





**REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN:  
CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER-ROLES IN COMPUTER GAMES**

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## ABSTRACT

### REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN: CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER-ROLES IN COMPUTER GAMES

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Developments in computer industry gave way computer games to become a popular entertainment agent for children as well as for adults. Interactive quality of computer games has displaced television and traditional games, however, they have become unattractive to women because of the fact that the pleasures offered by these games are gender-specific since they are offered into consumption with a male "Model Player" in mind.

The purpose of this particular study is to illustrate the constitution of gender of the player by the discourse itself as a fact independent from the gender of the actual player. In this connection, topics such as gender-role socialization, representation of women in popular culture, computer as a gendered technology will be the main issues to be investigated in order to demonstrate the constitution of the player through an analysis of a group of role-playing games.

Keywords: Gender, computer games, player.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b> .....	iii-
<b>Özet</b> .....	iv
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	v
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	viii
<b>1- INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.1- Definition of the Problem .....	3
1.2- Purpose of the Study .....	5
1.3- Related Terms .....	6
1.3.1- Gender .....	6
1.3.2- The Computer and Computer Games .....	16
1.3.3- Player .....	32
1.4- Method .....	35
1.5- Limitations/delimitations .....	36
1.6- Related Literature .....	38
1.7- A Summary .....	38
<b>2- IMAGES OF WOMEN IN POPULAR CULTURE</b> .....	40
2.1- Issues of Representation in Media .....	40
2.2- Television .....	46
2.2.1- Children's Television .....	47
2.2.2- Daytime TV .....	51
2.2.3- Prime-Time TV .....	52
2.2.4- Newscasts .....	53
2.2.5- Commercials .....	54
2.2.6- Popular Music and Music Videos .....	60
2.3- Magazines and Newspapers .....	62
2.3.1- Advertisements .....	64
2.4- Cinema .....	67

<b>3- ANOTHER GENDERED TECHNOLOGY: THE COMPUTER IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY .....</b>	<b>80</b>
3.1- Computer and Information Society .....	80
3.1.1- Computer as an Interactive Medium .....	83
3.1.2- Interface .....	86
3.2- Women and the Computer .....	92
3.3- Gender-Based Attitudes Toward Computer .....	102
<b>4- THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER-ROLES IN COMPUTER GAMES .....</b>	<b>108</b>
4.1- Computer Games as a Media Source and Gender-Roles .....	119
4.1.1- Representation of Gender-Roles .....	120
4.1.1.1- Game Categories .....	121
4.1.1.2- Game Genres and Women .....	125
4.2- Discourse on Games .....	131
4.3- Game Analyses .....	159
4.3.1- Doom .....	159
4.3.2- Heretic .....	172
4.3.3- Hexen .....	182
4.3.4- Duke Nukem 3D .....	185
4.3.5- Mario .....	189
4.3.6-Beauty and the Beast .....	196
4.3.7- Barbie Super Model .....	208
<b>5- CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>234</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-	<u>Equinox</u> .....	146
Figure 2-	<u>The Mystery Tiki</u> .....	150
Figure 3-	<u>Mega Race</u> .....	153
Figure 4-	<u>Lode Runner</u> .....	156
Figure 5-	<u>Lode Runner</u> .....	158
Figure 6-	<u>Doom</u> .....	163
Figure 7-	<u>Wolfenstein</u> .....	163
Figure 8-	<u>Wolfenstein</u> .....	165
Figure 9-	<u>Wolfenstein</u> .....	166
Figure 10-	<u>Heretic</u> .....	174
Figure 11-	<u>Heretic</u> .....	177
Figure 12-	<u>Heretic</u> .....	179
Figure 13-	<u>Hexen</u> .....	183
Figure 14-	<u>Hexen</u> .....	184
Figure 15-	<u>Hexen</u> .....	184
Figure 16-	<u>Duke Nukem 3D</u> .....	186
Figure 17-	<u>Duke Nukem 3D</u> .....	187
Figure 18-	<u>Duke Nukem 3D</u> .....	188
Figure 19-	<u>Duke Nukem 3D</u> .....	188

<b>Figure 20-</b>	Mario character .....	190
<b>Figure 21-</b>	Wario and <u>Wario Land</u> .....	194
<b>Figure 22-</b>	Game Boy advertisement .....	195
<b>Figure 23-</b>	<u>Beauty and the Beast</u> .....	200
<b>Figure 24-</b>	<u>Beauty and the Beast</u> .....	200
<b>Figure 25-</b>	<u>Beauty and the Beast</u> .....	203
<b>Figure 26-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	214
<b>Figure 27-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	214
<b>Figure 28-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	216
<b>Figure 29-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	216
<b>Figure 30-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	217
<b>Figure 31-</b>	<u>Barbie Super Model</u> .....	217

## 1- INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, a new electronic medium has become pervasive entertainment agent in Western culture to fascinate children as well as adults: computer games. Starting from the fact that will be shown further in this dissertation, on the whole these games are not played by girls or women as much as boys or men and accounts for this is the fact that the pleasures offered by these games are gender-specific.

They now become popular texts that employ a familiar language that the users are accustomed to read and yield their meaning in the face of the simplest kind of interpretation. Computer games, in other words, are popular products that are traded to masses, not to a particular group of consumers, say to an elite one. The user/player of a particular game confronts one thing new which is the interactive quality that is computer-specific and he/she automatically becomes literate and also the action becomes habitual because he/she has already have an experience coming from old technologies such as TV, computer and films. He/she becomes literate both in terms of reading and interpreting it. The images depicted in games are familiar images that are already engendered and represented as such in other media.

Computer game is a technological innovation and an environment in which people and technology have become much more closer than they were before

the interactive computer game era. The interactive quality of computer and computer game forces children actively create stimuli and information, not merely consume them (Greenfield 3). Computer games and other computer technologies, say VR (Virtual Reality) technology, and their growing pervasiveness opens new directions for the very near future to create new media technologies as well as new social relationships between men and women.

We are on the verge of an interactive multimedia revolution that is already placing cinema, television, VCR's, compact disc players, video games, computers and telephones within a consolidated supersystem combining home entertainment, education, and business. Television and home video games, and their intertextual connections with movies, commercials, and toys, help prepare young players for full participation in this new age of interactive multimedia - specifically, by linking interactivity with consumerism,

states Marsha Kinder (4-6). Since machines of industrial age were very different than those of the current technology - because of their ability to function autonomously - they feared humans. In post-industrial capitalism, the human has become to be defined in relation to cybernetic systems - the computer, robots, and cyborgs which incorporate with humans rather than exclude them and while doing so, they erase the assumed boundaries between them. Those transgressed boundaries define cyborg and complement the postmodern concept which lead to an uncertainty about one's self (Springer 303-323) which can be best summed by Bill Nichols:

The computer is not simply a machine, it is also an icon and a metaphor that suggests new ways of thinking about ourselves and our environment, new ways of constructing images of what means to be a human and to live in a humanoid world (22).

In this context, one of the major point of view changes occurred in the socialization procedures of individuals. Actually we do not speak of them as individual, but as woman and man. Socialization is a life-time process



by which a society's values and norms pertaining to gender are taught and learned according to a predetermined path which assigns a gender-role onto the individual.

### **1.1- Definition of the Problem**

A computer game is not "just a game" that we play for the fun of it, or a distraction from more serious matters, but they are also "playgrounds" in which we define ourselves and our culture.

It is said that computer games are particularly unattractive to women since they are a part of a technology which is identified with male power. Because of the ideological assumption implicit in the software and marketing of video game cartridges - the advertising, the magazines - articulate the cultural meanings of the technology through a set of masculinized images which "encourage players an accommodation to consumerist values and masculine dominance" (Provenzo 119).

Most of the images or representations in computer games are from popular forms that appeal to boys - principally action, adventure and horror genres - where fundamental model is that of the single masculine hero waging a personal battle against overwhelming odds. The problem is to understand why this particular technology has come to be identified with a masculine domain.

Within the framework of this dissertation, computer games will be taken as a part of the popular culture that develop within the patriarchal society in which gender plays an important role in every aspect of life, including computer game usage and production. That is, computer game as a specific signifying practice constitutes its subject as a male player.

In this connection, a list of questions to be used to guide the dissertation are as follows:

- How do boys and girls develop a gender identity?
- Does technology have a gender valence?
- How do technology and media sources affect gender stereotypes?
- How are men/boys and women/girls represented in media sources and what are their consequent implications?
- How is computer used by two different genders?
- Is there a significant gender segregation in computer games?
- Are the games mainly played by males?
- How are male and female characters depicted in games?
- Do role-playing games select a male Model Player and how?
- How do computer games, as a signifying practice, constitute its subject, i.e., the Model Player, and during this process how can the functioning mechanisms be related to gender?

## 1.2- Purpose of the Study

The computer has now become an indispensable part of our lives and also characteristics of the age which is called as the "information age." They are not just tools, but also an important factor that interfere with our social lives including stereotypic gender identities.

As we live in a male dominant society, computer game medium can be seen as a reinforcing factor over that patriarchal arrangement in which gender-roles may need to be reviewed, that is why both critical and theoretical basis must be prepared.

Within the framework of this research, gender factor will be investigated in correlation with computer games and other media sources. Instead of accepting all the technologies and gender identities that are represented in them as "given," we must generate a discussion ground in order to have a useful step for further studies.

The purposes of this study are: 1- to illustrate the role of computer games in gender-role socialization; 2- to question the nature of the pleasure taken by these games in terms of gender.

As will be shown in the following chapters, popular forms in media, such as TV, print media, films and etc. will serve as a background in my analyses of computer games. Advertisements, reviews of games, the images that

appear on the screen and game covers will form my main object of study as materials that constitute the whole discourse.

From this stage on, in this chapter, basic terms will be explained. In this dissertation, as the title indicates, terms such as gender, computer, computer/video games, player, and gender-role socialization will be defined and used in terms of their consequent participation in the construction of a male Model Player in computer/video game environment.

### **1.3- Related Terms**

#### **1.3.1- Gender**

The socialization of gender-roles begins very early. From the moment of birth, male and female infants receive different treatment, parents have expectations based on their own understanding and acceptance of cultural stereotypes. Pink blankets for girls and blue ones for boys may be seen as significant examples of these gender-roles, in other words, children are born into a world that is already organized and structured in terms of the shared meanings that individuals use in their interactions. These cultural meanings are often seen as if they were facts of nature, like the weather (Kramer 222).

At this stage, it would be useful to make a clarification between the terms gender and sex although frequently used interchangeably, the two terms actually differ in important ways. Sex is a biological term; people are termed either female or male depending on their sex organs and genes. In



contrast, gender is a psychological and cultural term, not biologically given. "Gender is not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings, but the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations" (De Lauretis 3). Each culture creates its own meanings for the terms female and male, thus gender is socially constructed which involves a series of expectations regarding how each gender should behave (that is, gender-roles) (Stockard and Johnson xi).

Roles are learned and gender-roles encompass all cultural expectations associated with masculinity or femininity that go beyond biological sex differences. Gender-roles represent a more complex conceptualization than sex-roles. As such, gender-roles involve that intricate blend of social and psychological behaviors, attitudes and norms and values that society designates "masculine" and "feminine" (Lipman-Blumen 3).

Thus, gender is constructed by culture, not by biology, and this construction is shaped by historical, cultural, and psychological processes which also shape one's gender identity in daily life activities and professions. For example, in the United States, dentistry is reviewed as a male profession; and, indeed, most dentists today are men. In Sweden, however, most dentists are women, and the profession is viewed as a female-related (Basow 2-3).

Gender stereotypes can be explained as "structured sets of beliefs about the personal attributes of women and men" (qtd. in Basow 3). These beliefs are normative in the sense that they imply that gender-linked

characteristics not only exist but also are desirable. Gender stereotypes both on the cultural level - as reflected in the media, and on a personal level - cover attributes linked with being female or male (qtd. in Basow 2-3). People acquire gender stereotypes as they acquire information about the world and their roles in it.

The definition of the roles themselves is very much related with the order in the society. If the current one is a patriarchal order, then, the gender system can be explained as the system in which men dominate women and what is considered masculine is more highly valued than that which is considered feminine.

Studies indicate that children, as early as two years of age, become aware of their gender and gender stereotypes. They obtain this information from their own images as well as from the world outside. In other words, they learn that boys do some masculine things and that girls do some feminine ones. Some theories have been put forward in order to explain this process.

### Cognitive-Developmental Theory

Based on the work of psychologists Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, cognitive-developmental theory holds that children learn gender (and gender stereotypes) through their mental efforts to organize their social world, rather than through psychosexual processes or rewards and punishments. For the young child who is literally new to the world, life must seem chaotic. Thus, one of the child's first developmental tasks is to try to make

sense all the information he or she receives through observations and interactions in the social environment. According to cognitive-developmental theorists, the child accomplishes this by creating schema or mental categories (Stockard and Johnson 173).

Sex is a very useful schema for young children. Children's interpretations of their world are limited by their level of mental maturity. Early on their lives, children's thinking tends to be concrete; that is, in organizing their observations and experiences, they rely on simple and obvious cues. Sex is a category that has a variety of obvious physical cues attached to it, such as anatomy, hair length, body and facial hair, dress, and so on. Children first use the schema to label themselves and to organize their own identities. They then apply the schema to others in an effort to organize traits and behaviors into two classes, masculine or feminine, either gender appropriate ("good") or gender inappropriate ("bad") (Stockard and Johnson 174).

There are other organizing categories available with obvious physical cues, but children use sex instead - not because it is easier, but because in the culture of their society, sexual distinctions are emphasized. Toys, clothing, occupations, hobbies, the domestic division of labor - even pronouns - all vary as a function of sex.

But cognitive-developmental theory has not escaped criticism. By portraying gender learning as something children basically do themselves, cognitive-developmental theory downplays the critical role of culture in gender socialization.

## Identification Theory

Identification theory is rooted in the work of the famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, children pass through a series of stages in their personality development. During the first two stages, referred to respectively as the oral and anal stages, boys and girls are fairly similar in their behavior and experiences. For both boys and girls, their mother is the chief object of their emotions since she is their primary caretaker and gratifies most of their needs. It is around age four, however, that an important divergence occurs in the personality development of girls and boys. It is at this age that children become aware of both of their own genitals and of the fact that the genitals of boys and girls are different. This realization signals the start of the third stage of development, the phallic stage. It is during the phallic stage that identification takes place; that is children begin to unconsciously model their behavior after that of their same-sex parent, thus learning how to behave in gender-appropriate ways. Significantly, identification does not occur for girls the same way it occurs for boys (Stockard and Johnson 175).

For boys, identification is motivated by what Freud called castration anxiety. At this age, a boy's love for his mother becomes more sexual and he tends to view his father as his rival (the Oedipus Complex). What quickly cures him of this jealousy is a glimpse of the female genitalia. Seeing the clitoris, the little boy assumes that all girls have been castrated for some reason, and he fears that a similar fate may befall him if he continues to compete with his father. Boy perceives the formidable size



and power of his father and concludes of competing with his father, the little boy tries to be more like him. The boy still enjoys his mother sexually, through his father. As a result of this, the boy begins to take on his father's characteristics, including his gender-role behaviors (qtd. in Basow 90).

In contrast, a girl's identification with her mother is motivated by what Freud called penis envy. Penis envy develops in girls upon first sight of the male genitals and results her jealousy of boys, a sense of incompleteness. She, thus, begins to identify with her mother as a means to win a penis. Eventually, the girl realizes that she can have a penis in two ways: briefly through intercourse and symbolically by having a baby, especially a baby boy (Basow 90-91).

Some identification theorists have raised Freud's original argument (Chodorow, 1990) and Erik Erikson (1968), for instance, has offered the provocative suggestion that males harbor some jealousy toward females for their unique ability to bear children. Referring to this phenomenon as womb envy, he views it as the underlying reason for men's apparent need to dominate women. Others, such as Karen Horney and Clara Thompson, place the notion of penis envy in a social context. That is, women are jealous of the male organ in that it is a symbol of male power in our society. From this point of view, then, women are actually envious of men's higher status and greater freedom (qtd. in Stockard and Johnson 175; Basow 91).

More recently, Nancy Chodorow has revised identification theory in an effort to explain why females grow up to be primary caretakers of children than males do. She suggests that identification is more difficult for boys since they must psychologically separate from their mothers and model themselves after a parent who is largely absent from the home, their fathers. Consequently, boys become more emotionally detached and repressed than girls. Girls, in contrast, do not experience this psychological separation and capabilities for mothering, and "feminine personality comes to define itself in relation and connection to other people more than masculine personality does" (qtd. in Stockard and Johnson 175). Because girls develop their sense of self with a similar other, namely with mother. They develop an identity characterized by interpersonal involvement (Basow 56).

### Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is more straight forward than identification theory in that it focuses on observable events and their consequences rather than on unconscious motives and drives. The basic principle of social learning theory derives from a particular school of thought in psychology known as behaviorism. One important idea of behaviorism is the notion of reinforcement: a behavior consistently followed by a reward will likely occur again, whereas a behavior followed by a punishment will rarely occur. So, for example, your dog will probably learn to play frisbee with you if you give it a biscuit every time it runs to you with the plastic disk in its mouth. Conversely, the dog will stop urinating on your houseplant if

you spank it with a rolled newspaper and put it outside each time it squats or lifts a leg near the indoor foliage. According to behaviorists, this same principle of reinforcement applies to the way people learn, including the way they learn gender (Lott 39-40).

Often the rewards and punishments are direct and take the form of praise or admonishment. For instance, on a shopping excursion, one of the authors overheard a little girl asking her father to buy her a plastic truck. Looking at her with obvious displeasure, he said, "That's for boys. You are not a boy, are you?" Without answering, the little girl put the toy back on the shelf (Interestingly, research indicates that boys actually receive harsher disapproval for cross-gender behavior than do girls). Children learn through indirect reinforcement as well; for example, they may learn about the consequences of certain behaviors just by observing the actions of others (Stockard and Johnson 176).

Children learn not only through reinforcement, but also by imitating or modeling those around them. Of course, two processes - reinforcement and modeling - go hand-in-hand. Children will be rewarded for imitating some behaviors and punished for imitating others. At the same time, children will most likely imitate those who positively reinforce their behavior. Social learning theorists predict that children will imitate individuals most like themselves . Obviously, this includes same-sex parents and older same-sex siblings, but teachers and media personalities also serve as effective models for children. From a social learning perspective, girls become more communal and boys more agentic because each sex is reinforced for different

behaviors and either punished or not rewarded when they engage in behaviors seen is inappropriate.

Children, at a very early age, prefer to play with their same-sex partners. According to Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin, girls are more likely to stay away from boys because of their playing styles. They prefer to play with other girls or stay near adults. From the age three, boys become more active to obtain gender-based segregation. According to a research, boys are found to react negatively to those who behave more girlish. As a result boys stay away from typical girls' activities (qtd. in Stockard and Johnson 177).

Up to this point, it has now become clear that gender and consequent roles are learned through a life-time process and shows its effect in the diversity of actions and occupations that assign a gender-role onto the individual. Considering this, it is inevitable to think of stereotypes as different attributes assigned differently to women and men and subsequent gender identities.

### Gender Stereotypes

For most people, masculinity is associated with competence, instrumentality, and activity; femininity is associated with warmth, expressiveness, and nurturance. Studies conducted with nearly 1000 males and females demonstrated a broad consensus regarding the existence of different personality traits in men as compared with women. This consensus



was found regardless of the age, sex, religion, educational level, or marital status of respondents. More than 75% of those asked agreed that 41 traits clearly differentiated females and males. Women most often characterized as communal (that selfless and other-oriented); men most often are characterized as agentic (that is, assertive and achievement-oriented) (Basow 5). Table 1 shows the results of the research on stereotypic sex role descriptors (see Appendices).

As men and women socialize differently from each other, technology also takes its part from this fact and shows its mark in the production and consumption of these innovations. In Michel Foucault's theory of sexuality, it is a "technology of sex" which proposes that gender, as representation, is the product of social technologies such as media and of course, of other institutions such as nuclear or extended or single-parented families, private and public schools, courts, in short, of what Louis Althusser has called the "ideological state apparatus" (De Lauretis 2-3). Thus, social relationships can be considered as organized and structured by technological systems which allow or encourage some kinds of interactions and prevent or discourage other kinds.

New technological processes are usually considered a part of modernization which many think inevitably leads to the improvement of the status and well-being of the people involved... Most Western technological change is linked to traditional, patriarchal work practices. Ironically what seems new for men often turns out to be very much the same old thing for women. Since the industrial revolution - with the separation of men from daily domestic life and the separation of unpaid house and child care work from other work - social hierarchies have remained amazingly consistent. In this sense, much of the seemingly revolutionary technology is actually very conservative (i.e. change versus continuity);

says Cheris Kramarae and continues saying that histories of technology have almost nothing to say about women and like all aspect of "progress", is usually thought of as a masculine invention and activity developed by men for men (2). This does not mean, of course, that women do not use and obtain benefits from many innovations but their access to these resources is not permitted to extend their traditional, stereotypic female attributes since Western society is a patriarchal one in which men dominate women.

As the topic of the research indicates, what will be taken as a technological innovation mainly is computer and computer/video games and their subsequent effects in determining the gender of the user/player. Since computer and computer/video games are not the only environment, media sources, such as TV, films and etc. must along be mentioned in terms of how they all depict women and men in an intertextual consensus.

### **1.3.2- The Computer and Computer Games**

#### **The Computer**

The computer as a technological and continuous innovation, is currently used in the office to edit or compose a text, to find and send information, to design and at school, as a tool under to name of "Computer Aided Instruction" and "Computer Aided Learning" and at home especially to play games.

The computer game is one of the visible products of advances in computer technology. Within the past decade, these games have gained incredible popularity especially among young people. Video arcades have sprung up across the countries and an enormous amount of publicity, both positive and negative, has been generated. In one step further, there is VR technology. The technology of Virtual Reality is getting perfected and widespread and in the very near future it will become a popular activity as games of today. Since the earliest days of computer games' intense popularity, many concerns on the possible effects are being put forward but unfortunately it is impossible to notice a well-formulated critical point of view about gender segregation as a factor influencing the production and consumption of computer game technology.

Every new technology carries the marks of the precedent ones. One's weakness constitutes the newer's strength. In this sense, technological innovations are complementaries, not opposites of each other. Before computer games there were only the computer and there were and are also many claims about the use of the computer by male and female users.

Nearly 30 years ago, Marshall McLuhan advanced the revolutionary thesis that "the medium is the message." His idea was that each medium of communication produces social and psychological effects on its audience, particular social relations and a particular form of consciousness or ways of thinking, that are quite independent of the content being transmitted. These effects constitute the message of the medium (qtd. in Greenfield 4).

The domesticated mass media situated in the home such as television and video games have now become substitute for parents. According to National Institute of Mental Health, for example, children spent far more time looking at video screens than interacting with parents, thus media become primary models for the child's discursive repertoire as well as they provide the child both with a compelling multisensory enunciation of the patriarchal symbolic order and with a powerful means of reenvoicing cultural values.

Such reenvoicements can be achieved through a dialogic system of intertextuality (involving language, play, and commercial exchange), which positions the child as an active consumer whose desires are directly addressed . . .

says Marsha Kinder (1-2, 22-23); thus, these domesticated toys replace family as the "collective mind".

In contemporary mass media studies, intertextuality has come to mean that any individual text (whether an artwork like a movie or novel, or a more commonplace text like a newspaper article, billboard, or casual verbal remark) is part of a larger cultural discourse and therefore must be read in relationship to other texts and their diverse textual strategies and ideological assumptions. The author or the reader of a particular text may not consciously aware of the other texts with which it is connected, those texts still help to structure its meaning (Kinder 1-2).

Media sources such as television, radio, films, computer and computer games help to structure people's angle of view to the world. Especially in the current age which is called as "information age," people are under a bombardment of information that they cannot isolate themselves from

that network which is characterized by technology. Television, films, print media, computer games and etc., all communicate messages about gender-roles. Females and males are presented in stereotyped ways .

Stereotypes frequently attempts to validate certain roles and behaviors. Far from being necessarily negative, they often present us with positive models of behavior to emulate. The "housewife" stereotype, common in TV programs, films, magazines, news stories, and especially favored by advertisers, is a role women are invited to copy and men to reinforce. But both stereotypes and labels reflect power relations in the wider society and both exist as powerful forces in the real world as well as being reinforced through media (Barrat 42).

The early interest of psychologists in stereotypes formed part of a broader concern with the origins of attitudes. They were interested in how attitudes changed and why some seemed more resistant to change than others. The stereotype was seen as an exceptional type of attitude - one that was particularly difficult to change. Thus the study of stereotype was closely linked to the notion of prejudice. Prejudice implies an attitude that pre-judges reality and that is based not on experience but on some firmly fixed belief or dogma. The stereotype became the content of this belief, as it was projected onto particular persons or groups (Barrat 42).

The "dumb blonde" stereotype, for example, portrayed in many films refers to the subordinate position of women in western societies and in that sense is quite accurate. Women typically do find themselves in roles that

are seen as less intellectually demanding. Women are often defined in terms of their physical attractiveness to men. But, as Richard Dyer argues, the stereotype goes further to suggest that such differences may be the effect of their inferior position in a male dominated society. Thus it confuses cause and effect, and in doing so, serves the ideological function of making female disadvantage seem just, acceptable, and legitimate. The "dumb blonde" stereotype is not, therefore, necessarily inaccurate, it reflects back the reality of women's exploited experience, but in doing so, makes it seem inevitable and natural (Barrat 43).

Because of the pervasiveness of the media sources, gender offers a very clear intertextuality. The media can take new forms - if, for example, one considers the transition between radio and interactive television - except the characteristics of the medium, it can be seen that the representation of gender-roles have not been changed that much and as such, all media sources are consequent. That's why, in analyzing the computer games and gender-roles, which is supported by the other media sources, it seems very useful to look at television, films, commercials, magazines and newspapers in order to understand how gender-roles are depicted in and how it is arrived to popular computer games and gender-roles. Although, in recent years women represented in the media may seem as improved but this improvement cannot be seen as exceeding the limits of the patriarchal order.

In her book Playing With Power, Marsha Kinder states that in video games, TV programs and movies, gender-roles are increasingly reinforced rather

than transgressed. In analyzing the mass toy market as "one of the strongest early influences on gender," Susan Willis observes:

There is much greater sexual division than has ever existed before. Walk into any toy store and you will see, recapitulated in store's aisle arrangement, the strict distinction and separation of the sexes along specific gender lines: Barbies, My Little Ponies, and She-Ras in one aisle; He-Man, the Transformers, and Thunder Cats in another (qtd. in Kinder 9).

In addition to toys, children's books are also of the pervasive influences that encourage the development of traditional masculine and feminine self-views. What children read and that others read them, influence their self-concept development, and evidences tend to confirm that many of these materials provide only limited roles for females, a preponderance of male characters, limited occupational goals for women, and traditional gender stereotyping that girls are pictured as kind, attentive, serving and are known in terms of their appearance or the way they look to others, while boys are pictured as adventuresome and strong (Pearson et al. 62-64).

The same division is seen in TV programs, from this respect, media and top industry have similar market strategy concordances. Because the media both reflect and shape society, they are extremely influential, especially for young children who cannot differentiate fantasy from reality.

### Computer Games

Being a part of the media sources, computer games have become one of the major activities of children's daily lives. With a growing popularity, children are now offered a new environment to play games which is totally



different from what they were once playing, but the way they are depicted or represented in these games, or the roles they are assigned, reflect cultural stereotypes of men and women. As Terri Toles argues: "Games serve as extensions of social man, giving new meaning to social structures that have become so familiar that their meaning is forgotten or obscured as we conduct the routine activities of everyday life" and according to Marshall McLuhan, "games are extensions, not of our private but of our social selves", in other words they are media of communication (qtd. in Provenzo 72).

Children with a television background develop a preference for dynamic visual imagery (Greenfield 99). Before computer games there were games that have now become as "traditional." The most striking difference between traditional games and computer games is the fact that the latter is interactive. The interactive quality of the computer games provides the player to affect what happens on the screen, and developments on the screen, in turn, constrain the possibilities for the player's next move.

A straightforward example is the original commercial computer game, Pong, an electronic ping-pong game. Like other popular computer games, Pong involves moving imagery, as television does. But instead of merely watching an animated ping-pong match, as one might watch Wimbledon on television, the player actually plays the match, and thus has a part in creating the video display (Greenfield 100-101) or, as an other example, children not only watch what Bugs Bunny, a very popular cartoon character, is doing on the screen, but also they find the opportunity to perform his quest by identifying themselves with him. Thus, control and influence over

the game go in two directions, from the player and from the computer. Marshal McLuhan argues that games - and this particularly applies to computer games - provide the player with a "release from the monopolistic tyranny of the social machine"; for a brief moments the child can escape the tyranny of school and the social demands of his family and peers by becoming part of an alternate world of galactic invasions, bionic man, teenage mutant Ninja turtles, and damsels in distress who must be rescued (Provenzo 73).

### Gendered Toys

Psychologists interpret children's games as preparation for adult life. It is stated that below two years of age children show no significant gender differences in toy preferences. By preschool age game and toy preferences become clear as a result that seem linked to adult gender-typed behaviors (Lipman-Blumen 54).

As is well known, boys prefer trucks, guns, carpentry and engage in large-muscle activity like running, leaping, pushing, fighting to explore their strength without fear. This pattern is consistent across many cultures. For example, in four out of six societies studied by a team of anthropologists, boys three to six years old exhibited more "rough-and-tumble" play than did their female age-mates. This was also true for children seven to eleven years old in five out of six societies studied (Lipman-Blumen 55).

Little girls are more likely to be protected from physical harm and parents are more apt to worry about the physical well-being of daughters, even as young as nine months. That's why little girls are restricted on the physical activities and are kept closer to home than their brothers, a pattern anthropologists have observed in preliterate as well as postindustrial societies. Keeping girls closer home can also be viewed as assigning them household and childcare tasks at an early age which lead to their future responsibilities as a wife and/or mother. Even their delicate clothes limit their physical activities, however, the recent trend toward dressing little girls in overalls and pants influence girls' self-confidence and independence. Unisex clothes can be interpreted that the females are allowed to share in more unrestricted, and therefore particularly powerful, styles and symbols.

Boys are not treated closer to home as females, they are trained for a world of independent, aggressive action to confront the environment directly. Males learn that society's goals are best met by aggression, by actively wresting their accomplishments from the environment. Force, power, competition, and aggression are the means. Achievement, males are taught, is measured in productivity, resources, and control - all the result of direct action. In the Western world, the importance of self-reliant, individual action is systematically inculcated in males. To be masculine requires not only self-reliance and self-control, but control over other people and resources. Thus, dominion over weaker men and over all women is an important goal whose accomplishment is practiced early. That's why competition and winning are seen more appropriate for boys. Winning in competitive sports provides practice in planning, coordinating, and

implementing a plan for successful goal attainment. On the contrary to boys, girls are taught to value relationships above winning in the name of friendship and love and that overt competition in general, much less against friends, is unfeminine. Boys are socialized to compete overtly, even against friends, to play to win. Rather than competing to win, females are far more apt to contribute to other people's success or take pleasure vicariously from the success of others (Lipman-Blumen 57).

Studies have revealed that females as young as eight years old report self-appraisal of fearfulness more often than their male age-mates. Thus, despite no objective differences in fear-related behavior, females somehow begin to believe they are more fearful than males. Women's self-described fearfulness can be interpreted as recognition of their weakness, which leads to a wish to be protected by a less fearful, more stronger male protector. Boys are encouraged to explore and investigate fearlessly. Between the ages three and six boys begin to outdistance girls in their "willingness to explore new environments." Unlike girls, who are more protected from physical danger, little boys are allowed to wander farther from home. As part of this training, boys are encouraged to be daring, to suppress fear. The fear of the girls may be seen as a reflection of the greater emotional intensity permitted and encouraged among females throughout life (Lipman-Blumen 58-61).

The typical toys offered little girls are soft and unmechanical; dolls are the primary toys through which the play activity of talking to and caring for dolls, girls train themselves to be ideal recipients of gender-role

socialization. They also choose sewing and housekeeping play. As they grow older, they are assigned small household and childcare responsibilities, part of the tasks they watch their mothers perform. These early lesson in "servicing," "mothering," and "helping" are played out in the classroom, where girls often assist their male classmates in finding the correct page and following the teachers' instructions.

### The Game Theory

In order to examine the role of the games and play activities, it would be useful to look at the game theory that has been put forward in the past and which tries to figure out games that are called as "traditional" today.

Huizinga, one of the most well-known game theorists, states that a game is a voluntary activity free from any compulsion. While playing, the player is isolated from the real world and enters into game's own world of order. By this time, child is aware of that she/he is out of the reality, as such, materialistic benefits can not be gained, it is an escape from the stresses and strains of real life (Caillois 35-41).

In the game, player, by projecting his/her real life problems into the make-believe context, the player may solve them with great boldness, and at the same time, forget for the while what his/her real problems are (qtd. in Fisher 443-72).

Game is apart from daily life in terms of space and time. That is why it has its own space and time. Within the game environment, an absolute and autonomous order is reigned. Game creates an order as well as it creates a limited and temporary perfectness in the complexities of life (Huizinga 10).

A game commences and at a certain point it ends. It is oriented to a conclusion, it can also be considered as a tradition that is repeated. A game also has enchanting effect which contains a certain harmony. Tension, which comes out from the desire to struggle with the unknown, is especially an important characteristic. There is tension in the effort spent for an accomplishment, for example, the child playing with the ball, the kitten that touches the woolen ball, all try to terminate the tension (Caillois 35-41). The thrill derives from the accumulation and resolution of tension of each play and is greatly enhanced by the element of risk to the individual. While the player is strongly attracted to the thrill, she/he finds it subjectively intolerable and seeks ways of easing it (Fisher 443-72).

Every game has its own rules. Violating the rules will end the game. Rules must be obeyed, they do not give any place for doubt. There is difference between a killjoy and cheating, the former does not respect the rules while the latter make-believe that she/he obeys them, unless being caught she/he stays in the game (Caillois 35-41).

As Metin And states, game is not only an activity for people to pass free time, but also is related to deal with the cosmos; human beings have

always been willing to settle-up with their anxiety of the universe (53). They, in other words, gain experience over the troubles that they can face within the game environment.

A game can be considered as "fiction" in which players (are) represented different from real life; sometimes they become a prince or princess, father, or a dangerous character in which children experience "make-believe" sensation. Here, "make-believe" takes the form of something which is desired, in other words a re-presentation is actualized through a symbol (Huizinga 10).

After all these definitions, it must not be thought that games have nothing to do with real life. Contrary, games can be considered as factors to prepare children for their future roles. For example, a girl playing with the doll may be seen as an experience for her role as mother in the future. Thus, the act of play becomes an identity, as such, games are part of the cultures. For an individual, it has a biological function and for a society it has a cultural function since it creates moral and societal bonds by satisfying the ideals of expressions and ideals of society (Huizinga 15).

Every culture induces in its children certain conflicts and anxieties - power discrepancies, for example, and conflicting desires to be fused and independent - through its child training procedures. These inevitably (and naturally) conflicted children are attracted to games which model their conflict by codifying its emotional and cognitive aspects and provide them, in the course of playing the game, an opportunity to develop confidence and competence to handle the real-life situations symbolized by the game.

Games invite an exploration of feelings - screaming with fear at a terrible monster, roaring with rage at a "mother" or "father," imperiously directing an army of plastic soldiers, weeping in sorrow over the death of a "baby" - without the dangers that would be involved in exploring such feelings in real life. The player, it is said, can keep

his character up and costs down. The structure of the game and the understanding that it's just "pretend" are the safeguarding boundaries of this low-risk testing grounds. Early childhood conflicts are assuaged, and the child makes step-by-step progress toward appropriate adult behavior (Snyder and Palmer 114-15).

