To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Todd H. Muldrew entitled "You're In Our World Now: Sex and Gaming Styles in Massive Multiplayer Online Gaming." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communications.

Michelle T. Violanti, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

You're In Our World Now: Sex and Gaming Styles in Massive Multiplayer Online Gaming

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ABSTRACT

A study of communication behaviors in the massive multiplayer online roleplaying game, Everquest™, was conducted to determine if there were any relationships between playing styles, gendered communication strategies, and player or character sex. The use of feminist standpoint theory as a theoretical framework allowed the results of the study to be generalized to the social constructs known as man and woman, without necessarily indicating the results are true for individuals. The study found that it was possible to classify an individual's playing style as either that of a roleplayer or a power-gamer, but that there was not a significant link between these playing styles and communication strategies or the sex of the player or character. There was some evidence that communication strategies are different between the sexes, but the virtual sample observed did not include enough women to allow sufficient analysis of this phenomenon. The gaming environment might have been biased towards men and could have discouraged women from participating.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the world awakens in the twenty-first century, the information revolution is changing the way people are entertained. Mass communication studies are moving beyond the world shaped by television to look at a world shaped by the Internet. Not only will conventional media such as newspaper, radio, and television adapt to the web, but also new forms of communication media will emerge. One such medium is the on-line game. Americans spent more money in 2000 on video games ($8.9 billion) than on movie tickets ($7.3 billion) (Young D9). Kelly Flock, president of 989Studios, argues that fantasy worlds created to be played over the Web "are going to become the dominant form of entertainment" (qtd. in Krantz par. 9) in the not too distant future. Even today these games are taking their place in the family home. Families such as Jim Kesserling, his wife, and three kids, are playing together on-line (Krantz par. 8). Kesserling explains, "For us, Everquest [an on-line roleplaying game] has pretty much replaced TV" (qtd in Krantz par 8).

These roleplaying games that Kesserling and Flock refer to are the grandchildren of the first paper-and-pencil roleplaying games, such as Dungeons & Dragons. In these games, players would assume a persona and play through a series of stories provided by an individual, often known as a gamemaster, who created obstacles and distributed rewards. Usually these rewards would come in the form of items, wealth, or some sort of points that allowed players to improve their characters. Socially, the players, sitting in

their host's living room or basement, would try to figure out how their character might interact with the others in the room.

With the advent of Internet gaming, text-based games known as MUDs, or Multi-User Dungeons, began to develop. While the gamemaster faded to the background, players could interact with a world full of other players and creatures. A variation on MUDs, called MOOs (MUD, Object Oriented), began to allow players to change the world itself, adding houses and other features to their environment. No longer were people limited to interacting face-to-face with a few people at someone's house. Now hundreds of relatively anonymous individuals were interacting with brand new identities in a game world. Today's games, such as EverQuest, not only add a face to the names with which people are interacting, but they are drawing a much larger crowd (Aihoshi par. 18).

While the crowd for early games was mostly made up of men, today's game audience is increasingly becoming a balanced mix of women and men. As Ralph Koster, Creative Director for Star Wars Galaxies, indicates, "MMO [massive multiplayer online] games get a far higher proportion of female players than standalone games do [. . .]. I'd say that the gender proportions are in near balance" (par. 17). Perhaps, but a survey by PC Data Online found only 23 percent of roleplaying game (single, multiplayer, and online multiplayer) players were women, though the analysts suspect that this percentage is higher for the subset of massive multiplayer online games to which Koster is referring (Laber par. 6). Koster also indicates that without a strong female presence, games suffer from lack of community and leadership (par. 18). "A virtual world takes all sorts, and

certainly takes both genders!" (Koster par. 21). As we begin to interact on this virtual stage, we need to recognize what actors are filling the roles.

Statement of the Problem

As the following chapter will show, research into the similarities and differences between men and women as they interact with each other has yielded an inconclusive, yet intriguing body of understanding. The objective of this work is to contribute an additional perspective on the communicative behaviors of men and women by examining these similarities and differences in a relatively new arena. By exploring communication behaviors in this virtual reality, it is to be hoped that greater insight into this interaction in our own world can be gained. To do so, we need to understand the types of players that occupy the gaming environment.

Most game players have a primary focus either on *power-gaming* or *roleplaying*. A writer identified only as "Moonshadow" sums up the distinctions in the "Comprehensive Power-gaming and Role-playing Guide." The author argues that an individual who roleplays has the following characteristics:

> A "Role-player" is an actor who manages to place himself or herself in the "skin" of a minimally outlined persona, giving that persona depth and life. The Role-player is interested in weaving a small story as they develop their character. This story does not have a plot, but there is a constant depth created through interactions with their peers. Role-playing is hard work from the beginning where the character's foundation is established to

> the actual continual maintaining and development of that persona. The "True Role-player" cares not for game rules, but instead only cares about the image that they portray [. . .]. They will gain experience and become more powerful, but that is a side aspect [. . .]. Role-players tend to mix in interaction with advancement being of a slightly lower priority. (par. 3)

Similarly, there are certain characteristics primarily associated with the power-gamer:

> The Power-gamer recognizes [. . .] any role-playing game [. . .] as simply a game, nothing more nor less. Everything outside of the scope of the game is superficial for what is the point of a game, but to win? A person does not sit down to play a hand of cards or to run a race without at least the hopes of victory. Now this does not mean that the power-gamer does not have fun, but it is the accomplishments [sic] that motivates this person. Power, items, levels are the fuel that drives the power-gamer down the track [. . .]. The power-gamer is a very competitive sort. They are out to win and even though the realms are open-ended they will fight, claw and conquer until whatever goals they have established for themselves have been obtained. You see, the power-gamer is very goal oriented. (par. 4, 5, 9)

There are distinct parallels between the way in which roleplayers and power-gamers are classified and the way in which the Separate Worlds Hypothesis (SWH) classifies men and women. In short, though, women and roleplayers see advancement and status as secondary to community. Men and power-gamers see

community as secondary to advancement and status. Not only do these parallels exist, but also the roleplaying environment becomes the perfect environment for acting out these drives. Status is quantified in most roleplaying games in ways not possible in the real world. Attributes such as strength, intelligence, and charisma are assigned numerical values corresponding to one's ability. Skills are catalogued, isolated, and given a similar statistical value. This allows a hierarchical comparison of status not available in the real world. Thus, a character that has risen through 20 levels is numerically superior to one who has only achieved 3, and will have more power in terms of game mechanics; that is, if one pitted the two in toe-to-toe combat, the level 20 character would prevail easily in practically all situations. Likewise, a character with an Intelligence attribute of 18 is almost always going to be better at skills requiring intellectual prowess than a character with an Intelligence of 8, since attempts at this skill will be based on this score.

