

SEXISM STUDY ON DRAGON QUEST

Author: Kelp

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ABSTRACT

Els jocs de rol, en anglès role-playing game han estat un gènere de videojocs durant més de trenta anys i, per tant, amb el pas del temps han anat canviant tant com la manera de pensar de la humanitat. És d'esperar trobar canvis en la manera de desenvolupar la història, presentar els personatges i desenvolupar les seves personalitats a mida que la història d'aquests progressen.

Aquest treball se centra en analitzar els personatges i el seu desenvolupament per veure si amb el progrés de moviments com el feminisme, la presència de comportaments o tendències sexistes dins els jocs ha anat disminuint, la qual cosa es veuria reflectida en els gràfics, en la caracterització dels personatge, en la seva evolució dins del joc i en la manera d'explicar la història.

Aquest treball se centra en una franquícia de videojocs que ha romàs en el mercat durant més de 25 anys i encara continua, és *Dragon Quest*, una saga de jocs que porta en el mercat des de 1986. Fou creada i desenvolupada al Japó i allà és molt coneguda, així com als Estats Units, malauradament pel públic europeu no ho és gaire o gens.

Per posar de manifest si els videojocs, en concret *Dragon Quest*, ha evolucionat en la seva concepció del sexisme al llarg del temps, es realitzarà un exhaustiu treball de recerca que consistirà en un anàlisi dels personatges més rellevants en cadascuna de les sagues estudiades i finalment, s'avaluarà la tendència observada classificant-la en sexisme hostil o tradicional i sexisme benvolent.

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1. Glossary

RPG - Role-playing game

MMORPG - Massive Multiplayer Online Role-playing game

NES - Nintendo Entertainment System

Famicom - Family Computer

SNES - Super Nintendo Entertainment System

Super Famicom - Super Family Computer

HP - Hit points/Health points

LGTB - Lesbian Gay Transsexual Bisexual

2. Introduction

As a part of humanity's creative production, the video games, among them Role-playing games manifest the mindset of those who create it, mirroring the creator's mindset. This form of entertainment has changed its way of manifesting itself as the platforms in which they are played on have advanced. This does not only apply to graphics, going from the small and narrow palette-coloured 8-bit sprites to the realistic 3D graphics one can find in a game easily nowadays. Figure 1 shows the evolution of graphics.



Fig. 1. Graphics evolution between 8-bits, left image, and 3D graphics, right image.

Storytelling and character design and development have also advanced as time progressed, akin to how literature changes depending on the age the writer creates their novel, poem or theatre play. The goal of this project is to determine if, with the changes of humanity's way of thinking in the last years, character concepts and development have grown to adapt said changes, eradicating gender discrimination and stereotypes that may still very well be present nowadays but had a stronger influence years ago, such as the lady who stays home taking care of household chores and children without working or studying, or the man who presents a muscular physique and has a stoic personality.

2.1. Motivation

The reason I chose this as my research project topic mainly comes from my Japanese roots, as most of the currently famous series of RPGs are Japanese. The well-known series of Final Fantasy, the Legend of Zelda, Pokémon or Dragon Quest are just a part of the spectre of series developed by Japanese producers and creators within this genre. Another reason why I was motivated to take this topic is my personal

involvement as a consumer of most of said series, playing them as a form of entertainment.

2.2. Scope of the project

This project's aim is to determine whether video games have changed their orientation towards sexism with the pass of time and see if there has been an increase or a decrease of said behaviour if still present.

The hypothesis of this project is that video games are still sexist but there has been a decrease of it.

ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

3. Video games

While it is easy to find RPGs from any age, it is preferable if the same franchise is used to analyse since they're often developed by the same development team in most of its totality, although sometimes creators stop working on the project because of retirement or contract reasons. Since RPGs have been around for more than thirty years, it would be preferable to pick a franchise with such a period of time in the market. Because of this, I will focus on the long-lived franchise of Dragon Quest, which with over 30 years of history and eleven mainline games makes it one of the franchises fit to be analysed. Figure 2 shows some of the Dragon Quest instalments.



Fig. 2. Dragon Quest instalments.

Characters from the games will be analysed based on their dialogues and acting in the games, the setting and context in which the games take place, and the age this game has to determine how has the franchise changed with the pass of the years. Before

analysis, I will contextualize this franchise for better comprehension of the setting, places and characters.

Dragon Quest, formerly known as Dragon Warrior in America, is a franchise that debuted on the Japanese Famicom or its American equivalent, the NES, in 1986 and 1989 respectively. It has had eleven main games and several spin-offs, along with manga and anime created based on the franchise's concept. The games have several constant bases, which are: a Middle Age setting, a hero chosen to fight the last enemy, and monsters being the main enemies.

This franchise was developed by Yuji Horii as the lead designer with Akira Toriyama helping in the graphic aspect of design, creating the official artworks for monsters and humans alike. While most of the mainline games were released worldwide at some point there is one game that never made it overseas to either America and Europe, Dragon Quest X, the only instance of the section it belongs to be an MMORPG, thus making character analysis difficult as the server can only be accessed from Japan officially.

Some kind of distinction within the games of the franchise must be set for them to be evaluated as older or modern instances, since the focus of this project is to determine how sexism evolved with the progress of the world. This division shall be set in between the games that belonged to the NES/Famicom system and SNES/Super Famicom as older instances while the games set on the more recent game platforms such as the Nintendo DS, 3DS and Switch will fall in the modern category.

This makes a clear division between the games ranging from Dragon Quest's first instance to the sixth as 'older' while the instances from the seventh until its latest instance would be classified as modern. While most of the older instances got remakes afterward, some brought to mobile, others to more modern consoles, some even adding content to the original storyline such as the extra chapter 6 added to Dragon Quest IV once it got to the Nintendo DS as remake, the content will be split into modern and old within the character analysed themselves, since posteriorly added content would have been influenced by different things that may have happened afterward or even the changes the artists themselves had, making the circumstances slightly different to how they were originally.

3.1. Dragon Quest

Dragon Quest is a franchise developed by the video game studios Enix, merging with Square to create Square Enix ^[1]. It is a turn-based RPG. The lead creatives in this franchise's development are Yuji Horii, in charge of most of the game designing, Akira Toriyama, in charge of the art and the style the game is drawn in, and Koichi Sugiyama, in charge of the soundtrack. This series has been on the market since 1986 and still has games in development. It has a mainline series and several spin-off series.

The mainline series, usually following the formula of 'Dragon Quest' followed by Roman numbers ranging from I to XI so far. Aside from said title most have an additional title such as 'Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie/Revelation', 'Dragon Quest IX: Sentinels of the Starry Skies' or 'Dragon Quest XI: Echoes of an Elusive Age'. Generally, this part of the series follows the formula of a hero chosen by a god-like entity that is usually young, in some instances such as Dragon Quest III or Dragon Quest IX letting you choose the gender of said hero, but usually being a male and a swordsman.

Most of the heroes can make use of magic in their default class, the only exception being the Prince of Midenhall from Dragon Quest II. All the series have in common the fact that the antagonist is a monster, even if in the past they may have been human, like the cases of Nimzo and Mordegon, and that said antagonist either has multiple forms or has an even more powerful entity ordering them that must be taken down on the final fight. It is common to find the plot twist where the one you believed to be your final enemy was nothing but a minion under the true threat's orders or a much smaller threat compared to the actual final boss of the game.

With the only exception of the first Dragon Quest, the franchise also has a party system that is usually also a preset party of characters with their own personalities, backstories and such. The few exceptions for the present party being such being Dragon Quest III, Dragon Quest IX and possibly Dragon Quest X, being an MMORPG where the player usually has to fight alongside people they meet online in the game.

Among spin-offs there is a particularly long-lasting one, Dragon Quest Monsters. It is a franchise where the hero instead of having a party of humans to fight alongside has a party of monsters with which to accomplish their goals, whether it is winning a tournament or saving the world from a threat. Although with limitations, said party of monsters can be heavily customized in terms of skill sets, naming and even monster

species. The series started with a game named Dragon Quest Monsters (Dragon Warrior Monsters in America) for the NES/Famicom. It featured a young Terry from Dragon Quest VI who adventures in a quest to save his sister who has been kidnapped by a mischievous spirit, namely Warubou.

The series has grown since that one game to have six different games on consoles along with remakes for the two first games in Japan for the 3DS and mobile, transitioning from 2D to 3D graphics the adventures of Terry (Dragon Quest Monsters Terry's Wonderland) and Coby and Tara/Iru and Luka (Dragon Quest Monsters 2: Cobi's Journey/Tara's Adventure/Iru and Luka's Marvelous Mysterious Key SP in the remake); and a few instances on mobile such as Dragon Quest Monsters Super Light.

4. Dragon Quest Characters

The characters shall be picked by their paper (main characters and antagonists) and analysed according to existing official art and in-game behaviour.

4.1. Dragon Quest 1

The game that started it all. It's the first instalment of this long-lived franchise that debuted on the NES. The game's plot is rather simple since it was made for the NES, whose had rather limited abilities so a game of the same complexity as the ones we can find today would be difficult to make.