Games constitute an environment for "informal learning." In general - excluding hi-tech games - games are in the services of three main goals: 1- To unite and diffuse cultural values, 2- To unite and diffuse cultural behaviors, 3- To unite and diffuse beliefs. While playing a game, players are allowed to think, try, discuss, experience in a free atmosphere in which social interactions can be emphasized. Games are cultural inventions, in their own boundaries, they reflect the interactive styles of the culture in which they are created. As such, they can be considered as the miniaturized control systems of the culture they belong. They play a role in shaping the culture as well as can be adapted into new forms according to the evolution of the perceptions (Snyder and Palmer 109-110).

Computer and/or video games, just as other games, are just toys but they also teach players about the society in which they live and provide important insights into the values which is held as culture; their content reveals a great deal about people's attitudes concerning violence, their fears and hopes for technology, and the social status people assign to women (Provenzo 99).



## Gender in Computer Games

As is mentioned earlier, child is born into a world where gender-role attributes are already constructed. Social institutions and media sources are so structured and so bound to each other that any individual cannot isolate him/herself from that network and its effects of what McLuhan calls "social machine."

Being a part of the media sources, computer games have also important impacts on the individuals' gender-roles. Women - when they are included at all in games - are often cast as individuals who are acted upon rather than as initiators of action. In other words, they are depicted as victims in the games. This fact has important consequences not just for the images provided by the games (as well as other sources from the media and the general culture) that women are inducted the "weaker sex," and constantly in need of aid or assistance. Thus the game not only socialize women to be dependent, but also condition men to assume dominant gender-roles (Provenzo 100).

Every game has a story, or in a more sophisticated manner, has a narrative of its own. At the beginning of a particular game, a problem or a disorder is given, as can be seen in other types of story-telling, and the player is encouraged to solve this problem. Sometimes, the problem would be a puzzle to solve, or a task to be performed as in role-playing games in which the player assumes a role by modeling the character relevant to the overall scenes depicted in the game. Player can assume a role of a prince,

or a race-car driver, a warrior and etc... So, the narrative is crisis and resolution, i.e., a series of events into which disorder is introduced (Mayne 25).

At first sight, computer games may be seen as offering players multiple choices, which create new possible endings to follow in order to come to an end. This gives the player a great amount of possibilities and a sense of independence in a given space, but it must not be forgotten that a single game has an actual programmer and that every possible choice to solve the problem can be actualized within the very limits of the designer of the game. Many ways, many solutions, many different strategies can be followed, even invented by the player, but only within the closed textual scheme which is the outputs of the intentions of the programmer/designer.

Computer games have frequently been criticized for teaching and promoting violence and sexism, but their real problem is that they are a reflection of the concerns and attitudes of the still mostly male computer-jock culture. It's a culture that builds systems that demand quick, reactive thinking in a universe of limited choices. And it is this culture that is designing the so-called information highways. The type of intuitive interface perfected in video games - you see it, you shoot it . . . ,

writes Karrie Jacobs in her article "RoboBabes: Why Girls Don't Play Video Games" (42). And the editor of I.D. The International Design Magazine, Chee Pearlman adds that:

Last year (1993), retail sales of video games software in the U.S. reached \$6 billion - nearly \$1 billion more than the total domestic box-office receipts for all feature films released during the same period. What's fascinating about this figure is that the bulk of the \$6 billion is spent by one sector of the population: boys. Primarily ranging in age from 8 to 18, these pre-adult males are addicted to video games (37).

And again, according to Heidi Dangelmaier, computer scientists, mostly male, thought that recreating an image on the computer screen with exactitude was more important than understanding what that image could actually communicate (qtd. in Jacobs 42).

### 1.3.3- Player

If one looks at the content of most popular games, it can be seen that they are categorized under the titles, such as "crime fighting" -in which the player acts as hero, battling crime and saving the city from villains - "military" - features games that offer military action, including battles in the air or on ground - "science fiction" - that offers some sort of futuristic battle - and one of the major themes in top-rated video games is games that include women being kidnapped who have no contribution in the overall game whose main characters are again males who are expected to rescue them as a reward at the end of the game that can be mostly associated with male interests, pleasures and attributes. Names of the games go as Mortal Kombat, Doom, Street Fighter, and Street Racer in which male characters are depicted as the major character with whom the player has to identify in order to perform the task.

Another criterion would be the content analysis of gender themes on the covers of the game boxes. Number of males figures and dominant males on covers of the games, outnumber the ones with female figures and dominant female figures. Males and females can be identified by their dress and physical characteristics. They can also be characterized according

to whether or not they were initiating action in the visual frame - for example, striking out with a weapon, leading a group through dangerous terrain or as part of military charge and of course the relative size of their appearances. The boxes in which video games are sold usually feature lurid illustrations, much more realistic than the actual game graphics, bare-chested male warriors are a favorite image (Jacobs 40).

Not only games and their covers depict males and females differently from each other, but also the publicities concerned on how to win at games and on giving information, summaries of the latest games with screen-shot examples, support the idea that games are primarily produced for male players in mind. Magazines' covers are made of popular game graphics that remind of magazines targeted for male readers with discriminatory images and slogans. Of course, these written materials also shape people's understanding about computer games and their gendered players.

What has been explained up to this point, has led us to a conclusion that gender plays a mediated role in computer game industry and related environments and that the players are introduced to games which have already been coded of certain consuming styles, reflecting the designers' and manufacturers', on the whole, society's intentions and tendencies, and ways of looking to men and women. To name it better, a "Model Player" is constituted within the game which is the main articulation of this dissertation.

## The Model Player

The term Model Player is based on the term Model Reader that Umberto Eco (1984) first introduced in his work The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts. Eco states that:

To organize a text, its author has to rely upon a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses. To make his text communicative, the author has to assume that the ensemble of codes he relies upon is the same as that shared by his possible reader (hereafter Model Reader). . . At the minimal level, every type of text explicitly selects a very general model of possible reader . . . (7).

Model Reader is a component part of the structural strategy of the text. The process of interpretation is a structural element of the text's generative process. It will only be the text itself that tells us which kind of reader it postulates. If there is a "jouissance du text" (Barthes, 1973), it cannot be aroused and implemented except by a text producing all the paths of its "good" reading (Eco 9-10).

Eco continues saying that no text is read independently of the reader's experience of other texts. Every character (or situation) of a novel is immediately endowed with properties that the reader has been 'programmed' to borrow from the treasury of intertextuality. Common frames come to the reader from his storage of encyclopedic knowledge and are mainly rules for practical life. The reader approaches a text from a personal ideological perspective, even when he is not aware of this. This means that not only the outline of textual ideological structures is governed by the ideological bias of the reader but also that a given ideological background can help one to discover or to ignore textual ideological

structures. All these reading habits properties are not actually present to the mind of the reader. They are virtually present in the encyclopedia, that is, they are socially stored, and the reader picks them up from store when required by the text (Eco 21, 22, 23).

Video games are "texts" that have a certain beginning and an end. Currently, all of the games are represented in the form of visual texts but indeed they have a certain script created through the collaboration of imaginative writer and innovative technology into a genre now widely known as interactive fiction whose key factor is the reader's active part in shaping and exploring imaginary worlds.

In this context, computer games select a model of possible player whose gender identity is constructed by the game as mainly male and on the whole, by the components of the computer game industry.

#### 1.4- Method

Such a dissertation begins with an analysis of the written records and observation of the field of gender-role socialization since the so-called player is not the actual player but a constituted player, namely, a Model Player which is the product of the text itself. The topics such as player, the way the identity of the player is constructed as subject within the game will be described. The main concern will be the model player, not the actual player, that's why a theoretical description must be made by submitting unique combination of existing information which may suggest

new relationships or explanations since no study has been made of this to date.

In this connection, it is necessary to apply other disciplines in order to criticize the field from a wide angle perspective. The media, such as TV, films, print media and the computer will be addressed in order to evaluate the relationship between computer games and the way women and men are represented in the other sources. To do so, it is useful to turn back to childhood psychology as well as psychoanalysis to see the ways boys and girls socialize differently from each other. At this stage, mirror phase, recognition and misrecognition of the self, Oedipus complex, women's lack and the patriarchal system must be reviewed from childhood treatment point of view.

Identification process, identification with the protagonist as well as the gender of the represented characters of the games will be analyzed by correlating the same issues of other media sources. The term player will be taken not as the actual player, but as the model player whose gender identity is constructed by the discourse.

### **1.5- Limitations/delimitations**

Umberto Eco states that at the minimal level, every type of text explicitly selects a model of possible reader. The text aims at pulling the reader along a predetermined path, carefully displaying its effect so as to arouse expected reactions or emotions at the due place and at the right moment

in the same way in which an advertisement chooses its possible audience, otherwise the result is incredibly disappointing (7). That is why, this study is mainly concerned with the way the Model Player is constructed by the computer/video game discourse, thus actual players or ideal players are not dealt, rather a male Model Player will be dealt as the result of the text itself.

This study is mainly concerned with the way the model player is constructed by the discourse, that is why a theoretical approach is needed.

Popular role-playing computer games will be analyzed, for that reason Virtual Reality and its subsequent applications related with games will be excluded since they have not become popular yet, in other words, not reachable, affordable and not available in the market for daily usage.

Since the dissertation is intended to focus on gender-roles and computer games, simulations will be excluded since they are not considered as games but as model. A model could be used in a game but should not be confused with one.

The term computer game(s) will be used with the term video game(s) interchangeably within the dissertation since frequently used as synonyms. These games can also be called as electronic games that can be connected to a regular household TV set. With the developments in computer industry, home computer market have become available as well as games specifically programmed for them. There are other types that can be called as console



systems which are dedicated games machines which take cartridges into a port in the control deck and hand-held liquid crystal display (LCD) games which are about of a pocket size operated by batteries with games specifically designed to fit them. The main example is Game Boy from Nintendo. We will call all of them as either computer game, or video game for not to cause any confusion.

## **1.6- Related Literature**

1- Gender-role Socialization

2- Technology

3- Media Studies

4- Computer Studies

5- Film Theories

## **1.7- A Summary**

An outline of the dissertation is as follows: In chapter 2, images of women and representation in media will be investigated and discussed. It is observed that television programs, magazines, newspapers as well as films depict men and women in stereotyped ways in which roles are assigned and that the viewers/spectators have certain expectations based on these stereotypic images.

Chapter 3 will cover computer technology as a gendered technology in which psychological aspect of computer usage will be discussed in terms of

gendered pleasures offered from. Computer usage will be described considering gender-based attitudes toward computer in order to understand why girls or women do not play computer games as boys or men do.

Chapter 4 will be mainly focused on computer games in relation with gender-roles. Computer game categories as well as discourse on games will be discussed along with the analyses of selected popular role-playing games in terms of the constitution of a player independent from the actual player.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion. Major conclusions are drawn from the dissertation and possible research areas based on this are summarized.

## 2- IMAGES OF WOMEN IN POPULAR CULTURE

### 2.1- Issues of Representation in Media

As is well known, "information age," "information society," or "consumer society" are the characteristic terms of the current age in which people live. Informational developments are central to the spread of consumerism since they provide the means by which people are persuaded by corporate capitalism that it is both a desirable and an inevitable way of life. Through a sustained information barrage, attests Schiller, "all spheres of human existence are subject to the intrusion of commercial values... the most important of which, clearly is: CONSUME!" (qtd. in Webster 95). If one tries to look at the environment, preparative factors of this so-called "information age" can be observed.

Television has been in extensive use for over thirty years and people are able to watch from breakfast time until the morning. It has expanded from a single channel to a multichannel medium both with state and private ones and has been enhanced to incorporate video technologies, cable and satellite channels, and even computerised information services such as teletext.

There is much more radio output available now than even a decade ago, at local, national and international level. And radios are no longer fixed in

one room, but spread through the home, in the car, the office, and with the Walkman, everywhere. Movies have long been an important part of people's information environment and are today very much prevalent than ever. They are available at cinema outlets, broadcast on television, and readily borrowed from video rental shops.

While walking along any street it is almost impossible to miss the advertising hoardings, the billboards, the window displays in shops. Bus and railway stations are the places where books and magazines whose subjects ranging from classical through pulp fiction are available. In addition, audiotape, compact disc all offer more music, poetry, drama, humor and education to the general public. Newspapers are extensively available and a good many new titles fall on people's doorsteps as free sheets. Junk mail is delivered daily (Webster 21).

This sort of listings implies that new media surround people, presenting them with messages to which they may or may not respond. Thus, our environment is an informational environment which is more intimate, more constitutive of us including our gender-roles and it is almost impossible to get away from the strains of this network.

In that sense, mass media technologies serve to transmit popular culture images that are constructed depending on the dominant ideology. Popular culture is the culture of everyday life. It contains entertainment and provides the representations for a specific life style ideology. It directly serves to diffuse certain norms, values including gender-based attributes using mass

media and other technological devices to reach to a wide range audience. As with other popular products, both in its content and its form, accustom the "reader" to stereotypes that emphasize a consensus on issues such as nation, family, manhood, heroism by the help of media sources (Oktay 26, 30).

Dominant ideology serves to impose certain attributes that assign certain roles on men and women to emulate. In that sense, mass media play an important role in representing attributes linked with being female and male. In the case of women, images of women in media become part of woman's concepts of herself. Represented status and abilities of other women (e.g., stereotypic housewives) affect her image of her own status and abilities. Never seeing women in some roles, for example, and seeing women playing other roles poorly reduces the likelihood that a woman will attempt such roles herself. As Provenzo states media images help women to "construct reality" (100).

Frank Webster, in his book Theories of the Information Society, states that information revolution encourages capitalism by extending it deeper into everyday lives of people:

First, television is enhanced both to become a still more thorough means of selling goods and services to the individual buyer and to bolster the consumerist lifestyle. Television already contributed much to the stay-at-home ethos of consumerism, and critics anticipate that flat-screen TVs, home entertainment systems, video and cable will spread this trend.

Second, and related, the bulk of the programming itself, aside from the advertisements, serves to encourage a consumer lifestyle. The symbols of success, beauty, fashion, popularity, approval and pleasure that are displayed in everyday television are presented to the public, which in response yearns for them and must seek for them on the market.

The third argument, however, is less frequently made. This suggests that where once, for instance, people grew much of their own food in the garden, or perhaps made their own clothes, nowadays virtually all of our requirements are met at the supermarket or through the chain store.

Similarly, it is suggested that television and TV-type technologies take away the responsibility of arranging one's own pleasure, replacing it with a new dependency on a machine . . . (95-96).

Thus, the media are valuable learning sources for shaping one's and, on the whole, society's perceptions of themselves as women and men and consequently the overall characteristics of the age in which they live. For many people, media are the primary sources of information and are also a system of control over people who model the behavior they perceive, that's why they are responsible for substantively changing interpersonal relationships and are instrumental in shaping an individual's self-image.

Media are sources of expressions, in other words, they are the results of technological processes that reflect the latest achievements and innovations in their way of representing the world. The latest developments in interactive media (such as Compact Disc Interactive, developed by General Electric and Intel Corporation) promise consumers that, with the purchase of an electronic device (which, like a Nintendo home video game system, can be hooked up to any television set) and the use of a remote control unit or joystick, they will be able to access and combine a wide range of graphics, video images, sounds and words (Kinder 4).

In an analysis of interactive television of the 1980s, Andrew Pollack concludes:

So far, the only interactivity that appears to be developing into a successful business is the simplest equipment in homes . . . allowing

viewers to order merchandise on shopping networks, by calling an '800' telephone number or to respond to questions on television by calling a '900' number (qtd. in Kinder 5-6).

The latest developments in technology, position receivers in a much more active role. Through the marriage of computer and films, soon people will be able to have access any listing, say, in the Paramount or ABC libraries, punch in a code and, within minutes, have Singin'in the Rain on their screen.

Media sources such as television, films, print media, computer, and computer games are full of images of men and women. The way they are depicted and represented in media sources present people models of behavior to emulate. Positive and negative roles that men and women are assigned are reinforcing agents that tell what an acceptable woman and/or man can be and must behave. As such, they offer stereotypic attributes or labels that reflect power relations in the wider society.

According to psychologists' view, stereotypes formed part of a broader concern with the origins of attitudes. David Barrat writes that they were interested in how attitudes changed and why some seemed more resistant to change than others. The stereotype was seen as an exceptional type of attitude - one that was particularly difficult to change. Thus the study of stereotype was closely linked to the notion of prejudice. Prejudice implies an attitude that pre-judges reality and that is based not on experience, but on some firmly fixed belief or dogma (Barrat 42). Stereotypic attributes of men and women can be projected on to particular persons or groups by

both the institutions (family, school) and by the media sources. As is mentioned before, gender offers a very clear intertextuality in all of the media sources.

The term intertextuality was first introduced by Julia Kristeva. In contemporary media studies, intertextuality has come to mean that any individual text (whether an artwork like movie or novel, or a more commonplace text like a newspaper article, billboard, or casual verbal remark) is part of a larger cultural discourse and therefore must be read in relationship to other texts and their diverse textual strategies and ideological assumptions. The author or the reader of a particular text may not consciously aware of the other texts with which it is connected, those texts still help to structure its meaning. Television programs, films, cartoons, toys are all consequent in terms of similar messages about gender-roles marked by "transmedia intertextuality" (Kinder 1, 2).

For the most part, the media present a world view that conforms to patriarchal beliefs. The power to decide what will be reported or portrayed in the mass media belongs to the leaders of media organization, who are rarely critical of the existing distributions of power in the society. "Women who attain decision-making positions do not usually rush to remove patriarchal patterns in their medium's messages because they rarely have sufficient power to protect themselves from criticism or from more serious punishment from their superiors" (Kramer 20).



## 2.2- Television

The widespread use of television in homes since 1950s, the process of subject formation has gained a new dimension. In Lacanian sense, television functions as a mirror, and in Althusserian sense, it functions as an ideological state apparatus - that is, as a social apparatus that transmits and reproduces the dominant ideology through widely accepted cultural practices. Before television, there were the family, the education system that performed as the powerful ideological state apparatuses. With the invent of television medium, it has become the most powerful ideological state apparatus in this late phase of postindustrial capitalism (Kinder 37). The images that are introduced to viewers appear as gendered characters with whom people are expected to identify as well as roles that are expected to reinforce. Thus, the result is a gendered spectatorship.

It has been estimated that children spend one-third of their lives at home and/or sleeping, one-third at school, and one-third in front of a TV set. The average child watches from 3 to 4 hours a day, by the time a child is 16, she or he has spent more time in front of a TV set than in a classroom (qtd. in Basow 157).

Regardless of what the viewer is watching - children's shows, daytime TV, prime-time TV, newscasts, or commercials - stereotypic gender messages abound. This is not surprising, especially given the fact that over 95% of television writers, producers, and executives are male. Women, when they are represented in TV programs, are generally depicted as weak and

portrayed as diminished and subjugated, family-oriented and passive; on the contrary, men are represented as powerful, assertive, and work-oriented. Men are also expecting rewards and punishments (qtd. in Basow 157).

Marsha Kinder, who is giving an overall observation of the current television and computer games usage and their possible effects on people who consume them, states that:

Television is so widely perceived as a postmodernist medium, or at least as a medium that contributes to the postmodernist condition, and why, within this context, intertextuality functions as a powerful vehicle of commodity formation. In this process, the newly emerging subject comes to perceive himself or herself as a gendered commodity around which a whole commercial nexus is organized - just like Garfield, the Muppet Babies, and other TV personalities with whom the child is led to identify. Further, the child comes to believe that this nexus is activated and extended whenever he or she consumes a product. In short, television teaches viewers that commercial interactivity empowers consumers by enabling them to assimilate the world as they buy into the system . . . This process of reproducing the postmodernist subject and its dynamic of commercial empowerment is now being intensified and accelerated in home video games, in commercial transmedia supersystems constructed around figures like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles . . . (38).

### **2.2.1- Children's Television**

The world that children see on TV is sex-typed and White-male-oriented. Children's TV, for example, has been found to depict more than twice as many male as female roles. The behaviors of the female and male characters are strikingly different, as are the consequences of these behaviors. Females are usually ignored and are expected to be passive and sedate. Beginning with the fall 1991 season, all Saturday morning programs began to feature dominant male characters with females playing peripheral roles, if any (qtd. in Basow 158). This was a deliberate marketing decision by television

executives based on the finding that girls will watch shows with male or female lead characters, but boys will only watch shows with male leads. Since commercial TV is driven by advertisers, and since boys are 53% of the Saturday morning television audience, programmers are concerned mainly about pleasing boys (Basow 158).

Actually, there is also a similar concept like Saturday morning television in Turkey. Especially with the growth of private TV channels, all Saturday morning TV programs are generally aimed at children. Walt Disney, Hanna & Barbera and Warner Bros. productions are the most popular cartoons as well as Disney films whose target audiences are mainly children and whose leading characters are mainly male, like "Donald Duck," "Mickey Mouse," "Roger Rabbit," "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," and so on.

Boys prefer animated, high-action programs (often involving violence) and so such programs predominate on children's TV. Even in educational programs like "Sesame Street," gender stereotypes can occur. The Muppets, the major characters on "Sesame Street," all have male names or voices or both. These puppets not only are the mainstays of the show but also are remarkable in books, toys, and other commercial articles (Basow 158).

Most of the cartoons, films and "Sesame Street" programs are U.S. originated and Turkish and American children share the same pleasure from this respect. These kind of imported programs are translated into Turkish in order to be understood by Turkish children. Translations are done according to the main plot, if the "Big Bird" in "Sesame Street," for

example, is represented as having a male voice, in its Turkish version again a male voice is adapted. So there is not any change in the voices of the characters as well as the representations of the puppets. From this respect, children's programs offer a global point of view onto the gender-roles that are represented.

As is well known, there are many television programs depict their major characters from toy products or vice versa, which are called as a supersystem which is a network of intertextuality constructed around a figure or group of figures from pop culture who are either fictional, like Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT), or "real" like Michael Jackson or Marilyn Monroe (Kinder 122-123). These characters that form the supersystem help to construct children's gender-roles by allowing for identification. These toys and their related television programs send messages about their targeted consumers. These messages are consistent throughout the media sources.

Toys, video games and television programs of TMNT, for example, are very popular among children, and as such, very influential in terms of the way the depiction of the characters from gender-roles point of view.

TMNT is primarily a discourse on fathers and sons. The film's primary moral conflict is a choice between good and bad fathers. The evil patriarch is Shredder (bad father) and the ideal patriarch Splinter (good father), the Japanese-American mutant rat who learned to be a ninja by imitating the moves of his master. The viewers learn in a flashback that one day in a New York sewer he discovered the four mutant Turtles who, like Oedipus,

were abandoned in infancy. Splinter adopts, names and trains them in the ninja arts and lovingly calls them "my sons." It may well be that the idealized father-son bonding between Splinter and the Turtles reassures its young spectators that those disturbing oedipal tensions and castration anxieties can be overcome. That is part of the myth's great appeal.

In this world of glorified father-son bonding, the maternal is more invisible than ninjas. No mothers are seen or mentioned; Turtles and other characters such as April and Danny are all motherless. Besides April, the other females in the movie are victims.

The gender of the Turtles appears to be totally "constructed" by their costuming, weaponry, behavior, and names, which are bestowed on them by their patriarchal master, that is, by the symbolic order - and that means that these accoutrements of masculinity can also be obtained by the young spectators who buy into the TMNT supersystem.

What is seen in the TMNT myth is the fact that masculinity therefore proves to be not biologically determined, but culturally constructed - a role that can be chosen, learned, or acquired. What TMNT offers for male viewers is the power of the Turtles that are gendered as male, and for the female viewers, is the maternal that is totally suppressed. The power is restricted solely to the male sphere. The only way for a female to be empowered within this mythic world is to become, not a Barbie-like princess, but an androgynous daddy's girl like April - that is, one of the boys (Kinder 145-148).

Mulac, Bradac and Mann found that the characters in children's programs speak sex-typed in an exaggerated manner and again Mulac et al. claimed that just reading the dialogs will give an idea about the gender of the character speaking (qtd. in Pearson et al. 257). Both females and males are the victims of the gender stereotypes in cartoons. In general, a female character in a cartoon does not exist or is in aid of a male character. Especially in "Bugs Bunny," for example, exclusion of the female characters can be observed. In cartoon shows, active female character can be used as an aim but always less than the number of male characters.

### **2.2.2- Daytime TV**

Daytime TV is especially targeted to women who stay at home and responsible of the households. In daytime soap operas, viewed primarily by women, characters are presented in traditional and stereotypic ways, although the subject matter has come more contemporary in recent years (qtd. in Basow 158).

Soap operas present a view of reality and of men and women quite different from that shown on prime-time television. Women in soap operas tend to be much younger and they are usually acted upon, raped, divorced, abandoned, misunderstood, given drugs, and/or attacked by unusual and mysterious diseases. Professional women are portrayed sympathetically, and women as well as men work outside the home at professional jobs (i.e., law and medicine). Men are portrayed in soap operas as more active and less tied to relationships than women. (qtd. in Pearson et al. 259).

Conversation for both men and women in soap operas tends to center on marriage, family, romantic and professional relationships, personalities, health, deviant behavior, and routine business matters. Many of the conversations are "small talk." The topics tend to be conventional and stereotypic. However, the conversational styles in soap operas are similar to real conversational patterns. Soap operas appeal to many people because their stories never end (qtd. in Basow 159). Because of the structure of continuation of the events, even if not followed for a couple of weeks, these shows do not exclude any of their audiences, that is why they last even for years.

### **2.2.3- Prime-Time TV**

Sexism on prime-time TV has been well documented since the late 1960s, although it has been reduced somewhat in the last years. White-men consistently outnumber women three to one as leading characters of shows. In exciting adventure shows, White-men outnumber women more than four to one. Men are more likely to be depicted as wage earners, and men appear in a greater variety of jobs than women. Since 1979, increasing numbers of female characters on TV have had jobs, and can serve as positive role models for young girls. Most shows with female professionals still focus on family issues rather than on work ones. Despite such changes in depictions of females, they still are more often identified by their relationships to males - as girlfriend, wife, mother - than males are identified by their relationships to females. In general, most females on

prime-time television are young, attractive, sexy, and ornamental (qtd. in Basow 159).

Female characters are more likely than males to show helpless and incompetent behaviors. For example; even in a show where a woman is a major character, she often must be rescued from a difficult situation by a male. Females are much more likely than males to be depicted in a negative light (for example, as a prostitute), especially on adventure shows. Men on TV also are more likely than women to be older, serious, and to hold prestigious jobs (Basow 160).

#### **2.2.4- Newscasts**

Most Americans (65%) use TV as a primary source of news (Television Digest, April 3, 1989, p. 3). The percentage of female news correspondents has increased somewhat from 1977, when 79% of the newscasters were males. The percentage of women in management positions in TV news still is small. Women, when they are in newscasters positions, are expected to be younger, more attractive, and more deferential than their male counterparts (qtd. in Basow 159-161).

These findings can be applied to Turkish state and private television channels as well. Almost all the beauty contests have now shown a tendency to mean a kind of TV speaker selection. Winner beauties are transferred as newscasters or so, by TV channel executives (male) just after the day of the contest without having any of their own initiatives on the overall



information to be given to the masses. There are always others, specifically male ones behind them as decision makers on what and how the news or the program will be transmitted. For example, until recent days, "Kanal D"s prime-time newscaster was Jülide Ateş, who was elected as "Miss Turkey" and was a popular and desirable both from her private and professional life aspects.

Although having more women in front of the camera does not mean that the news focus primarily on women issues or that they reflect women's point of views. What Jülide Ateş is doing in front of the camera is transmitting the news prepared by Uğur Dündar, who is a well-known popular male persona. Jülide Ateş has no contribution beside her appearance and voice on the news. Her image was used to attract people to follow "Kanal D"s newscasts and she can be considered as a stereotypic woman.

### **2.2.5- Commercials**

Researchers found that gender stereotypes are even more explicit in TV commercials than in regular programming, although women and men appear equally often as central characters. Since the early 1970s gender stereotyping has decreased somewhat, but women still are most often presented in the home in the role of wife and/or mother. When they are depicted as employed, their range of occupations is broader than it once was but is still traditionally feminine. Men, whose depiction as husband and/or father has increased, still are more frequently presented in other

roles, especially ones in the business world. Women are more likely than men to be shown using the products they advertise. Men are most often seen in ads for automotive products and alcohol (Basow 161).

The famous commercial Marlboro Man, for example, is one that we are very accustomed to watch especially in cinema auditorium just before the film begins:

A more virile male image could not have been created - with his broad shoulders, deep-set eyes, strong jaw, always pictured alone, a million miles from civilization, or so it seems. A man with a mission. A difficult man to match. The advertiser would have us to believe we too could become this way by smoking a particular brand of cigarettes, but the more important message we get is that this man's man is handsome, strong, powerful, active - and alone . . . (Kramer 31).

Women in commercials are much younger than the men, who can range between young and middle-aged. Relations between sexes typically are portrayed in traditional ways. For example, detergent commercials still primarily depict a woman worrying about getting the dirt off her husband's clothes rather than vice versa. And women are presented as sex objects more frequently than men since the bearer of the look is always considered as male. The most striking difference between women and men in commercials is the fact that men predominate (83%-90%) as the authoritative, dominant voice-overs, even when the products are aimed at women. Thus, again the voice of authority is male (qtd. in Basow 161).

On children's shows, sexist stereotypes in commercials are rampant. Boys dominate both quantitatively and qualitatively. Boys are more likely to be portrayed in active roles, girls in passive ones. Indeed, commercials

aimed at boys have a different format than commercials aimed at girls. Commercials aimed at boys have rapid action, frequent cuts, loud music, sound effects, and frequent scene changes. In contrast, commercials aimed at girls contain many fades and dissolves, background music, and female narration. Children as young as age 6 recognize these distinctions, which means that even if the content of a commercial does not sex-type a product, the style in which it is produced might (qtd. in Basow 161).

Commercials in Turkey can be considered as sex-typed as well. In "Garanti Bankası" commercial whose main character is a boy aged around 8 is a typical example. The boy looks like an ordinary boy with a pure face and represented as a worker (the implicit idea is that the boy cannot go to the school because of not well-being of his family, the viewer assumes). In the plot, he is depicted as selling a glass of fresh water to by-passers. Because it is the commercial of a bank, the story is mainly based on achievement and gives the impression of a step by step improvement after a well planned investment. The voice-over is again a male one, the main character is a boy and the by-passers are all business men. There is not any female, implicit or explicit in the plot. The message of this sentimental commercial is very direct and targeted especially to men. It is very long lasting commercial in the memories of men, women and children because of the depiction of the boy as a main character. Here, many inferences can be made: 1- Only little male children can work outside the home if the family can not afford the payment of the school; 2- Little boys can (must) start thinking about their future careers very early and can help their families; 3- Banking is a male-oriented profession.

In another automotive commercial, one can witness how the words of the father are considered correct and the "Law of the Father" is performed by the generations. In this commercial of one of the leading Turkish companies "Tofaş," again children, both boys and girls, are depicted interchangeably in the commercial serial. At the beginning, with the visual imagery of a "Tempra" car, a voice-over is saying that "my father says that . . . ." This sentence is very familiar to all people, especially in Turkey where the chief of the families have always been considered the husband/father, and at the same time indicate that whatever fathers say is true. Since it is a very popular one, it can be said that this particular commercial depicts a common belief that is shared by the society. Thus, all the television programming, commercials can be seen as the most sexist.

Children, growing up with television culture, are conveying whatever they observe on the screen outside the television. Marsha Kinder is giving an example about her observation on her son and states that:

Victor used to enjoy playing with toy ponies at a friend's house -until he saw them featured in the "My Little Pony" commercials, where they were being fondled exclusively by little girls (in hyperfeminine clothes) who combed their colorful manes, as if they were equine Barbies. He thus learned that the gendering of toys is determined not by direct experience (that is, not by observing which children actually found them fun to play with), but by how they are represented in TV commercials and other marketing practices (50).

This gendering process also extends to inanimate toys - even to those once considered appropriate for both sexes. For example, a recent commercial for "Dream Builder" shows two little girls playing with a building set designed specifically for their gender, the implication being that all other similar toys are intended exclusively for boys. If the young female viewer

already owns a set of building blocks, then, it instantly becomes inappropriate and therefore obsolete. Thus, this advertiser makes the product more desirable to its target audience by commodifying the gendering process: by renaming the toy and dressing it up in a female masquerade that is just as hyperfeminine as the clothes worn by the little girls in the commercial. Since all of these toys are designed and promoted as objects of identification for the youngsters who consume them, it is apparent that these children are being constructed as commodified gendered subjects in precisely the same way (Kinder 50-51).

Within the advertising discourse on Saturday morning television, this exaggerated emphasis on choosing "appropriately" gendered products is also associated with the movement toward adolescence, implying that consumerism is a form of growth. In many of these commercials young viewers are frequently positioned to identify with sliding signifiers who fluidly change age, size, voice and form before their eyes and ears. As Susan Willis observes, young children anticipate adolescence both consciously and unconsciously and in consumer society their anticipations are met more quickly and easily by commodities than by social institutions like family and schools. Commodities offer the young child a means to articulate his or her notions about the transitions to adolescence. Although several commercials show preteens consuming products (like Barbies, soft drinks, and cereals) that instantaneously transform them into adolescents.

In sum, television viewers see a world in which men dominate. Men are depicted as important, competent, dominant, authoritative, and aggressive. These elements can help shape a child's developing gender identity.

A number of factors may mediate the effects of television viewing. Parents' sex role attitude may be important, and parents' presence during TV viewing may modify the TV message. And not all TV shows are alike. Children who watch more educational TV programs tend to demonstrate less sex-stereotyped attitudes than children who watch less educational TV. The same was found for young children who viewed such nontraditional shows such as "The Cosby Show," and "Who's the Boss?" Viewers of these shows tended to have nontraditional gender-role perception. Viewing women and men in nontraditional as opposed to traditional roles in TV commercials has been found to improve women college students' self-confidence, independence of judgement, and achievement aspirations (qtd. in Basow 162-163). Since children see about 20,000 traditional commercials a year, it is clear how TV can contribute to important gender differences.

In sum, television depicts marked gender stereotypes: men are presented as more important, competent, dominant, authoritative and aggressive than women; women are presented as more subordinate and sexualized than men. These portrayals effect child viewers both by modeling different behaviors for females and males and by encouraging the development of a strong and stereotypic gender role.

## 2.2.6- Popular Music and Music Videos

Popular music is another important mass medium that has not received much attention from communication researchers and women have been stereotypically presented in the lyrics of popular music. Basically, women in pop music are idealized, presented as evil temptresses, or seen as victims (qtd. in Pearson et al. 260).

In radio broadcasts, sexist bias appear as with the other media. What the listeners hear primarily, is men and men's views of women. For example, Lont (1990) found that, top 40 radio stations in the U.S., have male disc jockeys, newscasters, voice-overs, sportscasters and weathercasters (qtd. in Basow 168).

In popular songs, themes of love and sex are the most common followed by songs of social protest. Since most songs are written in the first person, and since most lyrics are written and sung by men, the male point of view predominates. Lyrics tend to be gender stereotypic. Songs written and sung by females tend to be less stereotypic, however, it is not a matter of having more female writer because these two genders are brought up in the same families with different and stereotypic attitude of treatment. In sum, it can be argued that hearing sex-stereotypic lyrics contributes to the listener's stereotypic views of the sexes.

However, one study of Cyndi Lauper's song, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," indicates that women can break away from stereotypes to be active

and in control. Peterson (1987) states that Lauper's song and video opens up previously male-defined public spheres for women's use. However, Peterson cautions against putting too much stock in one song since women are used and abused in much of rock music (qtd. in Pearson et al. 260).

