protagonists, where would the girl characters fit into a game? I'm legit asking a question here not trying to troll, haha.



Juergen Mayer
on **June 15, 2012 at 5:07 pm** said:

@Sexualization

That's exactly the problem and realist prejudice against fantasies. Besides of "The Sims" or Jason Rohrer's "Passage", which I consider a quite abstract game by the way, I hardly know any game which would even suppose to portray characters in their everyday lives. On the contrary, for the most part, they portray people in extraordinary circumstances, situations out of the question of one's real endeavours. Often aspirational fantasies, as Amy Hennig was once calling them.

Even in titles like "Heavy Rain" a protagonist is not portrayed in her or his everyday lives all the time, when for example Madison Paige is forced to strip. And no, she's not a stripper in that game, not by profession.

What "sexualization" therefore says is basically that people have to be the way they are (born, occupied or whatever it means). Even in video games.

What else? In dreams, wishes or other thoughts too?

Who dictates that? You and your friends? Society? The same society which Pasolini once said is constantly destroying the culture of each individual?

With the power of (at least near-)perfect behaviours, tastes and feelings. Their violence against other beings, lives.

Social capital?

And that's what I think discriminates people who are different, want different things, and that's also what I consider to be very offensive. Regardless of body, gender, or sex -



Victoria

on **June 15, 2012 at 9:09 am** said:

There are stereotypes in games of both sexes however, one of the main differences is that there are enough male-dominated games that the stereotypical men are not all that exist and while there are some female characters that are more dynamic, they are still few and far between. That's what the main issue is. As the writer states, the point of this is not to eliminate sexy women, helpless women, or even the disproportionately large-breasted women; the point is that those women should not be the norm and that women can and should be used in a wider variety of ways. I would think that gamers would support this because it opens up the gaming industry to being more creative rather than making the same basic game over and over again just with new names and faces.

Also the problem with the assertion that the game portrays men as expendable is that when you are shooting a guy, your character is almost always also a male so you can make the distinction between good guys and bad guys rather than thinking you're gonna blow up a bunch of males.

Male issues become much more prevalent when you add the race factor. How black characters (men) are portrayed or Asians or Hispanics? This is when the video game industry marginalizes certain male players but not males as a whole.

I did not read it as saying that women should not be hurt in games. Of course they should be in fighting games and similar genres. Female gamers would be just as disappointed if women could not be hurt or fight, but their clothes don't have to come off after being punched. They can fight and get hurt without mysogyny.



Tokechan

on **June 15, 2012 at 5:21 am** said:

Downplaying/dismissing the harmful effects of male stereotypes in videogames is a common feminist comeback to the misogynist come-back from #7. I'm not going to say that harmful male stereotypes should put us on equal ground, in terms of dismissing the impact of harmful female stereotypes, what I would argue, is that contrary to what the hypothetical misogynist is saying, and even possibly the author of this article, we SHOULD care.

Certain male stereotypes harm both males (often in similar ways to how female ones harm females), AND females. Wouldn't it be nice if guys were more sensitive, ladies? TOO BAD. Males are told to be stoic, hide their feelings, and not talk about them, or worry too much about other people's. We are also often told, often through our media, that it is bad for us to have any female characteristics, that we have to be super manly, which is obviously a major feminist concern, because it is enforcing the idea that female=bad the same way that female gendered insults do, as well as being cis biased.

Feminism is firmly rooted in the world of gender issues and it is important to consider all genders when making a feminist argument. Being dismissive of ANY gender's issues, even cis-male ones, serves not only to alienate/antagonize some people, but can actually have a negative impact on other genders because of overlapping issues.

On an slightly unrelated note, on the topic of the whole violence against woman as relates to #11, I would argue that in many cases, women NOT getting hurt in videogames is misogynistic. When there's something happening in a videogame where PEOPLE are getting hurt, if only men are getting hurt, then this is saying women aren't as strong as men, aren't as important etc. Saying "Nobody enjoys seeing women getting hurt", is not a valid argument against "It totally makes sense in the story of the game". If people are getting hurt in a game because of some conflict that is happening, saying that people can get hurt to advance the plot, but women can't is SEXIST. It's the same bullshit chivalry thing as "women shouldn't have to open doors" (not that I don't think holding doors for people isn't a nice and acceptable gesture).

I know you were probably talking more about cases where domestic abuse is depicted, or the whole "women in refrigerators" thing, but I just wanted to make the distinction, that if due to the story's conflict people are getting hurt, it TOTALLY makes sense for there to be depictions of women getting hurt in games.

Cheers.

