

The Elven Slave and Conan The Barbarian

Male Sexualization in Video Games

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Bachelor Thesis, 15 ECTS Credits

Degree project in Game Design & Graphics

Game Design & Graphics, spring 2012

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Preface

I would like to thank Fia Andersson, Adam Mayes and Pernilla Sparrhult for all of their support and feedback during this degree project.

Abstract

This is a thesis based on a survey, targeted at self-proclaimed gamers that identified themselves as homosexual males, male and female bisexuals, and heterosexual females. The survey asked them the basic question “What constitutes a sexualized male for you?”

The aim of the thesis is to find out if male sexualization exists in video games and, if it does, how males are sexualized. I analyzed video games with focus on how male bodies are perceived and/or created for them. I used existing research in comparative fields, including research into illustrations found in Japanese video games and comics that are targeted based on sexualized males. I then analyzed male video game characters in different genres based on the results.

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1. Introduction

In 2012, Anita Sarkeesian started a campaign to raise enough money to create and record a documentary about how women are often portrayed in a sexualized manner in video games, a brooding storm unleashed over the video game community.

“What about the male characters?” many asked, but when trying to defend how sexualized males were, no one in the discussion seemed to be able to give an example that wasn’t contradicted by someone else.

This led me to the question... Is there male sexualization in video games to be found, and what do people perceive it to be?

With this thesis I will examine these questions.

2. Background

This thesis which is based on a survey that targets self-proclaimed gamers that identified themselves as homosexual males, male and female bisexuals, and heterosexual females, asking them the basic question “What constitutes a sexualized male for you?”

The aim is to find out if male sexualization exists in video games, and how males are sexualized. I analyzed video games with focus on how male bodies are perceived and/or created for them through existing research. This includes a study on how close to reality the video game’s male bodies are. Another study included is one that goes deep into why and how males are portrayed in a certain way inside of a video game genre that specifies itself on storytelling. It’s a Japanese genre that merely exists to satisfy the player’s desire for romance or sexual lust. Therefore, while researching what makes it special, I try to discover an English equivalent.

As the same type of storytelling is used in a Japanese comic format, research made on the same questions for the comic format is included as well.

Along with these studies, I will also describe the terms around the topic of sexualization, and shortly go through how it differs for women and men only where perspective is needed. Some coined terms for female sexualization might be able to be transferred onto the male equivalent, but some might not.

2.1. Stereotyping

In sociology, stereotyping is considered to be a set of inaccurate, simplistic generalizations about a group that allows others to categorize them and treat them accordingly (Collins 2009).

2.2. Objectification

Martha Nussbaum (1995: 257) describes objectification as the idea of treating a person as an object. She has identified seven features that are involved in doing so:

1. instrumentality: the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier's purposes;

2. denial of autonomy: the treatment of a person as lacking in autonomy and self-determination;
3. inertness: the treatment of a person as lacking in agency, and perhaps also in activity;
4. fungibility: the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects;
5. violability: the treatment of a person as lacking in boundary-integrity;
6. ownership: the treatment of a person as something that is owned by another (can be bought or sold);
7. denial of subjectivity: the treatment of a person as something whose experiences and feelings (if any) need not be taken into account.

Rae Langton (2009: 228–229) has added three more features to Nussbaum's list:

8. reduction to body: the treatment of a person as identified with their body, or body parts;
9. reduction to appearance: the treatment of a person primarily in terms of how they look, or how they appear to the senses;
10. silencing: the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak.

2.3. Sexual Objectification

Sexual objectification is the viewing of people solely as de-personalized objects of desire instead of as individuals with complex personalities and desires/plans of their own. This is done by speaking/thinking of a person especially as only their bodies, either the whole body, or as fetishized body parts.

Sexual attraction is not the same as sexual objectification: objectification only occurs when the individuality of the desired person is not acknowledged. Pornography, prostitution, sexual harassment and the representation of women in mass media and art are all examples of common sexual objectification (Smythe 2007).

2.4. Sexualization

Sexualization is to become sexual or sexually aware, or to give or acquire sexual associations (Collins 2009). It's when one is treating other people and oneself as an object of desire, with their value primarily from sex appeal and physical attractiveness (Shewmaker 2011).

2.5. The Male Gaze

There is a technique for the use of female sexualization in films. It's called "The Male Gaze" and is often used by putting the camera in specific angles, movements and zooms – all of them examining and focusing the female character's body in detail, attracting the gaze of a male and his full attention. The character can also pose for the camera herself, showing off her body parts towards the lens in an erotic and exhibitionistic way (Mulvey, 1975: 6-18). It is also used by cameras and some female characters in video games in the same way.

TVTropes (2012) has created a list with examples of this method used in Video Games, showing forty-three examples of a female being subjected with this gaze (showing off either buttocks or chest) and another list with seven males (Tvtropes 2012). The lists are being updated to this day.

Example:



Fig. 44. A screenshot from the video game Mass Effect 2, showcasing the use of the Male Gaze. The camera's angle is cutting off the female's head and paying detail to the buttocks and breasts. (Bioware, 2010-2011)

2.5.1. Female Posing

As said about the Male Gaze, women can exhibit their body towards the camera. A term has been coined for a certain kind of pose that is used to show off a female's two most sexual body features: her breasts and her buttocks. It's called "The Brokeback Pose", which basically means the person (often the woman) in question has to own a broken back or spine to be able to move her body in such a way. This pose even has a dedicated website with more extreme examples than those shown in this thesis.



Fig. 1. "Dance", Alfons Mucha, 1898



Fig. 2. Witchblade, #131, Top Cow Universe, 2009



Fig. 3. Ayumi, X-Blades, Gaijin Entertainment, 2007

2.6. The Female Gaze

The Female Gaze is something both Mulvey (1975) and Berger (1972) describe as watching the self being watched. Berger also says a male is unable to bare the gaze of another, thus saying the Female Gaze does not exist except when other females are watching either themselves, or other women. These examples are from 1970's however, and have since then been criticized.

In a more recent book, Susan Bordo's "The Male Body" (1999), it's discussed how the way a man is appearing in advertisement is starting to develop into something new, to many men's outrage.

First, Bordo explains how advertisement is usually portrayed for a heterosexual man, something she calls "The Face Off".

Overall, these ads depict what I would describe as "face-off masculinity," in which victory goes to the dominant contestant in a game of will against will. Who can stare the other man down? Who will avert his eyes first? Whose gaze will be triumphant...? (Bordo, 1999)

Bordo then explains there is a new, more feminized approach. The example given is a man in a Calvin Klein advertisement.

[...] my gaze is invited by something "feminized" about the young man. [...] this model's beautiful languid body posture, his averted look are classic signals, both in the "natural" and the "cultural" world, of willing subordination. He offers himself nonaggressively to the gaze of the another. Hip cocked in the snaky S-curve usually reserved for depictions of women's bodies, eyes downcast but not closed, he gives off a sultry, moody, subtle but undeniably seductive consciousness of his erotic allure. Feast on me, I'm here to be looked at, my body is for your eyes (Bordo, 1999).

She continues to discuss how this inviting pose is often mislabeled as passive, when in reality, inviting, receiving and responding are all active behaviors. She believes it's a macho bias to view the only real activity as that which takes, invades and aggresses. This, she believes, might be because of Greek, Latin and prison cultures that make it okay to sleep with a man, as long as one is labeled as "active" (the penetrator), and the other "passive" (the penetree).

She then quotes gay theorist Ron Long who describes the difference between these two advertisements:

[...] lean, taut, sinuous muscles rather than Schwarzenegger bulk-- points to a "dynamic tension" that the incredible hulks lack. Stiff, engorged Schwarzenegger bodies, he says, seem to be surrogate penises-- with nowhere to go and nothing to do but stand there looking massive --whereas muscles like this young man's seem designed for movement, for sex (Bordo, 1999).

Bordo describes how her gaze - a female one - can be put into action by using a more lean-built man who uses activity in a feminized manner to invite the viewer, instead of telling it to look away.

2.6.1. Men Exposed to the Female Gaze

The seven male examples of TVTropes (2012) “Male Gaze” exist on a separate page for what is called the “Female Gaze”. It is quite the same as its male counterpart but in the examples given often involves a man’s tight pants instead of his chest, how other characters in game talk about the man’s pants, and none of the males in the examples know they’re being watched by the camera. A few of the examples also include how characters in a series of video games have become more handsome.

2.6.1.1. Male Posing

While there doesn’t seem to be much official artwork from video games where males use the female gaze to their advantage there are many drawn by fans. These unofficial erotic and sexually explicit drawn images of males in video games by fans of the games, which is usually called “Fanart”. It means the piece of artwork described is based on a character, costume, item, or story that was created by someone other than the artist. In my research I found many that included a strong and very manly character from a video game, often put in submissive and oppressed situations. Quite evident was also the high amount of erotic images between two male characters with no female ever present.

For example, fanarts made by Joe Phillips (2012) show how male superheroes can be shown in a more female gaze-friendly manner. The four superheroes in the examples are pushing their hips to the side or doing a bit of a “Brokeback Pose”, all while holding onto a part of their costume; showing off their chest with a very distinguished V-line going down to their crotch.