Music television (MTV), shown on a number of cable stations worldwide, are viewed predominantly by teenagers. Females are likely to be shown dancing than singing or playing a musical instrument, trying to attract the attention of a man who ignores them, or engaging in passive activities. Some videos, for example, are found misogynistic and violent; overall, most videos which dramatize the music, contain violence, graphic sexual content, and females as sex objects.

However, less objectified images of women that are represented in rap and rock videos, but they are few in number and usually performed by women. Janet Jackson, for example, tends to present a positive image of an active and sexually assertive female. Madonna, as another example, presents an image of a woman in control of her own sexuality with her male performers around, but she seems to reveal in objectifying herself rather than breaking with that imagery. Females appear to use MTV to gain information about dominant male culture. Female viewers of MTV, for example, show a strong relationship between amount of exposure and acceptance of sexual violence; that is, the more females watch MTV, the more likely they are to believe that men are violent toward women, that violence is part of love and sex. Overall, the adolescent viewers are confronted



with images of male dominance and female subordination, and the sexualization of both (Basow 162).

### 2.3- Magazines and Newspapers

Magazines are written for many different groups of people. The target audience of the magazine appears to affect its stories, features, and kinds of advertisements. Kramarae notes that magazines for young children do not differentiate between sexes. These magazines are targeted to both boys and girls. However, at adolescence, magazines are very different for female and male audience. Kramarae observes that girls' teen magazines emphasize improving one's appearance and personality, while in boys' magazines the emphasis is on gaining mechanical and physical skills. The distinction between the interests of females and males is continued into adulthood as women and men both have some magazines written especially for them. Romance magazines, for instance, are written for women as escape literature. Adventure magazines, on the other hand, are written primarily for men. Romance magazines allow women to escape to fantasized relationships, while adventure magazines allow men to fantasize about being rugged individualists. Magazines in these categories tend to encourage traditional stereotypical roles (qtd. in Pearson et al. 252-53).

Another stereotype encouraged by men's magazines is woman-as-sex-object. In an analysis of the image of women presented in Playboy magazine, Robards (1984) argues that the women presented in Playboy's centerfolds in the years 1980-1984 send a dual message. The model is sexually

provocative and aggressive, yet at the same time, projects a shy, traditional persona. However, Robards notes that there are some indications that the stereotype of woman as sex object may be changing in magazines, at least in Playboy. First of all, he observes that Playboy's circulation has declined in recent years and, in response, is attempting to mark itself as a "Life-Style" magazine. In so doing, Robards argues, Playboy has to move towards a view of woman that is acceptable to women such as more attention of model's profession, the inclusion of older women, more women posed clothed, and more "independent" comments from the models (qtd. in Pearson et al. 253).

Recent studies examining changes in messages reflected in magazines, suggest that the portrayal of women working outside the home can be seen that the status quo changes but some more established magazines still ignore these changes and focus on the traditional tasks that women perform (qtd. in Basow 165).

Male-centered and female-centered news stories in newspapers have been studied. An equal number of male-centered and female-centered stories were selected. About 48% of the female-centered stories appeared in the first or second sections of the newspapers, while 78% of the male-centered stories were in the first or second sections. No significant differences were found in the stories' lengths or in the photo size used. Personal appearance (excluding age) was mentioned in 38% of the stories about women and in 14% of the stories about men. Marital status (disregarding the title "Mrs.") was mentioned for 64% of the women and 12% of the men. Some sexism

appears evident. Stories about females are given less importance than stories about males; both personal appearance and marital status are more examined in another study. Men outnumbered women in photographs by a ratio of three to one in the Washington Post and about two to one in Los Angeles Times, men clearly dominated photo coverage on the first page of both papers. Half of the women's photos were on the life-style page, only 10-15% of the male photos were on those pages. Women's roles were mostly as spouse and fashion models, while men pictured as politicians, entertainers, and in a variety of other roles (qtd. in Pearson et al. 255).

The women's pages of newspapers were studied in another investigation. High-circulation newspapers which were principally metropolitan had male editors for the women's pages 79% of the time. When men served as editors of the women's pages, more coverage was given to entertainment, recreation, and leisure. When women served as editors, more attention was given to social news as well as women's movement. It appears that the sex of the editor causes major differences in coverage on the women's page. (qtd. in Pearson et al. 256).

### **2.3.1- Advertisements**

Research in the early 1970s suggested that women are largely portrayed in stereotypical roles. One study stated that although 33% of the work force was composed of females, only 12% of the workers pictured in advertisements were female. No women were depicted as professionals or

in high-level managerial positions; however, they were portrayed as entertainers, clerks, airline attendants, airline employees engaged in food preparation, and school teachers. These researchers concluded that these ads did not portray the true range of women's roles in contemporary society (qtd. in Pearson et al. 257).

Another study's findings are the following: 1- women are more concerned with their appearance and domestic duties than with complex decisions; 2- women are more often portrayed in domestic settings than men; 3- women are rarely portrayed in occupational settings; and 4- women wear pants or slacks in only a few ads.

More recent studies indicate change is occurring, albeit, slowly. One author concludes that women are being portrayed in more responsible roles, and that subsequent to the study by Courtney & Lockertez, women's appearance in working roles has more than doubled. More encouraging news was recently available. Mitchell Siege, research director of Alschiller, Reitzfeld, and Solvin, a New York ad agency, investigated the roles of women and men in current advertising. He determined that women are equally disapproving the housewife who is in "endless" pursuit of dirt. Judith Langer, a market researcher, states: "What is evolving is a new kind of women who is active, alive and out in the world. She cares about home but isn't obsessive about it. Advertisers are showing a softer woman who cares about relationships yet at the same time is strong;" advertisements are beginning to show multifaceted women and men who appear to be equally proficient at managing home and career (qtd. in Pearson et al. 257).

Erving Goffman, in his book Gender Advertisements (1979), illustrates numerous examples of genderisms composed visually which indicate the position of men and women in society: "function ranking (male teller, in front, and in authoritative position), ritualization of subordination (for example, a woman at a man's feet), . . . and an overabundance of images of women on beds and on floors" (qtd. in Basow 166).

Men are also more likely than women to be portrayed with their faces prominent, as opposed to their bodies and as opposed to women depicted with their bodies prominent. This difference of facial prominence affects the viewers' views of the sexes.

Rossi and Rossi found that both men and women were aware of sexism in ads, although men rated the sexism in advertisements less than women. Both men and women prefer ad models who are attractive, although men appear to prefer the model to be female, while women prefer the model to be male. The preference of a group of men in another study may provide a suggestion to advertisers. The researcher found that men preferred ads using a male and female rather than males only or females only. A man and a woman of similar status engaging in similar work on the job and at home might be most useful in minimizing sexism as well as in selling goods and services (qtd. in Pearson et al. 257).

## 2.4- Cinema

Cinema has been studied as an apparatus of representation, an image machine developed to construct images or visions of social reality and the spectators' place in it. But, insofar as cinema is directly implicated in the production and reproduction of meanings, values, and ideology in both sociality and subjectivity, it should be better understood as a signifying practice, a work of semiosis: a work that produces effects of meaning and perception, self-images and subject positions for all those involved, makers and viewers; and thus a semiotic process in which the subject is continually engaged, represented, and inscribed in ideology (De Lauretis 37). As Beverle Houston states in "Viewing Television: The Metapsychology of Endless Consumption", "cinema re-creates a specific social world." Representation of woman, as image (as a spectacle, as an object of the look, as a field of visual pleasure) in western culture, before and after the cinema, has been very pervasive. Cinema or the films, like the other sources of media, are the places in which men and women are re-presented from gender-roles point of view (qtd. in Doane 3).

Women do not exist in American film. Instead, there is another creation, made by men, growing out of their ideological imperatives. Gaye Tuchman has called the phenomenon the symbolic annihilation of women, the replacement of reality by the patriarchal fantasies of subservience or its opposite, the fantasy of the voracious, destructive woman (who must in turn, be destroyed) (qtd. in Todd 130).

emotional intensity and nurturant care within traditional marriage. The reassurance is never wholly successful, however. The reader almost inevitably picks up another romance as soon as she puts her last one down (81).

On the other hand, a male reader of a James Bond novel, sees that the hero goes into a battle with an enemy, preferably one that constitutes a threat over western order, and meets a woman on his way and then he (Bond) defeats the "bad." In that sense, popular texts accustom reader to stereotypes. In doing so, they represent dominant notions, values and norms in new forms, as if they are wholly new. Badness, or harmfulness is exhibited, but it has always been offered as a sort of problem that can be resolved within existing social order or system. At the end of each narrative, the reader wishes to come to a satisfactory end, in other words, calls for a fulfillment of his/her desire which is promised by each story that is told. However, since it continues on a basis of repetition, it becomes a sign of an inarticulated pleasure. Film viewing has always been considered as a free-time activity, one can expect to experience freedom, but what the viewer meets, is an apparatus which keeps him/her in a strict limited boundaries. In that sense, free-time would become purchased by this "non-free" medium.

The ideological interchange between film and culture is not subtle, but it is complex operating through a system that filmmakers create must be shared by both sexes in order to exist. If audiences did not assent to the images, they would not go to see them; if they were not seen, they would no

longer be made. That they were made and continue to be made, that the varieties of subordinate, passive, or pacified women, or women who are killed, have persisted throughout the history of American film indicates either that the producers' cliché - "we give public what it wants" - is true, or that the "public" accepts whatever it is given and in that acceptance is molded into a state of assent (Todd 130).

Women and men enter into the cinema auditorium as social subjects and are encouraged to accept one of the forms which arrange the social environment with dual oppositions of genders. Men try to fill the position which is defined as masculine and women, the feminine one. Man, as spectator, assuming himself in a voyeuristic position, can identify himself, with the same-sex character on the screen (Doane 8).

In order to understand the male spectator's voyeuristic position, it might be useful to give an example from Richard Dyer's study of the male pin-up, which illustrates the symbolic association of male power and the phallus.

Lacan gives us a very different account of sexual difference from that provided by Freud, one in which the privileged term is no longer the penis but the phallus. "Phallus" is a word used by Lacan to designate all of those values which are opposed to lack. On the one hand, the phallus is a signifier for those things which have been partitioned off from the subject during the various stages of its constitution, and which will never be restored to it. On the other hand, the phallus is a signifier for the cultural privileges



and positive values which define male subjectivity within patriarchal society (Silverman 180-193).

Dyer draws attention to the empirical research of the psychologist Nancy Henley, which reveals that in any distanced and public situation men tend to stare at women, women to avert their eyes. In one to one conversation, however, men more often avoid eye contact, while women watch men attentively. Both dispositions confirm the male power. Staring is used to assert dominance; not looking while listening is a denial of importance ('Look at me, when I talk to you,' the authority demands) (Segal 88).

This creates special tensions in images of men available to women - whether publicity photos, portraits, drawings, paintings, sculptures or pin-ups. Men being looked at by women violates the code that men to the looking in public places; accordingly men subjected to the inquiring gaze will be presented as though unaware of the viewer. As Margaret Walters has shown in her study The Male Nude, male poses more often than not look away from the viewer, suggesting not (as in images of women) that the man is modestly avoiding the eyes of the viewer; but rather his interest lies elsewhere. As Dyer's graphics confirm, when focusing on the viewer the male gaze appears to stare straight back, through and beyond the viewer. In accordance with the Lacanian motif, the male look is made to appear active, able to penetrate, and not passive, susceptible to penetration. It conveys the phallic function. Disavowing passivity, images of men are often images of men in action - playing sport, at work - or at least tightening

the muscles ready for action. The acceptable male image suggests muscles, hardness, action (Segal 88-89).

For a female spectator, identification with the character on the screen is much more complicated than male spectator's. What is gazed is the woman. This gaze, whether direct, whether through the male character on the screen, has always been accepted as masculine. Woman, being an object of the look and not the bearer of it, has to be in a masculine masquerade in order to be in such a voyeuristic position in the auditorium. Here, Freud's statements about the woman's transition into a masculine identity might be helpful. For Freud, femininity is complicated by the fact that it emerges out of a crucial period of parallel development between sexes; a period he sees as masculine, or phallic, for both boys and girls.

In the phallic phase, before the development of femininity sets in, females strive to be masculine. But it then succumbs to the momentous process of repression that determines the fortunes of a woman's femininity. Regressions to the pre-Oedipus phase very frequently occur; in course of some women's lives there is a repeated alternation between periods in which femininity and masculinity gain the upper hand and one of the instances of such periods is realized in the auditorium. At this moment, woman spectator lives a kind of transvestism and assumes a male identity while watching the film. Freud introduces the use of the word masculine as "conventional" (activity) and the feminine cannot be conceptualized as different, but rather only as opposition (passivity), or as similarity (the phallic phase). This shifting process, this definition of opposition similarity,

leaves women also shifting between the metaphoric opposition "active" and "passive." The correct road, femininity, leads to increasing repression of "the active" (the "phallic phase" in Freud's terms). In this sense Hollywood genre films structured around masculine pleasure, offering an identification with the active point of view, allow a woman spectator to rediscover that lost aspect of her sexual identity (Mulvey 30-31).

In his Three Essays on Sexuality, Freud isolates scopophilia (pleasure in looking) as one of the component instincts of sexuality which exist as drives quite independent of the erotogenic zones. At this point, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze. His particular examples centre on the voyeuristic activities of children, their desire to see and make sure of the private and forbidden (curiosity about other people's genital and bodily functions, about the presence or absence of the penis). In this analysis scopophilia is essentially active (Mulvey 16).

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness. Woman displayed as sexual object, holds the look, and plays to and signifies male desire (Mulvey 31).

Whenever painted, drawn, sculpted or photographed images of women is seen, it is important for people to remind themselves that images of women have traditionally been the province and property of men. The spectator is the buyer, to possess a woman's sexuality is to possess the woman; to possess the image of a woman's sexuality is, however mass-produced the image, also in some way to possess, to maintain a degree of control over woman in general. In this situation the female spectator of images of women has been faced with a single-option - to identify with the male in the spectator and to see woman, to see herself, as an object of desire (Kuhn 10-11).

"Voyeurism," as an action, requires distance between the owner of the look and the object which is looked. For a female spectator, in her gender identity, is impossible to be in such a position because it is her who is looked on the screen as an object of desire and what is considered as an object of desire is the whole system of signification under the form of woman. For a female spectator, there is a possibility for her to identify herself with the male hero on the screen or with the woman while enjoying of being looked at (Mulvey 31).

The gaze which is directed at the male hero on the screen is different than the gaze directed at woman. Mulvey discusses the male star as an object of the look but denies him to function as an erotic object. Because Mulvey conceives the look to be essentially active in its aims, identification with the male protagonist is only considered from a point of view which associates

it with a sense of omnipotence, of assuming control of the narrative (Neale 13).

There are examples of films that offer the spectacle of male bodies, but bodies unmarked as objects of erotic display. There is no trace of an acknowledgment or recognition of those bodies as displayed solely for the gaze of the spectator. They are on display, certainly, but there is no cultural or cinematic convention which would allow the male body to be presented in the way that Dietrich so often is in Sternberg's films. Male bodies are seen as stylized and fragmented by close-ups, but the look of the spectator is not direct, it is heavily mediated by the looks of the characters involved. And those looks are marked not by desire, but rather by fear, or hatred, or aggression. The shoot-outs are moments of spectacle, points at which narrative hesitates, women to a momentary halt, but they are also points at which the drama is finally resolved, a suspense in the culmination of the narrative drive. Thus, the gaze designed to minimize and displace the eroticism, to disavow any explicitly erotic look at the male body (Neale 18).

The representation of Rock Hudson in Sirk's melodramas is a particularly interesting case. There are constantly moments in these films in which Hudson is presented quite explicitly as the object of an erotic look. The look is usually marked as female. But Hudson's body is feminized in those moments, an indication of the strength of those conventions which dictate that only women can function as the object of an explicitly erotic

gaze. Such instances of "feminization" tend also to occur in the musical (Neale 18).

Like television, films represent stereotyped images of the sexes. Two images of women have been classically presented, their origins in the Bible: as virgin or saint and as whore. These images were clearly exemplified in the 1950s and 1960s by the brainless sexpot (for example, Marilyn Monroe) and the feminine homebody (for example, Doris Day). It was only during 1930s and early 1940s, with the increased number of women in the labor force spurred by the women's movement of the 1920s and by the World War II, that successful, achieving images of women emerged (as in roles portrayed by Katherine Hepburn). This ended when the war ended and women pushed back into the home in films as well as in reality. The New Woman of the late 1960s and 1970s, although sexually active and more independent than her predecessors, usually was depicted in negative way or punished for her sexuality (qtd. in Basow 164).

The women's movement of the 1960s finally had some effect on film images of women in the mid- to late 1970s with credible and strong female characters in such films as Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, An Unmarried Woman, and Julia. But 1980s saw considerable backlash, with such retrogressive film images as the brainless young woman (The Woman In Red) and the prostitute (Pretty Woman) (qtd. in Basow 164). Motherhood and family came back, even (or especially) for working women (Fatal Attraction, Baby Boom). Films about women's friendship have been particularly hard to find recently, especially one where men don't become

the focus of the film, unlike the popular male buddy films, where women are merely backdrops, if they appear at all. The backlash against women, and the conflict about how to depict them in a time of changing gender norms, led to a surprising absence of women in films during the mid- to late 1980s. For example, most major box office stars have been male, and many films, especially the most popular ones, have glorified males and stereotypic masculinity (Robocop, Die Hard, 48 Hours). The roles for women have been smaller and more submissive. The intense reaction to the 1991 film Thelma and Louise, which depicted two strong women friends who used guns to protect themselves against male violence, clearly revealed how unacceptable strong women can be. The film was attacked by some male critics as a display of male bashing, despite the fact that most violent films depict gratuitous violence against women without being criticized for female bashing (qtd. in Basow 164).

As some of the recent films suggest, cinematic images of masculinity also have held strongly to the gender stereotype. Whereas the realms of domesticity and sexual allure have been reserved for women, those of aggression, as in Westerns, war, and gangster movies, moral superiority, and intelligence, as in detective and mystery movies, have been reserved for men (qtd. in Basow 164).

The brief attempt to make sensitive and emotionally competent men into film heroes during the 1970s, was slowly phased out during the 1980s. First a return to male dominance is seen, by men taking over what were once considered female issues - for example, single parenting (Kramer vs.

Kramer) and problems of divorce (Starting Over). Even Tootsie, a film praised for its perceptive insights into sex roles can be analyzed as conveying another message as well - that men make better women than women do (qtd. in Basow 164).

Beside classical Hollywood genre films, it is also possible to speak about melodramas and woman's films which produced especially after the woman's movement which are performed by women are not seen as exceeding traditional roles. The category of women's film as a whole is clearly divisible into coherent subgroups in a number of different ways, depending upon the focus of analysis. Molly Haskell, one of the first feminist critics to isolate and analyze the woman's film, claim that its themes can be reduced to four categories : sacrifice, affliction, choice, competition.

In the first, the woman must "sacrifice" 1- herself for her children; 2- her children for their own welfare; 3- marriage for her lover; 4- her lover for marriage or for his own welfare.

In the second category, the heroine is struck by some "affliction" which she keeps a secret and eventually either dies unblemished, despite the effort of her doctor-turned lover, or is cured, by the efforts of lover-turned-doctor.

The third category, "choice," has the heroine pursued by at least two suitors who wait, with undivided attention, her decision - on it, their future happiness depends.



In the final category, "competition," the heroine meets and does battle with the woman whose husband (fiance, lover) she loves. While deciding the man's fate, the woman will discover, without explicitly acknowledging it, that they prefer each other's company to his. However, many of the films (in the first group in particular) are aimed at the male spectator (qtd. in Doane 35-36).

In sum, what can be considered as the most striking is the consistency of the gender stereotypes conveyed. Through the media depictions, men and women are portrayed as differing widely in behavior and status. Throughout a child's developing years, these images are emphasized through continuous repetition in different media sources and each overpowers the other constituting an intertextual concordance. Given the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes in our culture, we can better understand that changing them is so difficult. Considering the issues that have been discussed in this chapter, following one will deal with the computer technology in which people take an increasing interest in it in recent years. However, research on computer usage demonstrates that male and female users may differ in their style of using them as well as in their attitudes toward this tool.

Since computer games cannot be separated from computer technology, gender-based attitudes toward computer must be mentioned. As is well known, its interactive aspect has replaced the passive spectatorship of preceding media, it might be relevant to discuss computer and gender-roles on a different chapter.

### 3- ANOTHER GENDERED TECHNOLOGY: THE COMPUTER IN INFORMATION SOCIETY

#### 3.1- The Computer and Information Society

The term "information society" is frequently used in describing the age in which we live. The most common definition of the "information society" lays emphasis upon spectacular technological innovation which is perceived as the major distinguishing feature of the new order. The key innovation is the computer, its processing, storage, transmission facilities as well as networked routes that become the highways of the modern age are the means of the so-called "information age" or "information society." Reductions in the cost of the computer, its increasing power, and its consequent application any and everywhere can be seen as the preparative reasons of this order (Webster 7).

As is mentioned before, the term gender is a set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations, in other words, a representation that assigns to one entity, say on individual, a position within a class, and therefore also a position vis-a-vis other preconstituted classes. So, gender represents not an individual but a relation, and a social relation; in other words, it represents an individual for a class. Thus, the terms male and female are sociocultural constructs and the construction of gender

is both the product and the process of its representation (De Lauretis 3-5).

Existing technology takes its part in these relations. The innovators and consumers of the technological inventions are human beings. Newly produced inventions enter into a relationship with the users/consumers that lead as an agent for new processes and new relationships. Binary relations cause re-evaluation of existing categories; while technology goes on its way, the users' positions and interactions lead to new problems, as well as new theories and assumptions.

In recent years, especially after 1985, the computer game technology has guided people and their relationship as well as their probable positions within this new environment to a discussion ground based on gender issues.

Technological devices are produced, first of all, in order to meet the demands coming from the users of older and more primitive ones. Washing machine, for example, in its simplest function, serves to wash the clothes according to a set of pre-programmed cycles automatically without requiring any assistance that allow users to do other things meanwhile, an aspect of the contemporary life criterion. It has no gender of its own, it is produced to be used by a human in normal physical capabilities. In other words, its door can be opened through a switch button, which will be used by an average human. The size of the button is designed with a physically capable human finger in mind. However, during the process of usage and its marketing strategies it becomes a gendered product. It is a technological device

produced primarily for women who are in charge of it within the family. That is why it is considered as a feminine one. Washing machine, detergent, softening, bleaching materials are all advertised as targeted to women and the characters depicted on TV screen, magazines, and packaging are usually represented as wives/mothers whose only concerns is getting the dirt off their husbands' and children's clothes. Thus, new products and their subsidiaries found new further relationships while reaching their target consumers.

There is a major increase in overall diversity in the consumption of technologies in households, and recent research suggest that their incorporation into the domestic environment is affected by social and cultural differences including gender-roles. "The diversity of technologies and the many different creative possibilities which each engenders ought to be recognized in our characterization of our relationships to them" writes David Morley in his book Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies (207).

The computer is also a part of this technological network which requires foremost a user. When the user is concerned, both woman/girl and man/boy must be included so an already gendered user, not a neutral one, must be thought.

From a historical perspective, it is noted that many researchers trace the origins of computer back to the abacus used by the Chinese. The abacus, is a straightforward instrument involving discs arranged on rods which

simplifies the fulfillment of various arithmetical tasks, which has now become to signify the school days for most of us. It is the oldest known tool for processing information. The computer is the most developed of such tools which developed rapidly, however, to take its place in almost every aspect of life; especially the computerization of telecommunications lead an even broader links within and between offices, banks, homes, shops, factories and schools as well as people, in other words, people become surrounded by this computerized web, whether or not they are willing to be a part of it.

### **3.1.1- Computer as an Interactive Medium**

In contrast of TV's demand for a fixated passivity, computer requires an interactive engagement which the viewer has now become the user. Interactivity of this kind, i.e., between the user and the computer has passed through an evolution before it became to its current degree.

In the history of computing, there was not a human-machine interactivity to speak of at all. The input to the computer was both physically and conceptually distinct from any of the workings of the computer. Entering the data or program into the computer was like passing a note to a friend who would not answer until some time later. Thus, there was not a direct, real-time interaction between the user and computer.

In the next stage, the hardware changes made it possible to support a full screen display so that the text editors could display an entire screenful at

a time. The full screen terminal and accompanying software changes allowed the user and computer communication to be much more direct; the user, at any point, could only be actively engaged in a single process.

Since people became much more sophisticated in their use of the computer, their tasks on it are rarely limited to a single process or to a single file at a time. The most recent technological change provides support for windows-dividing one screen into multiple virtual screens, each behaving like a complete screen. Within each window one can invoke a different process such as one window for graphic, and the other one for text and on a third one, both.

Window systems make it easy to move among different processes. The user simply uses the mouse to move the cursor from the window that contains the current process to the window that contains the new process. During the stay in the second or third, or fourth process and so, the user's state of activity in earlier processes is remembered and often visible. This facility makes the user save time, especially while surfing on the Internet, for example, while retrieving a directory from a host it is possible to look for another information from another host independent from the previous one.

With the development of menu systems, the computer present the user a "menu" of choices, from which selections could be made simply by pressing one or two keys. With the two -dimensional graphics screen, the screen can be turned into a desktop, complete with pieces of paper that can be

shuffled (windows), accessories (tools), and resources (applications). Pointing devices such as a mouse allows direct designation of objects on a screen without the need to type in names. For example, file directories can be displayed as file folders on a screen, each folder containing a number of documents. If users wish to move a document from one directory to another, they need only click it with the pointing device and drag it from one folder to another. In addition, when documents are edited, font changes can actually be shown on the screen. Controls that would otherwise have to be expressed as command names, or numbers can be shown as slider bars, meter faces, bar or line charts, or in any other form suited to the information being presented. The development of personal computer has placed the computer in the user's hands as a dedicated machine, and event-driven interaction that places the user in immediate command of the computer (Walker 443).

Currently, users have, at their fingertips, applications that carefully tailored to provide control of the powerful tasks they wish to perform and a growing ability to move between applications at will, combining them as needed to address whatever work the user needs done. Users are now able to move beyond the graphics screen and mouse. They can be transported into a three-dimensional simulacrum of a world that allow interaction in ways that mimic interaction with real-world objects. Cyberspace means a three-dimensional domain in which cybernetic feedback and control occur as can be seen in the future popularity of computer games. A cyberspace system provides users three-dimensional interaction experience that includes the illusion they are inside a world rather than observing an

image. At the simplest level, a cyberspace system provides stereoscopic imagery of three-dimensional objects, sensing the user's head position and rapidly updating the perceived scene.

### 3.1.2- Interface

For a human-machine interactivity to occur, one needs to have an agent which is called "interface." In computer environment, it means a piece of equipment which enables computer and/or peripheral(s) to be connected to each other; but in general, an interface can be considered as the contact surface of a thing.

A doorknob, for example, is the interface between the door and the person. The shape of an interface reflects the physical qualities of the parties to the interaction. The doorknob's physical qualities also reflect the physical aspects of its function. It is designed to be turned so that the latch is released and so that is easier for the user to pull the door open.

The shape of the interface also reflects who is doing what to whom. The doorknob extends toward the user and its qualities are biased toward the hand. The door will be opened; a human will open it.

According to Aristotle, the end cause of a thing is the function that is intended to serve; that is, what it is supposed to do. The end cause of a play, for example, is the arousal and catharsis of emotion. What is meant by emotional arousal is that the audience becomes emotionally involved



in the action of the play. The term catharsis can be considered as a closure that all the questions and issues that have been raised are brought to a satisfactory conclusion, so that the audience must have a rational component, that is the events that are represented are both probable and believable. When such engagement is successfully achieved, it becomes intrinsically pleasurable.

An interactive computer program may be intended to provide its user to do a variety of things, such as find information, compose and format a document, play a game, or explore a virtual world. "The user's goal for a given application may be recreational, utilitarian or some combination of both but it is only through engagement at the level of the interface that these goals can be met" (Laurel xii).

The user of a word processor, for example, wants to get the job done and is interested in finding an easier way to do it. If the user interface allows the user to perform the job more easily than any other medium, then, it is good enough. If, for example, one attempts to write any text on a computer and if the interface does not allow to convert the keyboard keys into "Q," then, it becomes very hard for the user to use it if he/she has a previous experience with a, for example, Turkish "F" key typewriter.

To do such a conversion, the computer must contain the necessary software in order to do so. Thus, the software is also an interface that convert the user's commands into numbers for processing. Not only the keyboard or the software do exist as interface, but also the other equipment such as

mouse, trackball, scrolling windows, joysticks, point-and-click interfaces, double clicking, click-and-drag, data gloves, head-mounted-display-units (HMDU), are the peripherals to be connected to the computer.

Computer games have always been at the forefront of the user interface revolution. Trackballs, joysticks and various representations of this kind first appeared in games because games operate in a more demanding user-interface universe than other applications. Since the user of a game feels no compulsion to play the game compared to write an urgent letter, for example, if the game's user interface is confusing, the player simply abandons it. It must be both functional and fun to use it. Children who play the interactive toys are not always secure enough with words to use a standard keyboard. They may not be able to recognize the letters as well as words to reconstruct them in order to communicate with the program. That is why designers have a tendency to move to other input devices to allow children to select inputs from existing choices, rather than requiring the child to create it. The joysticks, for example, work better for children than keyboards while playing a game.

As the technology and its product-related demands are evolved, user interfaces become much more friendlier. Until recent years, ordinary users, not the hackers, had to know a variety of commands while working on DOS environment, but now they are working with symbols, instead of words, whose meanings are shared in the same way by people from different cultural backgrounds. The trash icon, for example, is a very common one, especially for Mac users, since its shape signifies the one that people

know as trash, an object for wastes. When the user wants to delete a file, it is enough to point-and-drag the file symbol into that icon and select the "empty trash" command in order to save the disk space.

The screen is another user interface with a variety of functions. In the case of composing or editing a text, it serves as a paper and a crayon to write on while using different tools that are visually present on it. In other words, it simulates a basic action on one single screen. While running a software, such as Free Hand for example, the screen replaces the canvas along with different tool bars that offer a variety of applications to execute anything present on the artist's mind. In the case of playing a game, the screen becomes the point of view of the player, as in Doom-genre games, in other words, it simulates the look with up-and-down functions of the eyes and the head.

Since people have already accustomed to watch programs on a TV screen, the computer screen differs from the TV's in terms of interactivity and its ability to offer multimedia functioning in one single environment. Alan

Kay says that:

The computer can act like a machine or like a language to be shaped and exploited. It is a medium that can dynamically simulate the details of any medium, including media that cannot exist physically. It is not a tool, although it can act like many tools . . . it has degrees of freedom for representation and expression (qtd. in Gasee 225).

As with other tools, computer helps people become more than they are by overcoming their limitations and extending the functions of brain and body. The computer is a simulation engine for mental model building consisted of symbols in order to have an informative communication. The

key term which characterizes postmodern culture is the information, Lyotard argues. He states that information is gathered, analyzed and generated when it can be justified in terms of utility criteria which determines what is to be known, the program of the system insisting that information/knowledge will only produced when it is of practical use - which can be best observed in computer environment since it is the most developed tool for processing information.

Lyotard states that knowledge/information is being more and more treated as a commodity which is tradable, subject to the mechanisms of the market which has a determining effect on judging performativity which lead to the emergence of a postmodern condition in which the "truth" is replaced by a "plurality of truths." Now, what is considered to be an educated person is being in possession of a certain body of knowledge required by the conditions of a specific position. With computerization, it is more a matter of knowing how to access appropriate data banks than of holding the information in one's head. In the postmodern age performativity decrees that "how to use terminals" is more important than personal knowledge. Therefore, competencies such as "keyboard skills" and "information retrieval" will displace traditional conceptions of knowledge and truth which are under the service of the beneficiaries who have the power to manipulate and offer new "truths" out of them.

People are so accustomed to use a computer that they usually ignore the sanctions required by that medium. The users are not totally independent or are given an endless freedom in front of a screen. There are also some

requirements coming from the medium itself, that one must become literate in order to get benefits from it, or name it better, to reach to a desired information.

As is mentioned earlier, interfaces are the contact surfaces, in order to edit a text, for example, the user must be literate of the menu and the meanings of the symbols that appear on it, or the user must have at least an idea about the limits of the machine. If the RAM of the computer that is being worked on, is not enough, say, for a performativity application, then, it becomes impossible for the user to get the job done. There are hierarchies in computer applications. In order to work on a file, for example, the user must first create a virtual file, then write down later. In order to have this file in hand, not virtually on the screen, one must send it to the printer again using appropriate print commands.

Thus, in order for an interface to work, the person has to have some idea about what the computer has to incorporate some information about what the person's goals and behaviors are likely to be. In order to use an interface correctly, the user must have an idea of what the computer is expecting the user to do. Brenda Laurel calls for a similarity between theatre and computer in her book Computers as Theatre and states that:

If one takes the theatre and the film medium as subsets of a larger category, as representations of action in virtual worlds, then another key similarity between these media and computers is their fundamental elements of form and structure and their purpose. Both Heckel and Nelson draw our attention to the centrality of "make-believe" in the conception and design of software . . . According to Nelson, it is the creation of "virtualities" - representations for things that may never have existed in the real world before. The role of imagination in creating interactive representations is clear and cannot be overrated. In an important sense, a piece of computer

software is a collaborative exercise of the imaginations of the creator(s) of a program and people who use it (29).

All computer literates, more or less, use "cut" and "paste" commands in order to edit a simple text. Instead of using physically palpable scissors and glue, users are made believe that they cut a certain part of the text and glue them on a different part of it. Here, what the users fail almost always to see is that there are representations of tools and activities and to notice how that makes them different from (and often better than) the real thing. In other words, representation and reality stand in a particular and necessary relation to one another (Laurel 1993, 31).

Thus, like all other technological devices, computer comes with its own pre-defined rules for usage. And the user is limited with these rules, in other words, the user is imposed certain requirements in order to use it efficiently.

### 3.2- Women and the Computer

When women and the computer are concerned, Laura Kramer states that: There is much talk about women and "computer phobia." Women look at computers and see more than machines. They see the culture that has grown up around them and they ask themselves if they belong. And when, in high school and college, they look at the social world of the computer expert, they see something that seems alien . . . It's world, predominantly male . . . (41).

Girls' technophobia begins very early. Sarah Douglas, a University of Oregon computer science professor, states that teenage girls told her computer

was something their dads and brothers used. Douglas recalls that "Computer science is a very male profession . . . When girls get involved in that male world, they are pushed away and belittled. Pretty soon, the girls get frustrated and drop out." Ronald Anderson, a sociologist from Minnesota University, reported that until about fifth grade, boys and girls are equally interested in the computer. At that point, boys' use rises significantly and girls' use drops. Anderson says, probably because sex-role identification really kicks in. Many girls quickly put computer on the list of not-quite-feminine topics, like car engines and baseball-batting averages. According to the National Science Foundation men earning computer-science degrees outnumber women three to one and the gap is growing. Sherry Turkle explains this saying that the computer "comes to stand for 'a world' without emotion," an image that seems to scare off girls more than boys (qtd. in Kantrowitz 39).

As is well known and as shown in Table 1, one of the stereotypic sex role descriptors is the fact that women are very emotional and cannot hide them and men are not at all emotional and almost always hides emotions. This statement becomes true if the machines, as Sherry Turkle argues, are considered as acting "as a projection of part of the self, a mirror of the mind" (15). Thus, it is a male profession and a technology produced by men for men and it is reasonable that their products reflect their way of behaving, like hiding emotions and machines without emotions.