*Edited for typos version, please post this one and delete other one, thanks.



Tony

on **June 15, 2012 at 5:00 am** said:

Your points have merit, but some of these examples are terrible.

That clip from Shadows of the Damned? It happens five minutes into the game, before you even know the main character's name. Of course she has no characteristics! And those guys attack him as he comes home to find her like that, so of course she would be part of the scene at that point.

And Harley Quinn? Who is trying to kill Batman? What would you suggest Batman do? Seriously?

You make valid points, but you could at least do some research before you write at large about it.



Florian S.

on **June 14, 2012 at 10:54 am** said:

- removed by admin -



Jac

on **June 14, 2012 at 5:11 am** said:

I get what you're saying, but it's coming to the point that there is only female problems in video games or anything for that matter, but everything is peachy for how males are depicted. You talk about stereotypes that are bad for women and yet men are all heroic and dominating... other men in these games 99% of time (other 1% is aliens). Does this mean that females that play these games are becoming misandric? After all, they're killing men, making them disposable and not even thinking about it. Men do it too of course. Death and the disposable male is throughout our media, but I don't see anyone making lists about it (probably because it would take too long or no one would care).

Women = Sex objects

Men = canon fodder and disposable

I don't know which is worse, but at least one lives through the game (movie/book) the majority of the time (Duke Nuk'em Forever aside... the game is dumb and shouldn't be used as an example of anything other than how to make a bad game, imo. Most gamers that I saw were disgusted by the hive level.).

Men are almost always the enemy in these games, getting shot, blown up and destroyed, yet... "hurt or otherwise devalued, is created by the writers." -Is a problem when it happens to women but not when the entire game devalues men? It's a social taboo to hurt women, but not men and no one sees a problem with that, especially in games (No, it isn't a male club as much as it use to be. There are quiet a few women in game dev now, from animation and art to writing. They're okay with this too if the games they work on are any indication).

Perhaps I'm misunderstanding what you're saying, please correct me if I'm wrong. Maybe you're not saying that women shouldn't be hurt or what not in media if the story calls for it, just as it would of a man. If that's the case, I apologize.

If you really think that these games affect how people think and understand the world, shouldn't you be more worried about all these gamers playing violent games where men are blown to pieces in 'awesome trick shots' and groin shots. Where people think it's funny to shoot a guy in the nuts, or funny when one gets turned into hamburger by a shotgun. Of course, there are no conclusive studies that show violent games = violence in the real world. So why assume that these stereotypes in games would make men misogynistic and not assume the opposite?

You are also disregarding that trash talk happens all the time, and trash talking will take the easiest route (maybe not you, but I see it brought up all the time and I'm on a writing kick :). Men are called gay, fags, pedophiles virgins and basement dwellers (a favorite among women) and everything else under the sun in these games. Why would one assume it would be different for women? Yes, you are attacked on your gender... just like everyone else. Should it be fixed? Is it a problem? I don't know, I tend to just ignore asshats the best I can (games have block and mute), but I don't tend to play on consoles for the very fact that there are A LOT of internet tough guys that don't shut up.

This is what is making me tune out most arguments like this, they are always one sided and always playing at making everything worse for one side, rather then looking at BOTH sides and seeing what could be done to make it better for all, rather than just for some. As I said, I see your side, but marginalize the other side as you did devalues your points imo. And yes, some men (not really men, mostly teenage boys who feel powerful across the internet) will marginalize women issues, but I would think you're above that.

Honestly, I'm seeing a lot more well portrayed women in games. There will always be those stylized games (Batman comes to mine) where women look like they're falling out of their clothes... but then usually so do the men. It's a style and people can not like it, but that doesn't mean it has to go away, just as with comic-books. But then, that's just my opinion.

Take care,

PS. Your points would probably go over a little better without the Own up or change bit. It does nothing but goad, if that's your intent.. well, imo, you've lost the argument already.



Michael

on **June 13, 2012 at 10:32 pm** said:

>Where did you read that violence should be generally avoided and where did you read that women should not be shown as sexy? I did not write that as far as I know. There is no need to point that out.

I read "Dismissing the term misogyny, when it comes to the overwhelming sexualization of women and the objectification of women, is just a result of you not knowing your definitions correctly" as your suggesting that any portrayal of women as sexy is on a similar level to offering them prejudice, hatred, and violence. My comment was intended to make clear that there is a distinction between these two ideas, that your post seems both to ignore and to belittle as ignorant those who maintain that distinction.



Anjin Anhut

on **June 13, 2012 at 10:50 pm** said:

Hey Michael...