The game begins with the King giving the quest of defeating the Dragonlord to the hero, named as the player so wishes within a character limit (due to hardware limitations). The player must gather some items before being able to confront the Dragonlord, however. Before Dragonlord's location becomes the player must gather mystical items and save the princess who is hostage of a dragon under Dragonlord's orders. Once all mystic items are gathered, the Rainbow Bridge will appear to link the island the Castle Dragonlord is in with the rest of the overworld and then taking him down becomes possible with enough preparation.

4.1.1. Hero

Taking his appearance into account, the hero is rather stereotypical. He is a muscular man, rather young as well, as you can see in figure 3.



Fig. 3. Hero illustration.

As for his character, there are a pair of instances in Dragon Quest that are worthy of analysing for behavior. The first one comes from the original game in the NES era and posterior remakes that barely change the script. In it the hero takes the task of saving Alefgard, the kingdom the game is set in, in his hands but is eventually given a proposal from the Dragonlord, which will be elaborated on the following paragraphs, to rule the world beside him.

This brings to a splitting in the Dragon Quest timeline since, upon choosing 'Yes' the events of Dragon Quest Builders begin, taking the game's latest canon where the hero tries to convince himself that he is indeed ruling half of the world and not sealed in a fortress called 'half of the world'.

Previous to these events, in the original game, if the hero ever chose yes it would either trigger a game over or make it appear that he was sleeping in the Inn of Rimuldar, the town nearest to the Dragonlord's location, and had a bad dream.

The choice can either make him seem the usual heroic character (choosing 'No' and confronting Dragonlord) or break that stereotype to become a sort of villain/antihero character which used to be good but eventually became 'evil' in the conception of humans since his 'Yes' began a series of catastrophic events that made Alefgard fall.

There is one final choice in the game, which doesn't actually give you much of a choice since it's for setting the premises of the sequel, which is marrying the princess and leaving the kingdom to posteriorly create an even greater one overseas. If you choose 'No' in this instance the princess will insist by saying 'But thou must!' forcing you to choose yes and thus making the credits appear, signalling the game's end.

4.1.2. Princess Gwaelin

The usual case of damsel in distress, who is kidnapped by the antagonist and held hostage until the hero comes to her rescue. She does not fight canonically, which deems her useless in the game aside from changing a few things for the plot.

She is a classic middle age princess, which aligns rather well with the setting of the game. She does, however, differ a bit from the usual princess since she decided to move out of the kingdom to create another one with the hero as her husband and this fact set the premises for the sequel. (Setting the premises for the sequel.)

Figure 4 shows an image of Princess Gwaelin. She is a red-haired lady who sports a long and slightly puffy at the end hairstyle. She has a thin figure over which she wears a pastel yellow dress tied with a blue ribbon. She wears long white gloves, blue shoes and golden jewellery with possibly sapphires and rubies adorning the pieces.



Fig. 4. Princess Gwaelin image.

Gameplay from the original game shows little to none Gwaelin interactions, at most depicting her relationship with her father, who loves her dearly, and the hero, with whom she fell in love and married apparently. Future instances, however do show some of her personality in more depth, such as Dragon Quest Builders, picturing her as a lady with a strong resolution, being able to turn herself to stone just so Dragonlord couldn't get to her, and Dragon Quest Monsters Terry's Wonderland SP, depicting her as a damsel waiting for a knight to save her.

4.1.3. Dragonlord

This character is the antagonist of the game and the one who orchestrated most of the monsters' deeds in the game. He is a powerful wizard that can become a dragon, as seen in his final boss fight. Figure 5 shows images of Dragonlord as a wizard and as a dragon.

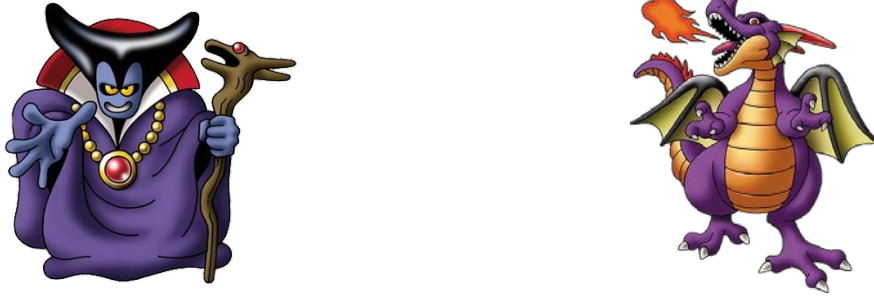


Fig. 5. The Dragonlord characterized as a wizard, left image, and as a dragon, right one.

While he is known throughout all of the kingdom not much is elaborated regarding his personality, the intentions behind his deeds being mostly political. Among the things he has done the most important ones are: stealing the Light Orb to plunge the world into darkness, kidnap the princess of the kingdom and the destruction of Damdara. Future instances do, however, elaborate on him seeking a strong enough rival to test his power and intellect on and his view towards humankind (being mostly if not only heroes the ones he treats with respect aside from monster masters).

4.2. Dragon Quest II. Luminaries of the Legendary Line /Pantheon of Evil Spirits

Dragon Quest II is the second instalment of the series, taking place 100 years after the first. The plot of this game becomes far more complex, dealing with a much more xpanse story mode thanks to the expansion of the map beyond Alefgard, occupying the continent and Kingdom of Torland.

The plot is still rather simple as it is to take down the high priest of a religious cult which destroyed Moonbrooke and took down its king and people. This game is the first to feature a party in the whole franchise, it being all three Descendants of Erdrick and heirs to the crown of their respective kingdoms.

The player must control the Prince of Midenhall throughout Torland, meeting his companions, the Prince of Cannock being needed to advance in the game and the Princess of Moonbrooke completely optional, and gathering the five sigils to obtain Rubiss's Charm, granted by the goddess herself.

The player must also obtain the False Idol (known as Eye of Malroth in the NES) to access the mountain system where the last dungeon of the game is in.

Upon being slain, Hargon introduces a twist that became recurring in the series since, as opposed to resorting to a second form, he called upon his god, whom he deeply believes in, to give way to the final battle of the game.

4.2.1. Prince of Midenhall

In the Japanese Famicom version of Dragon Quest II, the Prince has a child-like appearance, as some other of his fellow companions in the early times of Dragon Quest. Said looks eventually change to become those of a late teenager/young adult who is muscular, wears a blue sleeveless tunic with a black long-sleeved bodysuit, blue boots and a blue cap with goggles, as you can see in figure 6.



Fig. 6. Prince of Midenhall image.

He can wield either swords and shields or broadswords and is unable to use magic. This does give the impression he has quite some physical strength, sometimes putting some emphasis on that in the 4Koma series of comics. Out of his personality, which is almost completely defined by the player, a strong sense of justice or thirst for revenge can be seen in the initial scene as he takes on voluntarily on the mission to stop Hargon without not even a request of his father, King of Midenhall.

4.2.2. Prince of Cannock

Prince of Cannock is the cousin of the Prince of Midenhall who lives in the nearby kingdom of Cannock, which he is heir to. He is shorter than the Prince of Midenhall but taller than his other cousin the Princess of Moonbrooke. The figure 7 shows his appearance. He has shaggy orangish red hair, and wears black clothing on top of which he wears an orange cape and green tabard with the Crest of Erdrick.



Fig. 7. Prince of Cannock picture.

He wields swords and shields and can use magic. He also wears green gloves and green shoes, as well as goggles on his head (much like his cousin). In the Japanese version and posterior American versions (any save for the NES one) the prince is described as a slacker, a drinker and an overall fun guy, whereas the American NES version described him as a studious young man immersed in his own studies.

4.2.3. Princess of Moonbrooke

She is shorter than both of her cousins, Prince of Midenhall and Prince of Cannock. Depending on the art, she has either blonde or lavender hair, in both instances being long and slightly curly. Also depending on the version, she wears a pink or red hood with Erdrick's Crest on it. She wears a white robe with red trimming at the end of the sleeves and the hem of her dress as well, wrapping around her torso neatly forming her thin and slightly curvy silhouette, as you can see in figure 8. Underneath said dress she has pink boots.



Fig. 8. Two versions of Princess of Moonbrooke characterization.

Her American design changes considerably, although it will not be treated by the already divergent design in the Japanese versions. In the game she stars in with her cousins she comes across as shy but strong-willed, and decides to take revenge on

Hargon for what he did to her homeland and father. She is physically weak but can use strong magic.

4.2.4. Hargon

Hargon or Hargon the Great, as he called himself upon encountering him in at least the NES version, is a mad priest who leads a cult responsible for the events of Dragon Quest II/2, Luminaries of the Legendary Line. He seeks summoning his god to bring forth destruction upon the Kingdom of Torland, which was eventually split into three subkingdoms (Moonbrooke, Midenhall and Cannock), one of which falls in the beginning of the game (Moonbrooke).

In overall appearance Hargon is blue-skinned, has fins and a helmet, the fins being part of the helmet or not not being elaborated in game canon, is of a rather thin completion. He has a rather hunched neck which angles to a possibly perfect 90 degrees from the original neck position and wears a poncho and sandals and possibly something akin to an elastic fabric bodysuit underneath.



Fig. 9. Hargon illustration.

