

I have recently become increasingly aware of the types of prejudices and biases that come along with game characters. I recognize that especially in the early stages of game development, it was very prominent. Not only racially biased characters are problematic but video game characters that are hypersexualized make me very uncomfortable as a woman as well. My younger brother is in middle school and he has recently become more and more involved with video games and virtual interactions which make me more aware of what kind of characters he picks and what that says about him. It can be concerning to see options of “bad” characters that he can embody, especially if it is a choice. In games like *Undertale* and a *Transformers* game, my brother has the option to pick being a Decepticon or choose genocide, which I found very concerning. Even though these are simple “constructs” of the game, I think that video game experiences can open scary doors for people. Even though killing in a video game doesn’t feel real because you respawn, there is still a part of you as an individual desensitizing yourself each time you pull a trigger. It is especially concerning in modern warfare style games that have become way too graphic.

Similar to Michael Clune’s feelings, I think that video game characters regardless of appearance, speaks to our own identity in the type of character we choose. Good or bad, we temporarily embody and control that character’s actions but it is a reflection of ourselves to some degree. Even in the simplest of games like Pac-Man, we don’t think of “Pac-Man won! He ate all the cheese, we helped save him!” Instead, we win the game through the lens of Pac-Man’s character or circumstances of his character and choices he must make. I think that is a contributing reason as to why the short film about Kara is so powerful. We can dissociate and ignore actions because it isn’t really a human or we aren’t really killing because it isn’t real, but as the short film shows we are human. Because we have these inherent human traits and feelings, namely empathy (hopefully), we can recognize on screen even if it isn’t real that it is wrong to do in general. Maybe in another video game it would make it harder to pull the trigger if they acted less like NPC’s and more like people. I just believe that the idea of being a character in “just a videogame” can be a dangerous practice.