THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF VIDEO GAME PARODIES FOR CRITICIZING GENDER REPRESENTATIONS

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DEFINITION OF PARODY
A comical or critical repetition of media material that is marking difference rather than similarity with the use of techniques such as:
- exaggeration,
- inversion,
- extraneous inclusion,
- literalization,
- misdirection,
(Hutcheon, 1985; Harries, 2000).

OPPONENTS OF PARODY
- Childish buffoonery (Carrière)
- Powerless genre (Sartres, Barthes)
- Parasitic discourse (Madière, Voltaire)
- Elitist discourse (Madière)

SUPPORTERS OF PARODY
- Modernizes genres (Tomashevsky, Bakhtin)
- Highlights the constructed nature of fiction (Rose, Hannoosh)
- Criticizes stereotypes (Hutcheon)

DEBATES ON PARODY
HARRIES (2000)
- Lost its subversive dimension
- Evolved towards standardized forms of entertainment
- Conservative transgression

DEBATES ON PARODIES
HUTCHEON (1985)
- Ambivalent form
- Critical potential varies from one parody to another
- Interpretations varies depending on the context
**Research Questions**

- What elements maximize or compromise the critical potential of parodies?
- What makes the difference between a sexist parody and parody of sexism?
- In what contexts does the critical potential of parodies have more chance to be actualized?

**Subversive Potential**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIN</th>
<th>MAX</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mock superficial elements</td>
<td>highlight gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trivialize gender issues</td>
<td>attack ideologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use humor to repeat clichés</td>
<td>use humor to break preconceptions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Risks of Misunderstanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIN</th>
<th>MAX</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>interpretative clues</td>
<td>lack of interpretation guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explicit criticisms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>reflexive devices</td>
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**“Princess Peach and Daisy vs. Michael Jackson”**

**Subversive Elements**

- Empowers the female characters
- Deconstructs the idea that women are by nature weaker than men
- Puts into question their need to be sheltered
- Relocates them outside of the domestic space
- Overthrows the subject/object and the active/passive oppositions
- Introduces several moments of friendship between women

**Conservative Elements**

- Fails to dissociate the princess from her alleged nurturing instinct
- The finale re-establishes the traditional hierarchy
- The final intertitle can reinforce or challenge the idea of women as rewards
"THE ROAST OF MARIO"

**SUBVERSIVE**
- Underlines the absurdity of depicting Peach as a homemaker
- Subverts the players’ assumption about the virility of heroes

**CONSERVATIVE**
- Risks reinforcing the idea that men’s stamina and size matter
- Built around sexist and homophobic jokes

"THE ROAST OF MARIO"

**SUBVERSIVE**
- Depicts Peach as a subject of desire, not in control of her sexuality

**CONSERVATIVE**
- Does not move her sexuality away from a reward
- Supports harmful ideas about men’s sexuality

**SUVERSIVE POTENTIAL**

Mario and Daisy

The Roast of Mario

Princess Peach and Daisy

My own parody?

MINIMUM

MAXIMUM

**DEFINITION OF MACHINIMA**

3D animated film produced in real-time with video game engines, by using the viewpoint of an avatar to record in-game staged interactions.
SECOND LIFE

- A virtual world or metaverse where people hang around, chat, or role-play
- Good environment to make a machinima film

WHAT I TRIED TO AVOID

- Making jokes at the expense of women and sexual minorities
- Depicting Mario as the bad guy who embodies patriarchal norms
- BLaming female characters for their hypersexualization
- Reversing gender roles

GOALS

- Sensitize the audience to gender stereotypes in video games
- Test my theory on parody
- Encourage viewers to take part in a collective action
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- Test my theory on parody
- Encourage viewers to take part in a collective action
- Create an educational project with students