Computer is usually considered as a scientific object. "Scientific objects are placed in a 'space' psychologically far away from the world of everyday

life, from the world of emotions and relationships" says Sherry Turkle (115) and many research tell that girls not only take less computer classes but also take less science classes as well.

The term Turkle uses to describe this phenomenon is not "computer phobia," but rather what she calls "computer reticence" - which she characterizes as "wanting to stay away, because computer becomes a personal and cultural symbol of what a woman is not" (qtd. in Morley 232-235).

Contemporary writing about women's psychological development points the importance the way women gain their identities. Women are raised by women, men are also raised by women but unlike women, they are not allowed to maintain a close relationship with the woman, the mother, with whom they need to undergo a radical break to define their sexual identity. Girls grow up defining their identity through interaction; boys through separation which leads to control his environment. Male separation from others is about differentiation, but also about autonomy, "the wish to gain control over the sources and objects of pleasure in order to shore up the possibilities for happiness against the risk of disappointment and loss" and that is why men want to be alone at the top; they fear getting too close; women want to be at the center of connection; thus, men can be with computer and still be alone, separate and autonomous, but when women perceive this technology as demanding separation, it is experienced as alien and dangerous (Kramarae 50).

"Men imagine devices that could help them conquer the universe. Men



think of machines as an extension of their physical power as a way to 'transcend physical limitations.' Women want machines that meet people's needs, the perfect mother" says Barbara Kantrowitz in her article "Men, Women and Computers" (40).

Sherry Turkle states in her book The Second Self that all children anthropomorphize the computer to a certain extent (110). One of the children programmers, Anne, Turkle gives as an example, insists on calling the computer "he," with the explanation "It doesn't seem right to call it an it." Anne calls it as "he," but it is said that this doesn't keep her from getting down to serious programming. She believes that computer has psychology: it "thinks" as people do, although it "can't really have emotion." Anne thinks about whether the computer is alive. She says that the computer is "certainly not alive like a cat," but it is "sort of alive," it has "alive things." Her evidence comes from the machine's responsive behavior. As she types her instructions into the machine, she comments, "You see, this computer is close to being alive because he does what you are saying" (qtd. in Turkle 110-111). Another example is about Tanya, a fifth-grader who has spelling and writing problems. She is introduced to computer in order to fulfill her spelling and writing disabilities while programming. The computer room, where Tanya worked, contained four identical machines which Tanya personalized; she would only work with the computer she called "Peter," a commonly known male name. When Tanya anthropomorphized Peter, she created a demiperson, a "little animal" that could play the role the teacher played (Turkle 123, 125).

According to the examples given above, children give a kind of masculine personality to the computer. But it is also known that there is a component part of a computer which is called as "mother board" on which many "daughter boards" can be hooked up in order to execute different processes or "mother brain," for example, is another feminine term which can be associated with the computer:

Notions such as subject/object are absolutely essential to science (and to war), and thus to the development of computers. According to the usual "mapping" of dualisms, man is subject and woman is object. Man acts (has agency) and woman is acted upon. Thus computer users are male, and certain elements of computers are (or are idealized to be) female. But alternately, computers are "logical" and thus masculine. It is because of this confusion of dualisms that computers get gendered in different ways according to what we, as a culture (one which is still largely dominated by male heterosexual prerogatives) desires of them,

says Heather Kelley ([Online]). Traditionally, the mother in a family can be considered as the entity to which all other entities are attached. In that sense, computer technology can be considered as subjected to a sexual metaphor. This fact has frequently been the themes in popular culture texts. In Fritz Lang's film Metropolis, for example, one sees a robot shaped human woman representing both the celebration of technological efficiency and the fear of technology's power to destroy humanity by running out of control. According to Andreas Huyssen modernist texts tend to equate machines with women, displacing and projecting fears of overpowering technology onto patriarchal fears of female sexuality. The user in front of the screen, gets pleasure which, in Lacanian terms, results from the computer's offer to lead him/her enter into a microelectronic Imaginary where his/her consciousness integrated into the matrix - meaning both mother and womb - in which something else develops, which seems as the

breakdown of the boundaries between human and technological (Springer 305-306).

Thus, the computer is associated with the woman's womb in a metaphoric way in which people feel themselves secure and which represents their earliest home, as Freud explained. According to him, when people have an uncanny response to something, they are feeling the simultaneous attraction and dread evoked by the womb, where they experienced their earliest living moment at the same time that their insentience resembled death (qtd. in Springer 306) which represents fears of powerlessness that has been experienced in losing parental protection (Charmaz 59). In that sense, while entering into the world of computer, the user feels both a power and powerlessness in becoming a whole with that machine and in order to defeat this anxiety evoked by the nature of the computer, he gives feminine attributes to feel himself more secure and to keep women under control.

Claudia Springer states that the union of electronic technology and humans circulates in the scientific community and in popular culture texts such as films, television, video games, magazines, cyberpunk fiction and comic books. Most of the discourse represents computer as highly evolved intelligence and human body as imperfect (303).

J. G. Ballard argues that organic sex is becoming impossible, i.e., body against body, skin area against skin area, and believes that people is getting a new order of sexual fantasies, involving a different order of experiences related with technology (qtd. in Springer 303).

K. C. D'Allessandro argues that images of technology are eroticized. Locomotives, automobiles, pistons are subjected to a sexual metaphor which are the ways of expressions of tecnophiliacs for technology and states that:

For technophiliacs, technology provides an erotic thrill - control over massive power, which can itself be used to control others . . . (qtd. in Springer 305).

Popular culture, frequently portray the fusion of human with computer technology. Most of the cyberpunk fictions represent human bodies consisted of external robotic prostheses which signify the transformation the self into something entirely new in which human subjectivity is not lost, but altered. And popular culture does not represent this process as terrifying but as a pleasurable experience, as a sexual act which is represented as a masturbatory fantasy expressed in terms of entering something.

On the other hand, cyborg imageries represent more than just the fusion of technology and humans. As can be seen in Robocop figure, for example, the male body is consisted of metal circuits, only his face is protected as the same under a helmet. What this kind of imagery suggests is the way masculinity is constructed in a world where human bodies are no longer exist but where masculinity is preserved in the form of exaggerated imageries. What this reconfiguration may suggest, technological things are gendered in order to have patriarchal hierarchies permanently.

Gillian Skirrow puts a similar argument and explains it from the Writings of Melanie Klein who states that the first object of the instinct for knowledge is the interior of the mother's body, which the child regards as an object of

oral gratification and then as the scene where intercourse between its parents take place, and where in its phantasy the father's penis and the children are situated. Beverle Houston, on the other hand, had already proposed that the satisfaction promised by the broadcast output of television is the promise of endless consumption; in its endless flow of text, television suggests the first flow of nourishment in and from the mother's body. Thus, not only computer is seen linked with the female body but also the television is seen as such which constitutes a prior discourse for computer and computer games which invite the user to know what is going on and what things look like in there. For Klein, what is found in the sexual development of boys is the displacement of everything that is frightening and uncanny onto the invisible inside of woman's body (qtd. in Skirrow 326).

Thus, technology of computer represents two opposing desires. On the one hand, it is eroticized as the woman's body and is seen as a pleasurable sexual activity. On the other hand, because of the fear evoked by becoming something entirely new while interacting, the computer is seen, in a metaphoric way, as a secure place, like the matrix which symbolizes the fear projected onto woman's body.

The computer user commands rather than communicates, because the machine responds to its users' inputs, does what the user wants it to do. In its known sense, "to command" means someone tells another how or what to do. The term "command" calls for another term, that is "authority" whose attributes are power, patronage, prestige, control, domination,

government, directorship, presidency, chair, master that can all be associated with maleness in a patriarchal discourse.

Boys are typically motivated by a social structure that says if you don't dominate you will be dominated. As Deborah Tannen argues:

Computers, by their nature, balk: you type a perfectly appropriate command and it refuses to do what it should. Many boys and men are incited by this defiance: 'I am going to whip this into line and teach it who's boss! I'll get it to do what I say! (and if they work hard enough, they always can). Girls and women are more likely to respond, 'This thing won't cooperate. Get it away from me!' (41).

Thus, computer personalized as male as well as its user can be thought as male either, as a result the relationship between the user and the computer can be generalized as, what Skirrow calls it, "a technologized sexuality and a sexualized technology" (qtd. in Morley 232).

It is known that in English and in Turkish, nouns are genderless, but in German, they can be masculine, feminine, or neuter. This fact can be seen in an ad designed for Commodore (a Pennsylvania-based computer company) in 1984 in order to sell its products to women in Germany. They ran the ad not in a computer magazine but in the German edition of Cosmopolitan. Headlined "Why the Weaker Sex Needs A Commodore Computer," the ad begins, "Weil er . . ." (technically "Because it . . .," but because er is the nominative masculine third-person pronoun, the ad suggestive the following):

Because he will manage addresses, data, and appointments. And make himself useful in many other ways. Because he, the Commodore home computer, costs little and is easy to handle. And because he will give you more time to let yourself be weak . . . Six years later, indicating that sexism was still alive and well in the computer industry, MacUser magazine's July 1990 cover sported a blatantly provocative illustration that related in the most tangential manner

to the cover story. Electronic mail was the topic, and the cover art was a close-up of a woman's tongue protruding through glossed red lips and licking a stamp bearing the legend 'E-mail' (Barry 124).

Despite the growing number of new users in the last years, men still dominate the Internet and commercial services. "The sign over the access road says CAUTION. MEN WORKING. WOMEN BEWARE" (Kantrowitz 42). Because it is said and can also be seen that e-mail network discussions are full of male voices, unless they are specifically targeted to women only.

The anonymity of public networks frees a small number of men to send long, vituperative, sarcastic messages that many other men either can tolerate or actually enjoy, but turn most women off. The anonymity of networks leads to another sad part of the e-mail story: there are men who deluge women with questions about their appearance and invitations to sex (Tannen 41).

The above statement about men who interfere female users while working on Online writing is a common fact. Especially when the e-mail address contains the first name of the user, it is very easy for the person to check it out the list of persons on the line and send messages saying "Hello, what's news up there?" It is really a good reason for people to change their first name with their last name that is more sex-neutral or just abandon the terminal until the man on the other side gives up sending disturbing messages. If the user answers this message, the conversation changes direction through flirting according to the sex of the other user.

Next part of this chapter will cover empirical research in order to have a concrete idea on gender-based attitudes toward the computer.

### 3.3- Gender-Based Attitudes Toward Computer

Attitudes toward computer are measured by other research conducted in many countries and their results seem coherent. One of these research was conducted in Ankara, Turkey. The attitudes towards computer-assisted-learning and the perception of the difference between the computer-assisted-instruction environment and conventional classroom were measured for a group of 137 fifth-graders enrolled in a computer-assisted-science instruction. In this study, in all scores boys tended to be slightly more positive than girls (Aşkar, Yavuz, Köksal 133).

Another survey is mainly concerned with "we can, I can't" paradox. Gender differences in perception of computer self-efficacy and equality in computer competence, and the factors that might influence these perceptions among 15-year-old Japanese students is examined. The study replicated the "we can, I can't" phenomenon, a tendency for females to be unsure of their own individual ability to use the computer, but to feel that women as a group are as able as men in this domain.

The results of this study show clearly that females responded very positively to the statement that "females can do just as well as males in learning about the computer." However, as soon as females were asked to assess their own self-efficacy, they shifted in their judgements, reporting less conviction of their self-efficacy in computer as individuals, a finding that has been substantiated by previous research (qtd. in Makrakis 195).



There is a clear-cut and statistically significant difference between females' self-efficacy as individuals, and as a group. It is said that one set of factors underlying the "we can, I can't" paradox and the relative consistency of responses is, of course, cultural and attitudinal, and related to the role played by institutional structures of society, such as the family and the school.

The occupational aspirations variable was the strongest predictor of males' computer self-efficacy, but the weakest in the case of females. This may suggest females either do not see any significant relevance of the computer in their professional careers, or that they perceive computer work as more suited for men, despite the fact that they do recognize the usefulness of the computer in general. As a result, females may be less concerned with the importance of computing skills in their career lives and thus diminish their potential for further professional or vocational growth in the field of computer (Makrakis 191, 196).

One of the major claims about computer is the fact that it leads user to an isolation. There is only one place in front of the screen and they don't call it as "PC" for nothing. The above "we can, I can't" phenomena can be explained in Sherry Turkle's phrases as:

The computer evokes anxiety about one's own perfectibility. There is pressure from a machine that leaves no one and no other thing to blame. It is hard to walk away from the perfect mirror, from the perfect test. It is hard to walk away from a video game on which you could do better next time. Any computer promises you that if you do it right, it will do it right and right away. People who try out video games and say they hate them, or who actively dislike their first experience with computer programming, are often responding to this same promise. Mechanical objects (they work if you handle them right, they don't work if you handle them wrong) evoke the same anxieties. And when these people (in our culture, often women) meet

the computer the problem is taken to a higher order. Here is a machine that goes beyond all others in its promise to reflect human competence. It is not always welcome. For some, its challenge may be felt as an alien contest. For others as a long-awaited chance to finally test one's worth (85- 89).

All of these facts can be summed as the legacy of women's traditional socialization into relationships with technical objects, for many of them best summed up by the admonishment, "Don't touch it, you'll get a shock," a common warning for girl children.

Another research supports the idea that girls have less confidence in their ability to use a computer. Elementary school children in Edinburgh (approximately nine years of age) were the subjects in a study which began by asking about attitudes to computer. Boys were found more likely than girls to have a computer at home and to report that they were frequent users. Girls and boys were assigned to either single-sex or mixed-sex dyads to work on LOGO problems. Contrary to expectations, girls working with girls were not more likely to show positive attitudes toward the computer. What did become clear was that when boys and girls were working together, the boys tended to physically crowd the girls out. This finding suggests that much current computer software is highly competitive in structure and relates more easily to boy's learning styles than to learning styles preferred by girls; software which encourages cooperation and group problem-solving tends to increase computer use by girls (Fasick 54).

Other studies of gender-based attitudes toward computer use and education have also suggested that females are less likely than males to perceive

themselves as competent and efficacious in the use of computer. Females are also less likely than males to perceive the activities associated with computing (including programming and computer games) as interesting or relevant to their lives. Krendl and Broihier, for example, found that high school girls perceived the computer as significantly less interesting and valuable and were less confident of their own skills, even as their computer experience increased over a three year period (qtd. in Collins-Jarvis 53).

The reason of this fact can be explained with the assertion of other researchers who indicate that much of the software associated with computing systems is socially constructed to conform with competitive male norms and male interests in science, mathematics, and technology. They suggest that educational games and programs would attract more females if these programs concerned subjects (such as literature, art, creative writing, social science) for which females display more interest and competence.

In another study, Beeson found that among children under five years of age, boys were more likely than girls to choose the computer as a free-time activity. At a slightly older age, many children, and especially boys, seem to have developed the idea that the computer is boys' domain (qtd. in Fasick 53). This fact can be seen as the result of different treatments of parents towards their daughters and sons.

In a study designed to investigate the effect of gender-based software,

fourth- and fifth-grade students (ages approximately ten and eleven) were given a gender-neutral geography software game, based on the story "Winnie the Pooh in Hundred Acre Wood."

At the start of the study, the boys reported more previous experience with the computer. In using the game, the girls as well as boys learned geographical concepts, and both boys and girls enjoyed using the software and the computer.

The authors suggest that if gender-neutral software were developed, the difference between boys' and girls' attitudes toward the computer might diminish. They suggest including characters with whom both sexes can identify, as well as diminished emphasis on violence, loud noises and strong competition (qtd. in Fasick 53).

Lily Shashaani, in her article "Gender-Based Differences In Attitudes Toward Computers" reported that a significant sex difference in attitudes towards "Computer Aided Instruction" was observed. Girls reported fear of using the computer and feeling helpless around it. Boys showed greater enthusiasm for becoming familiar with the computer, enjoyed working with it, and were generally much more excited about the computer than girls. Girls were more likely to agree with the statements that "computer does not interest me" and "computer is boring." The higher score for boys in her survey suggests that the perception of the computer as a man's field still as a dominant view among boys. The influence of socialization was central in that study. Socialization prescribes gender-roles and values

associated with them and assigns different tasks to males and females. Parents, teachers, and peers are socialization agents who reinforce gender-related values among children. Parents and teachers may convey their attitudes by expressing their belief about boys' and girls' ability and the difficulty or importance of the courses they take.

The data of the research supports the idea that parents and teachers have different educational expectations for boys and girls. Results showed that school counselors encourage more boys than girls to take computer science courses. Both, boys and girls agreed that parents, particularly their fathers, believe that using computer is more appropriate for males than females. The statistical analysis of the research supports the hypothesis that the differences in attitudes such as interest, confidence and stereotype about the computer among boys and girls are significant and reflect the socialization of gender-roles (Shashaani 169-181).

These results support the idea that there is a significant difference between boys' and girls' interests towards computer related activities. As is mentioned earlier, preoccupation with computer games at an early age may promote computer usage in the future. Children not only receive different treatments from their family, school or peer groups, but also the media treat them differently from each other and this may cause real problems in the usage of the technological innovations such as computer games by children who are socialized as two separate genders.

#### 4- THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER-ROLES IN COMPUTER GAMES

With the development in computer industry, computer games have become entertainment agent displacing more traditional games as well as television. Interactive quality of computer games has added new meanings to the way people interact with each other as well as to the definition of play.

Before computer games, interaction was actually inter-human-action whereas computer games call for interaction between humans and machines. TV viewers and film spectators, now, not only watch what is happening on the screen, but become the performers of the actions. It's about pulling the audience out of their armchair and pushing them into the scene where events take place. This kind of interactivity always requires information flowing in both directions, it is the player's input and its possible effects that distinguishes it from the passivity of television and film spectatorship.

The main target consumer group of video game industry is primarily children. Before computer games, television has been one of their waking activities. And before television there was cinema. Both television and home video games refigure cinema not as a medium that is obsolete, but

as what Beverle Houston calls "a prior discourse" that can be parodied, recycled, and mastered (185).

As is mentioned before, television, films and video games are related to each other intertextually. The main story is frequently realized through a pastiche of borrowings from popular culture forms.

Intertextuality is incorporated into the surprise mechanisms. For example, in the middle of one adventure game a monster called the Gambling Gorilla forces you into a game of Play Your Cards Right, an idea from a television quiz show. News and current affairs, in their media images, also form the subject of some games: Harries Attack was very popular after Falklands war . . . (Skirrow 324).

Plots, motifs, and designs are common, subjects such as sword-and-sorcery, detective games, scenarios with dinosaurs are immediately familiar from cinema. Films such as Jaws, Jurassic Park, and Terminator, for example, have been made into a game under the same titles and Spiderman, a character from boys' comic, has its own adventure games. Most of the adaptations appeal to boys, however, one may expect some girls' comics to have been adopted but there are a few games marketed as games for girls, but these are not adventures. For example, one is a simple representation of horse-jumping. In addition, as Claudia Springer states, the popular children's writers' works have not been adapted for the games market because, as is said, familiar settings, relationships between groups of children and happy endings do not fit easily to the model of today's single hero having a personal battle and the market itself seems interested in the very deadly games (324-325).

It is said that computer gaming is a medium which, with increasing sophistication, is losing any sense of itself, becoming entirely subservient to the conventions of cinematic illusion. The common aim is now the "interactive movie." But there, of course, are games that are very computer-specific such as Russian Tetris (Stallabrass 85).

Developing a game proceeds in highly cinematic stages. First, the producer sketches out a scenario and a story line. Artists create the characters, which are then programmed in on computer-aided-design (CAD) screens. Musicians compose and program the sound. Hitoshi Takemura, a producer, describes what makes a good game:

The important thing is that the characters develop during the course of the game. In the beginning, they are weak and vulnerable, but all the battles make them stronger and more experienced. They learn to defend themselves, they learn to use different kinds of magic. But even more important are the supporting characters, friends, lovers who stand in various relations to the main character. The player controls them all and gives the game its content, so to speak. It's just like in the movies: struggle, combat, friendship, love, tears . . . (Fornander 24).

At the most obvious level, what television and computer games have in common, is a television screen to present visual motion. Visual action is an important factor in attracting the attention of young children to the television screen and now children, with a television background, have developed a preference for dynamic visual imagery as well as for interactivity which constitute the very popularity of video games (Greenfield 99).

Studies show a predictable pattern: children are attracted to activities in which they can become personally involved. According to an interview, interviewees were asked which they like better, TV or video games, and why. Children were found unanimous in preferring the games to television. They were also found unanimous about the reason: active control. The



meaning of active control, according to a nine-year-old girl was, in her phrases as: "In TV, if you want to make someone die, you can't. In Pac-Man, if you want to run into a ghost, you can" (Greenfield 101-102).

As such, a new form of narrative has emerged from the computer culture which is known as interactive fiction. The key to interactive fiction is the reader's active part in shaping and exploring imaginary worlds. Whereas traditional works of literature are written in the first or third person, computer-assisted fiction typically written in the second person singular: you are the main character. That's why children now want more control over the narrative form. This aspect can be seen in children's books as well. There are books like the Choose Your Own Adventure, with if-then twists of plot: "If you offer to go with Little John, turn to page 11. If you volunteer to go with Robin Hood, turn to page 72." When these children read a story, they project themselves into its characters and scenes from the protagonist's point of view, they identify with the elements of fiction while moving freely within fictional worlds in which the setting holds clues about character and fiction. They are accustomed to making decisions that shape a character's temperament and destiny (Constanzo 42).

Part of the pleasure of cinematic spectacle is an identification with the protagonist on the screen, involving imaginative replay of the action, the computer games seek to make mental act palpable. When the computer game player looks at the scene, the alter-ego appears as one of the characters, the identification remains compelling because the player directly controls the digital protagonist; the player winces as the character falls, is crushed

or otherwise meets its demise. "Most of all, in trying to provide a palpable and unified reality in which the player operates, by linking response, vision and sound, the computer game creates a phantasmagoric experience of total immersion" (Stallabrass 84). As McLuhan points out: "A game is a machine that can get into action only if the players consent to become puppets for a time" (qtd. in Provenzo 73). That is why, identification in computer games is mandatory, otherwise there would be no game at all.

Sometimes, the player sees what the character sees, or directly sees the character. There are also games where the personification is abstract and invisible. But the characteristics of that persona can be extracted by the help of the structure of the setting in which events take place, of the opponents and their attitudes and of the subject-matter of the game, at last but not least, of the way the games are marketed, such as cover design and magazine ads.

As is mentioned in previous chapter, identification in cinema constitutes a crucial part for spectatorship. However, identification in computer games can be explained quite differently. The variations such as "You be the Mommy and I'll be the Daddy" that children offer each other in the open-ended role playing are endless, the characters change with the issues on the children's minds and with the heroes and heroines of their culture: "You be Superman and I'll be Lois Lane." In this kind of play children have to learn to put themselves in the place of another person, to imagine what is going on inside someone else's head.

When the player plays a video game, he/she enters into the world of the programmers' who made it. The player has to do more than identify with a character on the screen. He/she must act for. Identification through action which doesn't exist in identification in cinema has a special kind of hold.

If one watches pinball players at their game:

They kick, they shake and thrust their hips, gently at first, then violently urge the machine to one side or another. Controlling the two buttons flippers by means of two buttons is the only movement in the game that feels discrete or precise. The physical pinball machine - the legs it stands on as well as its posts and flippers - are part of the game. Video game is different: here all of the action is in a programmed world, an abstract space. In an important sense, it is a space where the physical machine and the physical player do not exist. It is not easy for pinball players to describe their feelings of what makes the game respond. Some describes it as a 'conversation': there is a sense of give and take. But although it has become cliché to speak of the video game as "interactive," players describe the experience of being with one less like talking with a person and more like inhabiting someone else's mind. Conversation gives way to fusion. In pinball, you act on the ball. In Pac-Man you are the mouth. . . Jarish, a young computer player states that: "When I play the game, I start getting into it, and you start taking the role of the person . . . and then the game ends" (Turkle 69-70, 72).

Thus, the distinctiveness of computer games lies in interaction in which identification is much more stronger than the passivity offered by cinema and television. In video game environment player's actions have a direct, immediate consequence on the world depicted: "Players are surrounded by apparatus, in the home by screen, keyboard, joystick and perhaps speakers; in the arcade sometimes sitting literally inside the machine, turned back and forth, shaken in their seats, bombarded by noise" (Stallabrass 83-84).

In cinematic identification, for example, spectators usually identify themselves with the characters whom they feel they are alike including gender; a dominant cultural convention that the men identify with male

characters, women with females, but computer game player has to identify him/herself with the only protagonist which is programmed as responsive to the player's commands. Thus, the computer game player has no choice except identify with the protagonist, he/she cannot be in the position of the opponents. In that sense, computer game narrative offers little choice in terms of the main character with whom the player identifies.

It is known that every film or television program has a narrative with a specific beginning and an end. In film narratives, the dominant classical pattern is crisis and resolution in which events take place into which disorder is introduced, the presentation of several possible resolutions before a final resolution is possible. The meaning of such a textual structure can be extracted in terms of binary, or two-termed oppositions provoking crises as well as the need for resolutions. Some oppositions can be summed up as male/female, parent/child in particular which emphasizes the oedipal quality of narrative in a broad sense. All of the meaningful oppositions, crises and resolutions are addressed to a subject that means narrative structures are not meaningful unless certain positions are taken up by the spectator to understand, evaluate, and comprehend what occurs on the screen. As Mary Ann Doane puts it "in film there is a curious operation by means of which the 'I' and 'You' of discourse are collapsed in the figure of the spectator;" thus, the subject becomes a narrative effect carried along by the force of the events represented on the screen. More important, the subject of narrative is established through conventions, that is when one enters the movie theatre and take a seat, he/she has already engaged in an identificatory process (Mayne 25-26).

At the beginning of a particular game, a problem or a disorder is given and the player is encouraged to solve this problem. So, narrative is crisis and resolution as in cinema. But the ongoing structure of film narrative cannot be affected by the spectators. In video games, players are introduced many ways to follow, many different endings with many other characters to meet as the player changes direction. This gives the player a great amount of possibility as well as control with a sense of independence, but it must not be forgotten that a single game has an actual programmer and that every possible choice to solve the problem is within the very limits of the designer/programmer of the game. Many ways, many solutions, many different strategies can be followed, even invented by the player, but only within the closed textual scheme which is the outputs of the intentions of the designer/programmer. The player cannot go beyond the limits of the game program. When one solution is found, or a level is achieved, it means that the designer/programmer has already thought and wrote this probability into the software. In that sense, Huizinga's assertion must be mentioned here. Huizinga states that a game is a voluntary activity free from any compulsion. But the constraints and rigidly constructed fantasy are predetermined in video games that there is no place for a player to insert his/herself. In video game environment, the sense of freedom cannot transcend the intentions of its creator, in that sense, video games invite players to participate in a more narrow, strict, pre-defined position.

"Video games are playing an increasingly important role in our popular culture. As a result, they both reflect and shape our society" says Eugene

F. Provenzo (118). It is the culture of everyday life that offer anytime, anywhere, both wired and wireless, gaming pleasure at the office, at school, at home, in the arcade, in car and so on. While playing, players share common points that can be explained in McLuhan's phrases:

We can now live, not just amphibiously in divided and distinguished worlds, but pluralistically in many worlds and cultures simultaneously . . . so that the human family now exists under conditions of a 'global village' (qtd. in Ferguson 71).

In that sense, players not engage in an individualistic activity, but share the same pleasures, explore the same fictive worlds, identify with the same characters with other people who consume these products. It is a part of the popular culture that contains entertainment and provides the representations for a specific life style ideology.

Being a popular culture product, computer game's transmission is very much related with technology because it is the product of the advances in computer technology. It requires a certain knowledge to use it such as the player should have a literacy of using computer equipments such as both the hardware and software to play it. Every game has a producer, there are many brand names like Nintendo or Sega that specifically produce software and electronic game boards. It is totally a commercial product, so it has a specific consumer and the most important thing, it also reflects traditions and cultural norms-such as the representation of traditional gender-roles-in the form of new formulas such as interactive game that requires the player to be the major character of the story which is totally a new concept for people who has especially accustomed to be a passive receiver. And also what can be considered as a new form, is the device or

the machine, sometimes it can be a computer (like PC), sometimes a hand-held which serves only to play games.

At this stage, another aspect of computer games as a technological innovation has come into light: it serves to keep continuations, but at the same time it is new, it denotes a change. Children are offered a new environment to play games which is totally different from what they were once playing, but the way they are depicted or represented in these games, or the roles they are assigned, reflect cultural stereotypes of men and women. As such, there is a contradiction, on the one hand there is a change, on the other there is a continuity which is the continuity of the patriarchal order in which men dominate women.

According to Tom Panelas, a communication and media researcher interested in video games, this eight-to fifteen-year-old age group reflects the existing symbiosis between the social life of teenage peer groups and the marketing practices of popular culture and leisure industry. From the industry's point of view, the essential ingredient of this relationship is the linkage of cultural products with a population subgroup whose general tastes are known, relatively homogeneous, but highly changeable. Products such as video games are culturally and socially appropriated, according to Panelas, taking on symbolic value among their users. It is not surprising, therefore, that product markets expand beyond the video games themselves into a whole range of media and consumer products associated with games. The extent to which Nintendo's product market has been expanded can be seen in the wide range of secondary products that have been licensed by

the company (Provenzo 14). As is mentioned before, this is what is called a "supersystem."

Computer game market is an entire industry that develop with an incredible speed as the technology evolves. Marsha Kinder states that:

Children's television, video games, and the intertextual supersystems in which they are positioned function as the primary means by which children are interpellated as interactive consumers, and that, physical, emotional, and the ability to read and generate narratives are appropriated as forms of expanded consumption. In this way, our postmodernist culture guarantees its own reproduction. . . because of the ideological assumptions implicit in the software and marketing of cartridges, video games encourage an early accommodation to consumerist values and masculine dominance (211-219).

Video games are commercial products that can be obtained by purchase, they have a specific consumers. But buying a single cartridge does not stop the demand and never fulfills the player's desires. They are so compelling because they play with human psyche. Monsters never stop coming at you which creates "a sense of something beyond the present experience, of some unused potential within the machine, of a task never quite finished. Plots endlessly lengthen" (Stallabrass 101). If the expectations of the player are fulfilled then the game would stop. The impetus behind the wish the next games, the next machine is the reflection of consumer fashion culture. The world that is depicted in the game, that the player becomes a part of it for a while, is a dream, a utopia of an alternative, complete and consistent reality in Benjamin's terms (qtd. in Stallabrass 103).

While playing the game, players escape (cathartic experience) into a world that they think their desires are fulfilled within it. As the technology



evolves, markets evolve as well then the desires will never be fulfilled. It is a consumption. What is consumed is not a real consumption but a virtual or simulated one. What can be retold after, are only the scores:

Outside the digital arena, the heroics, the effort and the emotional commitment are meaningless. This as all the more so because forgetting is an essential part of the operation of the market, vital to the rapid obsolescence of any particular game, the unplayability of old games and the impetus of fashion (Stallabrass 104).

Computer games offer visual images that depict different worlds driven by their own rules in which characters, in other worlds, players act while assuming some roles in it. Like all the other media sources, video games, reflect cultural notions of men and women, both in their content and in their marketing strategies. In other words, industry commodifies its user as pre-defined consumers that consume pre-ruled worlds.

#### **4.1- Computer Games as a Media Source and Gender-Roles**

Video games represent social and cultural "texts" that can be read and interpreted on a number of different levels. In the case of women, the way in which they are portrayed, the roles they assume in game scenarios, and the extent to which they are included as part of the action of the games provide important insights into the role and status assigned to women in our culture. In addition, by carefully examining the content of the games from a gender perspective, one can learn a great deal about

how both men and women are socialized into assuming gender-roles in our society (Provenzo 100).

#### 4.1.1- Representation of Gender-Roles

Being a part of the media sources, computer games also help to shape one's identity according to the representations that appear on the screen as colorful, animated and sound-recorded graphics. Women-when they are included at all in games-are often cast as individuals who are acted upon rather than as initiators of action. In the most extreme manifestation of this phenomenon, women are depicted as victims in these games. This fact has important consequences not just for the images provided by the games (as well as other sources from the media and the general culture) that women are inducted the "weaker sex," and constantly in need of aid or assistance. Thus the games not only socialize women to be dependent, but also condition men to assume dominant gender-roles (Provenzo 100). Gender bias and stereotyping are evident throughout the role-playing games.

Every game has a story or narrative of its own in which characters and events take place within a win-lose condition. As such, the player has competitor(s), either human (networked games) or computer-based. Rules of the game define the content of the game and include criteria for determining the winner (Totten [Online]).

#### 4.1.1.1- Game Categories

Games are characterized by their genres, like movies, such as "sports," "fantasy," "adventure," "crime fighting," "war games," "martial arts" and "arcade." There are other classifications as well, such as "time-dependent" games, "active-agent," "passive-agent," "active-noagent," "passive-noagent" games.

"Time-dependent" games can also be called as "action" or "arcade" games because it is the time that creates the requirement for fast, precise action. If there is a figure or personality or agent involved in the game then certain affective activities (identification, role-playing) will tend to be prominent. The term "agent" means agent involvement with whom the player identifies.

In "active-agent" games, the player assumes the role of the agent while avoiding dying and destroying enemies. In these games, the user's actions are time dependent. The time of the video screen is limited with the programmer's intention. Charles Bernstein states in his article "Play It Again Pac-Man" that:

There is no future and no history, just a series of events that can be read in any sequence, we act out a tireless existential drama of 'now' time. The risks are simulated, the mastery imaginary; only the compulsiveness is real. . . The alien that coming at us is in so many of these games is ourselves, split off; that what we keep shooting down or gobbling up or obliterating is our temporality: which is to say that we have 'erring' bodies, call them flesh, which is to say we live in time, even history. And that the cost of escaping history is paranoia: being beside oneself, split off (which brings us back to where we started) ([Online]).

Bernstein's assertion about the "alien coming at us . . . is ourselves" can be considered, in other words, as that the players feel that they face with their anxieties because of the time that people are now entering when a great deal of executive power will be realized through machines, mainly through computer technology.

Power will become unassailable, because invisible. What this knowledge of power come anxieties about exploitation and manipulation, about inability to separate oneself from it. To this fear video games are in many ways the predictable male response: the video screen makes the fear visible,

says Gillian Skirrow (336), and thus a way of mastering anxiety toward current computer technology. As Sherry Turkle states, people are afraid to think themselves as machines, that they are controlled, predictable, determined, just as they are afraid to think themselves as "driven" by sexual and aggressive impulses. But in the end, even if fearful, people want to explore their sexual and aggressive dimensions; hence the evocative power and popular appeal of psychoanalytic ideas. Similarly, although fearful, people want to find a way to think about what they experience as the machine aspect of their natures; this is the heart of computer's holding power. Thinking about the self as a machine includes the feeling of being "run" from the outside, out of control because in the control of something beyond the self. Exploring the parts of oneself that he/she does not feel in control of is a way to begin to own them, a way to feel more whole (Turkle 299).

There are two basic types of active-agent games depending upon whether the shooting or the gathering is the most prominent. In "shooting games," the basic motivation is to avoid dying while shooting or eliminating

opponents. Difficulty is increased by more enemy agents, tougher enemy agents. Ninja Turtles is one of them.

In "gathering games," the main motivation is to avoid dying while accomplishing a task like moving to the next room or accumulating items like coins, lives. There may be enemies to destroy. Difficulty is increased by adding obstacles, puzzles, and enemies. Super Mario Bros. series can be counted as examples.