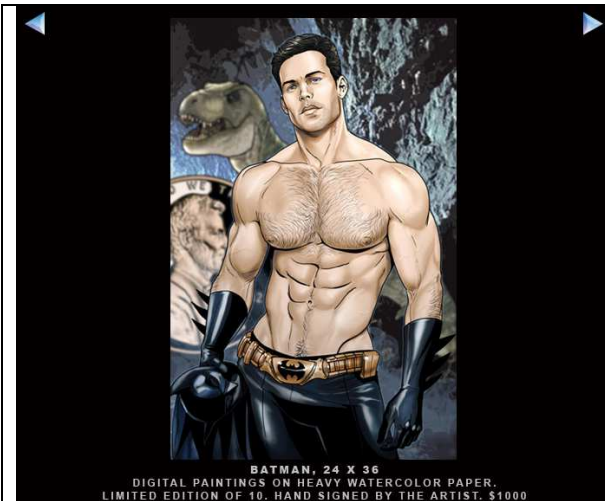


Fig. 5. “Batman”, Joe Phillips, 2012

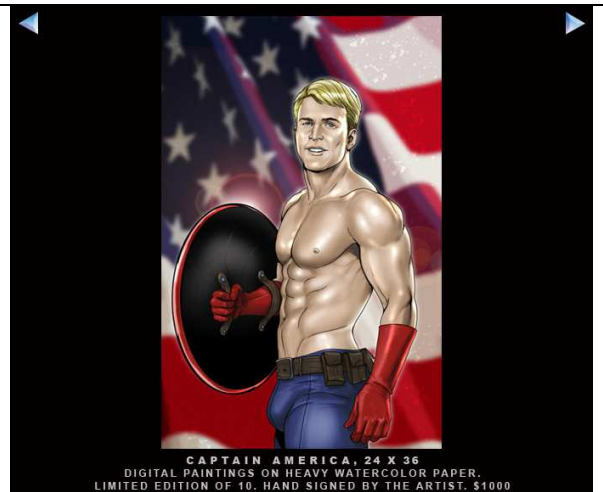


Fig. 6. “Captain America”, Joe Phillips, 2012

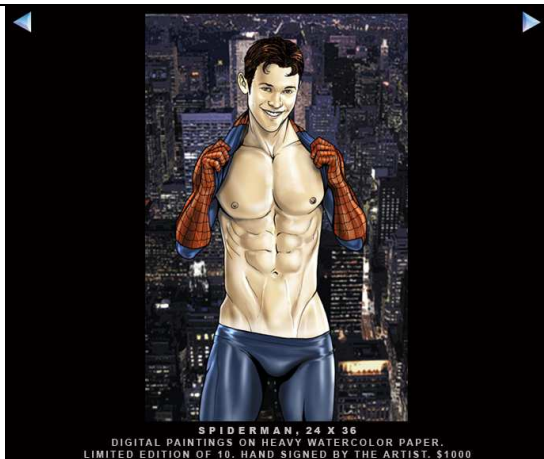


Fig. 7. “Spiderman”, Joe Phillips, 2012

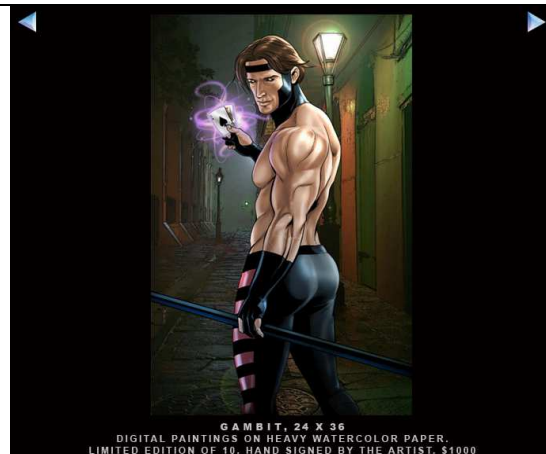


Fig. 8. “Gambit”, Joe Phillips, 2012

2.7. The Male Character’s Body

A common feature in female sexualization in games is the exposure of a skewed female body image. The body is the one of the biggest features in sexualization, so how do most of the male bodies in video games look like?

In a study named “Virtual muscularity: A content analysis of male video game characters“, by Martins et al. (2009), researchers wanted to know how far off male video game characters’ bodies were compared the males who played them. They found through measuring male video game characters bodies that characters at high levels of photorealism were larger than the average American male, but that those characters did not mirror the V-shaped ideal found in mainstream media. Characters at low levels of photorealism were also larger than the average American male, but the dimensions of these characters were so much larger that they

appeared cartoonish in nature. When game rating was taken into account, the results revealed that hyper muscular male characters were more likely to be found in games rated for children than in games rated for adults.

Game players, on average, encounter characters that have chest sizes that are 6% larger than the average male, and characters with waists and hips that are 14% and 16% larger than the average male respectively.

Martins et al. concluded with help of research made earlier (Martins et al. 2009: p. 824–836) that female video game characters at high levels of photorealism approached the thin-ideal more closely than characters at low levels of photorealism. Highly realistic characters were larger, but not necessarily more muscular. The researchers asked themselves, why are video game designers creating idealized female characters, but attainable male characters at high levels of photorealism?

One of their theories were that game designers created thinner women at high levels of photorealism to emulate what gamers are accustomed to seeing in other media, or perhaps game designers created idealized women because they represented objects of male fantasy, while the male characters are “just slightly better” than the average male to give game players a realistic model to which they could aspire (Martins, Nicole; C. Williams, Dmitri; A. Rabindra, Ratan; Harrison, Kristen, 2009: p. 43-51).

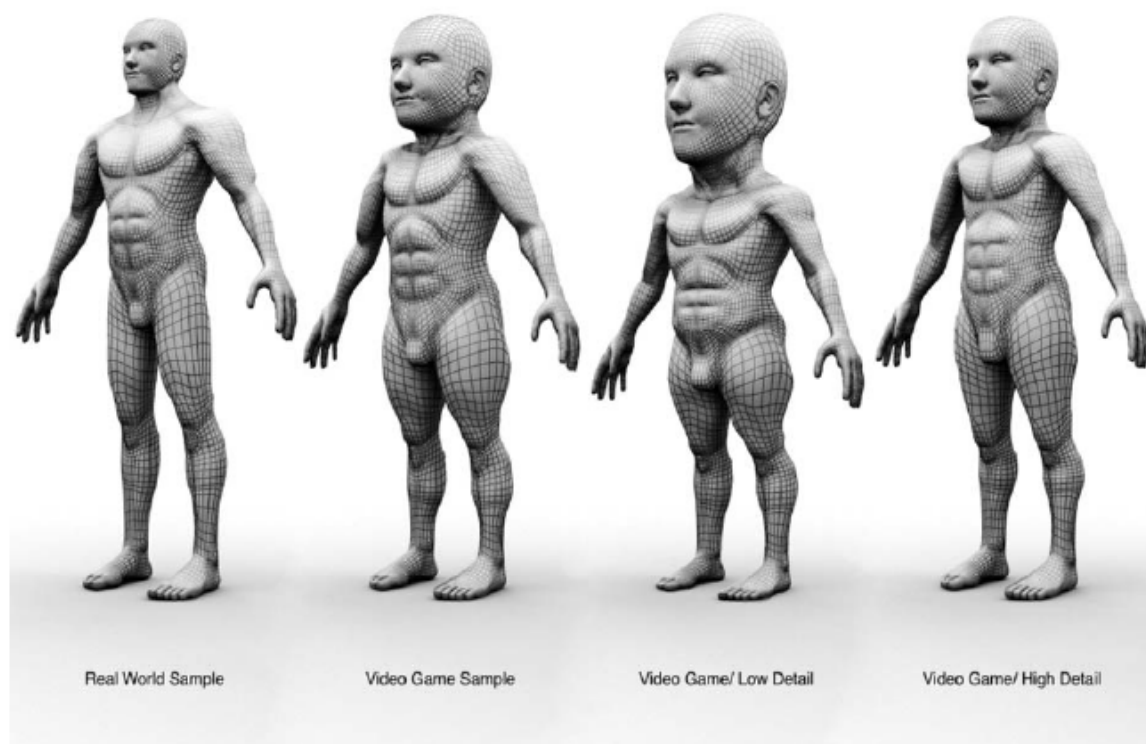


Fig. 4. Example of the differences between video games; low levels of photorealism and high level of photorealism (Martins et al. 2009: p.50).

2.8. Male Sexual Objectification in Visual Novels

In this section I will discuss a Japanese game (and comic) genre that exists to satisfy the player's romantic and sexual lust. I will see if there any sexual stereotypes I can use for my research.