Community, too, is created in a way not possible in the real world. The ability to role-play a character allows one to take on a persona not available to oneself outside of the game. Social experiences–such as marriage, combat, sex, etc.–that a person might be wary of attempting or unable to engage in while living real life, become possible in this role-playing game. This environment allows for community networking experiences not possible in other situations. Emily Laber of the *New York Times* explains:

> Women and men both hold leadership roles in the games, heading local governments, military alliances and other groups. What most distinguishes women players, game developers say, is that they use their imaginations to push the limits of the games, pioneering ingenious new kinds of player contacts. 'There

> have been emergent behaviors from women that are really kind of fascinating,' said Ms. [Patricia] Pizer, at Turbine [Entertainment Software, developers of Microsoft's *Asheron's Call*]. 'Women are seeing openings for social interactions that the game designers didn't necessarily plan on.' Some characters played by women band together as informal "fashion police," taunting characters who are badly dressed. Other women team up to help new players by handing out gold pieces, weapons and advice. (pars. 13-14)

Why should these distinct playing styles be tied to gender? Carol Warren argues "gender and age are among the most basic categories of the social fabric... living within a society presupposes a gendered interaction, a gendered conversation, and a gendered interpretation" (10). Julia Wood builds on this to assert that gender "must be recognized as underlying and permeating all of our communicative behavior" ("Enlarging Conceptual Boundaries" 33). Given that there are differences in the style with which people play these on-line games, and that these styles seem to reflect the communication behaviors described in the Separate Worlds Hypothesis, one should expect to find a relationship between the sex of the player and the style that is used in playing.

What seems to be lacking in the research is way to cross the bridge that has been built. Research describes communication styles based on gender, and provides the path by which we can link these to communication styles, but they do not discuss what types of communication behaviors would be indicative of a masculine or feminine style. As such, we have no guidelines for observing specific behaviors to determine if these behaviors are masculine or feminine within a communication framework. As Van Schie

and Wiegman explain, Eagly's social role theory provides characteristics based on gender stereotypes (1189), but these characteristics would not relate directly to the identified communication styles.

Objective of the Study

The process of communication not only works outside us to order our external relations, but also manages our internal conceptions. Masculine individuals seek to establish status with the metamessage of their own intrapersonal communication, and thus this desire should be evidenced in their behavior. Likewise, feminine individuals have their own intrapersonal metamessages seeking to reinforce the idea of community. Games give us the freedom to be ourselves and pursue these goals in ways not possible in other social contexts (Teitel 46-47). If the social constructs of "man" and "woman" are quantifiable, then they should be readily evident, or even exaggerated in the hyperreality of the virtual world. Given that, I will attempt to discover what characteristics of communication behavior are observable in a gaming environment as well as examine to what extent these behaviors are linked to the sex of the player. Before doing so, it is important to understand the body of work within which this study is grounded.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study attempts to pull together work from a wide variety of topics. Every topic, as usual in scholarly efforts, is embroiled in its own discourse on where the field stands. Feminism struggles with the concepts of social gender and biological sex. Communication researchers and linguists attempt to decipher if there are or are not any gender differences in the way people interact. Media researchers tackle the growing popularity of the video game and work to gauge its impact upon society. The following paragraphs yield some insight into the groundwork upon which this study is conducted.

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory (FST) is an evolving epistemology of the world as viewed from the perspective of women. The theory seems to have taken life when Nancy Hartsock drew an analogy between Karl Marx's view of society (as opposing classes in a struggle for power) and the struggle for power between women and men (New 352). Every group (class, sex, race) in society is uniquely situated to have a perspective on the way society works. The argument of standpoint theorists has been that the oppressed have a more accurate perspective because they do not have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, as the oppressors do. Thus, in feminist standpoint theory, at least in the original versions of the theory, women were uniquely situated to have more accurate knowledge about society than men. In response to criticism, the theory has

evolved. The argument is no longer that women's perspectives provide *better* knowledge than other perspectives, but that women's experience creates a unique knowledge specific to alleviating woman's condition as oppressed in the relations of power (New 368; Wood, "Gender and Moral Voice" 13).

This begs the question, *who are these oppressed, or disadvantaged women*? It is important to note that feminist standpoint theory is not discussing the plight of any *one* woman. As Hartsock, herself, points out, groups are not the sum of individuals–each group is the "complex interplay of 'individuals' and larger-scale social forces" (372). Feminist standpoint theory is concerned with the role of *woman* in society, not any particular female individual. Hartsock adds:

> Although they [the macroprocesses of power] may be played out in individual lives, [they] can be fully understood only at the level of society as a whole. To claim that we can understand the totality of social relations from a single perspective is as futile an effort as to claim that we can see everything from nowhere. (371)

In fact, feminist standpoint theory now acknowledges that every individual has her or his own unique perspective based on the groups to which one belongs, so it is impossible to make assumptions based on the general group about that group's specific members. Sandra Harding asserts "there are only women and men in particular, historically located race and class and cultural relations" (qtd.in Hallstein 36). This is supported by Janet Chafetz, who argues that sociological research has not borne out the existence of any essential traits in individual men or women (103-104). Therefore, it is the social

construct of *woman* in relation to the social construct of *man* that must be examined. And as a relational construct, "standpoint theorist's view of gender differences is not based on biological givens but on social relationships maintained by structural and material cultural practices" (Hallstein 36). The understanding of the relations between these two gender constructs gives us knowledge of the balance–or imbalance–of power between the two groups. And that relationship is one of advantage for "man" at the expense of "woman" (Hallstein 35).

So the purpose of feminist standpoint theory becomes not one of discovering the inherent traits of women as individuals, nor of building a link between the biological and societal being of woman. The goal is to identify the aspects of the social construct of "woman" that cause her states of oppression, and through that self-awareness to move to alleviate this condition of disadvantage (Hartsock 372). New explains that while "there is no single universal form of the oppression of women [. . .] nevertheless the oppression of women is universal, and always justified in terms of the characteristics that supposedly stem from their sex" (369). So while the power relationships between individual men and women are a diverse, shifting, set of relations that avoid universalizing, one may make the generalization that the social construct "man" has more power than the social construct "woman." By understanding the standpoint of "woman," we can make an effort to change this structural relationship of power.