In "passive-agent" games, the user is manipulating an agent or persona but time is not a factor. Adventure games is the typical example, which was completely text-based and started with a text description of what the player could do and see. The player could give simple one and two-word commands such as "go north," "take key." But current games show the player the scenes rather than just describing them and allow a more natural simulation of actions in which the player "does" things. Nintendo's Adventure Island II, and Super Mario - All Stars are the examples.

In "active-noagent" games, the player is engaged in a time-dependent action but there is no persona or agent to be manipulated. Tetris is an example for this group of games. On the other hand, "passive-noagent" games are not time-dependent nor is there an agent to control. Story book games fit in this category. Since the present research is mainly focused on role-playing games, active-noagent and passive-noagent games will be excluded from the analysis.

A series of games are based on popular "sports," Pong for example, is an arcade version of ping-pong, dated back to early 70s. Current Atari Football, Track and Field can be the examples.

"Quest" or "fantasy adventure" are usually role-playing games typically using a maze format. Dragons, wizards and warriors are often featured players, and each new level of the game triggers more complex action, as the protagonist journeys toward an often magical destination at the end of a series of labyrinths. The basis of this genre is getting the protagonist through a series (or maze) of possibly fatal mishaps.

In general, these games involve a single protagonist moving toward a destination, the quest being to complete the labyrinth, against all odds. In Pac-Man, for example, the player has to eat the colored monsters (blobs) in order not to be eaten by them or Donkey Kong's Mario trying to save his beloved from the monkey who roll barrels at him.

In "crime fighting" genre, player acts as the hero, battling crime and saving the city from villains.

Another genre is "war games" in which successive waves of enemy projectiles must be shot down or blown up by counterprojectiles controlled by joystick, push button, or track ball. Some famous games included Star Wars (a movie tie-in), Space Invaders (fight against aliens), and Robotron: 2084 (robots against humanity).

A related genre is the "martial arts" fighting-man video games, such as Double Dragon, Mortal Kombat and Street Fighter (Bernstein [Online]).

There are other genres such as shoot-'em-up, beat-'em-up, action, and strategy, but all of them can be mixed up in a one single game, that is why sometimes games cannot be counted in only one genre.

Arcade genre games is another group which is played in the arcades. In general, games that are designed for home video game systems have arcade versions as well. Arcades are environments designed to play games. "Arcade play is an essentially solitary, male activity with relative darkness and noise" (Stallabrass 95-96).

Arcade-based games seem more highly focused on specific themes of war, adventure, and sports and on specific skills involving rapid hand-eye coordination (Lin and Lepper 75-76).

#### **4.1.1.2- Game Genres and Women**

As can be seen from the above genres, most of the games have military scenarios. Because it is widely believed that the origin of video games lies in the war games and in that sense, the structure of video games nearly always conform to a version of the folk-tale form analyzed by Propp: "a lack provides the motivation for a hero to struggle with a villain which leads either to defeat for the hero or to his victory and return (Skirrow

322). It is not surprising since the first video game is generally considered to be Spacewar, which was developed on the mainframes at MIT in the late 1950s (the screen shows two spaceships, each under the control of one of two players) (Turkle 76).

One of the game's designers states that: "We decided that probably, you could make a two-dimensional maneuvering sort of thing, and decided that naturally the obvious thing to do was spaceships." Why Spacewar the "natural" thing to build with this new technology? . . . Its designers identified action as the key ingredient and conceived Spacewar as a game that could provide a good balance between thinking and doing for its players. They regarded the computer as a machine naturally suited for representing things that you could see, control and play with. Its interesting potential lay not in its ability to perform calculations but in its capacity to represent action which humans could participate (Laurel, Computers as Theatre 1).

Bomb explosions, spectacular graphics, sprite explosions and smoke, warriors, well-armed opponents that come toward the player while shooting are common frames. Everyday, people follow the newest developments in the military simulators. Pilots are trained sitting in a machine for a possible battle using hi-tech weapons or planes in these low-risk-testing grounds and computer games can also be considered as the commercialized versions of these military applications. As such, computer seems to have its origin in the need to simulate attack/response scenarios (Bernstein [Online]).

· Polls consistently show women generally to be against specific wars and against military solutions to international problems. For example, in December 1990, just before the United States entered the war in the Persian Gulf, 73% of the women polled opposed attacking Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait, compared to 48% of the men (qtd. in Basow 304).



Women tend to show greater support than men for issues having to do with peace, equality and social welfare and they show these tendencies when they are politicians. They are less likely to favor military strength, nuclear power plants and so on. They are more humanitarian and public-service oriented. Then, the question comes: "If more women were in positions of political or military power, would the policy be different?"

There can be many point of views, of course, feminists, for example, think so. But political institutions including military, because of their very structure, tend to operate on "masculine" aggressive, nonhumanitarian, competitive principles. So, women leaders cannot be considered as "women" leaders within this traditional, patriarchal discourse.

Most women leaders, Margaret Thatcher in England and Indra Gandhi in India and Tansu Çiller in Turkey, "have owed their positions to male dynasties . . ." (qtd. in Basow 305). Cemal Bali Akal, professor at the

School of Law, states that:

Çiller is a potent woman surrounded by males. These type of women live a kind of political transvestism and transform into a male. They are physically women but the world they belong is a male's world. Women have always been thought as lack compared to men . . . Çiller is always giving male promises, in that sense, there is no difference between her and Mesut Yılmaz (21).

Women, traditionally, have been excluded from gaining military power. By federal statute, in the US, women are prohibited from combat duty and from jobs that are combat-related in the U.S. Navy, Marines, and Air Force (Basow 307-308). The prohibition against women in combat is really a prohibition against giving women weapons, in other words, they are

prevented from gaining power, it is another way of oppressing women. In that sense, since most of the games are related with militaristic scenarios, they can be considered as the simulated versions of social realities.

As is mentioned before, there has to be a win-lose condition in computer games in order to consider them as such. In order to have a winner or a loser, there has to be a competition as well as a motivation to achieve a goal. Competition and achievement are considered as male attributes. Research suggest that males are more competition-oriented, especially if reward is concerned and in surpassing an opponent. These two prerequisites are present in computer games. There are many and strong opponents that are programmed to prevent the player from his/her way. Females, on the other hand, seem more concerned than males with interpersonal aspects of the situation. As with competition, achievement is also a male attribute. The male role is primarily defined by success and status gained through working and achieving.

The accounts of achievement and competitiveness are rewards such as power and possessions. The emphasis on competition and achievement come from the pressures of the society. All these pressures lead rise to a stress-related attribute which is called as aggression and violence.

Maleness is defined as power. But since it does not exist as a biological fact, it is fragile which lives as a reality in one's heart. It exists as an ideology as well as in engendered relationships. People are so accustomed to their gender-roles that being male and masculine are confused. Little

boy does not know that sex is not the same with gender. For him, to be masculine is what is considered male. That is why being masculine is being desexed, in other words castrated.

For many people, men's violence toward women and weaker men is the most common form of personal aggression. From sexual abuse to rape and incest, to wife beating and to violent pornographic images, many women escape from men's aggression. In that sense, aggression and violence must be understood as a bodily expression of the fragility and as a continuation of women's suppression and men's domination. Being aggressive is being active and work within the dualism of men and women. For the male child being female is a threat because femaleness symbolizes the loss of power as illustrated in Freud's schema:

male = penis = power = active = masculine

The same equation for females would be:

female = castrated = passive = feminine

These subconscious equations may seem absurd at first sight but constitute the commonly shared social order of patriarchy. Deviation from this norm for the male child results serious anxiety experiences. The male child looks for power in his imagination with superheroes, weapons, and magic while imitating adolescents until he becomes a powerful male grown-up (Kaufman 15-19). From this respect, computer games constitute a great environment for male children to experiment power. In other words, games are the preparative agents in the course of becoming a "real" masculine.

Violence is a crucial element especially in role-playing games. Almost every game has a violent theme. Violent games can be categorized as: 1-gratuitous violence (blood and gore for its own sake such as in Mortal Kombat and Doom I and Doom II, 2- killing bad guys such as in Ninja Turtles and Mario, 3- killing non-humans, Heretic, for example, 4- destroying icons, ships in Star Fox, for example. "All of these have a 'warrior' motivation that seems to be a turn-off for many females" (Westrom [Online]).

Games testers indicate that more violent games do physically stimulate players. A tester at Ocean Software reports that the more violent games have the effect of "making my hands sweat, and as the game gets more exciting, my back sweats. If you watch people playing a particularly strong interactive game you see them raise their feet as they press 'jump' and copying the actions of the figures they play" (qtd. in Stutz 23).

What is seen in the games in terms of violence is the fact that one must shoot or be shot, consume or be consumed, fight or lose. There is no any sense of community even in multi-player game modes. Each person is out for him/herself. In order to reach to a goal, the player must destroy whatever he/she confronts that keep him/her off advancing. Spaceships, aircraft, robots, monsters, aliens, enemy soldiers must be repelled. Violence and aggression are the only operative principles by which the player can function.

Before analyzing games as constitutive of a player, magazine ads as well as game reviews must be mentioned since consumers/players are imposed certain consuming styles before they purchase and start playing the games.

Magazine ads, game magazines' reviews as well as the packaging of games inform players of what kind of a possible player they assume and suggest. That is why, following section will focus on the issues that can be considered as the preparative factors for players in their way of choosing a particular game at the same time for games, in their way of choosing a player.

#### 4.2- Discourse on Games

According to an analysis of top-rated games of Nintendo system, of the 47 games in Table 2 (see Appendices), only seven do not have violence as their major theme (Provenzo 127). Violence aspect of the games has become something that the games cannot be thought without it. There is no other convention for the definition of a game, it seems very natural that in order to win the game, the player must participate into the violence because the story line develops in such a manner. In the space games the player has to shoot them before they shoot him/her, otherwise "game over."

With their violent and aggressive themes, video games provide simulation for the actual conditions of warfare. In shooting games, for example, the player has to shoot the enemy ships, drop the bombs on anonymous population. Violence, not only exist in the games, but arcades are also the places where violence can be observed. "The frequent outburst of hostility towards the machines are not suggestive of a female haven as can be judged from common social sex stereotypes . . . arcade video games are definitely 'male-oriented'" (Braun and Giroux 102).

All these characteristics lead to an acknowledgment of a male model player constructed by the game that is programmed around male pleasures, anxieties and attributes. According to Melanie Klein each sex has its own different mode of "mastering" anxiety. What constitutes pleasure and anxiety is the shift between life and death performances which is best represented in video game environment. Advancing in the game is the same as continuing to live. When the player stops, death comes, and the narrative stops too. Melanie Klein argues that what causes the repetition compulsion in children's play is anxiety about an unreal danger directed towards the insides of their own bodies. The boy, putting all his faith in the omnipotence of his penis-as-magic-wand turns the danger from an internal to an external one and embodies it as his father's penis inside his mother's body. The strategy is to go into a battle with a similar weapon to that of the enemy, and in a theatre of war well away from his own insides. Once having entered the mother's body in fantasy he risks the danger of being castrated by his father's penis, which is waiting for him in there or of having his own penis prevented from retreating, and being shut inside his mother's body. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the computer is the metaphor of the woman's body, the womb, the matrix, where the anxieties such as castration and separation from mother are mastered. Boys fantasies contain the idea that the penis, incorporated into the mother, turns into a dangerous animal or into weapons loaded with explosive substance, or that vagina, too, is transformed into an instrument of death. If (he) the player performs well he will be able to destroy everything in sight and escape intact. Once this has been achieved, the mastering of anxiety has become the child's greatest pleasure (Skirrow 331).

In sum, video games represent the separation from mother, for the boy, and his confusion with anxiety about his different anatomy from that of the mother and, as a result, represent mother's body and fights the Oedipal conflict in there with his penis. In contrast to boys', the girls' original anxiety is not overlaid by anxiety about differences, so the threat is not projected outwards and remains a threat to their insides. Klein suggests that girl feels that her body is poisoned and for that reason needs good nourishment from the mother's body to make it well again. The frustration the girl suffers at never being able to get enough nourishment leads to fantasy attacks on the mother's body. But the mother's body, because of the anatomical identity with her own, which it also represents, is an uncomfortable setting for a war game, so in the girl's fantasy the emphasis is not on the attack but rather on the need to repair the damage the attacks have done. For women, then, the leading anxiety, obsession and therefore pleasure is about restitution. Klein observed that sewing, making dolls' dresses were typical of reconstituting the mother's body, and therefore the girl's own. She maintains that giving birth to a baby is particularly satisfying because it signifies that the interior of the woman's body is unharmed and can produce good things. So, it is not surprising that video games based on battles have little appeal for women and similarly, performances such as knitting, sewing, looking after and talking about babies seem to have little appeal for men (qtd. in Skirrow 333-335).

Part of the popularity of computer games is the "unknown." Players dispatch enemies as the program goes ever deeper into the unknown. The feeling of suspense is produced by exploration and there is no way of knowing what

is coming next. Exploring is part of the fun:

The "unknown" is the illusion of open-endedness. It creates that tremendous sense of possibility. You never know what the programmer wrote in or didn't write in. You never know what the grandrules of the world you are playing in are (Totten [Online]).

Another aspect of the popularity of video games can be considered the fact that the games represent the breakdown of boundaries characteristic of postmodern culture; boundaries between play and real life, between fantasy and science and between high-tech and primitivism. The breakdown of boundaries between high-tech and primitivism may be thought as the language used in these games. As is known, the computer is the most developed machine, high-tech of the current age. In the case of games, there is no spoken language yet. Sometimes a character can sing to the player but it has no any narrative power. The text can only communicate to the player through writing or by other sound effects or by the movements of objects.

The player communicates by typing in a telegraphic form of language. For example, a compound sentence such as 'draw sword and kill dragon then get gold and leave' would be the utmost in sophistication to be expected. Very often the player's only response is to simply touch a key or type one word, such as 'look' (Skirrow 327).

As such, computer games' current lack of facility with language leads objects replace words as a form of communication, as a different mode of expression which may be considered the primitive part of such boundaries.

Rules that govern a game are an important issue in terms of girls' and boys' play. It is almost impossible to learn to play a video game if the player tries to understand first and play later on. Girls are often perceived as preferring the easier video games. When one has looked more closely of



what they really prefer, it is games where they can understand the rules before play begins because playing without knowing the rules means risk taking. But "risk taking as a learning strategy demands that people sacrifice a certain understanding of what is going on which can be seen in the case of computer games" (Kramarae 41).

After a three month period to research the attitudes of Sega players,

Dangelmaier found that:

If you look at the structure of play, boys' games are focused on rules and on winning. If there are rules in a game, girls want to change them. . . For example, in the game Sonic the Hedgehog, girls found it inappropriate that not jumping over the mushroom would have to make them start over from the beginning. But that's considered an important motivating factor for boys. For girls it's irritating. Why do I have to repeat? The same things that are motivating boys are deterring girls. They get bored with the redundancy. They just want to see where the character is going (qtd. in Jacobs 42).

This fact has a serious consequences in shaping market strategies. As the competition grows and starts to menace many more companies each day, manufacturers are now becoming much more aware of the fact that they really miss a great portion of population which is constituted by a potential group of female players.

Sega, one of the leading manufacturers, accepts that almost all of their games are targeted to boys since they do not know how to reach to female pleasures. To double up their sales figures, they are now trying to figure out a way to make games that girls truly enjoy. Along this way, the company's most significant strategy is the active recruitment of female game producers. Sega's "Girls' Task Force" has been hard at work developing titles. "Right now what we're really focusing on is research," says Michaelene Cristini

Risley, group director of licensing and character development for Sega. "We're trying to understand girls. It's not an easy task." One way of bridging the gap, Risley believes, is "incorporating play patterns that are interesting to girls into current games. " This process involves designing activities that are "more collective than competitive." Also the sort of repetitive progression - jump over the mushroom or start over - that as a standard feature of most games could be eliminated. Risley says that new titles that will be more "encompassing" should appear (qtd. in Jacobs 45).

Another development toward more female players is the foundation of a company called Girl Games, Inc., in the U.S., which is an interactive entertainment company designing and developing high-quality software products for the female audience, ages 7 to 17.

What they are really aiming is to prepare female players for the demands of a technologically advanced future while providing with meaningful computer experience. Their titles, in contrast to the many existing games on the market, feature activities and games that encourage social interaction, nurturing, role-playing and creative story development. They have already established an environment where female designers, writers, developers, and artists are encouraged to create the most innovative and inventive interactive content for young women. Their "web" sites on the Internet is now becoming a useful environment for female as well as male players to visit in terms of gender discrimination of games.

Margaret Honey, a developmental psychologist also the associate director of New York-based research group called the Center for Children and Technology, argues that for boys, video play provides a cathartic experience, that they find it empowering to be successful in these games; girls, by contrast, were resistant to the pacing, the need without thinking and constraints of the world within the game. "The problem with video games is that they don't give you any voice" Honey says (qtd. in Jacobs 42).

Like tourism, computer game is largely based on spatial exploration. Actions start by the player's acts and the other characters' acts are much more limited than the player's. Progress, in most of the games, can be achieved through explorations. At each level of exploration, the player meets the other characters and this process continues until the end of the game. When the player goes back to previous level that he/she completed, the same characters appear again in the same place, at the same time because of the situational adjustment of the opponents as well as the player's, in that sense video games offer a narrowed range of choices.

There are almost constant features in every game such as: "If it moves, kill it," "'bad guys' move in predictable patterns," "except for 'bosses,' most 'bad guys' can be despatched with one hit," "if you see food lying on the ground, eat it," "smashing things, in general, does not hurt," "there is no problem that cannot be overcome by violence," "if someone dies, it disappears," "if it is on the ground, you should get it," "the operation of a weapon is a simple and obvious procedure," "no matter how long you fight, you can always fight again," "death is reversible (only for you)," "whenever

huge evil men are about to die, they begin flashing red or yellow," "although the enemy always has more aircraft than you, they fly in elaborate patterns which make it easier for you to shoot them all down," "all martial arts men have rippling muscles and angry expressions," "the enemy always leaves weapons lying on the ground for no reason other than so their bitter enemy can pick them up and defeat them with it," "shoot everything, if it blows up or dies, it was evil; if doesn't, try and pick it up, it was probably a powerup or bonus," "the most powerful fighters always wait until you come close enough," "200-1 odds against you is not a problem," "when racing vehicles, do not worry if your vehicle crashes and explodes; a new vehicle will appear in its place" ("34 Things I Learned From Video Games" [Online]) and so, that this list may contain many other common characteristics about computer games. But the important thing in that list, is the fact that most of the items are about fighting, killing, bleeding, dying and overall violence that reveal a male player in mind.

"Video games and their contents represent symbolic universes that are spontaneously consented to by the general population. In this context, it can be argued that video games are instruments of a larger, political, and cultural hegemony" (Provenzo 115). In the case of women, when they are represented in a game, they often appear as a female figure being kidnapped by a "bad" figure. The various "beauties" are waiting to be rescued by male winners. This fact is also consistent throughout children's literature as well as contemporary movie versions.

In Table 3 (see Appendices) a list of 47 top-rated games include women being kidnapped as a major theme. In this analysis in which the number of times women were kidnap victims, or in need of rescue, was counted. A total of 13 of 47 games included in the poll - or appropriately 30% of the games - contained scenarios in which women were kidnapped or had to be rescued as a part of the game. These women cannot be seen as being rescued by another female character, since most of the games offer a male "Model Player."

In these games, the goal of the player is to rescue the princess or another "weak" character. Thus, the possibility of moving is always given to the player, in other words, the female character to be rescued is left inactive, does not respond to the player's commands. This female character can be shown with a "help" balloon.

This kind of situation reminds people of a "good," muscular, strong male character who has first to fight with the enemies and then rescue "his woman." In general, the setting in which the events or battle take place, cannot be named as domestic which is associated with femininity. When the kidnapers are shown as female then they must also be punished.

In regard to the question of gender discrimination and stereotyping, in other words, construction of a male player, can be determined by an examination of their covers and introductory descriptions.

Table 4 is showing the same 47 top-rated games which were shown in the

previous table (see Appendices). This table help to evaluate game covers in terms of gender themes. It shows the number of female and male characters depicted on the cover of the games. Not only covers, but descriptions portray sexist themes.

In Double Dragon II, for example, the cover portrays Marian, Billy's (player's) kidnapped girlfriend, clutching him as he supports her with his hand wrapped around the small of her back.

This illustration shows Marian's weakness, she is clutching Billy in order not to lose her savior/hero and not to be helpless. Billy, on the other hand, is aware she is afraid, he shows his support because she belongs to him.

Billy's other arm is entwined with a whip that he is tearing out of the hands of a woman who has enormous breasts and a punk "rooster crest" hairdo. This part of the illustration is depicting definitely an opposite type of feminine character compared to Billy's girlfriend Marian. The behavior of Billy against this woman introduces the bad character to the possible player. Probably, Marian is kidnapped by this woman whose hair style symbolizes a kind of revolt against dominant values and norms, in other words, she is doing "male things," so, she has to be punished. Here, again the woman as sex object is evident in the kidnapper's individuality. Men, in general, are portrayed as weak in front of a sexy woman and this fact may lead to a subordination. This kind of intertextual interference can be made because the other media offer this as a prior discourse.

In Dragon Warrior, the Dragon Lord has captured the princess, again a kidnap/rescue scenario, and stolen Edric's powerful ball of light. The Dragon Lord has a distinctive title, Edric has a name, but the woman is just "the princess." She is even not given an actual name of her own. This can be called as the annihilation of the woman. Since she does not have too much contribution over the game, her character is just a tool, a reason for the male player to test his power.

A gender-neutral cover does not necessarily mean that a game does not contain stereotypes and discriminatory material or a male model player. The back of the box of the game River City Ransom, for example, has a printed text saying that the "city and high school students are captivated by Slick, the powerful gang leader." This statement seem quite innocent, since games do not have to appeal to both boys and girls, optimistic people may think so. But the following paragraphs change this neutrality up side down. It is stated that the two school boys, Alex and Ryan were not at the school the day Slick took their friends, including Ryan's girlfriend. What is striking here, again, the female character is named simply as "Ryan's," and she is even not depicted on the cover of the game. One can understand that Ryan and Alex are the major characters of the game who will probably rescue the city and their friends, including "Ryan's," from Slick.

Forty-seven games, shown in Table 4, were selected out of a possible 90 different games. Game covers are the first impressions for the player to have an idea about the content of the games. Front side of covers generally illustrate the "good" and "bad" characters of the game in order to introduce

the player his/her alter-ego and the opponent(s) visually. The back side of covers contain written explanations about the game as well as about possible requirements to run it.

Covers, since they are widely used in conjunction with advertising for the games both in magazines and in store displays, are important in order to be recognized by the possible consumers. Thus, gender discrimination becomes consistent throughout the media.

Eugene F. Provenzo is giving valuable explications about this list (107-108). His scoring system for conducting a content analysis of the selected game covers based on theoretical models originally outlined by the British sociologist Erving Goffman. In his work Gender Advertisements, Goffman describes how men and women, but especially women, are portrayed in popular advertisements. Goffman's analysis is based on categories such as "relative size," "the feminine touch," "the family," "the ritualization of subordination," and etc. Using these categories, Goffman makes reader aware of this social phenomenon (qtd. in Provenzo 107).

Characters on the cover of the games can be identified as male or female by their dress and physical characteristics. Another criterion would be whether or not the characters, male and female, are initiating action in the visual frame, for example, striking out with a weapon, leading a group. In the list, these initiating actions can be seen under the title of "dominant males" or "dominant females." "Submissive" or "subdued females" title indicates characters being dependent or under control of another figure.



Another category includes non-human characters such as monsters, animal, mythological or robot-type figures. However, in contemporary writings on film theory, monsters have frequently been conceptualized as feminized, this fact will be analyzed later on in this research.

On the 47 game covers, a total of 115 male and 9 female characters were identified. Male versus female figures predominated by a ratio of nearly 13 to 1. 20 males were identified as having dominant poses, while no females were identified in this classification. Three females were in submissive poses (one-third of the total), while no males were in corresponding representations.

According to the results of this analysis, it is observable that most of these 47 top-rated games in Nintendo poll, depict females in supportive roles. They don't have direct effect on the overall flow of the game. They are represented as being kidnapped and in need of someone else. This has a crucial implication that the model player, which is constructed by the content as well as by the illustrations and texts on the covers, is male, independent from the actual gender of the player. This fact cannot be charged only to manufacturers, but magazines and advertisements are all supportive factors in determining the gender of the player; i.e. the "Model Player."

Heidi Dangelmaier states that designing and marketing cannot be separated. For her, designers are ignoring the messages they are giving out in the packing. The way games are represented, the number of male or

female characters, the actions of the figures, the medium of the advertisement and the way of interpretation of the games are signs that lead to a thinking of a model player.

Karrie Jacobs states that:

The boxes in which video games are sold usually feature lurid illustrations, much more realistic than the actual game graphics. Bare-chested male warriors are a favorite image. Females figures are scarce most often found wearing armored bikinis and cowering behind a hatchet-wielding protector or clinging provocatively to a brave prince (40).

There may sometimes be a game which is designed around female characters. Kendo Rage is one of them. The package features a cartoon of two buxom babes having a sword fight (Provenzo 110). The story line of the game is about a little girl who is depicted on the back of the box dressed in a modest school uniform and who becomes a kendo superhero. This game may attract female players' attention but this does not mean anything different than other games' male model player, because being rage and having sword fight can be associated with violence and aggression, again male belongings. In other words, females can play this game but only through assuming a male identity - transvestism.

An entire subfield within the computer game industry has been developed to intensify the consumption, as well as gender segregation. Books such as How to Win at Nintendo Games provide the reader with secret codes, training tips, and expert tactics for games. There are also magazines specifically aiming at players for the same purpose. Many of the computer magazines have a separate section for game reviews as well as for new equipments available in the market.

The majority of these games are monthly ones in which game cartridge drives such as Super NES (Nintendo), Game Boy (Nintendo), Lynx (Atari), Master System II (Sega) or Megadrive (Sega) as well as new games appear with colorful photographs and screen-shots of the games. Game review sections depict the most newest popular games and evaluate them from their point of views. Sometimes, these kind of publications may become so important that they can be very influential on the future stand point of a game or a drive.

It cannot be expected, of course, that these magazines' contents to be different or independent from the whole universe of computer gaming market decisions. Being a part of the supersystem they must be considered as a supportive force over the industry as well as over the player's concentrations on gaming and on purchase. Their covers are made up of popular game graphics which are consisted of, in general, male characters as well as male players holding a specific brand name machine. From this respect, the target reader, in Eco's terms model reader, is again male. As with the game covers and game contents, these magazines help to support the idea of a model player which is constructed, as in Eco's, by the text itself.

In May 1994 issue of Wired magazine, the game of Equinox is advertised (see Figure 1). On top of this one full-page advertisement, there is a series of illustrations reminiscent of a life-span of a cartoon character. Through this life-span, what is communicating, in a caricaturized manner, is the way human beings are captivated by video games, especially by the game Equinox, from childhood to death. The whole life is illustrated in six phases



in the same place in which common characteristics can be observed as: an armchair, a human character which gets older as the phases changes and a hand-held machine. Since it is an ad for a specific game, what is played is the game Equinox. The armchair which is used, is a special one that cannot be coincidentally used and whose form reminds of daddy's chair which can be imagined located in front of a television in real life home setting.

The reading direction of these illustrations is the same with the general reading habit, i.e., from left to right. In the first illustration or phase, a male character is seen of 6 or 7 years of age with a hand-held. His looks reminds of a restless child whose choice is the game of Equinox, not anything else. His eyes' shape, his hairdo and color as well as the "daddy's chair" are the common points that lead the viewer to a conclusion that this character is the same in all the other phases.

While aging, the armchair gets an older appearance, the dressing style also changes but there is one thing which never changes: the hand-held which runs Equinox. The interferences that can be subtracted from the reading of these series can be summed up as: the game is an addictive one which can be played at every stage in life, so it will never be old-fashioned. In general, when one thing is totally consumed, it becomes old-fashioned, what's emphasized here is the fact that the player can spent all his life playing this game without finishing all the levels. There is another option as well, this game is so well-designed/programmed that it can be played

over and over again, in other words, the game can never be consumed at all.

On the bottom part of each illustration, there are descriptive texts about the mood of the player. In the second, for example, he skips his graduation ceremony because conquering the third dungeon is much more important. In the third one, it is understood that this game isolates him/player from his social environment and relationships, he even never has a girlfriend at this age. What is striking in these phases is the fact that the game's player is certainly a male one. Otherwise, advertisers would think of adding a female character, may be as his wife next to him, playing together while sharing the same pleasures together, because it is traditionally accepted that when people reach to a certain age they are expected to get married to form a family to keep the existing order, but there is not.

In the fourth one, he is seen very old and he has trouble seeing the screen but he still keeps playing. The last illustration shows a death man lying on the ground, in front of the armchair as if fell down with his Equinox in hand. He probably dies while playing, may be because of the high thrill of the game. Since this kind of interpretation would lead to an abstention, probably the first comment is the advertisers' message to convey.

On the below of the last picture the text is longer than the others, it is like a testament which reminds of a tradition that is continued from one generation to another. Thus, the game Equinox, the reader assumes, is a classics, a tradition that is inherited through male members of a family.

This game has to be kept within the family - as the term "grandson" indicates - it has to be protected, it symbolizes a continuation which is actually the continuation of exclusion of women. It can also be thought of a kind of a mystery that when females play it, the magic will disappear.

Following example is not an actual advertisement, but it is about a letter from a reader/player, which is published in the June 1994 issue of the Wired magazine (see Figure 2). The game is called The Mystery Tiki which, as is said, is designed specifically for girls. At this stage, it must be noted that, if not necessary, it is impossible to notice any description concerning the target consumer from gender segregation point of view. From this respect, all the games can be considered as targeted to males, unless otherwise noted both in the magazines and on the covers of the games.

The reason that leads the writer to a conclusion that this game is a girl's game, as the way images and slogans are used. The writer says that: "To a 9-year-old girl like me, it seems like most computer games are made for boys - Mortal Kombat for example." In the game, briefly, a female character called Jennifer, probably 15-years of age, the viewer assumes from her portrayal on the cover illustration of the game, is seen. The reader of this image can find her as charming which comes not from description of such, but from the reader's prior intertextual experiences. When the term charming is used for a girl especially, it almost reveals the same impressions in everybody's mind; a "good" girl.



## Gender videogaming.

Figure 2- The Mystery Tiki.  
Source: Wired June 1994: 111.



Jennifer, the main character of the game, visits Hawaii in the game and takes player along on her adventure. "She meets a new friend (a girl), and together they go to the beach, where they find a stolen Tiki doll. They want to return it to the museum. They go on an adventure through the forest, where see lots of friendly animals" (Rheingold 111).

Jennifer's meeting with a "girl" friend is very significant since if she meets a boy friend, the game's purity would be lost and would lead readers/players to an uncertainty whether it is a girls' game or not. A game with two little girls, from the very beginning, even without seeing the game, just from the reading of this column, lead to a conception that this game cannot contain violence, lots of action, in the video gaming manner, and challenge. In this sense, it does not fit into the form of best-seller games which are expected to have violence and destruction as their major themes.

The animals that they meet in the forest are called as "friendly" animals. Here, again, the term friendly reminds of innocent, helpful animal characters. In terms of gender-based attitudes toward male and female infants, as is mentioned before, females are treated much more attentively than the male infants, they are even held much more gently by their parents. Thus, these little girls are not permitted by the discourse to get into trouble while meeting with dangerous creatures as in most of the other games narrative flow. In other words, they do not have opponents firing at them, there is no violence, no aggression, no blood which suggest a warrior, in turn, a male model player. The term friendly animals is suggestive in a sense that they will not hurt the girls. The only trouble

Jennifer and her girlfriend meet is a choice of direction to follow in order to get to the museum to give the Tiki doll back where it belongs.

What the designer/programmer intended to give as the game's goal is to return back the doll to the museum which is a place in which cultural values, historical evidences of societies are exhibited as well as protected. In that sense, there is not anything that exceeds the accepted social borders. Returning back the doll is an approval behavior, so the little girls do not do anything that threatens the existing order and on top of that, they do it in a very secure way. The manufacturer's hidden intention of the choice of the two girls to execute this mission can be interpreted as to obey societal values and norms accepted by the dominant population.

In the same issue of Wired, there is an advertisement of an other game which totally ignores the female players (see Figure 3). In this full-page ad, bright colors have been chosen in order to attract the reader and most important thing is the figure and the slogan that are used. The game's screen-shots are put in a secondary position compared to this picture which suggest that what is communicated through this figure is of primary importance.

The figure (actual photograph) that occupies almost 80% of the page, features a bald-headed male with an angry look, through the reader/player, which reveals a violent facial expression. On top of the photograph, a huge size text reads: "No Cops," "No Laws," "No Wimps."

**NO COPS**  
**NO LAWS**  
**NO WIMPIPS**

CD-ROM  
For the store nearest you  
or contact us at  
1-800-234-3088

Choose your vehicle wisely. It may be the only thing that keeps you alive when you battle evil enemies like The Four Riders and Robots.

Available on Sega CD and IBM CD ROM. Coming soon to 3DO.

**ARE YOU A GIRLIE-MAN OR A MEGARACER?**

Will you get the jump on the competition and take the experience of Mega Race to the next level for the race of your life?

**MEGA RACE**

**WIN OR DIE!**

Spectacular fully rendered animation and amazing 3-D graphics make MEGARACE a true 3-D virtual driving experience.

Over 90 minutes of digitized video commentary, 13 full rendered tracks, hot rock music tracks and the actual ride of your life (or death).

Figure 3- Mega Race.  
Source: Wired June 1994: 113.

On the lower part of the page there are screen-shots of the game by which it is understood that it is a car racing game. As the slogan indicates, rules are not valid, or at least not obeyed, in this game. Everything can be done in order to be the winner. The player is invited to join to a world without cops, laws and the most important, there is no place for the weak, as the word "wimps" suggests. It seems violent from all aspects. Law and police institutions are established for the people's well-beings. Whenever a trouble occurs, people apply to these institutions in order to punish the people who offend the rules. Thus, there is no rules in the same manner as people are accustomed to obey. There is no protectors, everyone is alone of himself.

Below the slogan, there is another text that reads: "Are you a girlie-man or a megaracer?" Beside other features of this ad, this provocative slogan constitutes the most important point of view about the player constructed by the game's ad itself. It obviously selects a pre-defined player in advance and there is no place for females and persons who are weak and impotent.

It was noted before that females have always been considered as weak. Departing from this fact, especially the term "wimps" excludes all female players from playing the game. The second slogan "Are you a girlie-man . . ." is one which is frequently used in daily life conversations and which devalues women. For a boy, it is for most to be called a sissy or girlish than for a girl to be called a tomboy. It is found that grown men continue this pattern. The unisex fashion, for example, primarily involves women adopting masculine clothes such as pants and t-shirts. Men may wear brighter clothes and even carry purses, which are distinctively masculine,

but they never wear skirts or dresses which is totally a feminine way of clothing and a style which render them sexy and attractive, for a possible male gaze. As Stockard and Johnson state:

In an informal basketball game it is observed, when a boy miss a basket the other boys would call him "woman." On another occasion, it is heard a younger boy turn to an older boy in the midst of an argument and say, "shaddup, boy!" in the most deprecating tone. The older boy, however, gained the upper hand by saying "You shaddup girl!" There is no comparable phenomenon among women by calling each other "man" (11).