2.8.1. The Erotic Visual Novel

The erotic visual novel exists in a genre that is named “Eroge” in Japan, but is often also described as a “dating-sim” (short for dating simulation) in the West. These Japanese sexually explicit computers games are best described as visual “Choose Your Own Adventure” novels. Players have minimal interactive engagement with the game apart from reading through scripted dialogue and narrative text, viewing static anime-style CG (Computer Graphic) images while listening to accompanying audio dialogue. The only input players have revolves around making choices throughout the game (Wood 2010:354).

As far as my research went, there were no sexually explicit Eroge's released in Japan from a female perspective, but it did find two that were western-made by a fan community using the engine Ren'Py (a free software engine which facilitates the creation of visual novels with the help of the coding language Python) (Ren'Py, 2012). The first game named "That Cheap and Sacred Thing" was rated as sixteen years and above, telling the story of a man who had only been told by his android baby-sitter that she loved him, but then she disappeared. With the help of a prostitute he aims to find her again (Carosene, 2011).

The other game named "Torrey & the Vampire" was rated eighteen years and above, telling the story of a young female who has heard rumors about a male neighbor being a vampire and decides to investigate (Hawke, 2010).

While no Japanese sexual Eroge was found with a female as the main character, there were dating-sims where a female could choose a male to pursue, and if successful, he becomes the female's boyfriend. There were plenty of male stereotypes found in these games, all of them usually going under the common "Bishōnen" in Japanese.

2.8.1.1. Bishōnen

Bishōnen typically means "beautiful boy", and is a male character that possesses androgynous or 'feminine' physical traits. He is usually tall, slender with almost no fat, usually little to no muscle, and no body or facial hair. Large, expressive eyes are almost a given, and it is not uncommon for those at the more feminine end to be mistaken for women by other characters (Wood 2010).

2.8.1.2. Boys Love; Uke and Seme

Japanese Female heterosexuals who want eroticism in their Eroge seem to make do with a genre that is called Boys Love (two males falling in love with each other), a genre that is, according to Andrea Wood (2010), actually created for a female audience; schoolgirl and adult alike (Wood 2010:354).

Brewer (2009) elaborates on this;

Boys Love narratives correspond to women's subconscious, their wish to nullify their femininity and identify with their masculine identities. As critics like Nakajima Azusa and Miyasako Chizuru (1984) point out, many Boys Love consumers convince themselves that fantasies of male-male sex constitute the only medium through which they can sublimate the dilemmas associated with being a woman within a patriarchal context (Brewer 2009).

In the fan-made western community this was quite evident as well; the Boys Love genre had six out of twelve “sixteen years and above/eighteen years and above” while the “female pursues male” only had two out of thirty-eight, meaning that explicit (and sexual) content where a boy is pursued is more common when a boy is pursuing him, instead of a girl.

Boys Love is a Japanese genre that exists in manga (Japanese equivalent to comic books), anime (animated comics) and visual novels. Another term for it is Shonen Ai or Yaoi. The stories may differ, but no matter if it's a book or a visual novel, the stereotypes are still the same.

2.8.1.2.1. The Different Stereotypical Boys In Love

The theme usually goes with what is called a “Seme” and an “Uke”, both of them representing the American term “Top” or a “Bottom”, explaining if one is active and one is passive. Sometimes the roles switch in between the two for added surprises. According to research made by Linderström (2007), these characters tend to be a standardization of making one character female (Uke) and one male (Seme). She did also mention there were 3 different kinds of males to be found in Boys Love Manga:

2.8.1.2.1.1. Personality type A – Exaggerated Masculinity

This person is established and known and perceived as a foreigner. He is also characterized by the humiliating behavior towards his lovers as well as being violent in sexual situations, which are quite explicit. In his relationships he is violent, dominant, oppressive, mocking, sexually demanding and very protective.

He sexually penetrates his lovers, but never gets penetrated himself. He is always an adult (Linderström 2007:19)

In a study made by Nagaike, (2009) most of the characters with the same characteristics as mentioned above are often either Caucasian or Arab. Arabs in Yaoi have, according to Kuwahara (2008):

“[...] matchless sexual appetites. Arab seme characters are the strongest seme in the world. Without the characteristic of a matchless sexual appetite, no Arab seme character would be recognizable.”(Kuwahara 2008: front cover)

There are also two other stereotypes in Boys Love that Linderström (2007) describe:

2.8.1.2.1.2. Personality type B – The Gentle Man

This person's masculinity is emphasized in his appearance and broad shoulders, while his personality is friendly, protective and sentimental. He is an older teen which means he is still in school, but he is still older than his lover and often never has sex with him.

2.8.1.2.1.3. Personality type C – Confused Teenager

This is the usual teenage boy and is most often the targeted lover for Personality A and B and is often branded the “uke”. The uke has a life with school and friends whom he talks about girls with and other interests. He often lives a carefree life until the incomprehensible feeling of love hits him.

The enormous turmoil places him in a situation of brooding, tears and fear. The uke quickly accepts his feelings for someone of the same sex but is afraid to be repelled by the subject if he tells the subject that he loves him. Despite his inferior position in relative to the lover, the uke is very keen to protect him.

He is younger and at a disadvantage when he quickly recognizes his feelings without knowing if the feelings are answered, but he is never the one that initiates the first contact. He (mis) interprets the older man's behavior and believes the man doesn't like him, or that he only wants to be a friend. The uke is protected by his lover, but also tries to protect the one he loves.

Personality Types A and B are both immensely protective. They are also older, taller and far more broad-shouldered than their lover, and have for different reasons a higher social status than him.

None of the characters has any real connection with a female throughout the story, and if they've had intimate relationships with another person (male or female) than the lover they meet in the story, it has been fleeting or unrequited. (Linderström 2007:19-21)

3. Method

This scientific thesis is based around a survey that targeted anonymous gamers that identified themselves as homosexual males, male and female bisexuals, and heterosexual females, consisting of one question. "What constitutes a sexualized male character for you?" I intend to analyze the responses and try to find characters that fit this analysis. This will give me a clearer view if male sexualization exists in video games, and how they are sexualized.

For finding the sexualized male video game characters I am using a list called "The Female Gaze" created by the website TVTropes.com. The site is a collection of various conventions and tropes that are commonly found in television, film, video games, comics and video-games. I am using the list to find suitable male character candidates, as well as my personal knowledge of computer games characters. I want to see if there is a broad spectrum of male sexualization and because of this I am applying the following rules:

- No minor characters
- Most prominent males from the same genre
- Not more than one male from the same game
- No game that is obscure
- No stereotyped male allowed, only objectified and sexualized males

To ensure the results are verifiable I only use characters and games that have been played and reviewed extensively.

3.1. The Survey's Result

A survey was posted on a blog for fans of the fantasy role-playing game "Dungeons and Dragons". Thirty-two anonymous survey members who identified themselves as homosexual males, female and male bisexuals or female heterosexuals answered the question "What constitutes a sexualized male character for you?" (S, Zak: 2011) The responses are summarized below and merged if any member in its group says the same thing.

3.1.1.

Homosexual Males' Response


One participant said he loved a man in black, tight leather. Showing off the buttocks was also important.

Another said he did not like androgynous men, as for him it meant they didn't have something between his legs, which made him unattractive and not someone he'd like to have sex with. Another agreed, saying he preferred his men to look like men. This included things like facial scruff, body hair, sweat (of the glistening variety), and deep voices. Muscles were not required for him, which for another person, it was: "It's about having a defined, traditionally masculine form, and absolutely showcasing it."

Another said he thought sexualized male bodies could be divided into dominant and submissive: "The muscular big v-bodied guys in leather harness armor and Conan loinclothes there to fuck you and own you, and then there are the little narrow-chested elf-boys who wants to be used." He also continued "Sexualization kind of implies that there's someone there to consume that sexuality, like a powerful woman or a rich man or a dumb john or the like. You kind of have to question who the person/character is being sexualized for. Is it for someone who wants to be dominated but have control in how they're dominated? Is it for someone who wants to dominate another person? Do they want to worship their body/musculature/talents/cock?"

One male was stunned that there was not a good answer for male sexualization, only knowing that Aragorn from Lord of the Rings and Han Solo from Star Wars weren't of interest, because they were straight. "I don't want to fuck straight boys, because I don't want to fuck anyone who doesn't want to fuck me. They're hot, sure, but in a meaningless way."

3.1.1.1. Homosexual Male's Examples of Sexualized Males

 The image shows the cover of a comic book titled "MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE: The Motion Picture". The central figure is He-Man, a muscular man with blonde hair, wearing a red loincloth, a silver chest plate with a red cross, and a purple cape. He is holding a large sword. To his right is a large, yellow, skull-like creature with sharp teeth. In the background, there are other characters and a cityscape. The top left corner has the "STAR-comics" logo and a price tag of "\$2.99". The bottom left corner has a star logo and the text "STAR! THE NEW WORLD IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE!".	<p>Description of a sexualized male</p> <p>He-man style leather harness armor and Conan loincloths, lots of bare skin and rippling muscle.</p> <p>Homosexual Male's Motivation: "It's basically the male equivalent of the chainmail bikini; if you want to catch my attention, fur underwear, pointless straps, and lots of blatant frontal nudity does the job very well."</p>
<p>Fig. 43. He-Man on the cover of "Masters of the Universe: The Motion Picture", Star Comics, 1987</p>	

3.1.2. Bisexual Males' Response

One bisexual male did not see masculine men attractive, but men who were in touch with their feminine side.