Gendered Communication

Sex is commonly understood to be one's physiological being, male or female. *Gender* is most commonly seen as a societal construction, to be masculine or feminine. "Gender is a relational concept, since femininity and masculinity make sense in relation to each other" (Wood, *Gendered Lives* 28). There is general agreement that this *gender* identity is constructed–what is more hotly debated is what role *sex*, or the body, plays in the construction and maintenance of this identity (Bucholtz 5). Deborah Tannen argues that it is nearly impossible to make a definitive break between sex and gender because there is no scientific means available yet to yield such a concrete definition ("Display of Identities" 223). This is where feminist standpoint theory becomes useful to us. Feminist standpoint theory allows us to study what it is to be masculine and feminine genders, to be "man" and "woman," without assigning those traits to every member of those groups (Wood, "Gender and Moral Voice" 15). Thus, it allows for individuality while giving us the theoretical freedom to explore the structured identity of the group. Even Tannen agrees:

> Certain behaviors in certain cultures are more likely to be associated with the "class" of women or the "class" of men [meaning the social categories, or genders, of men and women]. This association is real, but it does not mean that every individual in the class will exhibit those behaviors. Associating the behaviors with every member of the class rather than with the class itself is... an error of logical types. ("Display of Identities" 222-23)

Though Tannen does not seem to recognize it herself, she appears to share this as a common perspective with feminist standpoint theorists.

Understanding Gendered Communication

At first glance, research tends not to support this hypothesis of gendered differences in communication. Tannen argues that early studies looked only at individuals of the sexes ("Display of Identities" 225). As our discussion of feminist standpoint theory indicated, individuals are uniquely situated, and thus are not reliable indicators of the group. Therefore, these studies that examine individuals for differences are not providing information relevant to the gender discussion. It is in examining the interplay of women and men together that "highly significant patterns of difference became evident (Tannen, "Display of Identities" 225).

These patterns that Tannen discusses are commonly distilled down to two main ideas–that male communicators use competitive and adversarial strategies, while female communicators use collaborative and supportive strategies (Kim and Bresnahan 53). This is also known as the separate worlds hypothesis, posited by Maltz and Borker in 1982, which argues that boys and girls come from different sociolinguistic subcultures (Goodwin 75). Goodwin explains that Maltz and Borker maintain:

> Girls use language to create and maintain relationships of closeness and equality; their 'play is cooperative and activities are usually organized in noncompetitive ways,' contrasting with boys' hierarchical forms of social organization. (Goodwin 75)

The idea has been a popular one, forming the basis for Tannen's book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, which uses the hypothesis to examine conversations. She argues that men tend to interact with their environments "as an individual in a hierarchical social order in which he [is] either one-up or one-down" (Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* 24). Personal interaction becomes a process "in which people try to achieve and maintain the upper hand if they can, and protect themselves from others" (Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* 24-25). Wood supports this argument with her analysis that male communication seeks to "exert control, preserve independence, and enhance status" (*Gendered Lives* 126). Women, on the other hand, usually see the world as "a network of connections" (Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* 25). From a woman's point of view, "conversations are negotiations for closeness in which people try to seek and give confirmation and support, and to reach consensus" (Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand* 25). Wood again agrees, stating that for women, communication is used to "establish and maintain relationships with others" (*Gendered Lives* 124). Canary and Hause find these distinctions troubling, because such assumptions set a stereotyped and polarized foundation for the accompanying research, distorting the conclusions (135-136). However, working within feminist standpoint theory, we can accept these limitations in an effort to understand communication between these socially constructed groups known to us as "man" and "woman." If these polarizations and stereotypes are so prevalent in research, it must indicate the level to which these social constructs are readily accepted in our society. Thus, we should find research to support this notion of opposing male and female communication strategies.

Even after almost 60 years of studying sex differences, though, the field seems to be lacking in consensus (Canary and Hause 129).

No Support for Difference

There have been a number of studies which have not found any significant differences in the communication styles of women and men. Very little variance was found between the self-perceptions of women and men in the assessment of their own communication styles (Kim and Bresnahan 63). However, because this is a measure of self-perception rather than interaction, it runs into the problems with generalizing from the uniquely situated individual, as Tannen suggests. Interestingly, in Wilkins' and Andersons' study, self-reporting is the only case in which they found differences due to gender (28). During interaction in the workplace, men and women were found to have similar communication behaviors, though it is noted "there was statistically significant behavior, but it was discounted due to a variance of 1% or less" (Wilkins and Anderson 27). This seems to correspond to a study of girls and boys in play, where skill level played a larger role than sex in determining what type of communication was used during jump rope games (Goodwin 102-103). The girls often used what are typically seen as "male" communication styles to control the game because they were more skillful than the boys (Goodwin 101). Additionally, in a study of interaction between sexes in small groups, neither men nor women were found more likely to use powerful (assertive, dominant) or powerless (hesitant, tentative) speech (Grob et al. 282).

It is not just in verbal communication that significant differences were found lacking. In examining the interpretation of nonverbal codes, Judee Burgoon and her colleagues found few differences between men and women ("Relational Messages" 372). However, they readily admit there are difficulties generalizing the results because they used only one of each sex in the study, thus encountering the same lack of interaction Kim and Bresnahan encountered (Burgoon et al. 372). Similarly, no differences between head movements for men and women were found in Donaghy's and Dooley's study on deception (73). Women were supposed to be easier to detect than men in moments of deception, but the researchers surmise that either head movements play no role in this, or women have become better at deception since early studies (Donaghy and Dooley 73). While not being conclusive, this body of work casts doubts upon the assertion that gender differences exist when looking at communication behaviors, even in cases of interaction.

In Support of Difference

In their review of research into communication and sex differences, Canary and Hause come to believe that it is inconsistency in definition and in operationalization that cause varying results, rather than any lack of true difference in communication styles (130). Therefore, despite the sex similarities shown in some research, it is important to recognize that many studies seem to indicate there may be some veracity in the claims of difference. This is perhaps most evident in relationships, giving credence to Tannen's argument for studies centered on interaction. In situations of two individuals participating in self-disclosure, "the mechanism through which we adjust our privacy

boundaries" (Petronio et al. 268), women are more concerned with and attuned to the traits of the sender and receiver than men (Petronio et al. 271). Thus, women who spoke to men used more direct questions and limited nonverbal interaction, but indicated listening and offered more self-disclosure when speaking to other women (Fischer and Sollie 28). Whether speaking to women or men, women were overall more attuned, supportive, and better at using nonverbal behaviors to guide conversation than men (Bullis and Horn 16-17; Rosenthal and DePaulo 95). Petronio and her colleagues speculate that this awareness on the part of women is inherent in the sex-role they adopt (272).