Please, do not conflate sexualization with sexuality.
Sexualization is not portrayal as sexy. That another problem with definitions.

Sexualization is depicting things as "sexual in nature". Meaning that women are depicted to be naturally sexual creatures, instead of just people who have a sex live. Imagine the equation of orcs = evil tribe in games. So goes women = sex persons.

My text never questions if women should be displayed sexy. Sexualization is creating a narrative in which the default impression of women is to be sexy all the time. It creates a distorted image of when why and how women express their own sexuality. And pushing women into a corner in which any sort of opinion about female characters is always related to sex, is prejudice.

I don not belittle people who do not make that distinction, I just use my words carefully and my words actually make a distinction here.



colby

on **June 13, 2012 at 10:16 pm** said:

Florian, that's a pretty big stretch. The fact is, having your shit together IS a positive trait. If you don't, you shouldn't fake it, but it's a good thing. And to the extent that male video game characters model that behavior (which isn't nearly as pervasive as you claim, given that the most famous male video game character of all, the character that is, in fact, synonymous with video games for most people, is a bumbling, overweight plumber), they're providing men something to aspire to AT LEAST as much as they're making men defensive about their own capabilities/masculinity.

And, of course, the male characters are simply not alienating to men as the females one are to women. I'm no one's idea of Nathan Drake or John Marston, but I certainly feel no hesitation about jumping into their skin.

Can women say the same about stereotypical female characters? I certainly can't speak for them, but I have trouble imagining they can play Bloodrayne or Mortal Kombat without at least a preliminary eyeroll.

And far too often, female characters are modeling negative attributes. "Asking for help when needed" is of course a positive attribute, but being a persistent victim with no personal agency is not- and let's be honest for just one minute and admit that the latter is FAR more common than the former.

As for the "leave women alone" stuff- that's self-contradictory nonsense. Women's rights were recognized the same way this issue is being pushed- women took action, convinced some male allies, and those allies took action, too. That's what's happening here. Yeah, if women made up 50% of the market in video games, we'd see some changes- but they're not going to do that much until some of these things change. And that's bad for video games AND for men who like video games as much as anything.



Anjin Anhut

on **June 13, 2012 at 10:52 pm** said:

Hey Colby...

Thanks for your elaborate comment replying to Florian.
Word! I so subscribe to that!



Michael

on **June 13, 2012 at 6:13 pm** said:

The problem with this type of 'call to action' is that it draws too wide a net.

1. Violence specifically against women in games should generally be avoided. That's obvious and uncontroversial.
2. Women in games should never be depicted as sexy or attractive, or that's misogyny and an attack on all women. Wait, what?

Women can be sexy. There's this glamorization of women who dress plainly but carry an attractive attitude, and that's fine, but having characters who are outright sexy and dress in a sexy manner is fine, too. Strong women don't need to reject their own sexuality to be strong.



Anjin Anhut

on **June 13, 2012 at 6:38 pm** said:

Michael: Where did you read that violence should be generally avoided and where did you read that women should not be shown as sexy? I did not write that as far as I know. There is no need to point that out.



Florian S.

on **June 13, 2012 at 6:07 pm** said:

Oh for the love of the invisible pink unicorn!

Male Stereotypes are not as harmful as female stereotypes?

Really? The stereotypical presentation of men as always getting their stuff together without the help of others and when they need a lot of help it is considered a weakness is not harmful at all?

You know, that thing that makes it so hard for boys/men to ask for help/show emotions because they fear to be labeled as weak/spineless and not like the heroic stereotypes they grew up with especially when they are surrounded by other males?

You know which also makes it less likely that men go and see a doctor by themselves when they are in pain and which causes a lot of deaths by heart-diseases and high blood pressure etc. that could have been prevented?

Now tell me how teaching that it is ok for women to realise that they need help or show emotions and that males are always supposed to help people in need has so much worse consequences on society?

Isn't it ironic how downplaying the effects of the male stereotype in regards of the female one is caused by the very same male stereotypes you are downplaying?

"I have to be heroic and defend females from stereotypes, but males do not need to be defended from them because you know...what their stereotypes show is not that bad"

Part of accepting/respecting someone is to trust that they are strong enough to do certain things on their own and to resist the urge to step in and help as well.

So maybe leave women the fuck alone in this matter and let them judge what is harmful and what not? Like how they convinced men to give them the right to vote/ to work / raise children alone by themselves?

As women become more and more significant in the gaming industry, they will have more and more influence over it as well.