"Males who seem comfortable with the female (or feminized) parts of themselves," one agreed.

Another said he loved women and men to be androgynous, explaining that what really turned him on with a man was if he was shirtless, without body hair and oiled up. Another example was in a corset or tight breeches and knee socks.

For another bisexual male, he explained his vision of a sexualized male was a fantasy; something larger than life. "If not in physical form, then in some way that is totally disconnected from reality; like a guy with an impossibly huge sword or gun who never wears

a shirt.” The analogy in that was obvious for him, but then again, sexualization for him is never about subtlety.

One male said it depended on his mood. His female side wanted someone big and brutish, well-hung, wearing not much and having leather bits hear and there. The idea of a slightly dumb beast-like man was very erotic, perhaps because it seemed like that raw power could be more easily manipulated to get it to do what he wanted it to do to him. “Submit physically but still maintain ultimate power.”

His male side agreed with many others, saying androgyny appealed, but it had to be the kind that blurs the boundaries between male and female while still projecting sexual and physical potency. A slender and fine-figured man that still knew how to handle himself and was nowhere near what he described as “sissification”, which is a practice often used in female dominance where the male switches into a submissive female role while wearing female clothing.

3.1.2.1. Bisexual Male’s Examples of Sexualized Males:



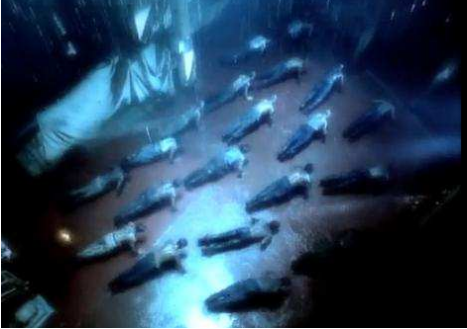
	<p>Jaye Davidson as “Ra” in Stargate</p> <p>Motivation: Is feminine or has feminine parts he’s not afraid to show.</p>
	<p>James Dean in Rebel without a Cause</p> <p>Motivation: Is feminine or has feminine parts he’s not afraid to show.</p>

Fig. 29. Stargate, MGM, 1994

<p>Fig. 30. Rebel Without A Cause, Warner Bros. 1955</p>	
 <p>Fig. 31. "Express Yourself", Madonna, Warner Bros., 1989</p>	<p>Madonna's original video for "Express Yourself"</p> <p>Motivation: The music video hit the tone of submission and raw power with its slightly dumb-looking but buff underwear models toiling in factory, oppressed.</p>

3.1.3. Bisexual Females' Response

One survey participant said it was extremely difficult for her to think up what a sexualized male actually entailed, until she finally concluded "a muscly, oiled-up man is just a muscly, oiled-up man. Han Solo is hot and so is Indiana Jones but Harrison Ford is not. It's really all attitude, character and context."

3.1.4. Heterosexual Females' Response

The heterosexual females were more decisive. "There's a certain part of anatomy," one female said. "When a man has ripped abs or is slender enough they develop this distinct pelvic v leading downwards...well, this man V with low slung black pants. The deliberate emphasis of those particular bones is the only distinctly sexualized part of a man I can think of. Oh, and long hair."

One female said she had a lot of problems finding images of sexualized men she found attractive, but had at least found one example. This was an image of an actor, his shirt pulled up by his muscular arms and sturdy hands. This in turn showed off his defined muscles and hair on his chest, and also showing of the pelvic "V" described in the comment above.

“It's not just the abs, it's everything going on around the picture. His eyes, arm pose, etc.” She continued saying that she preferred accessible men who are tousled and at the same time compassionate and brave.

Being brave was another female's example too. She listed a few male characters she enjoyed, and then realized something about them. They were all highly competent and skilled. They were the best at what they did or were special somehow, meaning they really knew what they were doing.

“A man who can handle his sword or a man who can command a starship and defend himself in battle or a man you know just not to fuck with because it's made obvious by some action in whatever depiction of the character...That's just hot.”

For one female a sexualized man was all about balance: “Rough, but not too rough. Barbaric, but not too much. Smooth and clever, but not too much. Flirty, but not easy. Handsome, but not unobtainable.”

For her, she liked the diamond in the rough. She liked to see (or at least imagine) room for improvement: “That's why the "bad boy" thing works time and time again: Because every woman believes that she will be the one to obtain his trust, to get beneath his hard shell and turn him into a good guy.”

3.1.4.1. Heterosexual Female's Examples of Sexualized Males



Fig. 32. Firefly, 20th Century Fox Television, 2002

Nathan Fillion as “Captain Malcolm Reynolds” in Firefly

Motivation: Just the right combo of danger, humor and loyalty rolled up into a decent-looking package. It's not the actor, per se, but that role.



Fig. 33. Lord of the Rings, New Line Cinema, 2001-2003

Aragorn, Lord of the Rings

Motivation: Scruffy, older, very competent and powerful but also gentle and compassionate. He's honorable--or takes on lots of responsibility but is humble about it.



Fig. 34. Casino Royale, Columbia Pictures, 2006

James Bond, Casino Royale

Motivation: Much commented upon in the media, as he rises from the water in a way where you'd normally expect to see a woman.



Fig. 35. Troy, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2004

Brad Pitt in Troy

Motivation: It is not the character, but the way he looks. He's just damn-right sexy.



Fig. 36. Chained by Frank Frazetta; cover to Conan the Usurper by Robert E Howard, 1967

Conan, the Barbarian

Motivation: Frazetta paintings where he's battling an enemy and half naked and sweat drenched or that one where he's chained up and facing a giant snake and straining towards it – it's raw male power made visible.

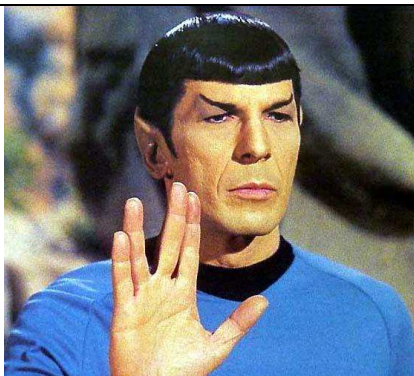


Fig. 37. Star Trek, Desilu Productions 1966-67, Paramount Television 1968-69

Spock, Star Trek

Motivation: Highly intellectual, repressed intense passion--pon farr, slender but powerful physique as Vulcans are much stronger than humans, again older, pale but with dark hair and eyes--a bit devilish/bad-ass looking.



Fig. 38. Star Trek, Desilu Productions 1966-67, Paramount Television 1968-69

Data, Star Trek

Motivation: Can program himself to function for optimal physical pleasure, super strong, intelligent, and still kind of like a virgin.



Fig. 39. Star Trek, Desilu Productions 1966-67, Paramount Television 1968-69

Worf


Motivation: Conan-esque and passionate, honorable, and again with the raw appetites for women and blood/battle and drink.



Fig. 40. Lord of the Rings, New Line Cinema, 2001-2003

Legolas, Lord of the Rings

Motivation: He's just pretty and cocky, but not as attractive as others here named.

 <p>Fig. 41. Star Wars IV: A New Hope, Lucasfilm, 1977</p>	<p>Han Solo, Star Wars</p> <p>Motivation: Cocky, sure of himself and knows how to get things done.</p>
 <p>Fig. 42. Star Wars VI: Return of the Jedi, 1983</p>	<p>Boba Fett, Star Wars</p> <p>Motivation: Bad-ass, mysterious and perhaps inaccessible.</p>

3.2. Introducing The Male Video Game Characters

Introducing characters that I will analyze that might fit into what they want can be found in Appendix A.

4. Result Analysis

The following section contains the analysis of my research into male sexualization in video games.

4.1. The Female Gaze

While Berger (1972) said the female gaze does not exist as men cannot bear to be gazed at, Bordo (1999) describes a “face-off masculinity” for many of the advertisements that are directed at heterosexual men. She mentions it challenging the viewer to avert their eyes; the man in the advertisement is angrily and triumphantly staring the viewer down, waiting for the viewer to avert his eyes. It’s as if saying a heterosexual man cannot bear the gaze of another heterosexual man.

Bordo continues mentioning that newly-made advertisement proves men actively enjoy and invites the female gaze by themselves posing in a more feminine manner.

4.2. What Male Sexualization Means

Male sexualization has a lot in common with male sexual objectification if you compare Smythe’s description (2007) and the survey members’ responses. “Sexual objectification is the viewing of people solely as de-personalized objects of desire instead of as individuals with complex personalities and desires/plans of their own. This is done by speaking/thinking of a person especially as only their bodies, either the whole body, or as fetishized body parts.”

But it’s not completely only about body parts. While looking into Bordo’s book about the Male Body in advertisement, the male described is always active in the way he poses, often taking one of two roles: the one that takes (“aggressive”) or the one that invites (“passive”) (Bordo, 1999).