When relationships become romantic, women are the most aware of their partner's emotional needs (Frazier and Esterly 348). This may be because for women, interaction is about being together, while for men interaction is centered around an activity (Sapadin 400). For example, sexuality is strongly linked to intimacy for men, even in friendships, while women are troubled by feelings of sexuality in friendships with men (Sapadin 401). These differences are reinforced by women having stronger networks of community than men. So women (who have close friendships with other women) are less emotionally dependent on their intimate relationships with men than men (who are competing for status with other men) are on their intimate relationships with women (Frazier and Esterly 347).

It is not just in relationships that we find these communication differences. The differences–or the perceptions thereof–evidence themselves in other types of verbal and nonverbal communication. When persuading women, both male and female speakers

used messages that raised more community and societal concerns than when the speakers addressed men on the same topic (Andrews 383-84). In evaluating their own persuasive messages, male persuaders were more concerned with the perception of their natural abilities than women were; men attributed success to talent and failure to either lack of effort or the difficulty of the task (Andrews 382). Female nonverbal behaviors such as touch, closeness, and relaxed posture were more expected and accepted from women than men (Burgoon and Walther 257). On the whole, it appears that there is evidence for identifiable differences between the communication behaviors of the socially constructed "man" and "woman." Though most of this and other evidence for sex differences is statistically insignificant, this does not mean that those differences do not exist (Canary and Hause 140-141).

But what creates and shapes these social constructs? Research indicates that gender differences are defined by mass media, which teach boys and girls how to become part of the group and reinforce "the dominant norms of sexuality and consumer culture" (Durham 212). These traditional sex roles are generally preferred in women or men by members of the opposite sex (Riggio and Woll 355). As computer games quickly become a significant portion of this media culture, it is important that we understand the ways in which these games influence and reflect the societal structures that shape us.

The Worlds of Gaming

Research about the nature of roleplaying games, both paper-and-pencil and on-line is not new. A great deal of the research focuses on whether people who play

fantasy games such as Dungeons & Dragons™ or other similar games suffer from harmful psychological effects, including introversion, depression, neuroses, and even suicidal tendencies. Despite popular perceptions to the contrary, this research has typically found no significant difference between players of these games and their control groups for any number of psychological factors (Carter & Lester 182; DeRenard & Kline 1222; Simón, "Vampire" 733; Simón, "Dungeons & Dragons" 332; Rosenthal, et al. 170). In fact, in at least some instances, fantasy roleplaying games have been found to be useful in treatment of individuals with emotional problems (Blackmon par. 28). Neil Douse and I.C. McManus did find some "relatively small" differences, such as players tend to be male and show less empathic concern than the controls (508). Though they did not have enough female participation in the sample population to make any analysis based on sex, this does raise interesting questions about the correlation between sex and empathic concern. Douse and McManus go on to explain that "to some extent individuals who are interested in any hobby or interest will differ from the population average, and these differences [found in their study] probably fit within that perspective" (508).

The rise of video games brought a change in focus for these studies. Researchers began to search for facts to support the conventional wisdom that video games were harmful to the social and emotional development of individuals. This research has had two primary foci–the emotional and social effects of games on children and the role of sex among game players.

Video Games and Child Development

Perhaps the most heavily debated subject is the causal relationship between video games and personality development. Every new medium is subjected to intense scrutiny, especially when it comes to the medium's influence on young people, who are perceived as the most vulnerable part of society (Kubey and Larson 107). Video games are no exception. Video games have been found to promote aggressive behavior and a need for dominance, feelings which are then carried over into interpersonal interactions (Mehrabian & Wixen 8). However, Akira Sakamoto found that such correlations were only marginally significant, and then only among boys, not girls (26). Other researchers have also had a difficult time finding a significant relationship between aggression and video game use (Van Schie & Wiegman 1190). The main point of contention is whether the game causes the personality and behaviors, or if the personality type is drawn to the game. Kubey and Larson argue that boys may be predisposed to the high levels of aggression and competition in video games by natural testosterone levels (126). What seems to be overlooked by much of the research advocating a positive causal relationship is that there may be underlying gender differences which are accentuated by game play. Perhaps these children are just acting out the behaviors deemed appropriate by society in the construct of "woman" or "man," not learning new behaviors as a result of playing a game. As Funk and Buchman argue, "in most cases, playing video and computer games encourages players to repeat cycles of competitive, aggressive behavior not generally considered desirable for females" (Playing Violent Games 27). Kubey and Larson concur, "Video games reward a penchant for control, competition, and destruction"

(127). At least in American culture, boys tend to be more socialized to value these characteristics than girls, who prefer more intellectual and emotionally meaningful games (Kubey and Larson 127). Thus, researchers began taking a closer look at gender differences in the way people play games.

Gendered Game Playing

A number of studies into how sex and gender affect play styles in games make the assumption that males are masculine and females are feminine (Ballard & Lineberger par. 12; Funk & Buchman, "Children's Perceptions" 219; Funk & Buchman, "Playing Violent Games" 235; Kelle 170-71; McCorkmick & Leonard 111; Vaughter, et al. 88, 92-93). They make little or no attempt to determine if there is a distinction between gender and sex, and the terms are used interchangeably. While we may criticize them for essentializing, or "thinking and speaking as if all women are alike and all men are alike" (Wood, *Gendered Lives* 19), within the relative theoretical safety of feminist standpoint theory, we can at least apply the research to the social constructs of gender. Prevailing research indicates that males tend to play video games and use computers more, that males hold video games and computer skills in higher regard than females (Barnett, et al. 1329; Chen 214; Van Schie & Wiegman 1186). Chen noted, though, that the differences may come simply from lack of exposure to the medium, because girls and boys who have similar levels of computer experience also indicated similar levels of usage and regard (214). Additionally, males tend to play sports or violent games that contain elements of combat, conquest, and tests of skill; whereas females tend to play less-aggressive,

intellectual or creative games that reflect real-life situations with emotional themes (Barnett, et al. 1330; Funk & Buchman 25-26; Mehrabian & Wixen 3; Vaughter 529).