As can be seen from the daily devaluation of women, this ad devalues women while calling men's most weak initiative. It is very provocative, it invites the male players to prove their masculinity, their omnipotence. It feels if they fail in the game, they would no longer be a "real" man. Kramarae states that:

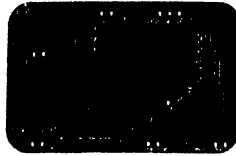
Risk taking has a gender valence. Boys are taught to react to risks positively, to view them as an opportunity to expand their knowledge and skill . . . When a boy shies away from risk, he runs what may be a greater risk: the accusation of being called a sissy, "girlish" in his ways. The female child is more often directed away from situations that might cause trouble . . . Being a "good girl" is defined as a virtue where good may mean passive enough to not get into trouble. Good may also mean passive enough to accept knowledge only in a safe, directed, "cook-book" form (41).

Competition, car race, violence, potency, disorder, lawlessness are the means, and suggestive of masculinity as well as a male player. It is through that way, the ad, that male and female stereotypic attributes become internalized even without playing the game.

Another ad with a heavy slogan can be seen in the September 1994 issue of Wired again (see Figure 4). It is a double-spread advertisement but placed separately leaving 24 pages inbetween.

2.5 MILLION  
F O R M E R  
A D D I C T S  
C A N ' T B E  
W R O N G !

**LODE RUNNER**  
THE LEGEND RETURNS



It's more addicting than ever. With all new graphics and sound effects, plus 150 new levels of non-stop action. Play alone or head-to-head. Use the Lightning Fast Game Generator to create torturous worlds of your own. See your retailer or call 1-800-757-7707 (ASK for offer 0866)



Figure 4- Lode Runner.  
Source: Wired Sep. 1994: 59.

In the first part, slogan, written on white background in red with a relatively huge size, says: "2.5 Million Former Addicts Can't Be Wrong." Below of this slogan, the title of Lode Runner: The Legend Returns appears. Up to this moment, there is nothing suggestive of a gender discrimination. But the color of red that is chosen for the text, as is well known, has the potential of suggesting a psychological effect, to term it better, a warning.

On the second half of the ad, placed on a different page, another title, red on white, a warning again, but in less size, reads: "Remember That Game You Played So Much Lost Your Girlfriend . . . Your Job . . . Your Car . . . Good News . . . It's Back" (see Figure 5). Again, below, there is the title of the game with its screen-shot samples. On the very bottom of the page, white text on a black background, writes that it is the ever created addictive game with new graphics, sound effects and flowless action.

What is extracted from the message is that this game would lead players lose their girls friends, their jobs, and their cars, in other words their social status. The most important thing from gender point of view, is the fact that the player risks to lose his girlfriend. Here the term girlfriend is used specifically to imply that the player is male, because heterosexual relationship is the only accepted norm for both genders. The player has the risk to lose her because, as is said, it is addictive that the players will not have even a second to spend with their girlfriends. Here, again the female player group is ignored because otherwise there would be no reason for females to quit their boyfriends. They quit them because they do not understand their insistence on playing this game, they do not share this

REMEMBER THAT GAME  
YOU PLAYED SO MUCH YOU

LOST YOUR GIRLFRIEND...

YOUR JOB...YOUR CAR...

GOOD NEWS...  
IT'S BACK.

LODE RUNNER  
(THE LEGEND RETURNS)



**LODE RUNNER**  
It's more addicting than ever. With all new graphics and sound effects, plus 150 new levels of non-stop action. Play alone or head-to-head. Use the lightning-fast Game Generator to create torturous worlds of your own. See your retailer or call 1-800-757-7707 (Ask for offer D845).

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**Figure 5- Lode Runner.**  
Source: Wired Sep. 1994: 83.



pleasure because game develops around male pleasures. Here the player is portrayed also as male.

As is mentioned before, manufacturers and advertisers do not specify the sex of their target group for the games, if not necessary, because all the games are targeted specifically to boys. The following source specifies the games as either for male or female players, or both. But it is not a publication widely distributed, sent only by request. It is Nintendo's "Software Directory." It is a promising one which may lead other companies to do so, but at the same time risky because the company exposes its sales to danger being a pioneer doing this kind of classifications.

### **4.3- Game Analyses**

#### **4.3.1- Doom**

Following is the analysis of the game Doom, in which the construction of a male player can be observed. Since this game has become a genre in itself, other "Doom genre" games such as Heretic, Hexen and Duke Nukem 3D will be called later on.

"Win-lose" condition which constitutes the fundamental part of video games, appears, in this game, as winning while destroying. The more violence, the more gets the player bonus point in the form of extra lives, and armors, because the game is built on high violence between the player and his opponents.

First of all, one must look at the name and its possible synonymies in order to have an idea just from the name itself. Another concern, related with the name would concern its relationship with other games. In an ordinary game catalogue, sometimes it becomes impossible to find visual clues such as screen-shots or illustrations about the scenes and the characters, at this stage, the name of the game is expected to give enough impression to sell it. The box, the visual representations as well as magazine reviews are taken into consideration later on.

The term "doom" in Redhouse and Websters' Third New International Dictionary has the followings: "bad destiny," "bad luck," "sovereignty," "being under sentence," "death," "final judgement," and "doomsday," "the end of one's life," "god's final judgement of mankind;" while "to doom" as a verb, as described: "to render certain of failure, or defeat; set of a fixed course of elimination, destruction, or other disastrous conclusion."

All these meanings, first of all, awakens negative impressions that led the player to think of the game revolving around war and death, related with challenge. Thus, in turn, just from the effect of the name, the player becomes stimulated by a sense of challenge, destruction and death.

The term war requires, in itself, an opponent to fight against and weapons to use to do so. Weapons are symbols for power and potency in Western culture; an object associated with masculinity and self-defense that make feel the user more powerful, more self-confident. A person holding a gun signifies an impression of self-protection for the sake of the holder as well

as his components. In patriarchal societies like our own, the term woman, as is mentioned before, is the equivalent of weak who has to be protected.

Weapons are tools for protection as well as have fallic significance which comes to stand for everything which is considered lack. It is the sign of male, having power, which is used to take people under control to suppress them. What is suppressed is the woman, thus, the weapon is not an object which is possessed by women, rather, an object to scare from. If weapons are not a female belonging and if that women have to be protected from something, then, men would do it. When a woman with a gun is concerned, it is assumed that she does it with masculine identity. Thus, Doom, as the name suggests, selects a particular model player for itself: a male one (see Figure 6).

The advertisements and reviews of this game involve criteria including graphics, sound effects and playability which are the common points in almost every magazine. Doom's German version Wolfenstein takes place in the January 1994 issue of the Video Games: The Ultimate Gaming Magazine review section. The same criteria are used to evaluate it. Overall rating given by the editors is 9 out of 10. In the ad, game cover takes place which illustrates a muscular, tough looking, bare-chested male image holding a firing weapon. In the background, a wall is seen, which leads the viewer to think of it as destroyed by himself. On top of the cover, the title takes place, written in Gothic type face, which emphasizes the German characteristic, in gradation from white to black and to red. The mixture of white and black gives a metal, cold, like lead feeling , on the other hand,

the color red with its harshness occupies the one-third portion of the whole title. While the metallic or lead effect remind weapons, the color red intensifies its violent effect. From the mixture of the image and the title what is perceived, is a high degree of thrill, aggression and violence (see Figure 7). The warrior image corresponds to the player in terms of identification. Thus, execution of the mission, suggested by this male image, can be dealt only by assuming a male player identity. Barbara Creed situates the pin-up muscleman star within the critical frameworks of postmodernism in her comments on the tendency of images and texts in the 1980s to play with the notion of manhood. Creed suggests that Stallone and Schwarzenegger, the muscular stars of the decade, could only be described as "performing the masculine." As she states: "Both actors often resemble an anthropomorphized phallus, a phallus with muscles, if you like . . . They are simulacra of an exaggerated masculinity, the original completely lost of sight . . ." (Tasker 232). In addition, cyborg imageries or cyberbodies, have a tendency to look masculine or feminine in an exaggerated way, huge muscles on the males and enormous breasts on the females can be observed. Janet Bergstrom points out that:

The exaggerated genders dominate in science fiction because where the basic fact of identity as a human is suspect and subject to transformation into its opposite, the representation of sexual identity carries a potentially heightened significance, because it can be used as the primary marker of difference in a world otherwise beyond our norms (qtd. in Springer 310).

Muscles function, as Dyer suggests, as a naturalization of male power and domination. The performance of a muscular masculinity involves "being a man." What is the truth behind this muscular image is the reconfirmation of power and dominance which is never arrived at. That is why a repetition



Figure 6- Doom.  
Source: Wired Apr. 1994: 110.

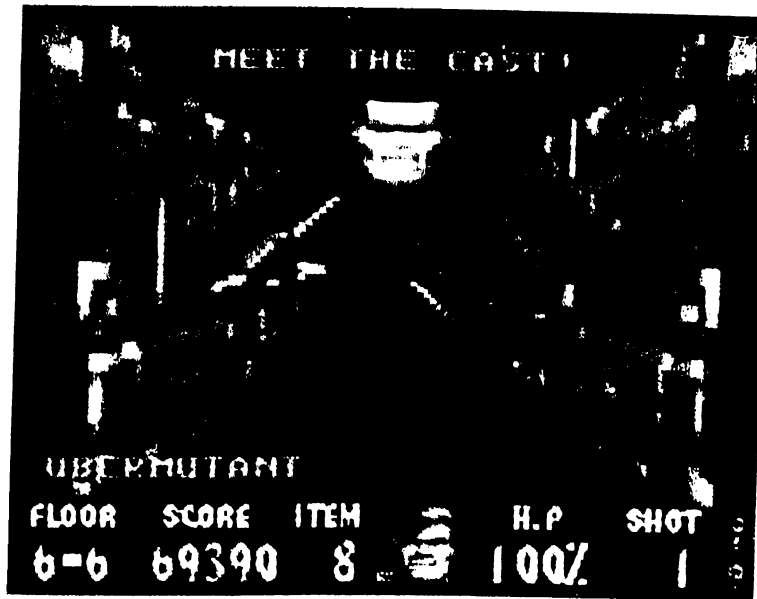


Figure 7- Wolfenstein.  
Source: Video Games: The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Jan. 1994: 70.

of such images and acts can be observed in all of the media sources (qtd. in Tasker 232). In 1980s Hollywood films, for example, the male body became the most fulfilling form of spectacle. Throughout this period, the male body became a vehicle of display - of musculature, of physical feats and of toughness. External weaponry, explosions, infernos, crashes, high-speed chases offered evidence of sufficiency. In the 1990s, muscular spectacle has begun to give a more internalized dimension to masculinity. Susan Jeffords argues that:

In contrast to the physical feats of Stallone in the Rambo films, the determined competitiveness of Bruce Willis's John McClane in the Die Hard films, the confrontations of Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry, the whip-cracking of Harrison Ford's Indiana Jones, the steely authority of Robocop and Michael J. Fox's time-traveling Back to the Future, recent Hollywood male star/heroes have been constructed as more internalized versions of their historical counterparts. More film time is devoted to explorations of their ethical dilemmas, emotional traumas, and psychological goals, and less to their skill with weapons, their athletic abilities, or their gutsy showdowns of opponents (245).

From this respect, muscular male fashion in computer games reflect that of the 1980s. The screen-shots from several instances of the game illustrate the opponents that the player is encountered. These characters are all armored, though, male figures that do not look friendly. On the lower part of the page, a bold text reads: "Kill! Kill! Kill! What better strategy for this game could you have?" (see Figure 8). This provocative slogan clearly demonstrates the killing theme which is conceptualized as a male mission depicted in several movies. When a female killer is concerned in movies, for example, the reactions of the spectators as well as of the other characters in the movie become much more booing than the reactions toward a male killers, because killing authorization is permitted only to male protagonists to carry on (see Figure 9).



**Kill! Kill! Kill! What better strategy for this game could you have?**

Figure 8- Wolfenstein.  
Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Feb. 1994: 43.

# WOLFENSTEIN 3D

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**Figure 9- Wolfenstein.**  
 Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Feb. 1994: 43.



Below text is the written format of the game Doom's first episode "The Hangar" which demonstrates its narrative flow evolving around masculine attributes such as war, blood, thrill, rage and violence. The protagonist/player speaking:

I readied my pistol, the only weapon they deemed me safe with. The weapon was extremely well made; the gyrojet bullets used were fast and extremely accurate. Automatic firing, it was top of the line . . .

The hangar doors whispered open, revealing the reception lobby that lay beyond. All was quiet. A soldier lay bleeding in the middle of the floor, a number of bullets and shells having sliced through his soft, tender flesh, I picked up a couple of pieces of armor plating, they could come in handy later on. Suddenly, a gurgled shout from behind me. The control tower, could anyone be left alive in this carnage? . . . I lowered my weapon. Mistake number one. A shotgun blast roared out, my left arm leapt to the side . . . Pain rocketed through my body . . . My God . . . Hamlin? I knelt down to confirm my first impression. Hamlin was a sector sergeant, one the first people I met on my arrival to Mars Base. I thought he had shipped home a month ago . . . Survival seemed difficult to achieve now, if not impossible . . . A small stimpack lay nearby, a useful concoction of pain killers, stimulants and Plasti-Flesh, a patch for open wounds to prevent too much loss of blood . . . The one downstairs had still not come up to visit. Looks like I'd have to go down and say hi . . . At the top of the stairs I even let myself smile. "Let's rock!" I called out, blowing the lead off the zombie at the base of the stairs . . . The ball of flame slammed into my chest, sending me up against the wall. More Hellspawn, this time in the form of brown, spiked humanoids . . . their hands moving in intricate gestures before spouting gouts of flames . . . Their blood oozed green and red . . . His head disappeared in a splash of red mist. Shouts were heard from inside. I fired blindly into the room cursing at seeing my shot hit into a barrel of waste . . . My body reacted before my mind could process conscious thought . . . The door slip open noisily, followed by a hissing scream. Another imp stood before me, somewhat surprised at my sudden appearance. His mistake. The shotgun fired twice, splitting the creature in half. I smiled and entered the airlock. Some scrap armor lay nearby, probably dumped by one of assaulting soldier I arrived with, as well as some dropped ammo. . .

This episode summarizes the overall characteristics of the game. While executing the protagonist's mission described above, what the player sees on the screen is a first-person perspective way of looking. The screen is

charged to work as the eyes of the player, thus, it is impossible to see the warrior visually as a whole. But on the lower part of the screen, the player is given a menu on which the number of armors and health points are listed with an illustration of a man, only his portrait, whose facial appearance changes as he gets wounds in the form of oozing grazes; in other words, as he gets wounded, he becomes castrated which emphasizes the violent theme. What is important with that image is not how the character is illustrated or in which sex, rather the meaning which is conveyed through this figure, a whole system of signification that extends beyond biological facts.

As the text suggests, the story develops in Mars Base, another planet where the war between human beings and enemy monster troops takes place. It is also clear that before the man takes over, there were other soldiers, probably his friends as the sentence "My God . . . Hamlin!" suggests, where he is now alone and must kill the rest of them to stay alive and to save the planet.

Violence can be read at almost every instance of the game, as the terms firing, bullets, bleeding, carnage, blowing heads, splitting the creature suggest. There are human soldiers as well, but they are enemies either. As his sentences "My body reacted before my mind could process conscious thought" and "I fired blindly into the room . . ." can be interpreted as he so automatically uses his gun that he even cannot think if there are some friends around or innocent people. He is like he is out of human mood, like a machine without any sense of emotion, just like programmed to kill. In

this sense, he has nothing that can be associated with femininity. At every stage, the game increases its degree of challenge which awakens a much stronger will to kill.

In terms of game categories, Doom can be considered as an "active-passive agent, shooting game," however, as is mentioned before, this game constitutes an autonomous genre in itself which has become influential for many programmers/designers to produce "Doom genre" games.

As the text illustrates, most of the opponents are monstrous - "zombie," "the creature," "brown spiked humanoid," "Hellspawn," and "imp" to name just a few. At this stage, it is useful to call psychoanalytic descriptions developed especially for monsters depicted in movies.

Barbara Creed, for example, in her book The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis, states that: "When male bodies become grotesque they tend to take characteristics associated with female bodies; in this instance man's body becomes grotesque because it is capable of being penetrable. From this union, the monstrous creature is born" (19). Because giving birth to something is a female attribute, the male body is considered feminized because it gives birth to a monster, namely a horrific female.

These theorists, departing from Freudian concepts, state that woman horrifies because she is castrated, she constitutes a castration anxiety for males. Stephen Neale, in his book Genre, argues, especially after Laura

Mulvey's theory of male gaze and castration anxiety, that monster represents castration in order to fill the lack, to disavow castration anxiety while entertaining male spectator, not female. Because the female has already been castrated, she has nothing to be anxious, but male has always been under the possibility of becoming castrated, being not-male, thus, female has to be suppressed, dominated and, when necessary, destroyed in order to defeat this fear. It is this fear of castration, for Neale, which ultimately produces and delineates the monstrous (qtd. in Kaufman 5).

There is another important point with the text as well as with the act of the player which is emphasized to repeat it throughout the game, is the act of grabbing weapons and projectiles in order to continue to survive, to kill more. It is one of the most important rules for the player to repeat this process since there is no other source of getting weaponries. It is a kind of loitering which has always been represented as a male role mission in most of the movies. These loitering people have conceptualized as insensitive males who do not appreciate moral values.

When the game is run for the first time, there appears some options under the title of "skill level." The first one's heading is "I'm too young to die" and the last one's is "nightmare." In the former one, the level is programmed for novice players in which the number of monsters and their resistance are less. In the latter, the game requires fast action, and correct ruling of keyboard keys. So, the player of the game must be enough competent using the keyboard, a requirement for female players that sometimes turn them off from the computer as surveys suggest in the previous chapter.

Keyboard keys have many functions to give a wide range movement possibilities to the player. Key functioning serves to walk, run, open doors, shoot, change weapon, look down, look up, map view, save, turn back, turn right, turn left as well as activate magic objects which serve to protect the player while rendering him invisible. With a stereo setup, players feel surrounded by the game. The tunes have an eerie, dissonant quality making the game even more sinister with grunts and sounds of a far-away demon.

Beside the actual fairly functions of the keys, there are cheating codes as well. When the player gets bored of dying and starting over again, these codes, if known, serve to activate, for example, "god mode" which means immortality for the player, and "all weapons" code serves to give all possible weapons, available within the program, which can normally be achieved when the player gets to a certain level, that is, as the player progresses, it comes to mean that he deserves to have a much more powerful weapon to fight with the enemies whose numbers increase relatively as more level scored.

In the April 1994 issue of Wired magazine, Steve Speer writes about his experience with Doom. He states, when he first started to play this game, he became Doomed, with a jaw hangs open. He continues saying that:

You fight with a shotgun, plasma gun, and chain saw, but get over it. It's violent, but it's also great programming, great graphics, and a giant leap forward in PC game technology . . . The important thing is to remember the main rule of survival: if it moves, shoot it until it drops, and then liberate the corpse of its weapons and ammo . . . The first level of Doom is free from many ftp sites but for the other levels you have to purchase the game. Network mode is also possible with up to three other game freaks. There is also the cooperative mode, but everybody goes for the death-match scenario, where the object is to kill everybody, including your buddies (110).

What is striking among many of his impressions about the game is the last part especially, which suggests that there is no way to play it cooperatively forming a team with friends to constitute much more power; on the contrary, the game invites the players/friends to fight against each other. As is mentioned earlier, females are likely to work cooperatively since they are communal, on the other hand, males are agentic which lead again to a model player notion in mind.

### 4.3.2- Heretic

Doom's manufacturer, I.D. Software, released Doom II just after the enormous reputation of Doom. The idea is basically the same, what is changed, is only the scenes in which events take place, with a lot more things to find whose graphics are more exciting with a 3-D effect. After Doom and Doom II's magnificent sales, the company released Heretic (1994). It places the player in the first-person perspective, active-passive role of a "woefully ill-equipped hero, charged with Schwarzeneggarian task of defeating evil by blasting it into blood-soaked tatters" ("Heretic" [Online]). But this time, the player is armed with a magic wand instead of the customary pistol of Doom, reflecting the fantasy setting of Heretic.

The player, hero, assumes the role of the last of Sidhe who vowed to the destruction of D'Sparil, the apocalyptic Serpent Rider of the Abyss. It was his magic that burn the Elders of Sidhe, clearing the way for his demonic creatures to devour the hero's people. In the game, the hero stands before

D'Sparil's City of the Damned, armed with an Elvenwand and the knowledge that D'Sparil is somewhere within, so the task is to find and destroy him to save the people as well as the City while taking the revenge of the Elders.

As the D'Sparil's ability of magic suggests, the player's opponent appears in the form of a sorcerer (see Figure 10).

At this stage, film analyses may be useful in order to analyze the representation of magic. There can be seen that there is one incontestably monstrous role in the horror film that belong to woman - that of the witch. The witch was not considered a figure of monstrosity until 1960 when the popular horror film monsters with Black Sunday and Witchcraft had appeared. One of the first films to present a terrifying picture of the witch was a children's film, The Wizard of Oz (1939), which can also be found in a video game format. In 1943, with the movie Seventh Victim, the witch clearly became a figure of terror. However, there also exist topics in some Hollywood comedies, such as I Married a Witch (1940) and the most recent one appeared with the character Samantha of the The Witch.

Witchcraft has a historical background as well. As the Christian Church argued that the witches were feared not as agents of the evil but they were thought to possess magical, terrifying powers. In that sense, D'Sparil's character can be very well associated with the woman; the witch.

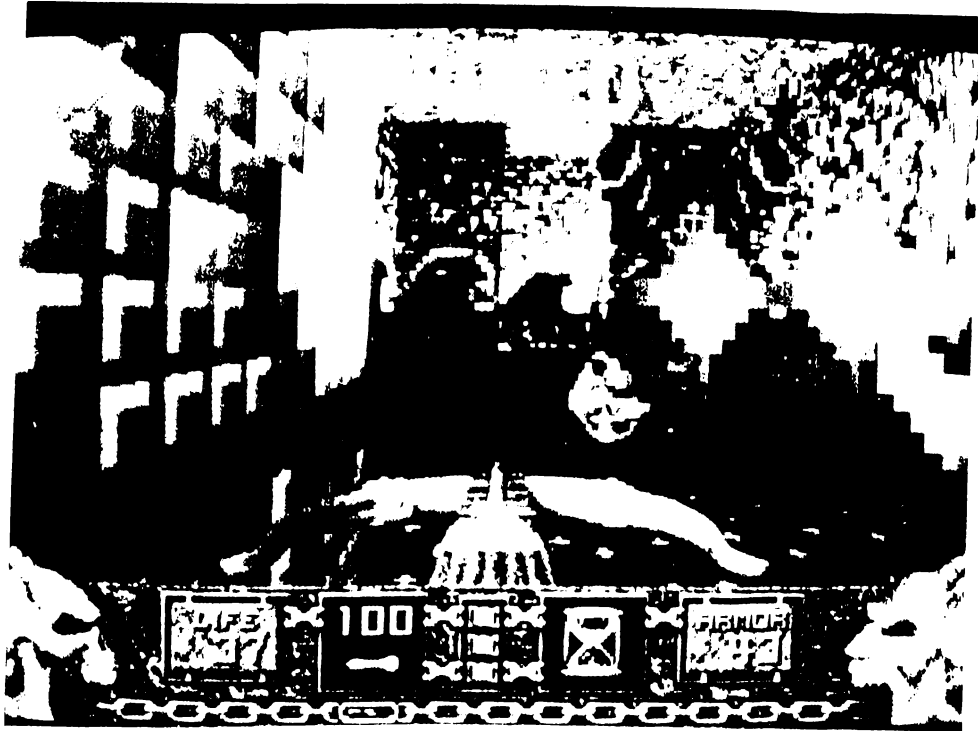


Figure 10- Heretic.  
Source: Screen shot.



Witches were accused of collaborating literally with the evil and this ensured that witches would be burnt; which is also present at the end of the game, the player destroys D'Sparil with the most powerful weapon Phoenix Rod which throws fireballs. The bad character of Heretic D'Sparil is introduced as a witch, with magical powers, to be destroyed at the end. D'Sparil, however, figures out a male character but the way he gets his power is that of a witch's. A central reason for the persecution of witches, in movies especially, was morbid interest in the witch as "other" and a fear of the witch/woman as an agent of castration. The image of the witch is one which continues to play an important role in the discourses of popular culture, particularly in children's fairy stories and in the horror film. Another discourse which studies witch is psychoanalytic theory.

The witch is defined as an abject figure which is represented within patriarchal discourses as an enemy of the symbolic order. It is thought that she is dangerous and capable of drawing on her evil powers to execute destruction on the community. Her powers are seen as part of her "feminine" nature, as mentioned before; she is closer to nature than man and can control natural forces such as storms and hurricanes. The witch is also associated with a range of abject things such as filth, spiders, bats, cobwebs, and even cannibalism, the elements which are frequently used in video games today.

Since almost all witch roles are executed by female actresses as in Suspiria, by the Queen Witch - Mater Suspiriorum and in Inferno, by the Three Mothers: Mater Suspiriorum, Mater Lacrimarum and Mater Tenebrarum

who represent sorrow, tears and darkness respectively, the atmosphere of Heretic, as well as its sequel Hexen, draw dark corridors and labyrinths which remind of that of the Alien's which is associated with evil womb, as Kristeva describes "the fascinating and abject inside of the maternal body" (qtd. in Creed 51). Especially, in Hexen, the interior is dark and constituted of many ways and directions with a lot of secret doors hiding monsters behind that can again be associated with the houses in which witches of many films depicted living. In that sense, D'Sparil as well as his helpers reinforce the stereotypical image of the witch as a destructive, monstrous feminine figure whose constant aim is the destruction of the symbolic order.

In Heretic, there is no any representation concerning the appearance of the protagonist as in Doom only the weapon can be seen in the lower part of the screen suggesting it is hold by the player (see Figure 11). Anyway, it does not mean anything considering the constitution of the player. Because, these is no need for a "body" for identification. Classic film analyses suggest that the viewers select a figure to identify with, which he/she feels much more closer in terms of their gender-roles in society. For a female viewer to follow the action on the screen there must be a gender shifting, that is, as Mulvey explains departing from Freudian concept, the female viewer wears her transvestite clothes and assumes a male identity which is explained by Freud as a regression to childhood period, the stage before the femininity sets in, which Freud sees it as phallic. Thus, the same shift happens for the female player.

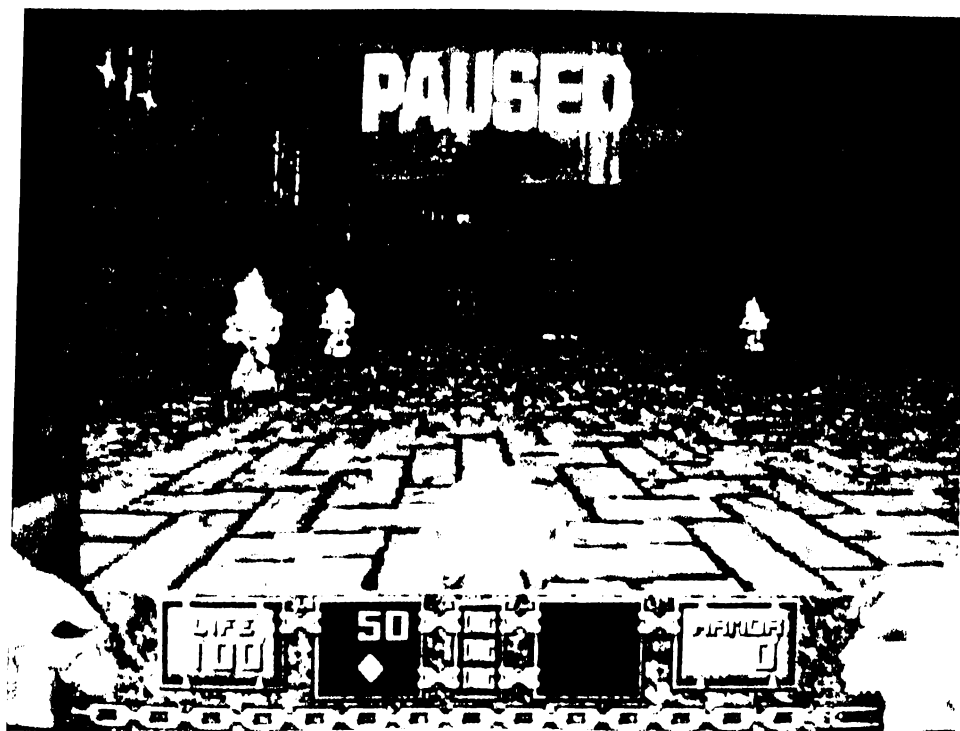


Figure 11- Heretic.  
Source: Screen shot.

Identification in games is crucial. A movie viewer can find it absurd or unexciting and even can take the sides of different characters as the narrative flow changes direction, but in a game, changing sides cannot be actualized because the player is the initiator of the actions, not a passive viewer. Since games are interactive, identification with a single protagonist is mandatory. While playing a game, female player also knows that the role waiting for her outside the gaming arena is not the role she assumes in that environment. From this respect, Doom and equivalent games provides the reconfirmation and continuation of traditional gender-roles.

Instead of Doom's spiked monsters, there are Gargoyles in Heretic, very pesky little creatures that fly and come in flame-throwing and non-flame-throwing varieties (see Figure 12). When the player walks into a room, with a high ceiling, he must remember to look up, because there's probably a Gargoyle lurking above. Golems, on the other hand, only attack up close, they toss ethereal axes that are not very hard to avoid. Sabreclaws are wicked quick, but they only fight hand-to-hand and if the player gets a Crossbow and can find a corner to back himself into, they are no problem at all.

Weredragons breathe fire, Orphidians are very tough and like to throw fire. The Disciples are the biggest problem. They fly, or rather float, and cast three missiles in a spread pattern that makes them hard to avoid. The Iron Liches are really wild, casting a variety of attacks including tornadoes that actually throw the player around. The Mallotaurs are very violent and have the coolest-looking attack.



They all look great, graphically, and sound good and die impressively. The levels are very different, however, the approach is the same: find the first key and then the second and the third. The medieval castle that the battle takes place is very rich in terms of graphical representation.

Player, contrast of Doom, has a wide range of weapons such as Crossbow, Dragon Claw, Time Bomb, Phoenix Rod, and also some magical ones that can be found left on the ground which also remind of superstition of old times, such as, ring of invincibility, enchanted shield, chaos device as well as wings of wrath that really let the player see how 3-D effect feels like. Not only can the player fly, but can also switch the viewing angle to look up and down. Beside the artifacts, there are power-up tools as well, such as, Crystal Vials that add instantly to the player's health. Tomes of Power increases the firepower of the weapons, Quartz Flasks and Mystic Urns give health, Silver Shields and Spirit Shields provide armor and ShadowSphere provides near-invisibility. All these tools and weapons are to make the player much more powerful and to make the game much more violent.

As explained before, the opponents use magic against the hero/player. However, the player is also using some magical things in defeating them. Thus, in such a condition, the player may be called as witch as well. But it must be noted that the player's use of magic is the only way to conquer the witches. As can be observed in movies, in order to kill the vampire, for example, the possible victims must have a cross in order to defend themselves and kill it. Thus, the cross does not describe the victims as

religious, rather, they use it because the cross is the only weapon, that can be used against the vampire, which, although, is not actually a weapon in normal life situations. Thus, the player cannot be described as witch, namely feminine and accordingly, the model player is not constituted as female; but as a male warrior who must temporarily use the required weapons in order to have the optimum income.

In order to explain the way the opponents are depicted, again psychoanalysis must start working here. As is known, males have a direct experience with the symbolic order which starts just after the Oedipal stage, when the male child tries to develop an autonomous identity which signifies the separation from mother. In order to have a pure identity, the subject has to bear no trace of its debt to nature, i.e., the maternal body. Nature is the opposite of symbolic order. In order to confirm his identity, maternal body is constituted as an abject body which secretes blood, milk - in turn, bodily wastes - and give birth to a nascent body. Since there is no way to escape totally from the abject, the male constitutes abject in the feminine body in order to expel this felling to feel clean and proper which forms the acceptable subjectivity. However, the abject does not simply repel; it also fascinates desire. In all werewolf films, for example, the transformation involves a series of bodily changes which signifies his abject status. From this respect, werewolf is considered as a monstrous-feminine. In Dracula, for example, the vampire needs to replace his blood at periodic intervals which suggests an experience of a form of menstrual cycle which also confirms his feminized monstrosity (Creed 125).

Thus, the Golems and Gargoyles that keep coming at players in Heretic, as well as in all other games including monsters, in Charles Bernstein's terms, are themselves, split off; that what the players keep shooting down is the fear of, and at the same time, reconfirmation of their masculinity and dominance.

### 4.3.3- Hexen

The other game from Doom clone, is Hexen with fast action, secret passages, buttons, moving floors and some new weaponries (see Figure 13). In Hexen, the player can pass through frozen caves, fall deep into the sewers, and the blackness can sometimes be frightening.

Details are much more exciting than others: leaves rustle off of dying trees, and float about in tiny circles across the player's path; fog floats through misty swamps, obscuring the player's view and even ice frozen along the ground makes the player slip and slide, losing control as though in real life. That is what Hexen and all the doom games do so well; they attempt to mimic life (Holmes [Online]).

Enemies, in Hexen, are different: two-headed orcs, iceman and swamp lizards to name just a few (see Figure 14 and 15). The musical score is equally dark, with its enchantments and mixes of church bells with low drums to give the player an added shiver as he/she plays.

The sound effects such as water splashes, wind whistles through trees, ice forms and cracks and monsters screech are very rich and inviting. The player does not just control one all-powerful warrior but there are three character classes to choose from - a Warrior, a Mage, and a Cleric - each with its own particular strength and weaknesses. There are magical objects





Figure 13- Hexen.  
Source: Screen shot.

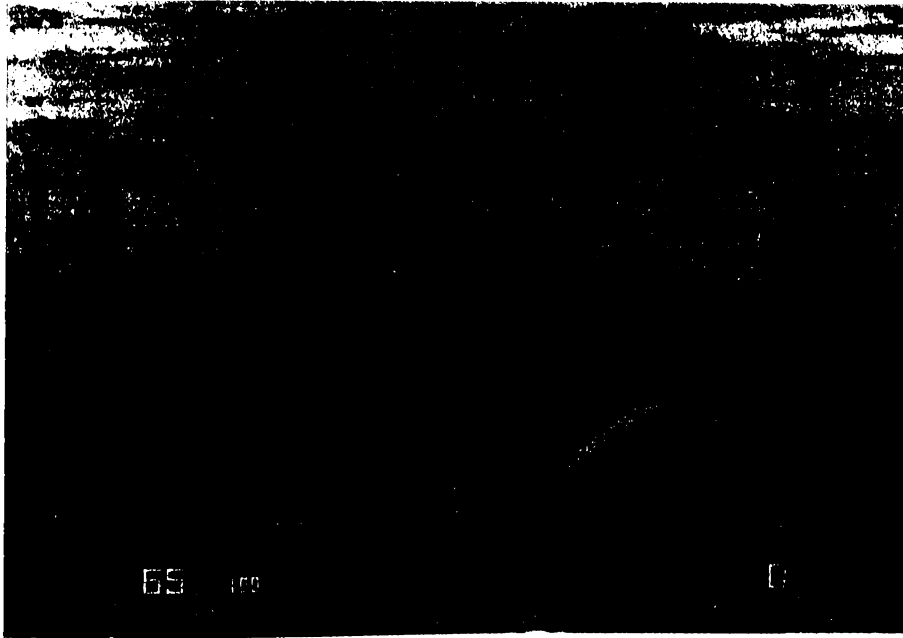


Figure 14- Hexen.  
Source: Screen shot.

