

A visual study of characters in video games — The role of half-human in Greek mythology as an example

Bibliographical Reference

'A visual study of characters in video games — The role of half-human in Greek mythology as an example' (2016) *2016 International Conference on Applied System Innovation (ICASI), Applied System Innovation (ICASI), 2016 International Conference on*, p. 1. doi: 10.1109/ICASI.2016.7539744. (**IEEE 2016**)

Topic of reading

A visual study of characters in video games — The role of half-human in Greek mythology as an example

Main points

- Motivation and Purpose for Research
 - Development of Mythological Half-Human Characters
 - Discussion of Medusa in Greek Mythology
- Analysis of Role Design for Video Games
 - Design Elements for Medusa
 - Analysis of Elements of Design for Medusa
- Role Creation
- The singularity and personalities of the half-human monster that is Medusa.

Key terminology

- Omnipresent – Widely or constantly encountered; widespread.
- Serpentine – Of or like a serpent or snake.
- Gorgon – Medusa in another way
- Poignant – Evoking a keen sense of sadness or regret
- Abhorrent – Inspiring disgust and loathing; repugnant.
- Idiosyncrasy – A mode of behaviour or way of thought peculiar to an individual.
- Allusions – An expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference.

Key quotations

Half-human creatures are omnipresent in the history and culture of peoples across the world. (p1/17)

To this day, people tattoo their bodies with mythological characters to make a statement about their personality or status. (p1/17)

Most video games are competitive, and the supernatural abilities of half-human monsters hold great appeal for players to seek to beat all others. (p2/17)

Interestingly, although historical myths make no mention of a snake tail for legs, this characteristic is present in [for Medusa] 90% of the games. (p12/17)

In Greek Myth, Medusa had a pair of wings. But it seems that she doesn't have wings in the twenty video games, which have been studied in my research. That is because she is usually figured with an image of snake and adding wings will ruin and confuse this individuality. (p12/17)

This research serves as reference for game developers of the processes involved in role design (p17/17)

Key references

He Gong-shang, "An Introduction to Western Paintings from Greek and Roman Mythologies" in Taipei: Art Book Co., Ltd., pp. 8-9, 1998. [1]

Fan Li-chang, "A Research on Computer-Assisted Game Avatar Design with the Market Suggestion Feedback Mechanism", Journal of Applied Art and Design, vol. 2, pp. 69-80, 2007. [7]

Overall 500-word summary

When I started to read this article, I thought it would be a comparison among multiple mythological creatures, their usage and such. However, this article was more focused on a singular mythical creature from the popular Greek mythology, Medusa.

They started their article with explaining the involvement of mythical creatures in our cultures, from tattoo arts into video games. "These creatures have also been a constant presence in literature and art. Writers and artists from various traditions have adapted these myths into stories, verses, paintings and sculptures" (*IEEE 2016, p1*) Then they clarify that the Mythical creatures "hold great appeal" to players due to the manoeuvrability of their "supernatural abilities" (*IEEE 2016, p1*)

After, they used a section to describe the story behind Medusa. They explained how Medusa "was a fair maiden and a priestess of Athena who was devoted to a life of celibacy" (*IEEE 2016, p3*) but due to violation towards temple of Athena because of her lust, Athena punished Medusa by transforming her "hair into a nest of venomous snakes, making Medusa abhorrent to gaze upon and exiled her to the end of the world" (*IEEE 2016, p3*). This alone, provides many opportunities for story tellers, such as game designers, to manifest a game idea.

In Section 2, they compare the representation of Medusa within 20 different video games, in respect to their visual design. In the second part of Section 2, they expand the figures they had provided, for example 90% of the designs featured the living snakes in the hair. The most interesting to me was how none of the images gave Medusa wings, like the Mythology does. This change is because "she is usually figured with an image of snake and adding wings will ruin and confuse this individuality." (*IEEE 2016, p12/17*)

In Section 3, they explain the features they decided to keep for their own project. They divided it into four main parts: "Elements derived from mythology" referring to the snake hair, the claws and its gas. "Visual attraction" referring to the attractiveness of Medusa in video games. "Combative capability" referring to body features that would allow her to fight such as tails, other weapons and her claw. "Idiosyncrasy" referring to the compatibility of the character to the game play. From there, they carry on about the design of their own project till Section 4. (*IEEE 2016, p13/17*)

They called Section 4 conclusion, but it felt more like a summery of what they said, but they clarified the post by their last sentence, the aim of their post was so it would "serves as reference for game developers of the processes involved in role design" (*IEEE 2016, p17/17*)

I enjoyed this article in a direction that I don't think it was intended to. The dissertation topic that I had in mind was Mythology in games. I was going to cover the different Mythologies in different games and use that view. However, this paper opened a new door and vision for me, comparing same mythologies in different games. I think it's most interesting when games evolve mythology.