Survey members declared all that was needed for a sexualized male was to be proud over his body and show it off, which is strengthened by the research of hyper muscularity, made by Martins et al. The research showed that male’s bodies in video games weren’t that much different from males in reality. Their theory was that the male characters are “just slightly better” than the average male to give game players a realistic model to which they could aspire (Martins, Nicole; C. Williams, Dmitri; A. Rabindra, Ratan; Harrison, Kristen, 2009: p.

43-51), but perhaps it is that for a male to be sexualized and attractive, he needs to have a realistic body.

In Bordo's book she mentions that advertisement featuring men for heterosexual men often use men with obscene muscles, these seeming to be surrogate penises; nothing to do but to stand there and look massive.

A sexualized male has a dynamic tension in his lean and taut muscles, as if he's designed for movement, for sex. More or less, even his body is designed to be active (Bordo, 1999).

In terms of my thesis, this information means I will not be analyzing the male's physique of a high importance of sexualization.

Many of the survey members also mentioned that the character should be custom-made for its viewer. As an example, one homosexual man said straight men were hot, but in a meaningless way. This fits #6 on Nussbaum's list of Objectification (1995: 257); "Ownership". This means the character has to appeal to a certain audience not only by looking or acting sexy, but also by having a specific sexual preference.

One survey member thought male sexualization could be divided in a minimum of two different categories: aggressive sexualization and passive sexualization, which strengthens Linderström's (2007) research about it being two different characters in the female oriented genre Boy's Live; a passive Uke and an aggressive Seme. However, there is another character trait in Boy's Love which is the passive Seme. He is still aggressive but more relaxed (and never uses sexual violence), so if plausible, this character is on the list as well (along with one section for examples that were not actually sexualized). Bordo (1999) explains however that the label "passive" does not mean that the male being labeled as such is actually passive. He is always active in his decisions; the label is merely used to say that the "passive" person plays a more feminine part.

4.2.1. Aggressive

An aggressively sexualized male is one that has power by knowing how sexy he is and puts these qualities on display, while still showing a fragile side by being innocent in some aspect, protective of another person, or somehow oppressed. This can be illustrated by not only the

scenarios he is put through, but by the remarks he makes, the way he acknowledges that he is being sexualized, the posing of his body and the way he dresses.

Scenarios where the man is strong, but put in oppressed situations were a big factor in the sexually explicit fan art found, along with two men, one playing a submissive part and the other an aggressive one. The Joe Phillips fanart shows just that: The men are holding their signature of masculinity or power fantasy in their hands; their costume. Their source of power is in their grasp, but they've taken it off to show their vulnerable, yet sexy, side. They are posing for nothing else, but for sexualization.

4.2.2. Passive

This sexualized man is unknowing of the camera/the observer, or unknowing of how sexy he is.

However, he is still active in his decisions. The sexualized man somehow needs to be exhibitionistic and fragile while deep down knowing what makes him sexy, even if it might embarrass him. What that particular quality is however, depends on the traits given.

The character's skin color can also have a factor of how much of a sexual appetite he owns. According to Kuwahara (2008), those with an aggressive and matchless sexual appetite were always Arabic or Caucasian, while the passive parts were always played by a native male (Japanese).

4.3. Analyzing the Characters

All characters (featured in Appendix A) were found on a list called "The Female Gaze" created by the website TVTropes.com that is a collection of various conventions and tropes that are commonly found in television, film, video games, comics and video-games, along with as my personal knowledge of computer games characters that fit my survey's examples and the research's descriptions of a sexualized man. I will analyze the characters further using the survey check list to see if they sexualized traits and then conclude if they are indeed sexualized.

However, when it comes to body physique of the male characters I will not take a character's muscle amount in consideration. As studies showed; the male's physique was not as warped as the female body was and is attainable for a male in real life. Some of the survey's

members even said they did not care about the amount of muscles a male had in a sexualization, as long as they were secure in their body and showcased it.

To make things clear I will not go into how the female characters of the same game are being sexualized unless it's relevant to the male character. This is to try to focus on the male sexualization without being distracted of how different it might be for a female.

4.3.1. The Check List

When analyzing the video game characters, I'll be looking for character examples that fit the survey – summarized in the checklist below.

4.3.1.1. Male Homosexual

- Masculine “manly” man with hair, deep voices and sweat dripping.
- Pointless leather straps
- No straight men
- Someone aggressive to fuck you
 - or someone passive to be used
- Someone showcasing his physique
- Someone with great buttocks
- A lot of frontal nudity

4.3.1.2. Male and Female Bisexual

- Androgynous
- Slender in body
- No body hair
- Oiled up
- Very masculine while in touch with their feminine side
- A man who is powerful and masculine but still weak or oppressed
- A man wearing kinky female clothing
- Someone who's completely disconnected from real life

4.3.1.3. Female Heterosexual

- Unobtainable at first, that turns out to be attainable

- Man in love with a man (as long as they still have the stereotype of either a “masculine protective man” or a “cute protective woman” and fits the stereotype of a Bishōnen)
- Showing off a muscle that looks like a V that goes down to his crotch
- Long hair
- Competent and skilled; special.
- A diamond in the rough

4.3.2. The Sexualized Characters

All analyzed characters that are described in Appendix A are put in the categories “Aggressive”, “Passive”, “Passive and Aggressive” or “Non-Sexualized” depending on what their traits are.

4.3.2.1. Aggressive



Fig. 9. King of Fighters XI, SNK Playmore, 2005

Shen Woo, King of Fighters

Sexualized traits: Exhibitionistic with an open shirt and a grin on his face. He knows he is being watched, and he seems to enjoy it. His accessories include what looks like a dog collar which is a trait of submissiveness, but the picture shows a closed fist as if saying he can take charge if he wants to.

Muscles are rendered as if they're shiny.

A bulge in his pants can be spotted and a distinct V line as well. Can the purple shirt mean he's a bit in touch with his feminine side as well and his tanned skin something about his sexual appetite?

Non-sexualized traits: The shirt covers his buttocks and no definition of muscles can be seen below the waist because of the baggy jeans.

Conclusion: Shen Woo is definitely sexualized and seems to be something Bisexuals and Straight Females would enjoy.

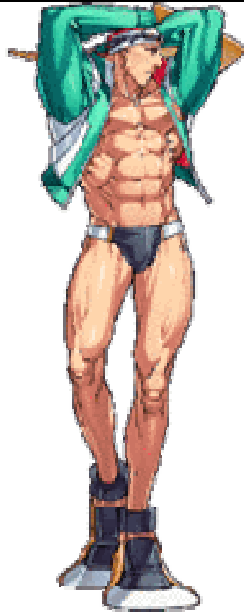


Fig. 10. Rival Schools 2, Capcom, 2000

Nagare Namikawa

Sexualized traits: Thighs showing as well as the V-muscle. Top is framing the torso while showing quite a lot of it. The pose is deliberate to show off his body. Tiny speedos that show off his buttocks and crotch, the crotch is even emphasized by being shiny.

Non-sexualized traits: Flippers make him look a bit silly.

Conclusion: Sexualized.



Fig. 11. Devil May Cry 3, Capcom, 2005

Dante

Sexualized traits: Bishōnen physique, leather, poses and lines in game that hint at him enjoying his sexuality, and women in the game do too.

Non-sexualized traits: Baggy pants, no crotch bulge, coat is in the way to see his buttocks.

Conclusion: His physique is that of a Bishōnen, which means it was created for the ladies' fantasies.

Women in game view him as a sexual object they want to use, one example being the scene described in Appendix A, which can be

translated as the woman asking Dante if it's his first time having sex and he plays along with her, pretending to be a toy that's supposed to be used.

So, instead of not caring or acting confused as a chaste hero, Dante embraces it. "You'll be kind to me, won't you?"

Instead of having sex they both try to kill each other, turning it into a sort of sexual frustration/build up.

Thus; Dante is sexualized, even though the females around him are possibly even more so.

4.3.2.2. Passive



Fig. 12. Final Fantasy XIV, Square Enix, 2012

Own Character

Sexualized traits: Thighs showing as well as the belly button. Top is framing the torso while showing quite a lot of it.

Non-sexualized traits: no V muscle nor genitalia or nipples, making this character quite asexual.

Conclusion: His pose is an objectified one as no real personality transpires it and even though he does not seem to have any genitalia I believe his objectification and outfit is enough to make him sexualized.



Fig. 13. Final Fantasy XII, Square Enix, 2006

Vaan Bash

Sexualized traits: In this promo artwork he shows off a pair of bedroom eyes and a vest that is slipping down showing a slightly blurred nipple, a broken necklace and legs that are slightly spread apart. He is hunched backwards in a passive pose, as if waiting for the observer to approach him and muscles are rendered with a shiny texture as if oiled up.