Again, we are met with something rather curious and unexpected, as he is neither elderly nor strong, which makes it curious to know how he got his cult so vast without that much time or strength to begin with, he must probably have the gift of the word.

His title of priest carries over half well to his moveset, as priests tend to specialize in healing and support magic, whereas Hargon also knows offensive explosive spells. He does know healing spells and support spells, which do line up with his class. He also knows a breath attack, which is rather curious taking his appearance into account.

Hargon is devoted to the cult in such way he is found praying when the fight that begins the endgame begins and is disposed to sacrifice himself to bring forth Malroth, the god he worships after failing to defeat the descendants of Erdrick as a last-ditch effort to achieve his goals and finishing the ones who put an end to his plans.

There is also further development much posteriorly to Dragon Quest II, 30 years or more later, in the form of the sequel of Dragon Quest Builders, known as Dragon Quest Builders 2. In the game Hargon is already long dead as well as Malroth it seemed but upon being in the wreckage of a ship, the builder protagonist of the game ends up in a deserted island with an amnesiac boy named Malroth. In figure 10 Lulu, pink-haired girl; Malroth, boy with the ponytail, and the builder, white-haired boy, are listening to the Hairy Hermit in the deserted island, who in turn grants the place they are in to the builder.



Fig. 10. Screenshot of Dragon Quest Builders 2.

Posteriorly, upon adventuring further into the game small dialogues between Malroth and Hargon, who is currently sealed within the Master of Destruction's body most presumably, appear. During the game's finale, Hargon reveals himself to be very much alive in the world they're in, as it turns out it's his own illusion world he used on the original mainline game to distract the Scions (the protagonists from Dragon Quest II) which they only managed to evade by using Rubiss' charm, a key item that when used dispels the illusion and reveals the true form of the Hall of Hargon.

None of the residents nor Hargon himself know how the world managed to stand for so long with its creator long dead, nor does Hargon know how Malroth and the builder ended up meeting, as the builder's only paper in the priest's plans was to have them build so Malroth's power could grow.

Hargon shows himself to be short-tempered and rather young compared to his fellow monsters that accompany him on the boss tag within at least the trilogy, who are mostly elderly men. He is especially good at psychological manipulation at least within the illusion, as shown in how despaired the humans within it are and how even Malroth himself believed all what the priest said, eventually making him believe that he'd killed all of his friends, making him turn into the monster he used to be in the real world.

He is also shown to be able to go through great lengths to get his revenge as seen on how willing he was to destroy both worlds completely only to have all what the Scions believed in destroyed and even admitted to be eager to see how he himself was destroyed.

He also has unwavering faith in the god of destruction he knows, shown as how he insisted on having Malroth turn into his godly form and destroy everything to the point he pressed until Malroth gave in and eventually, once the human side and the monster side of the god separated he remained next to the monstrous god until his last breath, but not before being somewhat swayed by the words of the, how he and the monster form called him, 'vestige', ending in his last words being that they show him the power of friendship for him to consider what the human proposed.

On figure 11 the green monster is Malroth's god incarnation (a monster) and the human with a black ponytail is what said being calls 'a vestige'.



Fig. 11. The two incarnations of Malroth.

4.2.5. Malroth

In Dragon Quest Builders 2, Malroth is a tanned young man with a long-sleeved short jacket, orange pants and red boots, gloves and belt with a skull medallion in the middle of said belt. He has a necklace made of fangs around his neck, his dark hair tied into a rather voluminous ponytail, pointed ears and red eyes. In his original appearance being a green-scaled lizard like creature with a snake tail and wings that resemble a bat as well as four arms and two legs each with three fingers with three sharp claws at the end of each and a pair of horns and fins on his head. Figure 12 shows Malroth's appearance.



Fig. 12. Malroth images as a human, left image, and as monster, right one.

Throughout the game Malroth experiences a lot of character development, since he remembers nothing from before his life in the deserted island and after clearing the game he has learned about his true identity.

At first he is rather tactless and sometimes unintentionally rude, with a rather violent attitude due to his status as god of destruction, but eventually, as his friendship with the builder develops and he begins learning about the world and concepts such as dreams or love, his personality begins changing, still being blunt and straightforward, somewhat violent and often, due to the enjoyment he feels when fighting, reckless and with very little foresight of the consequences of his actions.

He does not like what he discovered about his past self nor Hargon for that matter, who behaved with a highly manipulating attitude throughout their encounter, and is willing to change and begin his new life as a human, with or without a god status as it is unknown if said status was sacrificed upon making the illusion real in the final cutscene of the main story, and a builder and wants other former members from the Children of Hargon, a religion Hargon created, who previously opposed building, to try out the new lifestyle at the Isle of Awakening along with the human population, getting mad at them for not participating on chores such as building.

4.3. Dragon Quest III. Seeds of Salvation/Into the Legend

The third instalment and one of the most popular among the Japanese. This game was the first to introduce a customizable party and the ability to choose the hero's gender. The plot continues to become more elaborate and solid in the third instalment, giving way to a more elaborate storyline to settle the base of the previously majoritarily unknown legendary hero and their deeds.

The story begins in the hero's sixteenth birthday, the day he or she will receive the blessing of the king to go on an adventure as well as the request to take down

Archfiend Baramos, a quest that their father, Ortega, took on but alas, he failed because he fell into a volcano (which is later revealed to be a death in the hands of King Hydra, one of Zoma's strongest minions upon discovering that the volcano was simply a way to descend to the world the true enemy is in). To evade having the hero commit the same mistake as their father, the king suggests that they visit the tavern and make themselves a party, which is, again, optional for the player to do so. The hero's first task will be then, get to Baramos' Lair and take him down, but it will not be the last.

Upon taking him down Aliahan, the kingdom of origin of the hero, celebrates their victory, but not for long since Zoma, the Great Archfiend and Baramos' superior, reveals himself and the hero is tasked with taking him down, for which they travel to the dark world via the opening Baramos' death created and fought their way in Alefgard to Zoma's Citadel, in which the hero and their party confront the Great Archfiend and his minions.

4.3.1. Baramos

This character is an old reptile-looking monster whose appearance is anything but terrifying for many. As seen in a front view, Baramos has something akin to a lizard mouth or a bird's beak as a mouth, seemingly toothless. He also has some round eyes that are usually narrowed, glaring at the player. On top of his head there is something akin to a horn and the little bits of hair he has, as you can see in figure 13.



Fig. 13. Baramos' face.

His figure is rather round, although whether this is due to the clothing or his physique remains a mystery since you can't get a peek on what's beneath. He wears lime green robes and a purplish pink cape put together with an eye-shaped clipping. He wears a necklace consisting of something that are most presumably pearls and a red gem with gold surrounding it in all directions except the front being at the center. All four

extremities seem to be short and each has three fingers. Whether he has a tail or not is unknown, although his reptile look would suggest he does. Figure 14 shows the entirety of Baramos' appearance.



Fig. 14. Baramos illustration.

An overall examination once again brings to the conclusion that he is not the type of monster one would expect to be the final enemy, although that is proven to be true after defeating him the whole game up until then makes you believe Baramos is your last enemy to face. Even though he does not meet similar features as his fellow companions of the Erdrick trilogy that fall into the 'fake final boss' category.

Baramos uses a fire and explosion-based moveset and recovers HP each turn. He also knows the confusion-inducing spell and has a move that expels the party from battle. He has low agility, possibly hinting he is rather on the slow side but is strong both physically and magically attacking as well as counting with a rather good defence, a clear example that appearance can fool as Baramos looks like anything but physically strong upon first sight.

4.3.2. Zoma

The word cold fits this character well in both moveset and overall personality described in the game. This monster bears a striking resemblance to a corpse, although he is light-blue-skinned. He is somewhat tall, and has an orange robe with a purplish armour and a black helmet with red markings and yellowish horns as well as a somehow functional third eye on it.

He has a cape in a similar color as that of Baramos' and some kind of garment over his orange robe that is black, white, red and the same color as that of the armour and cape. Over it he wields a necklace that ends in a skull, all of it a yellowish tone. He wields a similar piece of gear as a collar as Dragonlord but his being white with red trimming. Figure 15 exhibits the entirety of Zoma's appearance.



Fig. 15. Zoma picture.

His entire moveset is ice-based with few exceptions like disruptive wave, a move that debuted with him that nullifies all buffs cast on the party, and bounce, a spell that allows a party member to bounce the spells back to the caster, when he has his shield on.

Zoma can come across as cold and arrogant when speaking prior to his defeat, and upon his defeat he shows himself noble enough to congratulate the hero and his party for defeating him as well as predicting the next threat in Alefgard, the kingdom in which the first instalment of the series and part of the third take place in, in the times where the hero is either too old or long dead to face: the Dragonlord, who, 100 years later would try to conquer Alefgard only to be stopped by a descendant of the hero, posteriorly known as Erdrick.

Zoma's size as seen in the Monsters spin-off is generally superior to that of a human, making the most adequate size comparison for him a wardrobe. He can certainly strike as intimidating, which can be attributed to both appearance and speech, which although poetic is sinisterly tinged with death and darkness as main topics. Zoma does meet some overall stereotypes as a villain but is not nearly as generic as to say he is indeed a stereotype of villain in particular, as there are some quirks mainly exclusive of him alone.