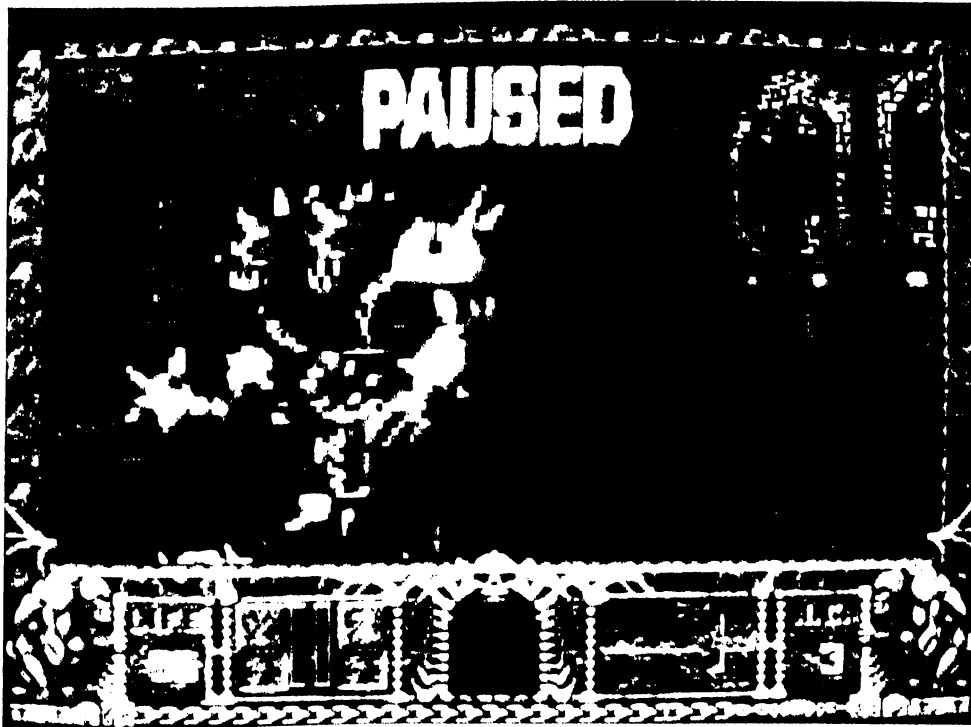


Figure 15- Hexen.  
Source: Screen shot.

as well, such as, "morph owum" which humiliate the opponents by transforming them into chickens in order to defeat their threat. What the "morph owum" may suggest, in term of its significance from gender point of view, is that the player uses a feminine waste to transform the opponents into a harmless animal: chicken.

#### 4.3.4 Duke Nukem 3D

The most recent follower of all these "Doom genre" games is Duke Nukem 3D. In an advertisement published in Computer Gaming World, February 1996 issue, one can find what other game magazines stated about Duke Nukem 3D. PC Power states that "It's the ultimate game for unleashing all your pent-up aggression;" Strategy Plus writes, "Duke Nukem 3D truly looks like a 3D supermodel of a game: sleek, sexy, and gory with lead-thrashing action" (6). On the cover of the game, a muscular male hero holding two huge weapon firing, with each of his hands - although it seems one is not enough anymore - is pictured in the middle of the screen. In the magazine ad, the same male character as well as screen shots from the game can be seen (see Figure 16).

The Computer Life magazine of March 1996 issue has given its review under the title "Game of the Month." The reviewer, John Bennett, states that:

Duke Nukem 3D is a suitably first-person perspective, three chapter Doom-clone in which arms, legs, intestines and eyeballs fountain through the air, blood spatters walls and soft porn decorates the sex shops, natch, and barrack rooms. For the true misogyny, you can even blow scantily clad dancers - gyrating merrily away in the night club, into fragments of flesh (104).

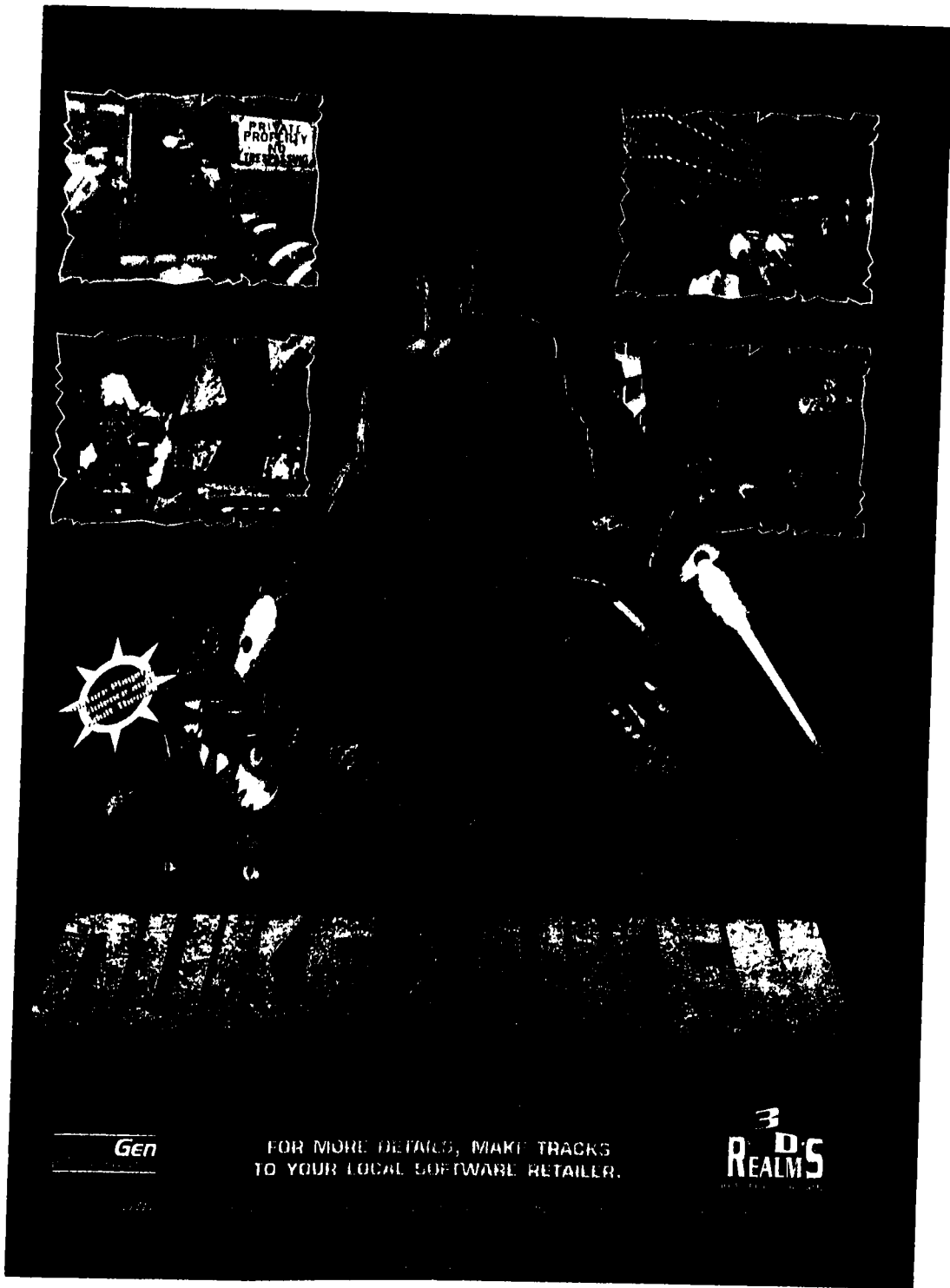


Figure 16- Duke Nukem 3D.  
Source: Computer Gaming World Feb. 1996: 1.

As the illustrations depict clearly, this time there is no women behind monsters but instead, there are real women images depicted as sex objects as well as victims. The text clearly suggests the player's misogynist aspect, in other words, he is invited to hate women and to prove it while blowing them into fragments (see Figure 17 and 18). It is seen that this time the player's gender is not hidden, it is absolutely male (see Figure 19). Because there is no any probability for females to be misogynists since what is hated, is themselves. This particular game reconfirm players the male ability to dominate even to destroy females that are constructed as such by themselves. They are their products as well as their victims. Female images are still being used, in Orson Welles terms, they hate them but at the same time, they need them. They need them to show their rage, to take their vengeance in the game environment since they can't do it like that, in full-conscious, in real life situations.



**Figure 17-** Duke Nukem 3D.  
Source: Computer Life. Mar. 1996: 104.



Figure 18- Duke Nukem 3D.  
Source: Computer Life. Mar. 1996: 104.

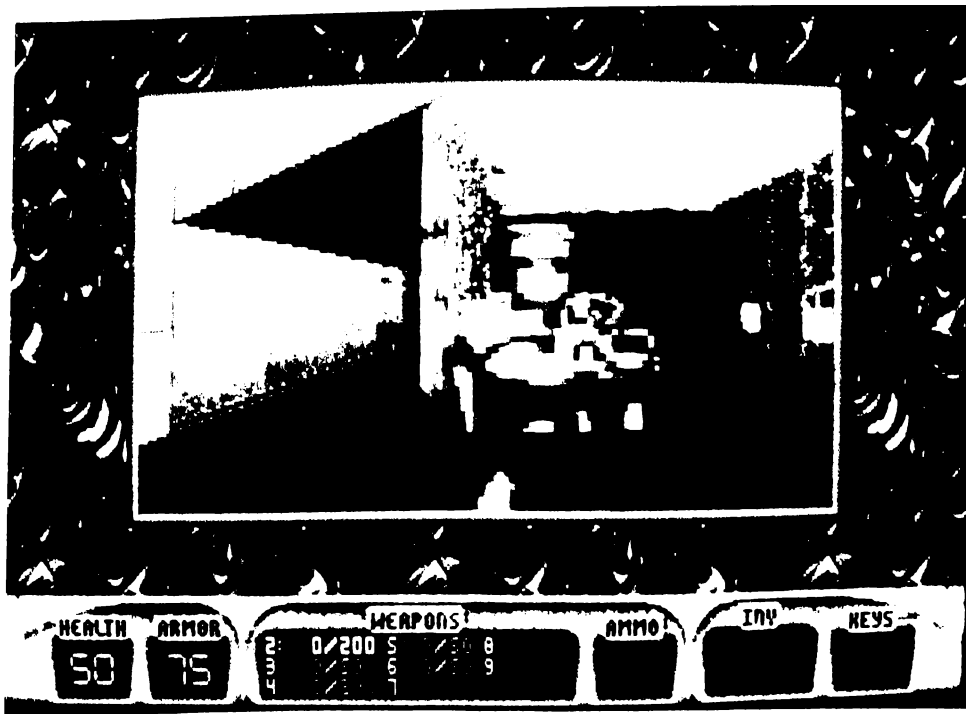


Figure 19- Duke Nukem 3D.  
Source: Computer Gaming World Feb. 1996: 1.

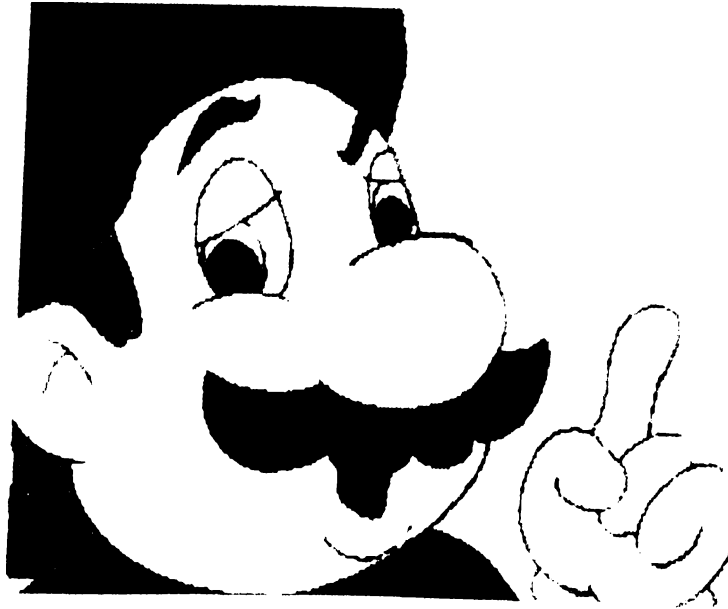
#### 4.3.5- Mario

Mario, the famous, well-known hero of Nintendo, first appeared in 1981 in a game called "Donkey Kong." At the very beginning, Mario character has been created as a temporal solution in a time of the company's great difficulty. He is not a product of well-designed and programmed process, rather, he is a product of coincidences: he is given a moustache because of the low-resolution of the Game Boy screen, is weared a sweater and a t-shirt to make his arms' movement to be perceived and a pair of white gloves to separate the image from the background (see Figure 20). These characteristics are all related with technical capabilities which gave way to his creation. However, he is also given a career, plumber. Mario's creator

Miyamoto explains this as:

He has to be a well-worker in daily life and for a character to rescue the princess, it would be useful to be mignon. By the way, what came first to minds, was a plumber. He wasn't really an Italian plumber from the beginning. He actually got his name is the U.S. people at our office, in New York, thought he looked like the janitor in their building, so they called him Mario (Fornander 22).

Mario made his global debut in Donkey Kong, saving a princess held by monster ape on a roof and addicts spent \$200 million as well as asked for the rest of the Mario series. That's why every year, approximately, another Mario adventure has been created; Donkey Kong, Jr. in 1982; Mario Bros. in 1983; Super Mario Bros. in 1985; Super Mario Bros. 2 in 1988; Super Mario Land in 1989; Super Mario Bros. 3 in 1990; Dr. Mario in 1992; Super Mario Land 2 in 1993 and Wario Land in 1994. Mario adventures sold more than 40 million copies that give him a much more reputation than Michael Jackson.



**Figure 20-** Mario character.  
Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Apr. 1994: 59.



Together with Super Mario Bros. series, Mario's charm has become an international cultural icon. In a poll of U.S. schoolchildren, he proved more popular than Mickey Mouse. Just as Mickey Mouse helped pioneer the animated picture in 1930s, Mario, has helped establish a new medium called interactive entertainment (Moffat 85-86).

Super Mario Bros. series present Mario, the "mustachioed" little plumber from Brooklyn for a battle with the help of his brother Luigi. Mario and his adventures execute on the proprietary Nintendo platform, such as Game Boy, Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), and Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES). In simple terms, Mario is a multi-dimensional maze that must be navigated using a variety of tools that are either given or learned by the player as he executes the game. The game's main objective is to move Mario through a series of adventures to capture and save the princess. While looking to find her, Mario must avoid enemies by jumping, running or moving around them. Mario is also given the ability to shoot, kick, or throw objects at opponents in order to move forward in the maze. The player accumulates three rewards: lives, coins and points. Coins and points are transferred into lives. If Mario is destroyed by an obstacle, then the current life of Mario is removed. The game does not allow the player to save games. Each time the player starts a game they start from the beginning. From this respect, Mario games can be found similar to arcade games where the player has no choice to save it.

The game provide many options for the player that he can use to help defend himself from opponents. In order to find a useful object, the player

must employ strategies to find tools that can help Mario. The tools range from invincibility to speed, to the deployment of projectiles at avengers. There exists, in the maze, many different adversaries ranging from flying fish to turtles. As each enemy requires different strategy to be destroyed, Mario has to find and try out the possibilities to get a better solution. The player is also given audio warnings via sound differences of music and characters. Since, most of the Nintendo players are younger children (approximately 70%), childish melodies, very much like the little music box which is hung up above a baby's crib in order to attract their attention and stop crying, are used.

As mentioned earlier, Mario has to find some tools or objects in order to defend himself. In Super Mario Land 2, for example, when Mario finds the rabbit hat, he becomes able to fly using them as wings.

In most of the Mario narratives, the major objective is to find and rescue the princess whose existence is nothing than an almost static image, not responding to Mario's (the player's) inputs, in other words, programmed not to move or act. She is depicted only as a reward which signifies the winner. In other words, she is transformed into a commodity which can be earned after a hard work adventure and who, in turn, becomes a life-time faithful indebted woman.

"Nintendo games have not been as popular with girls as they with boys. Because very few people liked to be consistently cast in the role of the victim. A girl playing on the Nintendo system little or no choice but to

assume the roles assigned by the programs" says Provenzo (96-97). Since the programs not only diminish but also limit and circumscribe how the players involved in them can define themselves and their sense of being, constitute an even greater problem for girls, it is like wearing brother's shoes; too large to walk without falling.

Mario draws a portrait of a good-man character fighting against bad ones, in that sense, he is a hero with all the possible positive attributes. However, the other Mario adventure Wario Land 3 for example, proposes a different Mario. Now instead of a little, modest character, Mario is represented as "Wario" who is after having enough treasure to buy a castle of his own without doing any work. This shift seems very important in terms of the trend in the market from the character constitution point of view (see Figure 21).

In recent years, television programs, movies and computer games show a tendency toward much more violent contents. May be, that is why, Nintendo executives needed for such a change in order to keep their Mario's reputation. With his new appearance, Wario, as the name signifies, now has tough, angry, warrior character. Not only Mario changed, his opponents changed as well, turtles became pirates and several other bad guys. Instead of throwing rotten tomatoes, he now wears different hats to defeat his enemies. The Dragon Hat, for example, breathes fire out of its nostrils. In other words, Wario of Nintendo prepares youngsters to play much more violent games when they become teenagers.



**Figure 21-** Wario and Wario Land  
Source: Nintendo Software Directory  
(Summer 1994): 1.

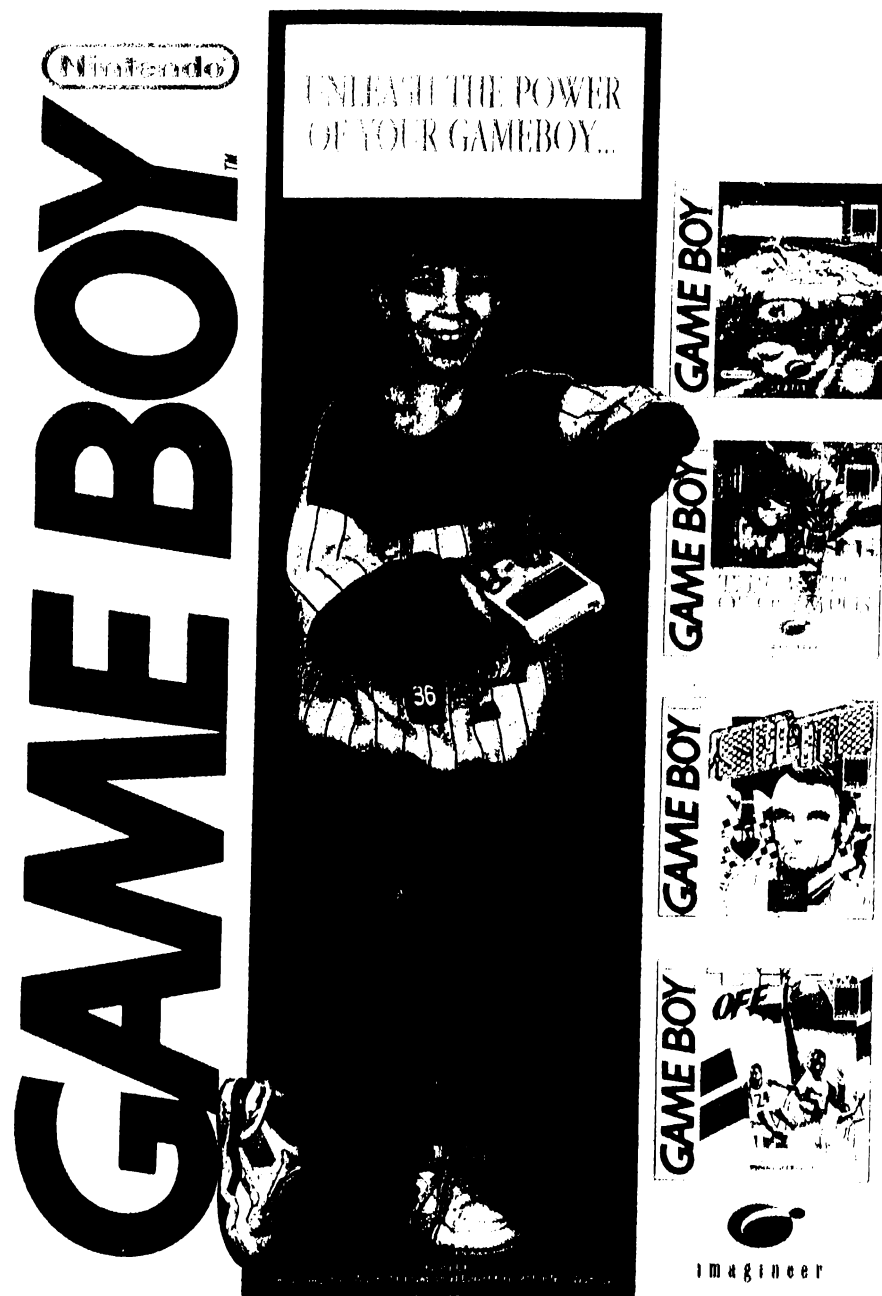


Figure 22- Game Boy advertisement.  
Source: *CVG: Computer and Video Games* Apr. 1993: 13.

With the depiction of such a character, the player has to assume a male identity again. Mario's movie version casting Bob Hoskins as Mario, supports this idea. Game manufacturers say few girls are attracted to these small-screen shoot-'em-ups. It is not surprising that the machine of Nintendo is called Game Boy and they don't call it as such for nothing; the hand-held itself calls for male players. All of the Game Boy drive ads depict a younger boy holding it (see Figure 22).

#### 4.3.6- Beauty and the Beast

It can be easily observed that the film and computer game industries have become to affect each other and started to interchange the themes that have become popular among players and spectators. On the one hand, some manufacturers have been adapting some of the popular films into a computer game environment in which the player(s) is given the opportunity to become the hero of the film he/she once watched and enjoyed. This is one face of the industries' tendency. On the other hand, there are games that are adapted as a film version that the spectator is placed as a passive recipient who has no control over the flow of the narrative.

Super Mario Bros. (1993), which is directed by Annabel Jankel and Rocky Morton, for example, is one of the examples in which Bob Hoskins is seen as Mario Mario, a hard working plumber find himself with his brother Luigi Mario in an alternate universe where evolved dinosaurs live in medium hi-tech squalor; they find themselves the only hope to save the Earth from invasion ("Super Mario Bros." [Online]).

Mortal Kombat (1995) is another movie, based on a video game that is directed by Edward L. Cahn and in which Christopher Lambert is seen as the major character of the movie whose action focuses on a mammoth martial-arts tournament called Mortal Kombat, in which humans are chosen to battle the forces of evil by the sorcerer Shang Tsung.

Beauty and the Beast can form an example for the former one which has received much interest especially from youngsters and then adapted into computer game environment by Sunsoft software company and became available by February, 1994.

Beauty and the Beast, first released as an animation movie in 1934 by Warner Brothers, was directed by Friz Freleng. Second adaptation released in 1946 in France under the title La Belle at la Bete. In 1962 Beauty and the Beast again released, this time director was Edward L. Cahn. In 1976 a TV version released under the direction of Fielder Cook in which Klaus Kinski and George C. Scott appeared as casting characters. Between 1987 and 1990 Beauty and the Beast appeared as a TV series in which the name Beast is seen as Vincent, a lion man who lives in the tunnels with a group of people. And in 1991 Walt Disney company produced an animation movie of the Beauty and the Beast ("Beauty and the Beast" [Online]).

Beauty and the Beast is a story about a beautiful woman, Belle, and a Prince who was imprisoned in his own anger and selfishness; and was cursed as a Beast who has taken Belle as a prisoner. After a while, Belle has slowly learned to love the Beast. After Belle declares her love for the

Beast, he is magically transformed into a human being and they lived happily thereafter. As mentioned earlier, witchcraft has always been associated with the woman which this particular movie draws attention around. The character depicted as Beast has no ability to break the magic by himself but needs a woman to do so. Again the woman is, somehow, constructed as witch.

In the February, 1994 issue of the Video Games: The Ultimate Gaming Magazine's review section contains a good approach to this particular game version of Beauty and the Beast from gender-roles point of view. Editors indicate that it is a good idea to make a game for girls and a game for boys based on the Beauty and the Beast movie. Then it continues saying that "What a stupid idea. Can you believe that the developers at Sunsoft created a game around archaic notions of femininity and masculinity? Those notions, of course, being that a woman is weak and a man is strong" (64).

Departing from the statement above, one may think that such issues as femininity and masculinity have rarely been the issues of the games that people play. At first sight, this particular game review sounds like the games, in general, are gender-neutral, that is, both boys and girls play and enjoy them equally because of the appeal of the game, the way they construct their model players. But it is not. This particular Beauty and the Beast game version gives its players two different modes, one the player plays the "Belle's Quest" in which the main protagonist the Beauty, and the other is the "Beast." It is stated that when the players play the

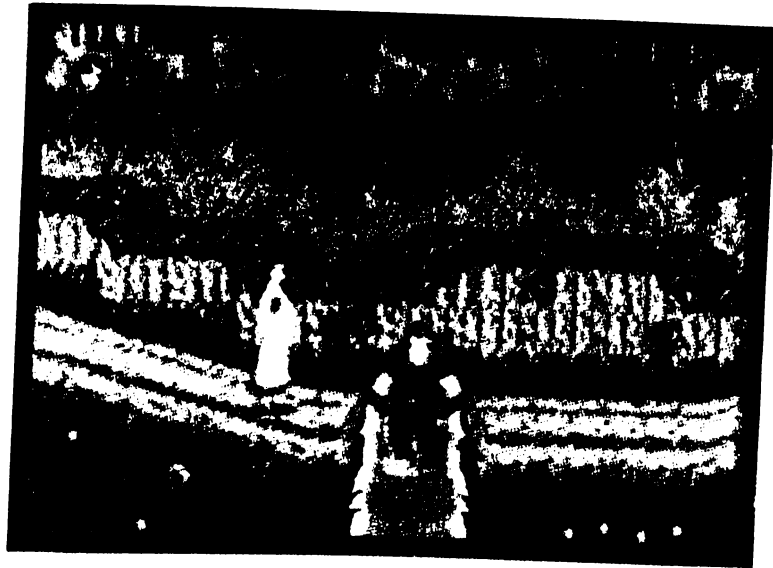


Belle, the player must identify with a heroine who is supposedly so weak that when she comes across a rock in a stream she has to walk all the way back into the village just so she can get Gaston to move it for her and one screen shot on this review page illustrates this scene with an explanation "Gaston helps Belle move a rock because she is a woman" (see Figure 23). In addition, Belle needs six lives to see her through the game, whereas the Beast needs only four. This means that the weakness of the woman character is highly emphasized by the game's requirements. She also starts out with a lot more energy.

The ability of their moves also differ from each other; Belle can only jump or duck. She can't even kill anything that happens to get in her way and can obviously harm her. The Beast can only kill on his way to becoming a prince - punching, pouncing, feasting, clawing, roaring.

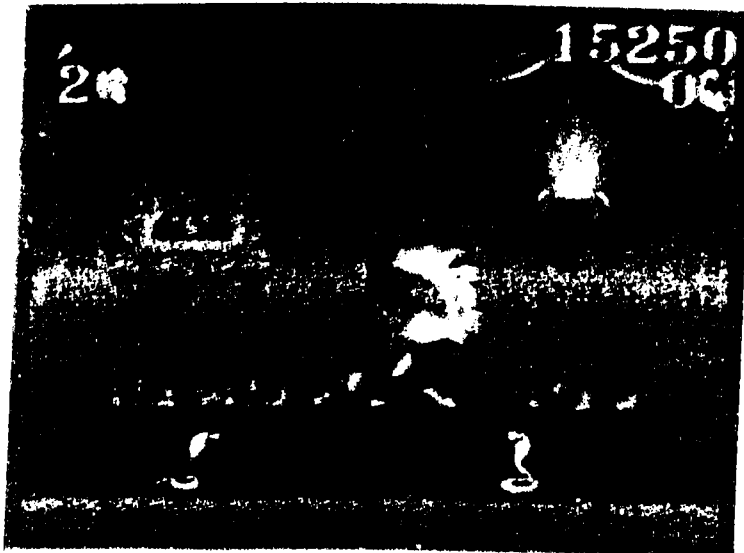
In the "Beast" version of the game, the main character is seen as male in the form of a lion but with some human-like characteristics, such as speaking, dressing like a human (actually lions don't get dressed) standing on his two feet. All these characteristics remind the player of a monster. He has both animal and human abilities (see Figure 24).

As is mentioned earlier, this game also has many film versions. At this stage, it might be useful to look at the ways in which monsters are represented in films.



**Gaston helps Belle move  
a rock because she  
is a woman.**

**Figure 23-** Beauty and the Beast.  
Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Apr. 1994: 64.



**Figure 24-** Beauty and the Beast.  
Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Apr. 1994: 64.

Whenever male bodies are represented as monstrous in the horror film they assume characteristics usually associated with the female body: they experience a blood cycle, change shape, bleed, give birth, become penetrable, are castrated. Traditionally, the male body has been viewed as norm; the female body a deviation. One of the more popular medieval ideas of the difference between the sexes was that women were men turned inside out. The parts that are inside in woman are outside in man (Creed, "Dark Desires" 118).

Departing from the statement made by Kristeva and Galen, it can be said that the form of the Beast can also be associated with the female body or its feminization. Actually the Beast is not an animal or a monster, but he gives birth to a monster-like creature and in real life giving birth has always been associated with women because of their ability to bear children. As the Beast metamorphoses into a monster, his human form remains somehow encased inside his animal exterior. In other words, the Beast is able to give birth, in either animal (monster) or human forms.

In psychoanalytic terms, this transformation can be explained as "man's desire to become a woman to be in a more desirable state, possibly a superior one" (Creed, "Dark Desires" 126), also to acquire the power of transformation associated with woman's ability to give birth. Williams argues that while the male spectator's look at the monster 'expresses conventional fear' (qtd. in Creed, "Dark Desires" 131), because the monster is different, like the woman's otherness.

If the screen shots are observed, it can be seen that the settings of the games (especially the "Beast" version), are the places in which action take place or the player move, are made of dark shadowy rooms which can again be associated with the womb.

It is clear that the name of the game is consisted of oppositional terms; one is the Beauty and the other one the Beast. Woman character is called Beauty which places her in a superior position, compared with the name Beast which can be associated with terms such as animal, brute, blackguard, whereas the name Beauty, with terms such as grace, loveliness, attractiveness, fairness, good looks which are just the antonyms of the Beast (see Figure 25).

In the game, it can be said that one also witnesses the process of feminization of the male body in order to fulfill the desire to become a woman, also a confrontation of his greatest fear, woman, but in so doing is made monstrous through the process of feminization (Creed, "Dark Desires" 122) which, at the end, transforms into a prince. This process can also be viewed as a punishment of woman, since at the end of most of the classic Hollywood films, monsters have always been destroyed, this destruction is not the one of the monster, but of woman.

The screen shots of "Belle" version draws the player a woman character in traditional appearance; a girl with long dress and a horse tail, important details that one might think that she does not belong to the sceneries like dark shadowy forests and corridors lightened by torch. Her appearance



**Figure 25-** Beauty and the Beast.  
Source: Video Games:  
The Ultimate Gaming Magazine Apr. 1994: 64.

does not give the player any feeling that she can beat whatever she confronts and become the winner at the end of the game.

In the April issue of the same magazine that Beauty and the Beast review takes place, there is a complaint about this particular game written by a reader/father with three children, two sons and a daughter, which is useful to see that the game magazines have real influences on the choice of the games. The father of these children states:

I have never written to complain about a review before, but I feel the review of Beauty and the Beast in your February 1994 issue was not completely fair. My two sons and I are video game fanatics, but my daughter is not into gaming as much as we are. She hates frantic button pushing and most games piss her off - she wants to join in the fun, but her idea of entertainment differs from ours. I bought "Beauty and the Beast" (the "Belle" version) for Christmas and she said she liked it, but after I read your review (in which you said it was sexist and suggested not to rent it) I thought maybe my daughter was just saying she liked the game to spare my feelings. So I let her read your review, and she defended her game with all the passion of a true gamer defending any street fighting game. I think you should allow for a rebuttal of the five-and-under rated games. If I had seen your review before buying the game, I never would have bought it, and my daughter would have missed out on a great Christmas present (16).

What this father says about this game proves that there is a great difference between the games that appeal to boys and girls. Before the "Belle" version she was off the gaming world because the way the game constructs its model player did not fit into the daughter's. On the contrary of father's claims about sexism it is observable that this game is absolutely sexist that it appeals to a girl who has not so much experience with the games. It can also be said that, since most of the games are highly violent and require active participation and complex moves within the game as opposed to "Belle," will not be played by daughters as such.

The editors go on saying that:

Any girl would rather play the "Beast" than "Belle." On the technical side, the 'Beast' game has some good fighting capabilities. You can maneuver the character in a bunch of different ways and even kill more than one enemy at once. The 'Belle' game is very slow. You have to go back and forth between the village and the forest and other locals so often, you start to get bored with the scenery (16).

Without even playing this game, one can have an idea about how the two characters are depicted and also their gender identities are constructed in the game. It is understood that the Belle is a woman and weak, because she can not move a rock and needs Gaston's help, which is another character who is in a selfish love for her. She has to move the rock in order to execute the task of the game, so moving the rock is another constraint for the "Belle" players. At this point Gaston, a muscular male character, appears to help her with the rock. So the model player is constructed in such a way that the player, who identifies her/himself with the Belle, is in help of a man, even being the main character.

Of course, similar examples can be given, for instance, among the detective films in which the male detective may in need of someone else's assistance but this help is not permitted to excess beyond the main character's ability, it stays as a little detail among many other ones. But in this game, moving the rock is an important constraint that prevent her advancing in the maze, she is not given enough ability to do this, on the contrary, she has to go back to find a help to move the rock and continue the game. This costs her long time and a good reason for the player to abandon it.

In the "Beast" version, there is not any problem with moving the rock, instead he has to kill the enemies which is considered much more difficult and appreciated than moving a rock and he has no helpers in doing that, like Gaston helping the Belle.

Here, it can be observed that the Beast has a much more autonomous identity than the Belle. His tasks seem much more difficult because the enemies are also active and respond him, but the rock is only a rock, does not even move and does not cost her a death, the only reason of its existence is to direct the player to find a way to move it, that is, to find a strong person which, in the game, is personified as Gaston, a male character.

Overall rating of this game is five out of ten. It gets five from the "graphics" because it is said that Belle moves like an old woman. This technical lack can be considered as an other constraint for the player, and enough to get bored. When the player can not move easily within the maze, there left no reason to insist on playing the "Belle" version. Why this particular version has this lack and the "Beast" version does not? Maybe the speed of the Belle is consciously programmed like this that the two versions differ both from the tasks to be performed and the way the character's given abilities, in other words, it uses stereotypic attributes.

For the sound and music, this game is given again five out of ten, which is the equivalent of "weak" according to the magazine's criterion, and the reason is stated as: "The Beast belts out a pretty good roar, but Belle doesn't say anything." Here it is seen that the female character Belle is



left soundless. She has no voice over the troubles she is faced with. This cannot only be explained as a simple fault, but reminds that the majority of the games and also films have female characters with no voice of their owns. They have been depicted as not the initiators of the events but as supportive of the male characters. Here, the Belle has no voice but the Beast can roar, so this can not be simply a technical incapability, but it shows another way of oppressing the woman.

As is known from the movie version, the Beast is actually a prince but transformed into a lion-like monster. In the game version, the Beast has to kill the enemies on his way to becoming a prince towards phallus, in other words, he has been castrated. His appearance, as well as his voice is not the appropriate of a prince's. Because, again, if one compares the representation of a prince with the Beast, it can be observed that he is out of the stereotyped prince attributes that people have in mind. A prince does not roar, if he is the main character, he has always been depicted as a "good" character who defeat the enemies and carry all the positive characteristics, like nobility, politeness and these characteristics have always been in concordance with the outlook of the character. Here, the outlook of the Beast, as the name indicates, does not give any sense of his position as prince. His task is to overcome the difficulty (castration) and become a prince again. So the goal of the Beast is much more obvious within the game and the goal is considered to be the major motive of a game's popularity. What the "Belle" version does, is just to increase the appeal of the "Beast" version.