Person

on **December 15, 2012 at 9:28 pm** said:

This part I don't really understand. Just because stereotypes against men exist does not suddenly make stereotypes against women okay. And, if you're really unhappy with the stereotypes against men, then why are you opposed to people who want to change that?

Also, I'm not sure what kind of messed up history book you read, but women did not earn those rights by "leaving everything alone". It took a lot of hard fighting for decades to earn those rights.



Retired Human
on **January 13, 2013 at 7:12 pm** said:

You know that more men fought for women's rights than women did? There are very few places where negative sexual stereotypes are still enforced. One of them being Administration jobs. To this day a woman with half the qualifications of a man will be picked over the man. Women are proven to be better at the job than men are.

If women want to be more prevalent in the gaming industry then well let them. They can build up their fan-base like every other game studio had to. If suddenly it was all "women-type-games" which I have no idea how you would distinguish between them an "male-type-games" then men might go elsewhere for entertainment (and we don't want you following us!).

Frankly you sound like a consumer who just wants to see a make-believe world of 50-50 involvement of men and women. This will never be the case as we are fundamentally designed different and derive fun from different ideas and activities.

I find these kind of arguments as hosts to "negative sexual stereotypes" themselves.



Michael Weir
on **June 13, 2012 at 4:59 pm** said:

It is a male dominated industry and, well, boys will be boys. BUT, men should be men and not put women with midriffs and grossly out of proportion breasts in their video games. I'd like to see some deeper research into this. I know that development teams aren't made up of 16 year old teens, but I wonder if games market or sell better (to the males of this male dominated industry) if they feature over-sexualized and/or helpless females. I haven't done the research so I can't presume to know.

Or how about a list of video games that don't star women who are underdressed and overly sexualized? There's a few out there, the most obvious coming to mind being Beyond Good and Evil.

Then there are games that draw the line. Heavy Rain featured Madison Paige, a headstrong, independent and compassionate woman who seems to be capable of holding her during violent physical confrontations with men. At one point fighting her way out of the basement of a murderer/rapist (should the player choose this fate for her), yet the first time players are introduced to her we're allowed to strip her down nude in a topless shower scene (although she looks perfectly human with average sized breasts).



Juergen Mayer
on **June 13, 2012 at 4:03 pm** said:

Most video games are heterosexual fantasies for males. Starting with "Custer's Revenge" and "Donkey Kong" (both from 1980, the year I was born). But for what purpose, and how? Many of them may be misogynistic, sexist or racist, like "Custer's Revenge" – even though I consider that in most cases their intentions can be questioned. Heavily.

For example: I think the idealized Girlfriend-character in last year's "Shadows of the Damned" is a manifestation of dreams. Foremost the dreams of this audience, i. e. heterosexual males. I think it's mostly about stereotypic male sexuality. This year's game by the same developer, "Lollipop Chainsaw", is mostly about the same male views on female sexuality. I guess you consider that also misogynistic: but how, then, is female sexuality in media dealt with in the "right" way? According to people like you, I guess "normal" people who "criticize" things that go "wrong"? What is sexuality anyway. And why should it be "women": what are "men" and "women"? For you, does sexual expression even exist? Or just oppression? And why should the objectivation of sexuality always be an objectification of women? On the contrary, I think that sexuality is never about real people. Never about real lives but always about the imagination of beings, things etc. People that don't really exist but in ones hopes, wishes or ideals.

I'm a handicapped guy and I like to play sports games. Sports games without wheelchairs in them: according to this I should damn all sports games because they don't represent me properly.

Ok, I'm a minority and women are not: but what does that mean? Why should these "normal" people oppress the fact that people are different, people want different things and so forth: I guess some people want things "normal" people don't. Ok, but... You know what: I even don't know what "normal" people are -



Q

on **June 13, 2012 at 3:39 pm** said:

Good list. Also I'd add the variations on "But films/jobs/tech/politics are all sexist! Stop picking on us! We're just a product of society, when you change that we'll be better"



qubodup

on **June 13, 2012 at 3:18 pm** said:

/me clicks all the social network buttons.



Dom Camus

on **June 13, 2012 at 10:38 am** said:

This gets my vote for best treatment of the topic so far. Great work!

Point 3's "But 1" is something which really should be said more often. Particularly great is that it's worded to contain almost none of the feminist terminology prone to causing instant hostility in the target audience. This might actually convince some people!



Anjin Anhut

on **June 13, 2012 at 11:02 am** said:

Thanks. I know quite a few people, who genuinely are nice guys, but rationalize their misogynic behavior using some of the defenses listed. One can only hope, that they spend some thought on it.