He is so antagonized with light he is hurt by light and healing spells themselves, which makes him possibly the only final boss in the whole franchise with such weakness, this applies to medicinal herbs as well, dealing him a random amount of damage within a set interval. Zoma is also the first one to set something most bosses will have afterward: attacking more than once per turn, more concretely twice this time around, as well as disruptive wave, a move common in bosses of the series.

Considering the already high attack stat he wields and the initial shield which has to be removed for any form of spells to be effective on him with the orb of light, an item granted by Rubiss when she is freed from her stone prison, this makes him an even

bigger threat, although he has limited points required to use skills and spells, which tend to be the key to victory. Adding on top of that the regeneration trait he shares with Baramos, this is a complicated boss to deal with which will require a lot of planning beforehand.

As expected from a final villain that will set the bases for a legend which will be remembered for at least 200 years he is strong and doesn't fear to show that power; even appearing, although only from voice, in the homeland of the hero to mock them for believing they'd achieved ultimate peace by defeating Baramos, making the king of Aliahan despair upon the arrival of an old yet new threat.

He was powerful enough to plunge an entire kingdom into darkness and able to break a sword made of the hardest metal through the prolonged effort of three years feeding out of the despair and suffering of the kingdom's inhabitants. With an intimidating appearance to match his power he meets the expectations of a being that is supposed to be the last one you face in your journey.

4.3.3. Erdrick as a female

There is an interesting take on picking the feminine gender for the Dragon Quest III protagonist and it is that due to the usage of the exact same sprite, the king will accidentally confuse the daughter of Ortega for a boy at the beginning of the game when granting her permission to set forth and take down Baramos. Although this is just an in-game joke, it carries over rather well to concept art, where the male and female hero mainly are differentiated because the female has more chest volume, but, it is not by much, as you can see in figure 16.



Fig. 16. Erdrick image.

This although being a small joke changes a bit the analysis of the character it's implanted since the female seems rather ambiguous in terms of gender. The other, although more subtle differences of the character designs between male and female

are the slight shine on the girl's eyes and the direction the hair spikes up towards shown in the figure 16.

Needless to say it is rather unusual to see a female figure in the paper of hero inside the old school games, the other prominent example within RPGs of the NES era being probably the Princess of Moonbrooke from Dragon Quest II , although she can be completely skipped and left at Moonahan, a town within Moonbrooke's territory as opposed to female Erdrick, being the character you control and the only mandatory character within the party throughout the whole game. She is then the first figure in at least the Dragon Quest franchise to be a heroine who fights from the beginning to the end.

Female characters will also become more story relevant, often linked directly with the hero's party if they're not the hero themselves. The heroine known as Erdrick after Zoma's defeat, seemingly remembered as a man afterward, although that may be due to the fact this prequel comes after the two games that take place afterward in the in-game universe, then is a woman who will fight both Baramos and Zoma with a party (or not, after all party customization is left to the player's choice and can pretty much leave Aliahan, the hero's kingdom of origin without one) to set the bases of a legend. This ultimately breaks the Middle Age lady stereotypes in a sense, since it's a woman who will pass to history, unsurprisingly remembered as a man, something that is joked upon even within the game, and will set the bases to a legend by fighting her way through, accompanied or alone, two prominent strong enemies.

4.4. Dragon Quest IX. Sentinels of the starry skies

Dragon Quest IX is the ninth instalment of the franchise's mainline, being one of the few instalments in a handheld device from mainline. The storytelling of this instance is slightly different due to Level 5, a video game studio, taking part in the development as well. It is the second instalment to feature a fully customizable party and hero, this time even allowing you to alter their appearance within a bunch of set hairstyles, skin tones, etc.

The story starts off with the hero being put to test by their mentor, Aquila, to achieve their title of guardian. They are both Celestians, creatures created by the Almighty, a god, to protect humans and gather Benevolence to restore Yggdrasil to her original form, Celestria.

Once the hero has proved their worth, they will be sent to patrol their area of the Protectorate, the world the humans live in, and so they bring a piece of Benevolence to Yggdrasil that when offered makes Fyggs appear within her branches. It is then the Observatory, the place where Yggdrasil and the Celestians are, is attacked and all Fyggs fall to the Protectorate as well as the Starflight Express, in charge of bringing the fruits to the Almighty and a few Celestians, among them the hero.

The hero reappears in Angel Falls without their wings and halo, thus unable to return to the Observatory by flying. The hero eventually meets Stella after helping a young lady who'd come from a nearby kingdom to seek for Patty, a girl who was in charge of the Inn and was giving the hero a place to stay. After proving Stella that they were indeed a Celestian Stella agrees to help them reach the Observatory again. With that goal in mind, the hero and Stella set forth on a journey and begin helping people to charge the Starflight Express by gaining back some of the hero's Celestian power by gaining Benevolence.

At the Observatory the hero and Stella discover the fate of most of it and the hero pleads Yggdrasil to give them back their wings and halo. That does not happen but Yggdrasil gives the hero a quest: to recover all Fyggs and bring them back to her. And thus the hero departs again in search of the fallen Fyggs, having to aid the mortals with some problems the fruits caused. While they were going back, the Express is assaulted by Aquila who, being the hero's superior, cannot be hurt by them, making the hero crashland again and all Fyggs to be taken by the Celestian. After returning to the Observatory to report Aquila's treason it is revealed that he was, in fact, a double agent and that the fruits are safe and sound since they were delivered to the Observatory by the aforementioned Celestian.

Around the same time the hero discovers that the attacks to the Observatory and the Starflight Express are Corvus' fault and the hero must find him and defeat him, however, this implies the hero must sacrifice their position as Celestian and become a mortal since Corvus is a superior of the hero as a Celestian. The adventure ends with Corvus' death and reunion with his beloved, leading to a happy ending for most.

4.4.1. Aquila

An angel-like man that is part of the Celestians, a species created by the Almighty that resembles the angels depicted in religions such as Christianity. He is bald, slightly tanned and strong-looking. He is named after a constellation. He is loyal to the point of even becoming a double agent willingly to spy for the Celestians in the Gittish Empire, the main enemy of the game.

He is hard-working, as proved by him being one of the top Celestians in the Observatory, he is also brave, willing to take the risk of spying in the enemy's lines. Figure 17 shows an Aquila's image who wears a black bodysuit with a blue jacket and skirt-like underpiece. He also wears yellow boots that go up to right below his knee.



Fig. 17. Aquila illustration.

4.5. Dragon Quest XI. Echoes of an elusive age

Dragon Quest XI, the eleventh instalment of the franchise and the latest in the market so far. The game is generally divided in three acts:

The first act, where the Luminary discovers his purpose and what he has to do as well as reuniting the party, this act ends with the fall of Yggdrasil, the world tree.

The second act, where the world is devastated and the Luminary must help bring back peace to the world, this act ends with either Mordegon's fall or with the time travel to the past.

The third act is that in which the hero travels to the past to save the world like he should have and evade the mass slaughter.

4.5.1. Jade

Jade is the princess of Heliodor, first encountered in a tournament with the grandfather of the Luminary. She has her hair tied in a high ponytail, which is also extremely elongated, her default outfit being a lime green and black attire consisting of a top that

ties around her neck with a choker, some shorts and sort of cape that wraps around her waist, fingerless gloves and high-heeled knee-high boots, as you can see in figure 18. She would fall into the femme fatale category, a kind of lady who breaks the usual stereotype and weapons her attributes, usually used against a hero. Although this time benefitting the hero, at least while she wasn't controlled by Booga, the spectral sentinel.



Fig. 18. Jade image.

She is a warrior princess specialist in martial arts, spear, claws, and attacks that use her feminine attractiveness to fool humans and monsters alike. Her character-type is referenced by an attack's name, which is literally named 'Femme fatale' and is available after freeing her of Booga's mind control in the second act. Booga being one of the high ranking minions of Mordegon, who manages a casino and falls for Jade. Her controlled jinxed form, a skill unlocked upon breaking the curse Booga put on her, is also localized as 'mujer fatal' (femme fatale) in the Spanish localization, once again referencing her character type. She is a reminder of it specially under Booga's control as she will prominently use moves akin to puff-puff on the hero's party, a skill within the action commands when in the hero party usually that can be picked as a move when fighting with her in the attacking party.

She ultimately breaks the usual princess stereotype, being a warrior princess instead of one who is generally captured and rendered defenceless by the villain, something that seems recurring in princess tales. Her behavior with the Luminary is rather sisterly, she herself admits she sees him as a kind of little brother although they do not share the same blood. Jade is rather protective of the 16 year old hero, being disposed to take him in her arms, falling together into a river once he is knocked out and falling after confronting Heliodorian soldiers, who were chasing the Luminary ever since he escaped prison with Erik.

4.5.2. Sylvando

This is a character whose gender is rather ambiguous although his personality falls into the trans and gay stereotypes that Japan has. This is both a step and not in including the LGTB collective in the games possibly, as it is not cleared that he indeed is wither transexual or homosexual in game although the name adopted by his character in Japanese (Sylvia/Silvia) could suggest so. Figure 19 shows Sylvando's image.