Non-sexualized traits: The belt

	<p>covers most of his abdomen, so no V-muscle is visible or even a belly button.</p> <p>In the game, Vaan's vest never slips down and no muscles are rendered or even really visible, nor is his body oiled in this way.</p> <p>Conclusion: Vaan is sexualized in this image, but never in the game.</p>
<div data-bbox="261 763 793 1171" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="220 1227 839 1317">Fig. 14. Enslaved: Odyssey To The West, Ninja Theory, 2010</p>	<p>Monkey</p> <p>Sexualized traits: V-muscle visible as if one side of his pants is slipping down, pointless leather straps, nipples visible.</p> <p>Non-sexualized traits: The crown, which bounds him to his captor, makes his enslaved state look less awful than the use of handcuffs. His pants are loose which hides the bulge in his crotch area.</p> <p>Conclusion: He has no real name which turns him into an object. He's masculine and protects the female, but also obeys her every command like a slave. Begs her to take off the crown on his head, making him oppressed, but still powerful as he protects her, which was one of my survey's favorite sexualized male.</p>



Fig. 15. Dragon Age: Origins, Bioware, 2009



Fig. 16. Dragon Age: Origins, Bioware, 2009

Alistair

Sexualized traits: Dialogue with flirting and toying with him, and also sex scenes where he wears nothing but underwear and waits for the player to approach him.

Non-sexualized traits: Has a lot of character and dialogue which makes him seem more human than an object. Looking at his clothes, his armor is quite bulky and doesn't show off much of his body, and he doesn't seem to pay much attention to the way he looks. In the sex scenes, he is also the instigator at times, thus the waiting as shown in Fig. 16. is a sexualized pose, but not a character trait.

Conclusion: Becomes an object that you can manipulate and sexualize at a few certain times.



Fig. 17. Soul Calibur 3, Namco, 2005



Fig. 18 Soul Calibur 5 Promo, Namco, 2012

Voldo

Sexualized traits: Pointless leather straps, showing off his buttocks, sexually objectified immensely (the tenth feature on Nussbaum and Langton's (2009) list of Objectification, named "Silencing") by his lack of vision and mouth. His crotch has been used as a poster. His backstory tells he was locked up by a man in a treasure vault, as if Voldo himself was a treasure. On place number six on Nussbaum's list is "ownership", as if Voldo belongs to the man who locked him up.

Non-sexualized traits: Going with what Kuwahara (2008) said about skin-color, Voldo doesn't seem to have much of a sexual appetite. He also has no hair, which was a stressed factor for sexualized traits for heterosexual females.

Conclusion: Sexualized.



Fig. 19. Tera, Bluehole Studio Inc., 2011

Castanic Male

Sexualized traits: Tight pants which shows off buttocks and crotch, shows lower part of stomach (underneath the belly button), quite a brown skin color which might entail he has a bit of sexual appetite.

Non-sexualized traits: No crotch nor any real rendered buttocks.

Conclusion: Could definitely become more sexualized by actually giving him buttocks and a gender.



Fig. 20. Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Konami, 2001

Raiden

Sexualized traits: Tight pants which shows off buttocks and crotch. The scene where he is tortured in a machine and humiliated by running around naked, unable to defend himself (but still given masculinity by letting him keep his dog tag and have tattoos on his body).

Non-sexualized traits: Pose, the way he doesn't react or acts confused when sexual innuendos are in the game (as if he has no

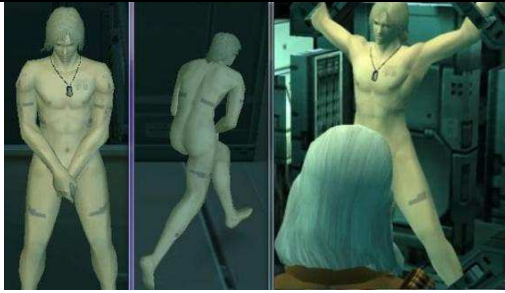


Fig. 21. Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty,
Konami, 2001

libido).

Conclusion: Passively sexualized in scenes and a bit sexualized in his regular costume.

4.3.2.3. Passive and Aggressive



Fig. 22. Shadow Hearts Covenant,
Nautilus, 2004

Joachim Valentine

Sexualized traits: Loves showing off his body and often makes remarks of how amazing it is. He wears tight pants so his buttocks and crotch are visible, a crooked belt and has holes in his costume where none need be. Two pieces of fabric is framing his crotch.

Non-sexualized traits: No nipples, unwelcome pose – the pose that Bordo (1999) calls the “Face-Off” pose.

Conclusion: Joachim is definitely sexualized, especially in the way he acts. In a way it’s hard to see if he’s a passive sexualization or an aggressive one. He loves showing off his body, but when approached, he is stand-offish and scared making him a bit of a chaste hero.



Fig. 23. Apollo Justice: Ace Attorney,
Capcom, 2007

Klavier Gavin

Sexualized traits: hands framing his crotch (and where is that left hand's index finger stroking...?), an unbuttoned shirt both at the top and at the bottom and dressed with big clunky chains, he seems to like being admired. He might be in touch with his feminine side with his long hair and purple jacket.

Non-sexualized traits: His loose fitting pants are hiding his crotch.

Conclusion: An interesting example of how a person can be sexualized without being naked. A pose and a few unbuttoned buttons can do the trick. In this image he is aggressive by the way he dresses, but he is still passively waiting for the onlooker to make the first move.

4.3.2.4. Non-sexualized



Fig. 24. God of War 3, SCE Santa Monica Studio, 2010


Kratos

Sexualized traits: He is aggressive and definitely shows that he can kill (or have sex?) with whatever he wants. His nipples are fully rendered and his costume shows off a bit of his thighs.

Non-sexualized traits: The belt covers the main part of what my survey's members found attractive; the V muscle. Not even a hint of belly button is shown and the fabric around his waist covers any chance of seeing a bulge or his buttocks. If a side view is possible in game the bandages around his thighs would cover everything. Like Voldo, he also has no hair.

I am not sure how my survey's members think of skin color, but since Kuwahara (2008) stated that the tanned Arabic male had the stereotype of having an insatiable sexual appetite, can that mean that a pale and dead-looking character has no appetite?

When it comes to the scene where Kratos has sex, the camera only hovers over the two naked women, as if Kratos is the one gazing over them (in a very Male Gaze manner). The camera turns away from him as he embraces them and no moans of

	<p>pleasure from Kratos can be heard, just the two females.</p> <p>Kratos turns into a chaste hero, taking no pleasure in sex except the power of embracing females who willingly surrenders to his masculinity.</p> <p>Conclusion: Kratos is - as Bordo, (1999) puts it - a surrogate penis given to the player. This is made obvious when observing the statue of the small boy peeing; it's the game designer's way of saying "this is a boy's wet dream".</p>
 <p>Fig. 25. Super Street Fighter II, Capcom, 1993</p>	<p>Vega (Europe) Balrog (Japan)</p> <p>Sexualized traits: The pose together with his naked chest shows a bit of insecurity, as if he doesn't want to be naked, and can be (if the face was shown) be portrayed as one of my survey members said "a used little elf-boy"... But it's too vague.</p> <p>Non-sexualized traits: Unattainable by his hiding behind a mask, has a hint of danger as he has a split personality (which is alright because of his tragic past) might pique the interest of my survey's participants, but this is a stereotype, not a sexualization. The fold in his crotch seems to be more of a loose pants-syndrome than an</p>

indicator of a gender and his pants cover just about everything my survey members loved about the upper body.

Conclusion: Not sexualized.

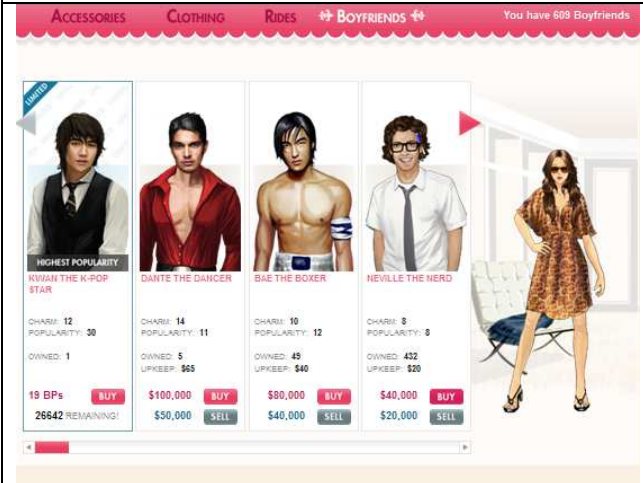


Fig. 26. Sorority Life, Playdom, 2011

The Boyfriend

Sexualized traits: Seen as an object, some have open shirts and an alluring smile.

Non-sexualized traits: Is nothing but an accessory, can't talk, has no background, can't do anything.

Conclusion: Objectified, not sexualized.



Fig. 27. Team Fortress 2, Valve Corporation, 2007

Saxton Hale

Sexualized traits: Thighs showing and nothing at all on his upper body except manly hair.

Non-sexualized traits: No real crotch, belly button isn't shown, no nipples.

Conclusion: Even though he might be considered to be a character for a homosexual/bi male demographic might be interested in, he doesn't have enough traits for a sexualization and too much of a comical character to even be thought of as a sexual object in game.