This is not to say that researchers into games have ignored the distinction between gender and sex. At least one study has looked at the differences between masculine, feminine, and androgynous male children by testing their responses to games perceived as masculine, feminine or neutral (Lobel 382). Another study has looked at the way in which video games reinforce stereotypical feminine gender roles in their portrayal of women (Dietz 439). More commonly, though, even researchers that recognize gender as a social construct still essentialize the subjects to study the gender constructs not only brought into the games, but also reinforced through play (Vered 58).

Overall, this research has shown that the gender socialization of males and females is reflected in the games that men and women choose to play. What it does not address is how the way in which they play games together might be a direct reflection of that same socialization into the predominant gendered social constructs.

The Gaming Community

How is it then possible that we can look to the gaming community as a virtual reality–a microcosm, if you will–of the social constructs within which we operate every day? While the gaming population is diverse, there are some factors that may influence the makeup of the gaming community. Simeon Yates and Karen Littleton argue that it is time for us to move past the concept of the game player as an individual alone with a

keyboard and a monitor; like television viewers, computer gamers are an audience (577). The authors continue:

> Gamers form very large and highly connected communities [. . .]. Recent work has focused upon the differentiated and negotiated character of media consumption and audience membership [. . .]. A central part of actively interpreting and appropriating media lies in constructing a subject position of being part of an audience [. . .]. This is also the case for games and gaming. (Yates and Littleton 577-78)

To be construed as part of the community of gamers often is perceived by gamers to be a negative in the eyes of non-gamers within a society (Yates and Littleton 578). The type of people willing to actively become part of this audience may influence the type of gender differences one finds among gamers. Women were often more affected by and aware of the social stigma of game playing than men (Kubey and Larson 127; Yates and Littleton 579)

Another factor that might affect the gender and personality makeup of the gaming community is the technology itself. It is arguably not something in the social construct of "woman" that discourages female users, but perhaps the fact that the male construct is primarily reflected in the designs of computer interfaces (Rommes, et al. 477). While this topic has not been fully explored, an examination of the main internet service provider in Amsterdam revealed non-conscious decisions in the design process which emphasized male learning styles and more readily accommodated male users (Rommes, et al. 499).

While both social pressures and technological biases may influence the makeup of these virtual communities, it is important to begin understanding how the constructs of our societies are being projected into the virtual world. Gaming provides an opportunity to build a link between reality and virtual reality; through the phenomena of roleplaying and power-gaming, an analogy can be created with the opposing duality of gender relations in our society. Elaine Graham contends:

> The technoscientific innovations of the last half of the twentieth century have done more than simply introduce new patterns of work, leisure, and social interaction, as in previous eras [. . .]. The ubiquity of computer technology and electronic media and the advent of genetic engineering are extending and displacing the physical body into new media such as cyberspace, and reconfiguring taken-for-granted patterns of physical space, procreation, communication, and intimacy. (421)

In fairness, Graham would argue against my proposal to extend our conventional understanding of gender constructs into the world of what she sees as "the dawning of the age of the 'posthuman' "[1](Graham 421), but I think she makes a valuable point about the type of voyage we are embarking upon. We may eventually be able to throw off the yoke of our current societal constructs, but as long as the main participants in the virtual world are socialized and living in the real world on a daily basis, it is relevant to examine the virtual societies in the same way we do our own. By understanding the social constructs of "man" and "woman," we can escape this relationship of domination and perhaps

[1] The 'posthuman' is the blurring of the lines between human, machine, and nature through technology. The breakdown of these basic distinctions leads to the blurring or destruction of all other dualities in our constructed societies, such as male and female.

achieve the "posthuman" world. To further our understanding of these constructs, this study will examine the virtual society of the massive multiplayer online game, Everquest™.

Research Questions

Based upon the assumptions of feminist standpoint theory and previous studies about the gaming community, the following research questions are explored in the game Everquest™.

Research Question 1: To what extent can we classify people as power-gamers or roleplayers?

Research Question 2: To what extent do particular communication behaviors cluster?

Research Question 3: To what extent do the clusters from R2 correspond to types of players?

Research Question 4: To what extent do observed in-game communication behaviors cluster?

Research Question 5: To what extent do the clusters from R4 correspond to types of players?

Research Question 6: To what extent can we predict the type of player based upon the sex of the character?

Research Question 7: To what extent can we predict the type of player based upon the sex of the player?

Research Question 8: To what extent are the percentages of agreement between the observed type of player and the surveyed typed of player the same?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

As virtual worlds on the Internet begin to mirror the social worlds of the users, the constructs that shape our societies will manifest themselves online. The player types of power-gamer and roleplayer may be one such manifestation, as these types seem to have characteristics corresponding to the traits of the social constructs of man and woman, respectively. To determine if this is the case, we must first establish that these player types do exist, then identify to what extent we can attribute certain communication behaviors to those types, and finally examine if there are any connections between women as roleplayers and men as power-gamers. Everquest™ is one of the most popular online games at this time, and as such, the players in its virtual world serve as the subjects of this study. Let us look at why Everquest™ provides an excellent environment for research, and how this study approaches the subject.

Subject

EverQuest™ was launched on March 16, 1999 and has set the bar for what the massively multi-player online roleplaying games (MMORPG) of the future will have to build upon. The game's designers describe it simply as "a graphical MUD" (EverQuest FAQ Sec. 1.2). Players enter a fictional world called Norrath. Forty-one duplicate versions of this world exist to accommodate the large number of players. The only difference between each world is the players who make it up, of which there may be over 2000 on-line at a time. Each world is made up of several continents and hundreds of

zones. Zones serve a practical purpose for the game designer, in that they limit the amount of information delivered to each of the thousands of people on-line at any time. However, zones also serve as barriers for interaction, creating chat-room type environments in that only characters (both computer-controlled and player-controlled) in that zone can physically interact.

Communication can occur on several levels. If players are within the same zone, they may come face-to-face and interact nonverbally through a series of gestures. These gestures are either displayed graphically (e.g., someone crying) or are displayed textually (such as the message "Pellaeron looks at you with concern"). There are also several forms of verbal communication that may occur non-vocally. Again, two characters that are face-to-face may simply speak out loud. In this case, anyone within a certain distance may overhear the conversation. Individuals may also choose from several types of messages that will be heard throughout an entire zone. These zone-wide messages may be identified as a *shout*, which is generally thought to be "in-character," an *out-of-character* message, which is typically used to indicate the player speaking as opposed to the character, and an *auction*, where announcements are made about items to be sold and traded.