Fig. 19. Sylvando picture.

He comes across as a cheerful and chivalrous character who wants to make people smile and thus, became part of a circus, running away from his future as a knight back in his home, although that won't stop him of eventually coming back in the third act seeking help to obtain the necessary power to support the party in the upcoming fight against Calasmos, the final boss, meeting his father again and alongside Hendrik, a party member who joins rather late in the game, defeating two golden gigantes, giant monsters who take on the appearance of cyclops, that helped each of them learn a skill tree of their own.

Sylvando is very supportive and warm with his companions, even generously offering his boat humbly, not even mentioning the size of the ship was considerably big in comparison to that the Luminary and his current party consists of a thief and a pair of twins who come from a small village to find and support the Luminary as the old Luminary's companion reincarnation, might have imagined.

Although he is not the usual attractive character you'd find in a game of the same setting as Dragon Quest he uses a moveset that is somehow similar to that of Jade's using his flamboyant character to make enemies get stunned with his charms. He tends to use the word darling to refer to the Luminary and his party. He likes hearing his friends use the shortened name of 'Sylv' to direct to him. In Japanese he uses the

pronoun 'atashi' (あたし) which generally is used only by women but can also extend to feminine men, a category he certainly falls in.

4.5.3. Veronica

She is the mage twin of Serena, who got her magical power absorbed and as she fought back she lost age until she was reduced to the physical age of a child, around 10 years old judging from her appearance. This caused her to get into quite some fights when she was alone, once trying to enter a bar and getting kicked out for her child-like appearance although she is very much an adult, her true age being 18-19.

She tends to have a brash character which often implies quite some sass which makes her clash with many like the bartender or Erik, the first companion of the Luminary. Despite this personality, and all criticizing she speaks because of it, she cares deeply about her companions, as seen when they encounter her dead body in Arboria upon returning to regain territory and power to defeat Mordegon, the main antagonist of the game, and Jasper, who turned into the Captain of the Spectral Sentinels.

The Luminary witnesses the very moment that Erdrea, the world the game takes place, fell into the darkness because Mordegon absorbed Yggdrasil's power, Yggdrasil being the World Tree and deity of the human population, where he sees that the reason he and his comrades except for Veronica were safe was because the latter sacrificed herself in a last-ditch effort to save the hero she swore to protect along with the companions that would help him take the Dark One down.

This brings her to a mixture of a sisterly and tomboyish character that also differs from what is the general role of a Middle Age lady, or a child for that matter, getting heavily involved in a fight that will ultimately end up in the death of the final boss, Calasmos. She is blonde, her hair arranged into a pair of braids. She wears a white smock with a red dress over it and a red hood matching the dress. Her outfit is completed by two blue bracelets and a pair of boots, as you can observe in figure 20. Here we see, as per usual with twins, that the two sisters wear matching outfits but with heavily contrasting colors like the two sisters' personalities which are rather opposed in dynamics.



Fig. 20. Veronica illustration.

4.5.4. Serena

Serena is the twin of Veronica and the more soft-spoken and visibly kind of the twins. She is kind-hearted to the point she is very naïve, causing her sister to worry about her. She is probably the motherly friend of the group, often trying to look after the whole party and showing concern if anything is wrong.

Upon the second act, she hits major character development, causing her to become more determined and brave than she used to be after thinking about Veronica's death for a while and finally, in a last act of letting go of the past and show some change, cutting her hair, also prompting for Veronica's power to flow into her and become akin to the sage class throughout the remaining part of the second act. In the third act, however, since it involves time travel, she loses said development in exchange for saving Veronica and many more lives lost when Yggdrasil fell. Some early concepts showed that it was requested for her to wear a miniskirt.

She has blond hair, long at the first and third act, at least before the Luminary requests for Serena to have another haircut, and short towards the end of the second act. As you can see in figure 21, she wears a long white dress and a green kirtle with an orange skirt on top of it all. She also wears a pair of earrings, a necklace and a hairband. Underneath the dress she wears orange socks and a pair of boots.



Fig. 21. Serena images.

4.5.5. Jasper

He is a cold-hearted tactician who has secured victory more than once thanks to his skills, even if they had a narrow number of soldiers in comparison to the opposing forces. Jasper is jealous of his childhood friend Hendrik for being more well-liked than him, leading him to follow Mordegon and aiding him in his plans to conquer Erdrea as a way to become stronger as a way of getting rid of that jealousy perhaps. Jasper and Hendrik's relationship proves to be that of admiration towards one another which led into both following a path of their own very different one from the other, Jasper betraying the Kingdom of Heliodor upon becoming the Captain of the Spectral Sentinels and turned into a demon.

He is rather proud of his own skills, but as seen from the jealousy that appeared upon witnessing Hendrik was more loved, he craved attention to his character, something he never got as a human. Jasper has three different forms, the first of which is his human self: A young-looking blond warrior with a long ponytail and small yellow eyes. He wears a silver and gold suit of armour over chainmail and white boots and pants. He also wields a cape the outer part of which is white while the inside is a hot pink. He looks somewhat attractive at least thinking about the classic kind of attractiveness, although the long ponytail he has somewhat breaks that stereotype a bit, as you can see in figure 22.



Fig. 22. Jasper illustration.

As his monster self his skin becomes a light purplish color and he has white hair. His outfit takes on a major change, becoming a black, red and golden adorned noble-like outfit. That outfit resembles that of a previous villain named Dhoulmagus who in turn resembled a jester, although Jasper's is way fancier and more ornate in appearance.

This outfit consists of a tank top-like jacket with a collar which is red and gold, a coat that ends in a pattern similar to that of a jester's outfit that is colored in black, red and gold, which seems to be worn over a black and golden armour which at the same time is worn over black pants and red socks ending with boots that have a scheme involving the three main colors of the outfit again and a belt wielding the spectral sentinels' emblem, as you can observe in figure 23. His position in Mordeon's ranks and his appearance make him seem a rather high-class noble.



Fig. 23. Jasper as a monster.

The figure 24 shows the last form, which is only adopted once he fights the Luminary and his party in the Fortress of Fear, is named his 'Unbound' form, in which he takes on an appearance of a very muscular demon with his long white hair untied, fur on his forearms, covering from his waist to his thighs and from his knee to his ankle as well as the initial section of his tail. He preserves the lavender-colored skin and now has pointed ears, black horns and spikes coming out of certain parts of his body, long black claw-like nails, and a pair of bat-like wings. He also has the Silver Orb stuck right in the middle of his chest.

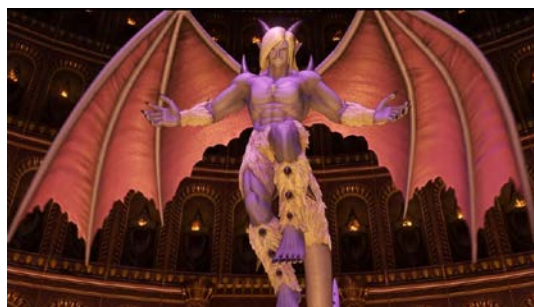


Fig. 24. Unbound, the last form of Jasper.

4.5.6. Hendrik

Hendrik is Jasper's friend and the general of Heliodor's offensive forces, he is what in terms of RPG fights would be called a tank, someone with high defence and HP that takes the hits for his companions. Hendrik excels at brute force, being a strong well-built individual able to wield greatswords, as well as swords and axes. In terms of strategy he pales in comparison to Jasper though, and has always looked up to him in that aspect.

He is childhood friends with the blond tactician although their nomination of soldiers split them and brought them down different paths that would eventually end up in them standing on opposite sides of the same battlefield. He is a knight with great skill, sense of duty and unwavering loyalty towards Heliodor, which brought him to believe that the Luminary was evil since his own king, although possessed by Mordegon, had said so. After the truth about that situation came to light, though, he swore to become the Luminary's shield and began accompanying him in his adventures in both the second and third act. Despite the lack of communication between the general and the tactician of the army on an emotional level, Hendrik cared deeply about his jealous friend and often wished he'd seen how tormented Jasper was over his popularity. He has a strong sense of self-sacrifice in regards to his allies, able to put their lives in priority over his own when a deadly situation comes to play, which is particularly noted in his moveset. Despite this chivalrous attitude he has a more hidden perverted side, as proved with his reaction to the volume of the Ogler's Digest Rab carried within his personage.

Hendrik is a tall and muscular man who wears a suit of armour that contrasts greatly with that of Jasper's being black and golden as opposed to the silver and golden one Jasper wears. Underneath the armour he wears chainmail, black pants and black boots. He also wields a black cape with the inside side being blood red. His hair is light purple and is all swept back save for a lock that faces forward that is shoulder-length. He has a goatee as well of the same colour as well as teal eyes. His facial features are rather on the sharp side, as you can see in figure 25.



Fig. 25. Hendrik image.

4.5.7. Rab

He is an elderly man who is initially met as a merchant that is participating in the Octagonian tournament alongside Jade for which he offered the prize: a branch related to the World Tree Herself. When the duo is met afterward in the ruins of the kingdom of Dundrasil, he reveals himself to be the grandfather of the Luminary and the previous King of Dundrasil. Both Jade and Rab speak about what happened sixteen years before the current situation to the Luminary, both of them happy to see the young Prince of Dundrasil again.