Fig. 28. Guilty Gear, Arc System Works, 1998

Bridget

Sexualized traits: Thighs showing, pose showing off his buttocks.

Non-sexualized traits: When the game does flow up his skirt, a pair of black long shorts can be seen.

Conclusion: He might get hit on by guys and seen as an object because of his cute demeanor, but he has a strong will an attitude; always gets annoyed and fights back when being called a girl. No one ever puts him in a submissive female role and he's never being dominated, so it's not sissification. Not sexualized.

5. Conclusion

As said in my introduction, male sexualization is difficult for many to pinpoint. For example, the creators of the lists of male sexualized characters I found and analyzed believed that the characters with, as Bordo (1999) puts it, engorged Schwarzenegger bodies, have sexuality. According to my study of such characters, that is often not the case, as many of them were rendered sexless by confusion or numbness when confronted with sexuality. Many of them also used the unwelcome “Face-Off” pose that Bordo (1999) describes to be used for heterosexual advertisement. She also quotes a gay theorist named Ron Long that says these type of bodies usually have nothing to do but stand there looking massive- as if it’s a surrogate penis.

The bodies in my study that were sexualized were often lean built; a body that the Japanese Bishonen’s always have, and a body that Bordo describes as being built to provoke ideas of it moving; of being active (Bordo, 1999).

The few male characters in video games that were sexualized were not strongly emphasized on being sexualized. Seven of them were passively sexualized versus three aggressively. All of them had no more than one or two features from Nussbaum’s Objectification list, most of them being number eight and nine – “reduction to body” and “reduction to appearance”. A few also had features that made them sexualized in terms of what the survey’s members believed were sexy. I could however not determine how truthful the survey members were, as they were all anonymous. In a positive way, anonymity clears the way for people to be open about topics such as specific sexual preferences, but it also means that none of the responses can be verified as genuine.

When characters were being sexualized, it was often not only by the way their body looked, but the way they acted. Action seems to be very important in male sexualization. There were also small details of how much of a character’s v-muscle was shown. If characters did show it, it was often in unison with humor, or, without having the character trait of sexual appetite. This seems to often be done by giving them a pale almost dead skin color, and often in unison with a bald head.

I definitely opened a lot of doors when it comes to the viewer’s perception and the artist’s intention in this study. It was interesting to see how easy it was to find information about sexualized females in video games, and how difficult it was to find a male equivalent. I had

to look outside the box and think of other fields that could have the same issues. I pulled loose threads together, ranging from Japanese comics to American ad campaigns by Calvin Klein to get a clearer view, and to be quite frank, I soon realized male sexualization was more complex than the female equivalent. The only clear thread I've been able to find is that a sexualized male is active, and most of the time he's portrayed with more of a gentle or feminine body type than a non-sexualized one.

So, now that I've studied male sexualization... Is this something that is needed in video game development?

Well, is female sexualization needed? Most of the games where it's featured doesn't need it, but if it fits the game and who it's targeted for, then yes. You see, I chose to write about the male bishonen for a reason. That type of character only exists for the female's pleasure and so does the game he's featured in, so thus, he fits the game.

If the game needs to be based around the player's sexual emotions towards a character, sexualization is a great tool, but it can often be misused. A lot of games use the cheap trick of using the male gaze to say "Look! There's a female character over there, and she's important! Remember her! (Subtext: remember her cleavage/buttocks!)" instead of using better design tools.

Now, if a developer has a game where sexual emotions are important and its target audience doesn't include heterosexual males, but homo/bisexual men or hetero/bisexual women, this essay can give them a small insight on how to customize a male for that specific audience. And if not for that, at least the reader can now have some counter-arguments for what a sexualized male is – letting the doors open wider for interpretation and discussion of this very debatable, and as far as I'm concerned, very interesting topic.

However, in my thesis I've only talked about how male sexualization is perceived by viewers and analysts, but one important question still stands; do the artists actively choose traits for their characters so that it can or cannot be connected with sexualization? And is it different depending on what gender is meant to be watching them, and what sexual orientation they have? I believe that a questionnaire made for such artists, asking what the most important features on a man are and how they, as artists, emphasize them, then asking the same question as the survey I used; "What constitutes a sexual male for you?", also letting the artist

know that the man is to be created for three different target audiences. Will the features be different? A more intricate and expanded study of the artist's subject is something that definitely be followed up on, and an even more in-depth analysis on media's view of men, such as Bordo's statements (1999) offered in my thesis would be a good resource to see how different, or similar the artists views are to the media's.

And for you, and myself, I have these questions to ask; how can we make our game design design better, so that we as players do not need to remember a human just by their body features?

Where exactly should the limits of sexualization be drawn?

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Appendix A. Introducing the Characters

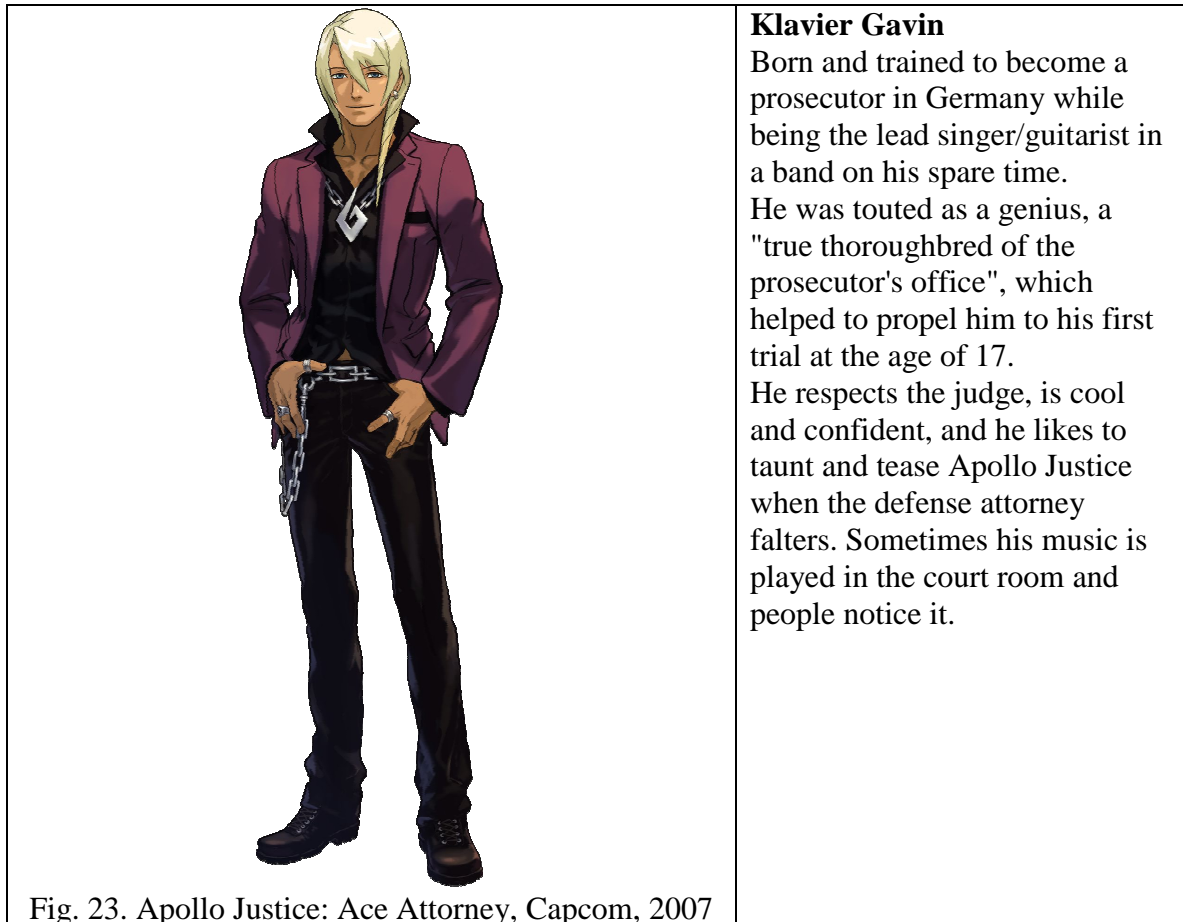




Fig. 24. God of War 3, SCE Santa Monica Studio, 2010

Kratos

Kratos is a brutal and aggressive man with a tragic past that he dreams of every night as he tries to fall asleep. The whole God of War series is more or less about Kratos doing what he wants and not giving a damn if he has to kill every God or beast that stands in his way.

There is a scene in God of War II where Kratos can enter a fountain and the camera hovers over two naked women whom he can approach. The camera turns away from him as he embraces the two females and shows a fountain statue of a small boy peeing water. The player presses different buttons which creates female moans and the statue's water spurt out water more frantically.



Shen Woo

Shen Woo was first presented in King of Fighters XI and was raised in Shanghai where he created his own brutal style of street boxing. He soon came to be feared and grew to enjoy the thrill of the fight. He is thrown into many different story lines throughout the game series and all happen to be about how Shen wanting to find strong opponents to fight.