Additionally, there are two types of communication that take place within certain groups of characters. During the course of the game, players may join groups, which tend to be temporary and consist of six people or less. Players may also join guilds, which have at least 10 members and are more permanent in nature. At any time, players may create a message broadcast to everyone in either a group or a guild, wherever they

may be in the world, and heard only by those individuals. The final type of communication is a private message. In this case, only the specified recipient, no matter where she or he is in the world, hears the message. No communication can occur across world servers, except in public forums outside the game itself.

During the course of the game, players assume a persona, or *avatar*, represented by one of 13 possible fantasy races (e.g., orcs, elves, trolls, etc.) and 14 typical fantasy *classes* (e.g., warrior, wizard, cleric, etc.). Classes determine what abilities and skills the character will have and what general function it will serve. Race provides some other minor abilities, but perhaps more importantly determines where you begin and how other races perceive you. Certain races and classes are described in EverQuest's™ background as *evil* and others are described as *good*. For the power-gamer, only the mechanical differences between the classes and races matter. For the roleplayer, it is essential to choose a class and race whose description matches the persona one wishes to adopt. (See *Appendix A* for more information about classes and races.) Further customization of the avatar is allowed in that players may make minor changes to their facial features, choose a name for their character that is distinct from existing character names, and choose the sex of the character.

Once the character is designed, the player sets off to play the game. The main premise of the game is that the player attempts to gain *levels*, which are a measure of the advancement of the character. Players begin at level 1 and may, at this time, work themselves up to level 60. Levels are gained by accumulating *experience*, which is a set number of points; for example, to reach level 2 one might need 1000 experience points.

Experience may be gained by completing *quests* or by killing computer-controlled creatures, or non-player characters (NPCs). Quests are errands in which an NPC requests that a player take or collect certain items and bring the items either to herself or himself, or to another NPC. A reward is then given in the form of experience and perhaps an item or money. Killing NPCs also grants an experience reward and may yield an item or money off the body. This reward is typically given in relation to the difficulty of the NPC killed. It is possible in this process for the character to be killed by the NPCs. (Players may only be killed by other players if both individuals have created characters called player-killers or if one individual issues a challenge to duel and the other accepts. In other words, player characters cannot be killed by other players without the express consent of the player.) If this happens, the player is revived at a home point, without her or his belongings. The player must return to his or her corpse to retrieve the belongings. Of course, the corpse may still be guarded by the NPC who slew the player. The most difficult NPCs to kill often require working in the aforementioned groups. Combating some NPCs requires the organizational skills and numbers of a guild. As such, players are encouraged to interact with others to achieve the goals of the game. Players gain prestige in any number of ways–from the level they have attained to the equipment they possess; from the guild to which they belong to their reputation as an individual.

One can see that EverQuest™ is a game in which there is an already evident dichotomy between people who role-play and those who do not. There is constant debate on message boards among the game's players as to the legitimacy of either style of playing. Roleplayers tend to adhere to the ideas of certain races and classes not getting

along due to their inherent evil or goodness. Power-gamers tend to overlook these concerns, as they do not have a functional impact on the achievement of their goals in the game. Role-playing guilds may get together for weddings, funerals, and good versus evil events with similar guilds. Power-gaming guilds may only get together for a raid on the most difficult Non-Player Characters in the game. There is even a debate over whether role-players should have their own world server on which to play, devoid of people who do not role-play. While there are no plans to create this division, the game's designers have gone so far as to create "tags" for players to place beside the name of their character to indicate whether they are role-playing or not role-playing. This method of identification is clear to everyone in the game. As such, this environment is ripe for conducting a case study to determine exactly what communicative behaviors are associated with the power-gamer, and which are associated with the role-player.

Procedures

Data Collection: Observation

To identify the communication characteristics of players in Everquest™, the researcher alternatively used a female and male character to conduct an observation of 20 individuals within one game world server. Arguably, each server, made up of thousands of players, will be composed of similar populations. Thus a sample from one server should provide as representative a sample of the playing population as observing multiple servers. By alternating the sex of the researcher's avatar, any differences that could be attributed to the perceived sex of the interviewer should be mitigated, though some research has indicated that the sex of the researcher has no significant impact on the

results (Wilkins and Anderson 28). Additionally, the researcher used characters of two level ranges (below level 20 and above level 40) to account for differences that might exist between the types of players who attain certain levels. The researcher conducted observations of 20 individuals by doing the following:

1) As a male character, join a group and participate in hunts.

2) As a female character, join a group and participate in hunts.

Ten individuals were observed as a female avatar, and ten as a male. During the observation, the researcher participated with the group as a member. To accomplish this, the researcher used the chat features of the game to ask to join groups. Upon being accepted, the researcher spent 30 minutes becoming familiar with the group dynamics before choosing an individual or individuals to observe. Each individual was observed for four hours while playing the game. The researcher noted the frequency of specific behaviors (as identified in *Appendix B*).

The communication behaviors were coded as to whether each was more likely to be evidenced by roleplayers (r) or power-gamers (p). Power-gamer behaviors were coded based on the status-oriented and task-oriented communication styles typically displayed by men. Status was achieved in a variety of ways. Achieving levels is one of the easiest ways to show status, thus task-oriented behaviors in pursuit of levels, especially to coordinate the group, would be most important to a power-gamer. Because of this, the behaviors *in combat*, *discusses game mechanics*, *takes leadership responsibility*, and *task-oriented* were coded as power-gamer. Another way to show status was to own equipment that was powerful and/or unique. *Looting kills*, *buying*

items, and *selling items* were coded as power-gamer because they were most conducive to attaining this goal. *Fighting another player* would allow a player to show direct dominance over that player by beating her or him in combat, and so was coded as power-gamer. The speed of one's computer and/or modem connection was used to indicate status unrelated to the character, therefore *talks about computers* was coded as power-gamer as well. *Anonymous tag* was coded as power-gaming behavior because a power-gamer would often become anonymous to avoid other players asking him or her for assistance. Finally, the power-gamer has little use for speaking in character, which would not help accomplish the task of achieving levels, so *talking out of character* was also coded as power-gamer.