Rab is an affable old man with thick accent typical of Dundrasil, although he has a more perverted side Jade and Bodhisattva Pang disapprove of, an issue of a magazine called 'The Ogler's Digest' being the proof of this side. Although he is an elderly man, he still shows great skills in both martial arts and magic. His appearance is that of an elderly round man with bushy eyebrows and a rather sizable mustache. He wears a red fez, a white shirt, a red coat with golden trimming, a black sash, orange pants and a pair of boots. He also carries a rather big backpack and uses a cane to walk. Figure 26 shows Rab's appearance.



Fig. 26. Rab picture.

4.5.8. Erik

Erik is a thief who ended up in prison after stealing the Red Orb since the Seer told him he'd earn forgiveness if he did so, meeting the Luminary 'underground' as he was told. He's gruff, sometimes striking as rude because of that. Outside of that prominent side of his personality he is kind and compassionate, as shown whenever his family or friends are in trouble, especially shown in a XI S side story regarding his whereabouts after the fall of Yggdrasil.

As you can observe in figure 27, Erik is a young man with spiky light blue hair with a single lock facing forward instead of backwards. He wears a pair of earrings, a necklace made of dark blue with a purplish tinge beads, a hooded dark-green tunic, blue trousers and a pair of leather shoes with orange socks. He has a hot pink sash which he uses to carry around his dagger. His figure is rather thin but well-built nonetheless.



Fig. 27. Erik illustration.

4.5.9. The Luminary

A 18 year old male who grew up in a small village with his childhood friend Gemma until he discovers he wields the mark of the hero chosen by Yggdrasil, the World Tree. He then sets forth in an adventure to defeat a great evil, but not without discovering first he is the Prince of Dundrasil right after escaping prison with Erik.

Throughout the whole first part of the adventure the Luminary discovers more of his past as Prince of Dundrasil, primarily via Rab and Jade, the two people who were with him the very day Dundrasil fell of all of the party members in the first act. In the final scene of the first act, the Luminary is met with some sort of wall of impotence, being unable to stop Jasper and Mordegon of stripping Yggdrasil of her power and ultimately ending it in a massive catastrophe that doomed most of Erdrea.

In the beginning of the second act the young prince awakens in Nautica, the kingdom of mermaids transformed into a fish. Alongside the queen of mermaids he discovers what has been of the world he tried to save during his unconscious state, it has been plunged into darkness and reduced to a mere shadow of what it used to be, despair and suffering being prominent words in the description.

This, of course, makes the Luminary feel powerless, especially considering his last face off with Mordegon, in which he lost all of his companions. This ultimately ends in him bursting into tears when he is literally fished out of the water by a fisher who lived near Heliodor and Cobblestone, the village he was raised in. Eventually he stumbles into a very changed Cobblestone which had been pointed to him as the last safe place. There he meets the inhabitants of the village, among them Gemma, and the royal guard and king of Heliodor among others. Hendrik is quick to apologize about his actions in the first act, which he deeply regrets and wants to help in any way he can to atone for his past mistakes. The Luminary throughout this second act felt a deep feeling of impotence in front of the powerful monster forces, thinking he had been stripped of his status as hero but is eventually proved wrong by the Seer's words, eventually getting his powers returned to him.

This, of course, left a small incognita since the Sword of Light had been taken and corrupted by Mordegon and it was the sword he was supposed to use to rid Erdrea of the looming evil. Eventually he discovers that the first sword was made and that if he got oricalcon from the Battlefield he'd be able to forge a new one. With that and the flute to bring Cetacia forth the hero confronts Mordegon to get rid of the evil monster, but this isn't his last quest.

After finding the ruins of an old civilization called the Watchers and discovers the existence of a way to travel back in time and save the world as it should have been saved from the beginning, taking the risk it meant. In the second act the Luminary experiences character development that is rather interesting, since it makes him differ from most heroes depicted by legends. He may be brave but can also feel impotent much like other humans when faced with the consequences of what Mordegon did, which makes him an approachable character as a human. Said development is possibly discarded upon entering the third act with the travelling back in time that happened.

As you can see in figure 28, on a physical level, the Luminary is a dirty blond fair-skinned young man with blue eyes. His hair is arranged in a bob haircut. He has a thin

complexion, and wears a long-sleeved dark grey shirt with a purple sleeveless tunic on top of it as well as brown trousers, and leather boots. He wears a belt around his waist and a scabbard on his back. The belt has a bag attached where he puts most of the items he carries on himself, some exceptions being the currently equipped gear.



Fig. 28. The Luminary image.

In general, the Luminary is a good-looking man, but does not appear nor strike as a particularly strong individual. His good looks are commented by some of the characters in the game.

4.6. Dragon Quest Monster. Joker 3 & Joker 3 Professional

The latest instalment of the Dragon Quest monsters spin-off series and the last part of the Joker trilogy. The game takes place in a world called 'Break World'. The hero, a young man who becomes a monster master who needs to fight a menace that is corrupting an airship named 'Mother' and their minions. To do that he counts with the help of Renate and a tribe of dinosaur-like monsters named 'Nochola'.

Island by island the protagonist defeats the leader of the darkonium corruption, it being a break monster, a monster that has been corrupted by darkonium until he arrives to Mother in which he fights a reincarnation of Snapped.

After that, Rukiya calls the protagonist to a place called Point Zero where revealing herself to be a young girl named Solitaire. Requesting help from the hero to create another core for Mother and free Renate, who sacrificed herself for the sake of the Break World. Once done and offered to Mother, an old enemy named Dark Master reappears and transforms into Darsgalma and after that Dagjagalma and is then defeated.

Even more after that a monster searching for the Incarni also requests the help of the hero, who finds the Incarni but also the Demonlord they were fighting and must fight the demonlord to stop his feet.

4.6.1. Rukiya

As met for the first time she is an elder lady who leads the Resistance, a group affiliated to the Nochola and the hero. She is a lady with great leadership skills and determination, able to perform self-sacrifice if needed for greater good, as seen in Ittable's Fortress after defeating the boss. This appearance was, however, an alias, as shown in Joker 3 Professional's second act, where she reveals her true self at Point Zero. She turned out to be Rukiya's apprentice but due to her master's death while during hard times at the Break World she assumed her appearance and role of leader as an alias to keep the human population calm.

Her true name is Solitaire, a blonde female with a top, jorts, a set of pantyhose the left leg of which is a bit torn a bit under knee length fingerless gloves, boots and a beret. Her figure is slender and slightly curvy, as you can see in figure 29. As tough as she may look on the outside she loves happy endings and went as far as to form a second core for Mother so that Renate could happily spend the rest of her life with the friends she made while fighting the break world menace and free the remaining hibernating humans that were around the place.



Fig. 29. Two versions of Rukiya characterization.

4.6.2. Renate

Renate is an incarnation of Mother most presumably who grew to understand human feelings and established friendship with her fellow companions in the Resistance, the passed away Ances included. She wears a bodysuit akin to that Hargon wears underneath his poncho at least in his Dragon Quest Builders 2 appearance with a white skirt and top over it.

She also has a pair of stockings, one longer than the other and boots of a light bluish-grey color. Over it all she wears a torn pink cape and a pair of fingerless gloves that

match her clothing's look. She has long green hair tied into a ponytail and eyes that match her cape's colour. Her silhouette is somewhat akin to that of Solitaire's. Figure 30 shows Renate's appearance.



Fig. 30. Renate illustration.

She's a kind girl who will take into account the player's feelings when he is asked to travel over to Mother to rid the core of its corruption with her help, asking him if that is what he truly wants to do.

She also helps the player out in several instances as well as sends him back to the land once the last menace, known as Snapped Almighty or Galmazard as unofficial fan-translations, the latter being a transliteration and the former being a reference to his true identity and god-like position he has assumed, is defeated. She then proceeds to work alongside Mother's core to get rid of all the corruption and stop the world from falling apart.

4.6.3. King Nochola

An affable character the player meets early in the game after stumbling with Nocholin, a fellow Nochola who was accompanying the player's starter (which comes determined by some questions asked at the very beginning of the game and can be among others Starkers, Zoma's Devil or Rebjørn) and have him guide him to the village they live in known as 'Wood Park'.

He is shown as an affable, kind and calm leader who leads the tribe of the Nochola, although upon using the Mirror of Ra program on him in Dragon Quest Monsters Joker 3 Professional triggers the beginning of the 3rd act as he was the demonlord Maduraja who had transformed and most presumably lost all memory of who he used to be during the Break World incident involving Snapped invading Mother's core.

As the Great Demonlord Maduraja he shows himself keen on fighting the player, sparring with him when the 3rd act is over and the true post-game begins, eventually

showing his true form if he is defeated enough times, around 10 times, which won't be easy.

In appearance he initially is a purple and green buff demon with a surprisingly curvy body and exaggerated muscles and spikes coming out of his body, as you can see in figure 31. He wields a staff with a pink crystal ball, most presumably made of Darkonium, the cause of corruption of the break monsters.