When all these pros of the "Beast" and cons of the "Belle" are put together, as mentioned by the editors, there is no reason to play the "Belle" version because a computer game has always been programmed and expected to be active, vivid, fast and playable which are the stereotypes of a game as well as the males. At the end of this review, it is stated that "Do not even rent these two sexist clunkers. Good games are meant for boys and girls. There is no need to label games for boys and games for girls."

This statement indicates that even these editors are not aware of the fact that the most of the games constructs a male model player that the actual player has to identify with, even if the player is female.

#### **4.3.7- Barbie Super Model**

One of the traditional toys given to girls, Barbie dolls constitute a great part in their play activities as well as an influence over their feminine identity. If one considers that in every second of every day, two Barbie dolls are sold somewhere in the world and 500 million Barbies and her friends have been sold since her creation, Barbie phenomenon can become prominent (Lott 44).

Barbie represents everything from the ideal American notion of femininity and has survived through more than three decades of political, social and cultural changes. Despite Barbie's flexible arms and legs which constitute the most part of her popularity, her adaptability into social changes in the society makes her a stable emblem of American teenagers. She is able to change with the times; as young girls' tastes and fashions change, so do

Barbie's. As such, her clothing is a perfect history of fashion over the past thirty years as well as her hair style and assigned profession and/or role reflect the current trends of femininity in the society.

Kristine Riddick is giving a clear historical background of Barbie dolls since her creation in her web site on the Internet (Riddick [Online]). Barbie first introduced at the American Toy Fair in New York City in February of 1959 by Ruth and Elliot Handler, founders of Mattel Toys. The influence that led to the creation of the original Barbie doll was a Lili doll, a German doll produced in the mid-fifties. Lili, however, was modeled after an almost pornographic caricature in a German comic strip; she was a far cry from the innocent, all-American image Ruth wanted to capture, and it was Mattel's job to change that. Then, Barbie was created, representing purity and innocence as well as the essence of feminine glamour and style.

The manufacturer of Barbie dolls, Mattel, developed a philosophy that the doll sells the clothes and the clothes sell the doll. The fashions that are developed for Barbie coordinate with society's expectations. As such, she was teaching women what was expected of them by society, she earned herself a high degree of respectability and became a figure girls wanted to emulate; she was not only a fashion model, she could be a sophisticated or a homemaker. Through the suggestions, Barbie's physique changed a little; her face underwent plastic surgery after the turn of the decade. The sophisticated look of her introduction gave way to a more neutral image in 1961. Designers created a less constrained visage with bright blue irises and curved eyebrows. That was not enough though; the public wanted

more. Against Mattel's wishes but by popular demand, they introduced Barbie's "handsome steady" Ken in 1961. They had coordinating outfits for fraternity parties, lawn picnics, drive-ins, and the beach.

Magazines began to run comic-book like stories about the couple, a series of books were published and Barbie sang about her new boyfriend Ken on a record. These inventions helped kids to understand relationships and manners. The couple was enjoying realistic adventures while children fantasized about adult life. Their seemingly perfect life did not escape from criticism; many saw Barbie as antifeminist who was a victim of a man-oriented society. They saw the introduction of Ken as an indication that women could not stand on their own and had to be constantly supported by men.

She was actually a reflection of women's roles in society and these roles were defined by men in women's lives; they were happy with raising families and being housewives, nurses and hostesses. Skipper and Tutti, for example, were the answer to the request for Barbie to have kids.

Another example that can be considered as Barbie's popularity related with real life events is, for example, after the assassination of President Kennedy, America was beginning to realize that the fifties way of life was quickly disappearing. So, Barbie must adopt herself into the confusion and chaos of the new era, she would not wear or do anything that did not portray a positive American image. Barbie modeled some fashions strikingly similar to Jackie O's until her marriage to Ari Onassis started

a scandal with the American public. Her image was tainted, and Barbie could not be associated with that which would potentially harm her own.

Racial equality/inequality dominating the country also affected Mattel in 1967 and a black version named Francie and then Christie were developed. The company also spent \$2 million in an attempt to tie Barbie to the 1975 Winter Olympic Games. Barbie was the athlete of the year as she appeared as a swimmer, skater, and skier in foreign markets with the appropriate gold medal draped around her neck. This marketing strategy move made Barbie an international star.

In 1976, Barbie and Ken were still Super Stars. Mattel's look was strikingly similar to the trend-setting stars of the day. Ken looked similar to Robert Redford as Barbie resembled the new star of "Charlie's Angels" Farrah Fawcett with her wide smile and winged hair.

Barbie had gone from a candy striper and housewife in the sixties to become "Astronaut Barbie" (1986) and "Dr. Barbie" in 1988. She was not just a stewardess but was now the pilot. Women were moving into the work force all over the country in every kind of profession. For many families it had become necessary for women to work. Mattel reflected the variety of options women were finding in the workplace through Barbie's many careers. She became everything from an aerobics instructor to a rock star to an executive. The dolls, including Italian and Oriental and Hispanic Barbies, were a good starting point to breaking all cultural, ethnic, and racial boundaries within Barbies's world. Mattel, did not need to dichotomize

the dolls' personalities; they could be the same "person" with different skin color. These dolls could do and experience everything just like Barbie. The country was becoming multicultural, and the increasing sales of these dolls proved Americans were accepting the equality of all races and nationalities.

Her multi-faceted appearance in recent years, has led feminists to see her as she is the symbol of female emancipation because she works and does not have to depend on men for her wealth and possessions. She has become the consumer made vinyl . . . Mattel's "Material Girl" (qtd. in Riddick [Online]).

After all, Barbie and her accessories can be considered as the concrete symbol of consumer society in which people gain their identity as well as status by what they consume. In recent years, for example, women have now been seen driving Jeep, a vehicle that was once a male one, and Barbie now owns a Jeep either, she also wears Lee jeans. When Barbie entered a Paris wax museum in 1993, her role as American cultural icon was confirmed. She is like the toy version of Coca-Cola or Marlboro.

Barbie sales reached one billion dollars in 1993 and hardly a girl left on the continent that does not have a Barbie. The average number of dolls per household in the sixties was one, now the average American girl, three to ten years old, owns eight. Even children in the poorest countries can afford a Barbie; her world has transcended all socioeconomic boundaries and she is the ultimate piece of mass art.

Beside her evolution from 1959 to present, now Barbie has been released in a computer game format called Barbie Super Model (see Figure 26). The Barbie character appears as a classic Barbie, blonde and beautiful, a fashion model with her body size which suggest the preferred one currently.

Children growing with a Barbie culture are not unfamiliar with the game. Because the game itself depicts a character whose target consumer has already been defined long before as girls. However, the computer version of Barbie cannot be considered as a game since there is no win/lose condition at all when compared with other games with violent and destructive content that mostly appeal to boys. From this respect, this game constructs its Model Player as girl.

The game starts with a menu of Level and Game Play options to choose. Game Play has two modes, one is slow and the second is fast. But when the game is run, these two options differ from each other only when Barbie drives her pink car on the road, the goal is to prevent from hitting other cars. In the slow mode, the car is relatively slow and quite boring, as such this slow/fast option does not contribute too much to the overall flow of the game (see Figure 27).

After the level selection, the player sees Barbie sitting in a cafe in Los Angeles where all the famous artists as well as models live. This picture informs the player about the icons to be collected in order to advance.



Figure 26- Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.

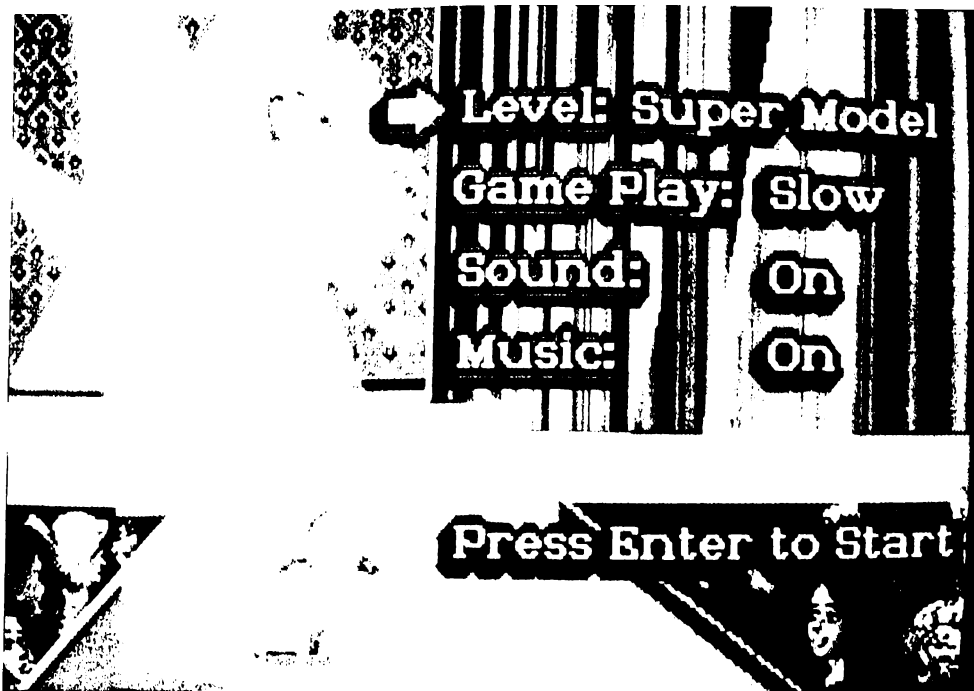


Figure 27- Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.



When the camera is taken, for example, the player moves to Make-Up Room, or Shopping Bag takes the player to Dressing Room (see Figure 28).

These icons are put along her way driving her pink cabriolet car. The player is expected to collect the items while driving safely. Each hit to other cars results losing points, a feature opposite to other games in which destruction is the main goal and an aim to gain, not to lose, points. So, here the player, instead of a destructive attitude, must be in reconstitutive position which is a female attribute. In that sense, the Model Player is constructed as female. When the car passes over the camera, scene changes and a Barbie magazine cover appears with a Barbie picture on it (see Figure 29). In this stage, the player is expected to match Barbie with magazine cover. After a short period of time, Barbie appears in front of a mirror with make-up and other accessories around. With the help of keyboard keys, the make-up colors as well as earrings, hat, hair-style and nail polish can be changed according to the example given on the cover in previous scene. If the player matches all the things correctly, gets more points (see Figure 30). When Shopping Bag is taken, for example, the player sees Barbie in some clothing, this time what is expected is to match Barbie's dress with the one shown at the beginning of this level started after having the Shopping Bag (see Figure 31).

In all of these episodes Barbie is seen very much concerned with her physical appearance. The player is wanted to construct Barbie as beautiful, to reproduce her as the image of the beautiful just like a "real" woman

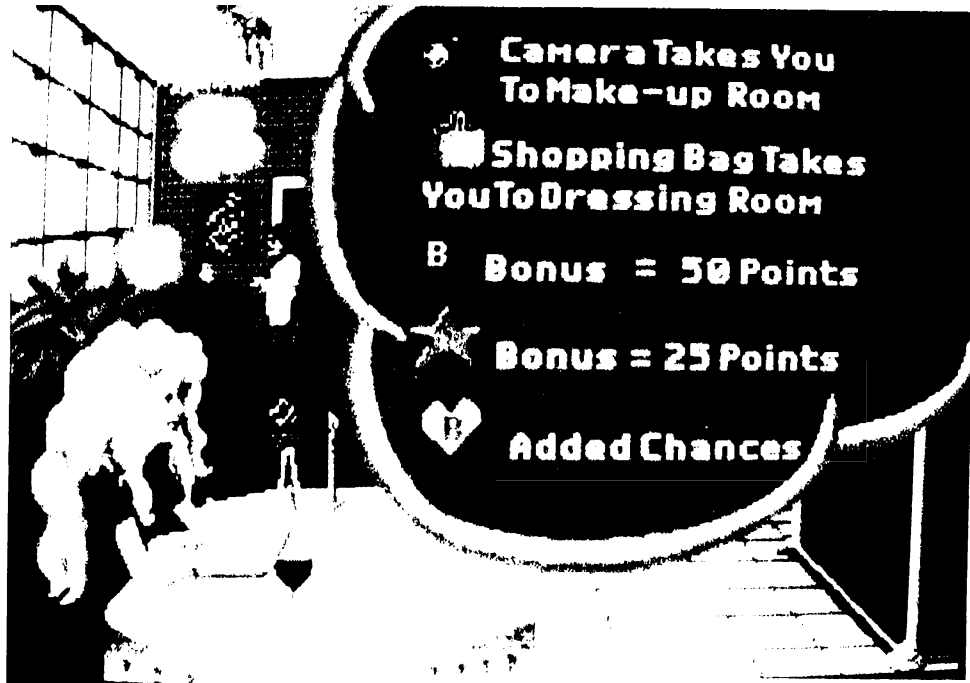


Figure 28- Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.

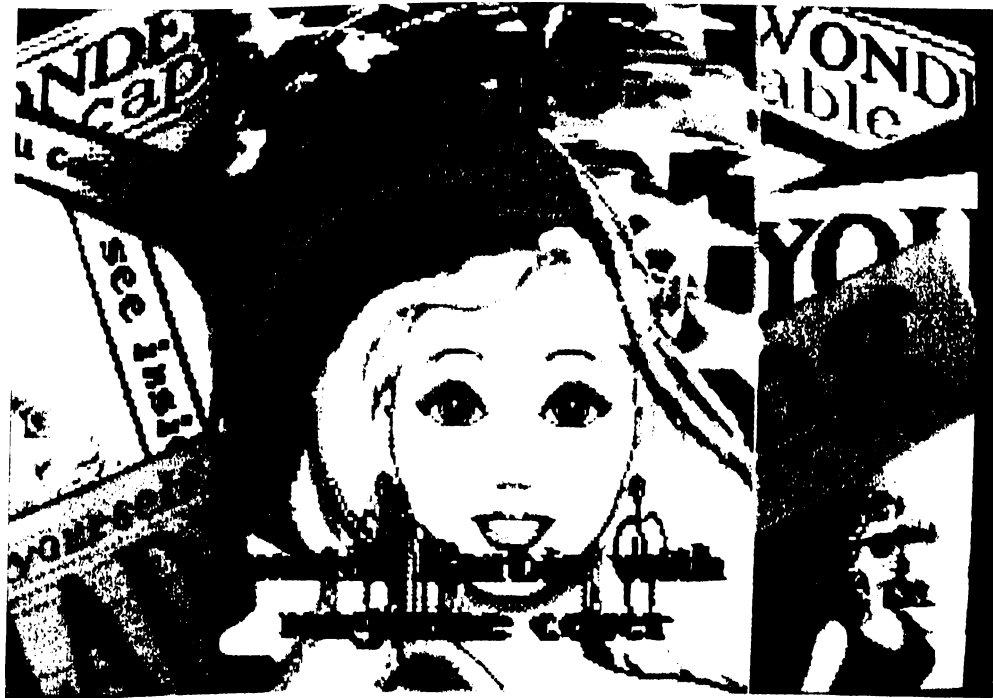


Figure 29- Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.



**Figure 30-** Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.



**Figure 31-** Barbie Super Model.  
Source: Screen shot.

using make-up and going to hair-dresser as well as wearing attractive, shiny clothes and jewels.

The term beauty is a relative one, changes as the society's notion changes and there are common beliefs that make one "beautiful," the beauty system. There is a huge market that try to offer many possible ways for women to be "beautiful," more "attractive." To reproduce herself as the image of the beautiful is to mistake that image as the self and for a moment, this constructed image produces a gloriousness in which the role of the man is, to use MacCannell's and Flower MacCannell's term, "marginalized." "As glorious as she may feel in observing herself thus 'imaged.' She nonetheless faces the threat of unmasking, in which her prosthetic and ultimately monstrous femininity will be revealed" (Radner xii).

Thus, the woman's beauty is a male product, an image that a woman will claim as herself through a rewriting of a body that must be continuously rewritten, kept up, and made over as a way to defeat the threat woman constitutes, to suppress and keep them under control. Thus, the Barbie constitutes a visible example according to male criteria and the game's playability offers young girls to fantasize about their future feminine roles, in advance, which is culturally allowed.

Being a model, Barbie shows how an acceptable woman can be. Thinking of the diversity of women in the 1990s, for example, she can never be introduced, say, as a Lesbian Barbie or a Boulevard Barbie with cheap make-up, short skirt and high heels or a Terrorist Barbie with dark glasses,

or a Bisexual Barbie that comes in package with Skipper and Ken because she has to constitute a model for young girls with a socially acceptable configuration.

The technologies of exercise, plastic surgery and liposuction enable the woman to rewrite the body itself along with haute-couture fashion and make-up. In her attempt to fix that instance of gloriousness she depends upon the manipulation of consumer products as technologies that function to reproduce and circulate an image that a woman will see as her's.

The popular feminist Naomi Wolf claims that one of the purposes of the beauty system (or what she calls "the beauty myth") is to affect a widespread suppression of woman's true sexuality. In simple terms, Wolf claims that because the beauty myth and its manifestations in the media stress physical perfection, this discourse instructs woman that to enjoy heterosexual pleasure she must be beautiful according to the impossible standards of this myth which offers an endless consumption. A woman is most feminine when she is not herself - when she is a reconstructed television image or when she enacts an elaborate masquerade. Since the feminine pleasure is articulated through the masculine gaze, the feminine subject needs men's approval. She preserves beauty as the guarantor of femininity and difference to retain the masculine gaze as a point of legitimation. Lemoine-Luccioni remarks that a woman is beautiful by definition, because if she knows herself or declares herself to be ugly, she is no longer a woman. In an era in which lipectomy or liposuction (an operation that uses a form of suction to remove fat from women's thighs and hips, body

partes that women hate) is the most commonly performed cosmetic surgery, women with fat thighs and fat hips have no value (qtd. in Radner 62-63). Even in Turkey, most women artists, singers as well as models have had plastic surgery operations, breasts supported with silicones have now become a part of women's sexuality that make them look more feminine in a male dominant society.

From all these respects, Barbie constitutes a great model in terms of her body shape, make-up and hair style. In the game, she is depicted as having exercise to keep her body fit. The player exercises her moves using shift, alt and arrow keys to execute the workout moves and memorizes them to repeat it later without the software assistance to get more points. Because of the implications that Barbie dolls as well as other agents such as make-up, fashion and body industries offer as an ideal physical shape, women, from the very beginning of their lives, namely from their childhood period, have been driven to engage very much with their imageries. They are always invited to go into diet and participate to fitness centers in order to have an ideal appearance which is confirmed by men as well.

In the game, what the player is engaged is only driving a car, or riding a bicycle or skating while collecting the items that lead to dressing room or make-up room. There is no challenge, no thrill and no any opponents, a characteristic that constitutes an opposition, especially, comparing with other games that mainly based on winning/losing as well as violence and destruction. The whole story as well as the scenes do not offer any surprise for the player and the game develops around a vicious circle, in a very

narrow boundaries that will certainly lead male players as well as girls get bored. It has even no way to save or pause the game. When the player fails, she has to start all over again from the very beginning and as such it has not any competitiveness among many leading current top-rated video games. The Model Player that this game constructs is a female one and not older than a teenager, if played. There is no creativity, no suspense added, only a limited number of keyboard moves that also limits the player's acts which constitutes the real life women's position in society while engaging her only with her appearance and with a limited number of occupational accesses. From this respect, Barbie's computer game version offers a much more restricted identity for female players than actual 3-D dolls.

## 5- CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation, I have tried to demonstrate how representation of gender, different depictions of men and women as well as boys and girls, are conveyed in order to constitute a player in computer game environment. Television, films, print media are all supportive in the course of the subject constitution. Each gender performs the tasks that are assigned to him/her culturally and roles violating those culturally-defined rules are reflected as unapproved in order to prevent both genders to model inappropriate ones.

Television, video technologies, cable and satellite channels, computerised information services, radio stations, movies, billboards, window displays, books and magazines, newspapers, CD technology, mail services all constitute our environment as an informational network while surrounding people with messages including their gender-roles.

Media sources represent the world while producing effects of meaning and perception, self-images of subject positions, both male and female, for all those involved, makers and receivers, a process in which the subject is continually engaged, represented in an endless circulation as well as consumption.



All products are mainly produced with a possible consumer in mind. Television programs, magazines and etc., all have their target groups which are selected and based according to commonly shared attributes, namely stereotypes dedicated to each gender.

Media are the places in which men and women are re-presented from gender point of view which assigns a role within the society. Thus, the terms male and female are sociocultural constructs and the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation.

As is mentioned in the second chapter, the media present a world view that conforms to patriarchal beliefs. Women, even who are in decision-making positions are seen they have insufficient power to remove patriarchal patterns from their medium's messages. When they are seen as characters depicted in media sources such as TV, magazines and so, they are usually depicted in a stereotypic way, especially in their roles in the wider society as mother and/or wife. Their careers have always been left behind their domestic responsibilities and this fact is continuously repeated intertextually throughout the media. When they are depicted out of their stereotypic gender roles, they are seen they are punished since they constitute a threat over patriarchal order. They are not allowed to behave autonomously, they are almost always depicted as in need of male protection which has actual consequent implications over women in real life.

Not only media sources are playing a constitutive part over people's gender role identities, but in the overall, technology also takes its part from this

fact and show its marks in the production and consumption processes. As is well known, the computer is a technological innovation which characterizes our information age. Its consequent application in everywhere opens new directions for the possible characteristic notions of our future. The key term, for Lyotard, which characterizes our postmodern culture is the information and computer is the most developed technology to process it. Technological developments do not change existing stereotypes, only technical possibilities are presented, thus seem new.

In the fourth chapter which is the core of this dissertation, it is seen that most popular games constitute their players as male. The medium in which games are operated is considered as a male domain. Additionally, the themes, the depiction of the characters/heroes, the mission to be executed within the game and the way games are marketed are all the preparative factors that lead us to a notion of a male Model Player independent of the actual players. As can be seen in Table 2, 3 and 4 in the Appendices, the majority of the top-rated games depict female characters either in secondary roles or totally ignore and exclude them while giving emphasis on the protagonists who are mainly depicted as male. All these factors also help us to evaluate games as offering male pleasures contributing to define computer games as evolving around masculine criteria.

Computer seems it will be the determinant factor of the way of life of the future. It will have a much more dominance in people's lives and careers. As mentioned before, research suggest that women have to be encouraged in computer-related activities since there will be a huge gap between genders

in terms of computer competence in which current as well as future life is/will be dependent.

In a very near future, Virtual Reality (VR) will be perfected and replace the current position of popular computer games as well as its many other possible applications will be widely used. Today's sci-fi films, as the technology's speed demonstrates, will be experienced and become real for ordinary people as well.

What is observed currently, half of the population, women, can not get enough benefits from that technology because as they feel they are excluded they also witness that, particularly in video games, they are seen as targets that must be destroyed. As is seen in the last chapter, female body is theorized as the place where the battle between father and son takes place, in other words Oedipal tensions are circulated and it seems impossible to prevent this within this social order.

Before computer games, there were other sources that manipulate male and female images that have settled down our notions of femininity and masculinity. What computer games contribute are just some technical possibilities such as interactive participation, more realistic images and while doing so, the industry use the pre-defined roles symbolized by the images. In addition, this new industry increases the pleasure by combining watching and doing with violence and destruction.

Eugene F. Provenzo, at the end of the book Video Kids: Making Sense of Nintendo, argues that violence, destruction, racism and sexism must be eliminated but, I think this won't be enough because the resulting games will no longer match the pre-defined game notion. That is why there is a need to extend the scope of video games with new alternatives and insert in existing game categories and then a new game definition must be theorized.

Ernest Becker in the book The Structure of Evil states that instead of the idea of l'homme machine (humans as machines) we must follow the idea of home poeta (humans as meaning seekers and makers) (qtd. in Provenzo 118). Technologies lonely progress, in existing social order, must not be considered as evolution, social sciences must be much more integrated and people from both sides must work collaboratively in order to offer an egalitarian environment from which both genders take pleasure.

Whereas in an era in which all cultures are integrating into each other and the reason for this is mainly the media and the computerized information flow, it must be natural that different disciplines be in a give-and-take mode.

It is believed that every attempt is done for humans progress and their well-beings, to know humans as well as to explore the extensions and limits of the human mind. If this is so, then, there must be some who may give credit that sometimes two plus two may not be equal to four and for some others, may be equal.

In the overall of the dissertation, it is explained that video games are not just innocent toys for entertainment, they must be seen and accepted as symbolic cultural forms that are offered into consumption with pre-defined meanings and from this respect for the culture and its future, they must be seen as a constitutive part of the gender identities.

The aim of this dissertation is to offer a discussion ground which may constitute a source for next researchers. Computer and computer games and their magazine ads, game themes, the way they depict male and female images as well as assigned meanings on them will become much more ordinary as they are consumed by an increasing part of the world population.

Women, on the other hand, are the less users of this activity. In order to protect and defend herself, they have to have a similar weapon which is computer literacy in this case and having careers in that field. According to many research, computer games constitute the entryway into the world of computing. Here, women is confronted with an unfair situation; on the one hand they are sex-typed, categorized and defined as "other" and on the other hand, discouraged from computer usage. This position is disadvantageous for them for their future education and career. Within this process not only cultural hegemony is maintained, but at the same time computer domain is becoming entirely male-dominated.

If we want a more humane world, we must provide the appropriate conditions for both genders, or at least, we must to question existing order before we

accept them as natural like our femininity and masculinity. It has now become observable that females, too, have started to take an interest in computer. The movie The Net, for example, depicts a woman computer expert as its major character (S. Bullock). What can be asked at this stage is: "Will woman accept her role that patriarchy designates for her in computer related activities or will she start to question her existing position while rejecting which is imposed, and finally, can the computer be an opportunity in this particular case?"

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## APPENDICES

**Table 1** Stereotypic sex role descriptors.

Competency Cluster: Masculine Pole Is More Desirable

Feminine	Masculine
Not at all aggressive	Very aggressive
Not at all independent	Very independent
Very emotional	Not at all emotional
Does not hide emotions at all	Almost always hides emotions
Very subjective	Very objective
Very easily influenced	Not at all easily influenced
Very submissive	Very dominant
Dislikes math and science very much	Likes math and science very much
Very excitable in a minor crisis	Not at all excitable in a minor crisis
Very passive	Very active
Not at all competitive	Very competitive
Very illogical	Very logical
Very home-oriented	Very worldly
Not at all skilled in business	Very skilled in business
Very sneaky	Very direct
Does not know the way of the world	Knows the way of the world
Feelings easily hurt	Feelings not easily hurt
Not at all adventurous	Very adventurous
Has difficulty making decisions	Can make decisions easily
Cries very easily	Never cries
Almost never acts as a leader	Almost always acts as a leader

Table 1 (cont'd).

Not at all self-confident	Very self-confident
Very uncomfortable about being aggressive	Not at all uncomfortable . . .
Not at all ambitious	Very ambitious
Unable to separate feelings from ideas	Easily able to separate . . .
Very dependent	Not at all dependent
Very conceited about appearance	Never conceited about appearance
Thinks women are always superior to men	Thinks men are always . . .

Warmth - Expressiveness Cluster: Feminine Pole Is More Desirable

Feminine	Masculine
Doesn't use harsh language at all	Uses very harsh language
Very talkative	Not at all talkative
Very tactful	Very blunt
Very gentle	Very rough
Very aware of feelings of others	Not at all aware of feelings of others
Very religious	Not at all religious
Very interested in own appearance	Not at all interested in own appearance
Very neat in habits	Very sloppy in habits
Very quiet	Very loud
Very strong need for security	Very little need for security
Enjoys art and literature	Does not enjoy art and literature at all
Easily expresses tender feelings	Does not express tender feelings at all

Source: Basow, Susan A. Gender: Stereotypes and Roles. 3rd. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole, 1992.

**Table 2** Summary of violent versus nonviolent content in 47 top-rated video games.

Game	Description
<u>Adventures of Bayou Billy</u>	A Rajun Cajun fights his way across Southern Louisiana to rescue his girlfriend.
<u>Bad Dudes</u>	Karate and hand-to-hand combat.
<u>Baseball Stars</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Bases Loaded</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Batman</u>	Bombs, guns, the batmobile, and "electrocutioners."
<u>Bionic Commando</u>	Your bionic arm allows you to swing from building to building and "mow down" anyone in the way.
<u>Blades of Steel</u>	Violent hockey simulation in which you must participate in fights or lose.
<u>Blaster Master</u>	Drive a heavily armed armored vehicle to a final confrontation with the Plutonium Boss.
<u>Bubble Bobble</u>	Little dinosaurs set out on their way to rescue their friend Baron von Bubba. Enemies can be destroyed by capturing them in dinosaur bubbles.
<u>California Games</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Castlevania</u>	To defeat the evil count and engage in a final battle with him, his body parts must be collected along with weayons such as whips.
<u>Contra</u>	Guerilla warriors fight an alien invasion.

Table 2 (cont'd.).

<u>Double Dragon</u>	Karate and martial arts.
<u>Double Dragon II</u>	Karate and martial arts.
<u>Double Dribble</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Dragon Warrior</u>	Karate and martial arts.
<u>Faxanadu</u>	Adventure quest game that includes the use of magic and fighting.
<u>Guardian Legend</u>	Alien invader game in which you must save the earth from being overrun.
<u>Hoops</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Hudson's Adventure Island</u>	Rescue game with weapons used to fight off wild creatures.
<u>Jackal</u>	Machine guns and grenades in hand-to-hand combat.
<u>Legacy of the Wizard</u>	Adventure quest game that includes the use of magic and fighting.
<u>Mega Man</u>	High-tech warfare and robots.
<u>Mega Man II</u>	High-tech warfare and robots.
<u>Metroid</u>	Space adventure game.
<u>Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!</u>	Boxing game.
<u>Ninja Gaiden</u>	Karate and martial arts.
<u>Nobunaga's Ambition</u>	Strategic war game.
<u>Operation Wolf</u>	Machine guns and grenades in hand-to-hand combat.
<u>Rampage</u>	Dinosaurs and assorted monsters eat American cities.
<u>RoboCop</u>	Robot policeman fights crime.

Table 2 (cont'd.).

<u>Skate or Die</u>	Skateboarding becomes a life-or-death sport.
<u>Strider</u>	Secret agent game.
<u>Super Dodge Ball</u>	Highly aggressive sports game.
<u>Super Mario Bros. 2</u>	Sequel to <u>Super Mario Bros.</u>
<u>Super Off Road</u>	Off road racing.
<u>Tecmo Bowl</u>	Football simulation.
<u>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</u>	Karate and martial arts.
<u>Track and Field II</u>	Nonviolent sports game.
<u>Ultima</u>	Dungeons and Dragons-type game with magic and warfare.
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>	Nonviolent game show.
<u>Who Framed Roger Rabbit?</u>	Rescue game following the format of a detective solving a case.
<u>Wrestlemania</u>	Professional wrestling simulation.
<u>Zelda II-The Adventure Link</u>	Adventure quest game that includes the use of magic and fighting.

Source: Provenzo, Eugene F. Video Kids: Making Sense of Nintendo. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1991.



**Table 3** Games that include women being kidnapped as a major theme in 47 top-rated video games.

Game	Yes	No
<u>Adventures of Bayou Billy</u>	X	
<u>Bad Dudes</u>	X	
<u>Baseball Stars</u>		X
<u>Bases Loaded</u>		X
<u>Batman</u>	X	
<u>Bionic Commando</u>		X
<u>Blades of Steel</u>		X
<u>Blaster Master</u>		X
<u>Bubble Bobble</u>		X
<u>California Games</u>		X
<u>Castlevania</u>		X
<u>Contra</u>		X
<u>Double Dragon</u>	X	
<u>Double Dragon II</u>	X	
<u>Double Dribble</u>		X
<u>Dragon Warrior</u>	X	
<u>Faxanadu</u>		X
<u>Guardian Legend</u>		X
<u>Hoops</u>		X
<u>Hudson's Adventure Island</u>	X	
<u>Jackal</u>		X
<u>Legacy of the Wizard</u>		X
<u>The Legend of Zelda</u>	X	
<u>Mega Man</u>		X
<u>Mega Man II</u>		X

Table 3 (cont'd.).

<u>Metroid</u>		X
<u>Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!</u>		X
<u>Ninja Gaiden</u>	X	
<u>Nobunaga's Ambition</u>		X
<u>Operation Wolf</u>	X	
<u>Rad Racer</u>		X
<u>Rampage</u>		X
<u>RoboCop</u>		X
<u>Skate or Die</u>		X
<u>Strider</u>		X
<u>Super Dodge Ball</u>		X
<u>Super Mario Bros.</u>	X	
<u>Super Mario Bros. II</u>		X
<u>Super Off Road</u>		X
<u>Tecmo Bowl</u>		X
<u>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</u>	X	
<u>Track and Field II</u>		X
<u>Ultima</u>		X
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>		X
<u>Who Framed Roger Rabbit?</u>		X
<u>Wrestlemania</u>		X
<u>Zelda II</u>	X	
Totals	13	34

Table 4 Analysis of gender themes on the covers of 47 top-rated video games.

Game	M	F	DM	MF	SbM	SbF	Other
<u>Adventures of Bayou Billy</u>	3	1				1	
<u>Bad Dudes</u>	4		2				
<u>Baseball Stars</u>	3						
<u>Bases Loaded</u>							
<u>Batman</u>							
<u>Bionic Commando</u>	1						5
<u>Blades of Steel</u>	5						
<u>Blaster Master</u>							1
<u>Bubble Bobble</u>							7
<u>California Games</u>	3	1					
<u>Castlevania</u>	2						
<u>Contra</u>	2						
<u>Double Dragon</u>	4	2	4				
<u>Double Dragon II</u>	3	1	2			1	
<u>Double Dribble</u>	7						
<u>Dragon Warrior</u>	1						1
<u>Faxanadu</u>							
<u>Guardian Legend</u>							1
<u>Hoops</u>	2						
<u>Hudson's Adventure Island</u>	1						6
<u>Jackal</u>	3						
<u>Legacy of the Wizard</u>	3	1	2				
<u>The Legend of Zelda</u>							
<u>Mega Man</u>							
<u>Mega Man II</u>	4		3				

Table 4 (cont'd.).

<u>Metroid</u>							
<u>Mike Tyson's Punch-Out!</u>	3						
<u>Ninja Gaiden</u>	1						
<u>Nobunaga's Ambition</u>	17						
<u>Operation Wolf</u>	4		2				
<u>Rad Racer</u>							
<u>Rampage</u>							
<u>RoboCop</u>	1						
<u>Skate or Die</u>	1						
<u>Strider</u>	2						
<u>Super Dodge Ball</u>	1						
<u>Super Mario Bros.</u>	1						
<u>Super Mario Bros. II</u>							
<u>Super Off Road</u>							
<u>Tecmo Bowl</u>	1						
<u>Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles</u>	4						
<u>Track and Field II</u>	16						
<u>Ultima</u>	2	1	1			1	2
<u>Wheel of Fortune</u>							
<u>Who Framed Roger Rabbit?</u>	1						
<u>Wrestlemania</u>	1						
<u>Zelda II</u>							
Totals	115	9	28	0	0	3	23

Note: M= number of male figures on cover; F= number of female figures on cover; DM= number of dominant males on cover; DF= number of dominant females on cover; SbM= number of submissive or subdued males on cover; SbF= number of submissive or physically subdued females on cover; other= number of monster, animal, mythological, or robot-type figures with no identifiable gender.