Conversely, roleplaying behaviors were coded based on the network-building communication strategies of women. Roleplayers would attempt to establish relationships with other players, so behaviors such as *assisting others*, *relationship oriented*, *discusses personal life* (building relationship through self-revelation), and *welcomes new group members* were coded as roleplayer. In addition, taking on a role within the social order of the game would help promote the game community, so *talking in character*, *roleplaying tag*, and *practicing a trade skill* were also coded as roleplayer. A roleplayer was less concerned than a powergamer with status brought about through levels or items. So rather than stay in one place to level, a roleplayer might travel around to multiple zones, thus *traveling to a new zone* was coded as roleplayer. Or instead of keeping a valuable item for themselves, roleplayers would give it to another player who

wanted it, so *gives items to others* was also coded as roleplayer. *Uses emotes* was coded as roleplayer because emotes expressed emotions on the part of the player.

Because the observer had to be part of a group to conduct the observation, *in a group* was not coded as either power-gamer or roleplayer. Because characters could join a guild either for social or status-related reasons, *in a guild* was also coded as a neutral behavior.

Data Collection: Survey

Previous surveys conducted on-line have addressed the question of the reliability of the measure. Almost all studies conducted via various computer technologies found that people "respond as or more truthfully using a computer than they do either face-to-face [. . .], over the telephone [. . .], or on paper and pencil questionnaires" (Cooper, et al. 156).

The survey instrument is coded for activities that should primarily appeal to a power-gamer (p) and a roleplayer (r). As with the observation, power-gamer behaviors were coded based on the status-oriented communication styles typically displayed by men. There were several ways status was displayed in the game. The first was by the level of the character, so *gaining experience and levels* was coded as power-gamer. Another way to display status was through the possession of unique or powerful equipment. Thus, *obtaining items*, *accumulating money* (to buy said equipment), and *completing quests* (to acquire said equipment) were all coded as more typical of power-gamers. *Participating in hunts* also allowed an individual to acquire equipment,

and it allowed one to display combat prowess to others, so it was also coded as power-gamer. Similarly, *improving combat skills* was another way a player could increase combat prowess. Finally, *exploring new areas* was believed to be more a power-gaming behavior due to the recognition that goes with being the first to conquer a new foe and the type of new and powerful equipment such exploration can yield. Roleplayer behaviors, on the other hand, were coded based on women's use of communication to build networks. *Meeting new people*, *assisting friends*, *assisting strangers*, *spending time with friends*, *attending meetings*, and *attending social events* were all ways in which a player could engage other players socially to build relationships without necessarily comparing status. *Improving trade skills* was not directly related to showing status, and thus was more likely to be engaged in by roleplayers, who could use the resulting skills to build networks of trading partners.

Rather than this coding of responses as power-gamer or roleplayer, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory was initially considered as an instrument. However, the BSRI "characterizes a *person* [emphasis added] as masculine, feminine, or androgynous" (Bem 156). This study is examining an individual's avatar in a simulated society, not the gender traits that individual possesses in real life. Therefore, the BSRI does not serve adequately as a model for behaviors for which to look during observation (e.g., there is as yet no proven link between any action in the game and traits like *self-sufficient* or *gentle*; nor does there seem to be a game action which corresponds to every item on the BSRI, such as *loves children* or *athletic*), nor does it capture the information about playing styles as a survey instrument.

Surveys (see *Appendix C*) were given via interview to the 20 individuals observed during the Observation portion of the study. The interviews took place in the game during or after the observation. The interviewer provided an explanation of the participant's role in the study, explained that the character's name was not being recorded, and told the participant that he or she could withdraw at any time without penalty. The potential subject understood that her or his participation was voluntary, and she or he was free to ask questions about the research.

Data Analysis

A cluster analysis of the communication behaviors reveals whether particular characteristics could be attributed to roleplayers and power-gamers. Additionally, percentages indicate the most frequently used communication behaviors and the extent to which these are predictable based upon the type of character, the sex of the character, and/or the sex of the player.

Participants

The age of the participants in the study ranged from 18 to 63, with the mean age being 32. The median age was 29. Ninety-five percent of the players were from the United States, while one individual was from the United Kingdom.

Eleven individuals (55 percent) had been playing Everquest™ for more than a year. Five more (25 percent) had been playing for six to twelve months. Only three individuals had been playing less than three months. One individual chose not to indicate

how long he had been playing. Most of these players (55 percent) played Everquest™ four to six days a week. Three individuals (15 percent) played every day of the week. The remaining six (30 percent) individuals played two to three days a week. On the days they played, most players (50 percent) played four to six hours. Three people (15 percent) played six to eight hours a day. Seven individuals (35 percent) played two to four hours a day.

Nine participants (45 percent) had between three and five characters. Four individuals had only one character. Three participants had two characters. Two individuals had six to eight characters, and two others had nine or more characters. In six cases (30 percent) the character being observed was not the player's primary character (the one that individual played the most). Many different character classes were observed, but warrior and cleric classes were observed most frequently, with four players having characters of each of theses classes (see *Appendix D* for more information). The most common character race found was Dwarf (5 players), and High Elf was the second most common (4 players) (see *Appendix D* for more information).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The online game, Everquest™, is a virtual mirror of our contemporary society, made up of individuals interacting through characters. Our social constructs of man and woman should be represented in the communication behaviors of these players. These constructs, as described in current research, closely resemble the playing styles of power-gamers and roleplayers, respectively. Through analysis of survey responses and observations of communication behaviors, eight research questions were answered to determine to what extent power-gamers and roleplayers can be distinguished from each other, to what extent communication behaviors reliably indicate these differences, and to what extent these differences have a relationship to the sex of the character or player. The answers to these questions are presented here.

Answers to Research Questions

RQ 1: To what extent can we classify people as power-gamers or roleplayers?

Only 50 percent of the participants chose or were able to identify themselves as power-gamers or roleplayers without a definition of the playing styles. None of these people changed their self-classification after being given a definition. In fact, only 35 percent of all the participants changed their answer after being given a definition. After having the playing styles defined for them, 85 percent of the participants were able to identify themselves as either roleplayers or power-gamers.

The survey results showed that six of the players (30 percent) gave responses that indicated a preference for power-gaming styles. Thirteen players (65 percent) responded with a tendency towards roleplaying. One player (5 percent) gave responses evenly split between roleplaying and power-gaming.

During observation, 18 players (90 percent) displayed communication behaviors more indicative of power-gaming than roleplaying. Only two individuals displayed more behaviors which indicated a roleplaying style.

RQ 2: To what extent do particular communication behaviors cluster?