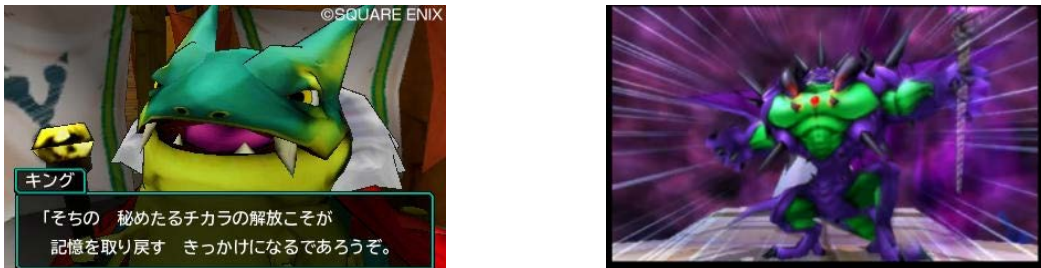


Fig. 31. King Nochola images.

Figure 32 shows his true form; he appears with six arms, two legs and a tail, sitting on top of a floating platform. He is a dark shade of pink and purple and has incredibly big horns on top of his head. The staff, which used to be akin to a closed hand with an orb in it, is now open, letting the orb, akin to an eye, float.



Fig. 32. King Nochola true form.

EXPERIMENTAL FRAMEWORK

5. Sexism analysis

The definition that the British Encyclopedia brings about sexism is: “*prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls*” [2]. Basing ourselves in this definition we could say that sexism is a set of attitudes and conducts especially towards women, and stereotypes regarding their physical appearance. However, during the last 25 years there has been a revision of this traditional definition of sexism [3] thanks to the growth of social psychology.

The old sexism or traditional sexism bases itself in three concepts [4-6]. The first of them is the dominant paternalism that references the subordination and obedience of the women because they are weak and inferior to men. The second is the competitive differentiation of gender where women don't have men's abilities and, as such, have a different role in society, being relegated to taking care of the family and their home. The third and last component of this sexism is the heterosexual hostility that presents women as manipulative and dangerous as a consequence of their physical attractiveness.

As a result of new research lines [3], in the year 1996 Glick & Fiske [4] developed a new model of sexism that they named ambivalent. This includes the traditional sexism, that was named hostile, and a new concept of sexism that received the name of benevolent. This ambivalent sexism includes a wider conception of sexism since it includes positive feelings towards women and coexist with a sexist antipathy, which means that there are feelings of attraction and desire to be liked coexisting with feelings of hostility. These two components of ambivalent sexism although being clearly different, they are related.

The benevolent sexism bases itself in three aspects [4]. The first of them is the protective paternalism where the man looks after and protects the woman. The second is the complementary differentiation of gender in which women present some positive traits that complement those of men. And the third and last one is the aspect of benevolent sexism that is named heterosexual intimacy where there is a sexual motivation from men towards women.

Considering the ambivalent sexism, that includes both conceptions of sexism, the traditional one and the ambivalent one, this work will proceed to make a comparative study between all Dragon Quest instalments, making the work easier by making a compilation of the main differential traits of the characters described in the theoretical work. The compilation of traits will split itself between physical appearance and personality traits. In this analysis there will also be a study on the represented or not stereotypes in the characters, males and females alike. We understand as stereotype the conventional or preconceived image about people and social groups that spread a simplified vision of reality as a substitution of more complex ways to understand people and social groups^[7].

Stereotypes such as these will be treated^[8]:

- Femme fatale, a woman that usually appears to have hiperfeminized, amplified and hipervisibilized physical traits (such as a disproportionately big chest) that usually presents a virile and sometimes violent attitude.
- The damsel in distress, a stereotype of women that are submissive, victims, sacrificed and waiting to be rescued.
- Standard male protagonist, men of this stereotype are often depicted as the alpha male, generally muscular, solitary, of a complicated personality, survivor and heterosexual.

Considering the definition of traditional sexism, this is a set of attitudes and conducts especially towards women, and stereotypes regarding their physical appearance. This discrimination clearly manifests in the audiovisual world, videogames included, most of which are meant for an audience in which the sexual component should not be present.

5.1. Physical appearance analysis and comparison

The relevant traits will be split in physical appearance, which includes from their complexion to the clothing they wear.

During the analysis the fact that Dragon Quest bases itself in a Middle Age-like context will be kept in mind to analyse characters, since some traits that may be considered out of place, stereotypical and possibly sexist are also part of how the society was

back in that age, for example, a princess wearing a frilly dress, something common back in that period of human history.

The study of physical appearance includes the following traits: hair length, height, complexion and clothing, as you can see in tables 1-6.

Table 1. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest 1.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Hero	Unknown	Tall	Muscular	Outfit appropriate for combat that clearly marks his muscular body. (Catalogued as 'revealing' of sorts due to how the outfit displays the hero's body)
Princess Gwaelin	Long	Tall	Slim	Long princess dress that exposes her neck and most of her shoulders. (Catalogued as appropriate for her status.)
Dragonlord	Unknown (Humanoid/Wizard form), None (Dragon form)	Tall (Humanoid form), Huge (Dragon form)	Unknown (Humanoid form), fat (Dragon form)	As mage, a sleeved blanket-like robe with a collar.

According to the traits that define hostile or traditional sexism, these are: dominant paternalism, competitive differentiation of gender and heterosexual hostility. The last one reflects aspects of the physical appearance and the clothing a character uses. In the same way, the main trait that define benevolent sexism in order to compare with physical appearance is heterosexual intimacy.

From this point of view, neither Hero nor Princess Gwaelin show characteristics compatible with heterosexual hostility or intimacy because of their childish appearance. Concerning to stereotypes, the Hero fits in the standard male depicted of muscular complexion and the Princess Gwaelin seems a damsel in distress.

Table 2. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest II.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Prince of Midenhall	Short	Tall	Muscular	Adventure garments that wrap around his body making a clear display of his complexion. (Catalogued as 'revealing'.)
Prince of Cannock	Short	Tall	Muscular	Wears a green tabard, an orange cape and a black outfit that marks clearly his body's complexion. (Catalogued as 'slightly revealing'.)
Princess of Moonbrooke	Long	Tall	Slim, wide hips	Wears a long dress that wraps around her figure and a hood. (Catalogued as 'appropriate' of sorts.)
Hargon	Unknown	Tall	Slim	Wears a poncho-like robe and a black bodysuit underneath.
Malroth	Long (human form), none (monster form)	Tall (human form), huge (monster form)	Muscular (Both forms)	His clothing exposes his chest when in human form. (Catalogued as 'revealing'.) As a monster he wears nothing other than a skull necklace.

The protagonists of Dragon Quest II keep the same childish appearance of the first game of the franchise, hence the heterosexual component of sexism is not clearly reflected. Same as the previous instance, the stereotypes are guaranteed, this meaning that both male main characters are muscular while the one female main character has long hair and a slim figure.

Table 3. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest III.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Baramos	Short, almost none	Tall	Round	Wears a green robe that reaches his feet with a pink cape.
Zoma	Unknown	Tall	Unknown	Wears an orange robe that makes his complexion difficult to see as well as some armour on top of it with a collar and a cape.
Erdrick (female)	Short	Tall	Thin	Wears clothing meant for travelling that adapts to her figure neatly. (Catalogued as 'slightly revealing' and 'appropriate' for the circumstances.)

In the third instance of the saga the most notorious character is the protagonist, Erdrick, when the selected gender is female, since her image does not seem to follow the same standards for the feminine figure seen so far in the franchise, understanding these as long hair and long dresses, having instead short spiky hair and travelling clothing.

Table 4. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest IX.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Aquila	None	Tall	Muscular	His garments adapt to his form on the upper part, making his muscular chest and arms clear, the pants being more loose. (Catalogued as 'slightly revealing'.)

Aquila, however does adjust well to the stereotype of the standard male depicted of muscular complexion.

Table 5. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest XI.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Jade	Long	Tall	Slim and curvy (wide hips and a generous chest)	Wears high heels, shorts that show most of her thighs and a top that leaves part of her belly out as well as making clear her generous chest. (Catalogued as 'revealing and 'sexy'.')
Sylvando	Long	Tall	Slightly muscular	Wears a jester tunic a red shirt and tights that wrap around his lower half of the body. (Catalogued as 'appropriate for the occupation'.')
Veronica	Long	Short	Slightly thin	Wears a white knee-length dress with a red jacket-like layer of dress on top of it. (Catalogued as 'appropriate'.')
Serena	Long (Acts 1, first half of Act 2 and 3), Short (Second half of Act 2)	Tall	Thin, flat-chested	Wears a long white dress with puffed sleeves and a green kirtle over it. The neckline of the dress shows the upper part of her torso, although it does not display her chest directly. (Catalogued as 'appropriate'.')
Jasper	Long	Tall	Muscular	Wears a full suit of armour when human (Catalogued as 'appropriate'.), as Spectral Sentinel he wears noblemen-class clothing with puffed sleeves that adapts to his figure, as Unbound he is a clothless beast.
Hendrik	Long	Tall	Muscular	Wears a full suit of black armour or a tabard-like blue cloth with a green sweater and dark-colored pants. (Catalogued as 'appropriate'.')
Rab	None	Short	Round, fat	Wears a white shirt that exposes part of his chest if opened, orange pants and a black sash with a red sleeveless jacket over the outfit and a red fez on his head.
Erik	Short	Tall	Slightly muscular	Wears a dark green tunic that exposes his chest, a red sash and blue trousers. (Catalogued as 'revealing'.')
The Luminary	Short	Tall	Slim	Wears a sleeveless purple coat with a dark grey sweater underneath and brown pants. (Catalogued as slightly 'appropriate'.')