Every game he is in his purple shirt remains completely unbuttoned.

Fig. 9. King of Fighters XI, SNK Playmore, 2005



Vega (also known as Balrog)
Being born and raised in Spain, Vega witnesses his mother's murder and becomes insane by this tragic event. He creates a dual personality: honorable bullfighting nobleman by day, sadistic murderer by night, starting with killing his mother's murderer.

He is gracious and fast but very vulnerable once the other fighter lashes a punch.

Fig. 25. Super Street Fighter II, Capcom, 1993



Saxton Hale
Saxton Hale is the rugged Australian CEO of Mann Co., star of the Saxton Hale's Thrilling Tales comic series and an all-around man among men whose favorite pastimes include fighting, drinking and battling with rare and ferocious animals. Identifying features include his exceptional moustache, rippling muscles, crocodile-tooth lined hat and a patch of chest hair shaped like Australia. He also refuses to wear clothes on his upper body "for obvious reasons".

Fig. 27. Team Fortress 2, Valve Corporation, 2007



Fig. 20. Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Konami, 2001



Fig. 21. Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Konami, 2001

Raiden

Raiden is a rookie agent who, as a result of training only in virtual reality, is inexperienced.

However, he later reveals that he was feared as a child soldier and is embarrassed over this. In the game he can call many people, including his girlfriend who helps him save data.

There is a scene when Raiden is captured and has to be stripped naked for a torture device. The camera goes through many different sequences with various objects being in the way of his crotch. After escaping he is unable to fight.



Fig. 19. Tera, Bluehole Studio Inc., 2011

Castanic Male

Castanics inspire more conflicting emotions than any other race in the federation. Clever and skilled, castanics are also opportunistic and hot-tempered. A castanic never forgets a friend and never abandons an ally. They're also notoriously quick-tempered and have a tendency to decapitate first and accept apologies second.

All races uses armor specific for that class character, meaning the all of the armor resemble each other and expose the same bits of the body.



Fig. 12. Final Fantasy XIV, Square Enix, 2012

Own Character

As it is a multiplayer online game with a character creation, the player creates his own character.

Unlike some MMO's, the player in this game has the option to put on top and bottom armor themselves, leaving quite a lot of different choices.



Fig. 13. Final Fantasy XII, Square Enix, 2006

Vaan Bash

Vaan is a 17 year old street thief whom while planning to steal from a palace becomes entangled in an empiric conflict. While being the game's main character he does not play a large role in the game's story, instead being a view-point character observing the actions of the other characters that influence the events unfolding around them more directly. Due to his homeland's hot climate, he wears only a loose cropped open vest held together by a pendant over his chest.

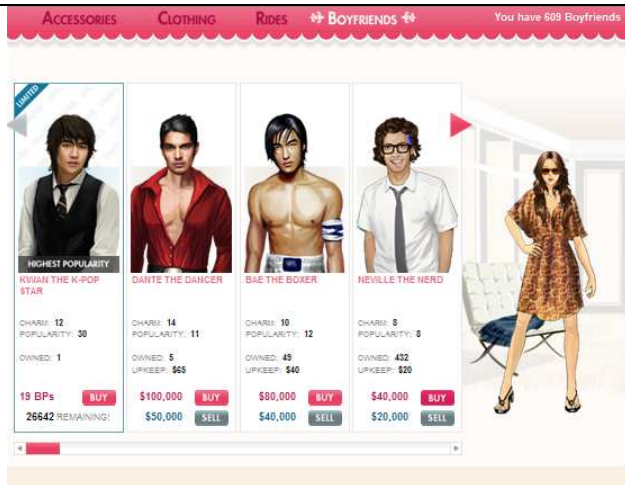


Fig. 26. Sorority Life, Playdom, 2011

The Boyfriend

Sorority Life is a browser game where the points you earn are spent on clothes, accessories, and boyfriends. Many of them are modeled after celebrities.



Fig. 15. Dragon Age: Origins, Bioware, 2009

Alistair

Dragon Age is a western roleplaying game, and just like a dating sim, characters in Dragon Age can be persuaded to have sex with the main character you play. The first character you meet is Alistair.

He does not take flirting easily and is uncomfortable with your approaches until you've gotten his approval first.

Alistair can by dialogue options also be toughened, making him do different choices in the



Fig. 16. Dragon Age: Origins, Bioware, 2009

storyline as well as accepting a threesome.

He is not attracted to men and cannot be persuaded otherwise.



Fig. 17. Soul Calibur 3, Namco, 2005

Voldo, Soul Calibur

A man with the story of being locked in a treasure vault for years, driving him crazy. He's in many Soul Calibur fighting games, and in all of them his costumes include hiding his face while gagging his mouth and blinding his eyes, forcing him into a passive role of making nothing but misunderstood noises.



Fig. 18 Soul Calibur 5 Promo, Namco, 2012



Fig. 14. Enslaved: Odyssey To The West, Ninja Theory, 2010

Monkey

A commoner that never tells his real name, only that people usually call him Monkey. He does not understand much and therefore relies on the bossy female with him to tell him what to do. He is forced to become a prisoner to a woman after she attaches a crown on his head which kills him if she gets killed, which also makes him her protector. He never shows much dismay about this. He has a deep and raspy voice.



Fig. 22. Shadow Hearts Covenant, Nautilus, 2004


Joachim Valentine

Joachim is a french vampire as well as a trained wrestler. He can transform into a bat or his super hero form, "Grand Papillon" (which is French for "Butterfly"). Joachim has the highest physical damage potential, but the trade-off is his slow speed, weak magic defense, and random transformations.

Like a stereotypical wrestler/superman character, Joachim is quite dense and goes along with anything anyone tells him, including a side mission which makes him have to have sex with his male master in wrestling in order to earn the title of "The Big Question".

He is however very aware of his body and shows it off when he can. During a fight with his master he flexes while saying "In the name of truth, these muscles! In the name of beauty, this butt!"

In battle he says one-liners like

	<p>“Too bad you can’t see how great I look!” (<i>in Invisible form</i>) “Don’t you love my golden glow?” (<i>in Golden Bat form</i>)</p> <p>In game there are events where Joachim finds an item which he wants to use as a weapon. They are often as big as a whole tree, and the bigger the better.</p>
 <p data-bbox="276 1122 807 1155">Fig. 11. Devil May Cry 3, Capcom, 2005</p>	<p>Dante His appearance changes from game to game, but what always remains is his red coat.</p> <p>He is arrogant and loves being sarcastic. However, he never receives credit for what he does, actually receiving debt instead of getting paid for his job, and he also protects those who he holds dear.</p> <p>In Devil May Cry 3 he fights a female with a skirt and hair that covers her naked breasts who asks him if it’s his first time there while stroking his chest. He says yes, asking her to be kind to him.</p> <p>When finishing the game one of the messages you receive is “Congratulations! You know how to make me look good.” There is also unlockable bonus art of giant half-naked females holding a small Dante in their grip, playing with him as if he’s a toy.</p> <p>The Nevan Guitar Attack from Devil May Cry 3 is basically an electric Guitar Solo with a bare-</p>

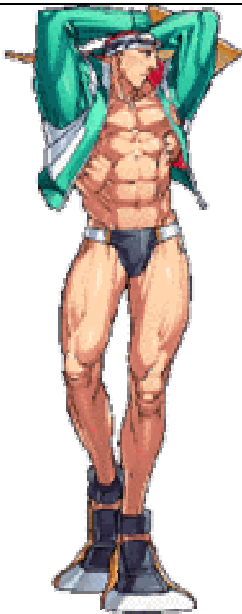

	<p>chedsted Dante, while the camera focuses on his ass and back.</p>
 <p>A muscular male character with a green jacket slung over his shoulders, wearing blue briefs and black boots. He is standing with his hands on his hips.</p>	<p>Nagare Namikawa A student and swimmer from Gorin High. His story explains he is a childhood friend of Shoma, and sets out to find him after he disappears from the school. Though he has no story cutscenes, his ending shows him freeing Shoma from the control of Justice High School. In Project Justice, he is a member of the school's university branch, Gorin University. In the game's plot, he joins Natsu and Roberto to investigate the new school attacks after Shoma separates from the group.</p>
 <p>A character with blonde hair, wearing a blue and white outfit with a large blue cape featuring a gold cross. She is holding a large brown teddy bear and a yo-yo.</p>	<p>Bridget Bridget was one of a set of twin boys born into a village where twin boys were thought to be bad luck. So to save face, his parents raised him as a girl, hiding his true sex from the other villagers. Eventually, Bridget grows up to become a Bounty Hunter to prove that he's not bad luck after all. His attacks consist of his super power yo-yo and a mechanical bear named Roger. At the end of one of a few different endings, a character named Johnny mistakes Bridget for a girl and hits on him, but Bridget doesn't really understand it. While fighting, his stance mode is him wiggling his hips back and forth.</p>

Fig. 10. Rival Schools 2, Capcom, 2000

Fig. 28. Guilty Gear, Arc System Works, 1998