Dragon Quest XI, latest instance of the saga in the market so far, breaks the patterns seen until now. Some characters show a clear sexual component, and, while some of the characters do keep that childish look characteristic of the first game instances, others show traits compatible with heterosexual hostility and intimacy. This is the case of Jade, Jasper, Hendrik, Erik and the Luminary, whose traits adjust to the femme fatale category in Jade's case and standard male for the rest.

Table 6. Physical appearance comparison in Dragon Quest Monster.

Character	Hair length	Height	Complexion	Clothes
Rukiya	Short (as Alias Rukiya), Long (as Solitaire)	Short (as Alias Rukiya), Tall (as Solitaire)	Slim (as both)	Wears a green robe and hat as Alias Rukiya (Catalogued as 'appropriate'.), wears a sleeveless black top, shorts and leggings underneath them as Solitaire. (Catalogued as slightly 'revealing'.)
Renate	Long	Tall	Slim, slightly curvy	Wears a black bodysuit that wraps around her silhouette with a light gray top and skirt over it, a pink cape and socks of the same color but different lengths. (Catalogued as slightly 'sexy'.)
King Nochola	None	Tall (as King), Huge (as Maduraja and Madurasha)	Round (as King), Muscular and extremely curvy (as Maduraja), Muscular (as Madurasha)	Does not wear clothes.

The change observed in females in the previous instalment is kept. Both Solitaire and Renate could fall into the category of femme fatale with a clear component of heterosexual intimacy.

5.2. Personality analysis and comparison

The personality analysis will consider items such as dominant or protective paternalism and the competitive or complementary differentiation of gender, depending if it is hostile sexism or benevolent sexism respectively.

As it has been previously mentioned, the difference between dominant and protective paternalism roots in whether the women are considered a lower being or not and the distinction between competitive or complementary differentiation of gender bases itself to equal the abilities of each gender in a way in which they can complement each other to unite forces.

Tables 7-12 gather the differential traits in terms of personality of the studied characters. This ranges from their active or passive paper, weapon usage and behavioural traits such as being kind, violent, protecting, skilled, competent, independent, etc. for the hostile sexism o submissive, weak, fragile, dependent, pure, generous, devoted (to the man or the cause) surrendered (to child care, home), obedient, subordinate, etc. for the benevolent sexism.

Table 7. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest 1.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Hero	Saviour of Alefgard	Independent, skilled	Swords, broadswords
Princess Gwaelin	Damsel in distress	Dependent, weak, devoted	None
Dragonlord	Main antagonist		Staves/canes, magic.

The description of the Hero and Princess Gwaelin adjust perfectly to hostile sexism. The princess shows herself as a dependent and fragile woman whereas the hero could adopt the paper of dominant paternalism, the gender differentiation being clearly competitive.

Table 8. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest II.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Prince of Midenhall	Hero, Saviour of Torland (Protagonist)	Independent, reserved, vengeful	Swords, broadswords.
Prince of Cannock	Hero/Hero helper, Saviour of Torland	Independent, vengeful	Swords, magic.
Princess of Moonbrooke	Damsel in distress (initially), Heroine/Hero helper, Saviour of Torland	Initially dependent (when in dog form), independent, vengeful(as human)	Magic.
Hargon	Main antagonist, Fake final boss	In Dragon Quest II: Arrogant/Egoistic, skilled, devoted to his own cause In Dragon Quest Builders 2: Cruel, egoistic, devoted to his own cause, vengeful.	Staves, magic, breath attacks.
Malroth	Final enemy, True final boss	In Dragon Quest Builders 2: Independent, violent, rash.	Breath attacks, magic.

The second instalment of the saga represents a change in the concept of sexism of its predecessor. While the initial role the princess of Moonbrooke adopts makes a reference to hostile sexism, her behaviour changes radically upon joining the party, becoming a heroine and saviour of her world, adopting a role usually kept for masculine protagonists even now.

In Dragon Quest II there is a radical change in the woman's role, going from being a passive subject to an active one with special relevance, then, the previous hostile sexism turns itself into benevolent sexism where the feminine abilities will be equalled and complemented with the masculine ones.

Table 9. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest III.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Bamos	Main antagonist, Fake final boss	Hot-headed, arrogant, skilled	Breath attacks, magic.
Zoma	Final enemy, True final boss	Ruthless, cruel, arrogant.	Breath attacks, magic.
Erdrick (female)	Heroine, Saviour of the World	Independent, skilled.	Magic, swords.

The twist in role continues in the third instalment if the chosen gender is female since female Erdrick and male Erdrick both count with the same abilities, she becomes a heroine and saviour of the world.

Table 10. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest IX.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Aquila	Hero's mentor, Hero helper	Independent, strong-willed, skilled.	Swords.

Aquila would symbolize hostile sexism given that he is characterized by his independent behaviour and abilities usually masculine represented by his physical strength.

Table 11. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest XI.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Jade	Warrior princess, Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Independent, kind, caring, skilled, protective (of the Luminary).	Spears, claws.
Sylvando	Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Optimistic, chivalrous, independent, skilled, caring.	Swords, knives, whips, magic.
Veronica	Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Brash, independent, caring, generous.	Magic, staves, whips.
Serena	Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Kind, caring, pure, fragile (in Acts 1, second half of 2 and 3). Independent, caring.	Magic, wands, spears.
Jasper	Antagonist	Cold, arrogant, cruel, independent, attention-seeking, skilled.	Swords.
Hendrik	Antagonist (initially), Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Chivalrous, independent, skilled, strong-willed.	Swords, axes, broadswords, magic.
Rab	Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Affable, independent, skilled.	Staves, claws, magic.
Erik	Hero helper, Saviour of Erdrea	Independent, gruff, kind.	Knives, swords, magic.
The Luminary	Hero, saviour of Erdrea	Independent, kind, pure (in Act 1), skilled.	Swords, broadswords, magic.

Some of Dragon Quest XI's protagonists represent perfectly benevolent sexism. There is a clear protective paternalism but also a complementary differentiation of gender on both masculine and feminine protagonists alike.

Serena initially displays traits compatible with hostile sexism, however, she will end up receiving a more active and independent role compatible with that of benevolent sexism's.

Table 12. Personality comparison in Dragon Quest Monster.

Character	Video games role	Behaviour	Using weapon
Rukiya	Resistance leader, hero helper	Independent, generous, competent.	None
Renate	Hero helper	Dependent (of the hero from Joker 3), kind, brave.	None.
King Nochola	Hero helper (as King), Last final boss, True final enemy (both of the latter as Maduraja/Madurasha)	Affable, kind, thoughtful, generous (as King).	Staves, dance skills, magic (as Madurasha/Maduraja).

The change observed in females of the franchise in previous instalments is kept. Both Solitaire and Renate show traits that would be included in the meaning of benevolent sexism.

6. CONCLUSIONS

An exhaustive analysis of the more relevant characters from different instances of the franchise Dragon Quest has been done. To do so it has been believed necessary to contextualize the reader and make a brief summary of the games studied to manifest the relevance of the character in question.

The traditional concept of sexism as a set of attitudes and conducts especially towards women, and stereotypes regarding their physical appearance has changed in the last 25 years and a new model has been created named ambivalent sexism, where hostile or traditional sexism coexists with another with less negative connotations named benevolent sexism.

After the analysis that has been performed with the new conception of sexism, the ambivalent sexism, done by Glick & Fiske ^[5] the following conclusion can be extracted: video games are still sexist but there has been a decrease of it, corroborating my hypothesis that way.

The study performed on some of the instalments of the saga of Dragon Quest manifest that the characters have evolved from a traditional sexism towards a benevolent one. While both are different, they are related since benevolent sexism includes affectionate attitudes and positive conducts towards women that are seen as stereotypes whether it is to emphasize the weakness of the woman or highlight her sexual component.

The evolution of both masculine and feminine characters with the pass of time in the different instances analysed reveals that the changes of humanity's way of thinking in the last years have made character concepts and development adapt said changes, eradicating gender discrimination, but not the stereotypes.

Regarding the determination of whether or not video games have changed their orientation towards sexism with the pass of time and see if there has been an increase or a decrease of said behaviour if still present, it can be said that even though Dragon Quest has evolved to ambivalent sexism, stereotypes are still very present in terms of the characters' physical appearance, be they masculine or feminine. Generally, the woman is drawn with an exuberant body, long hair and sexy clothing and the man is drawn muscular and strong.

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Almost all the illustrations used in this work have been taken from the Dragon Quest Wiki. <https://dragon-quest.org/wiki/Main_Page> [Consulta: 09/07/2020]