There were 49 communication behavior pairings out of a potential 351 (14.0 percent) that were consistent over 50 percent of the time. For instance, this means that in 85 percent of the instances where an individual reported spending little time attending meetings, he or she also reported spending very little time attending social events. These pairings are summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Clustering of Survey Results with Consistency Higher than 50 Percent

Percentage of Consistency	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming
85%	Time spent *attending meetings*	R	Time spent *attending social events*	R
85%	Goal of *assisting friends*	R	Time spent *spending time with friends*	R
85%	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R	Time spent *spending time with friends*	R
85%	Goal of *assisting friends*	R	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R
75%	Goal of *attending social events*	R	Time spent *attending social events*	R
75%	Time spent *spending time with friends*	R	Time spent *assisting friends*	R
75%	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R	Goal of *exploring new areas*	P

Table 4.1. Clustering of Survey Results with Consistency Higher than 50 Percent (cont.)

Percentage of Consistency	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming
70%	Goal of *assisting friends*	R	Time spent *assisting friends*	R
70%	Time spent *attending meetings*	R	Goal of *attending social events*	R
65%	Goal of *gaining experience and levels*	P	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
65%	Goal of *exploring new areas*	P	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
65%	Goal of *completing quests*	P	Time spent *accumulating money*	P
65%	Goal of *completing quests*	P	Time spent *completing quests*	P
65%	Goal of *assisting friends*	R	Goal of *exploring new areas*	P
65%	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
65%	Goal of *attending meetings*	R	Goal of *attending social events*	R
65%	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R	Time spent *assisting friends*	R
65%	Time spent *spending time with friends*	R	Goal of *exploring new areas*	P
60%	Goals of *accumulating money*	P	Goals of *obtaining items*	P
60%	Goal of *assisting friends*	R	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
60%	Goal of *improving trade skills*	R	Goal of *participating in hunts*	P
60%	Time spent *accumulating items*	P	Time spent *attending meetings*	R
60%	Goal of *attending social events*	R	Time spent *participating in hunts*	P
60%	Goal of *attending meetings*	R	Time spent *meeting new people*	R
60%	Time spent *assisting strangers*	R	Time spent *exploring new areas*	P
60%	Time spent *participating in hunts*	P	Time spent *attending social events*	R
60%	Time spent *assisting strangers*	R	Time spent *meeting new people*	R
60%	Time spent *improving trade skills*	R	Goal of *improving trade skills*	R
60%	Time spent *spending time with friends*	R	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
55%	Goal of *improving combat skills*	P	Goal of *participating in hunts*	P
55%	Goal of *completing quests*	P	Goal of *obtaining items*	P
55%	Goal of *completing quests*	P	Goal of *accumulating money*	P
55%	Goal of *participating in hunts*	P	Time spent *gaining experience and levels*	P
55%	Goal of *obtaining items*	P	Time spent *improving combat skills*	P
55%	Goal of *obtaining items*	P	Time spent *obtaining items*	P
55%	Goal of *accumulating money*	P	Time spent *accumulating money*	P
55%	Goal of *meeting new people*	R	Goal of *assisting friends*	R
55%	Goal of *meeting new people*	R	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R
55%	Goal of *participating in hunts*	P	Goal of *spending time with friends*	R
55%	Goal of *improving trade skills*	R	Time spent *completing quests*	P
55%	Goal of *attending social events*	R	Time spent *obtaining items*	P
55%	Goal of *meeting new people*	R	Time spent *meeting new people*	R
55%	Time spent *assisting friends*	R	Time spent *exploring new areas*	P
55%	Time spent *attending meetings*	R	Time spent *participating in hunts*	P
55%	Time spent *attending meetings*	R	Time spent *completing quests*	P
55%	Time spent *attending meetings*	R	Time spent *exploring new areas*	P
55%	Time spent *improving trade skills*	R	Time spent *completing quests*	P
55%	Time spent *attending social events*	R	Time spent *obtaining items*	P
55%	Time spent *attending social events*	R	Time spent *exploring new areas*	P

Twenty-one of these consistent pairings (42.9 percent) involved behaviors of differing playing styles. Sixteen consistent pairings (32.7 percent) involved two roleplaying behaviors. Twelve consistent pairings (24.5 percent) involved two power-gaming behaviors. The roleplaying behavior pairings also tended to show the highest consistency, with eight of the sixteen (50.0 percent) roleplaying pairings being consistent at least 70 percent of the time. No power-gamer responses were consistent at 70 percent or more.

RQ 3: To what extent do the clusters from R2 correspond to types of players?

In clusters of behaviors that were consistent in at least 70 percent of the cases, eight of the nine pairings (88.9 percent) were made up of two roleplaying behaviors. The other instance was a cross-pairing of one roleplaying and one power-gaming communication behavior, goals of *spending time with friends* and *exploring new areas*, respectively.

Three specific communication goals and behaviors are consistently mentioned together more than any others: *time spent with friends*, *goal of spending time with friends*, and *goal of assisting friends*. These three responses seem to form a core of the roleplaying style. Each appears three times in the nine pairings of consistent responses above 70 percent. The responses to all three items are the same in eighty percent of the cases. Of those people reporting positively (a four or five) on all three items, five respondents (31.3 percent) initially indicated they were roleplayers, though after a definition was provided, this number increased to eleven respondents (68.8 percent) who

indicated they were roleplayers. Three individuals (18.8 percent) who reported a four or five on these three items were power-gamers. The remaining two individuals indicated either he or she was not sure or neither. This is interesting when we consider that there are fourteen self-categorized roleplayers, so only 78.6 percent of roleplayers indicated preference for these three items, whereas all three powergamers scored positively on all three items.

The overall survey responses of individuals who responded consistently positively to *time spent with friends*, *goal of spending time with friends*, and *goal of assisting friends* reveal that, again, eleven of these respondents (68.8 percent) were roleplayers. Four of these individuals (25 percent) indicated more responses expected over power-gamers. The remaining individual did not indicate a leaning towards either playing style. When examining the group makeup from a style, four of the six individuals (66.7 percent) who were deemed power-gamers by their survey responses answered positively to all three items. Eleven of the thirteen roleplayers (89.7 percent) answered positively to all three of these items.

Of the four individuals (20 percent) who did not respond consistently to all three items, two of them (50 percent) indicated that they were roleplayers. The remaining two individuals initially were either not sure or neither. After being given a definition, only one player remained unsure, bringing the total number of self-classified roleplayers to three (75 percent). However, overall survey responses identified two of these individuals as being powergamers, and the other two as being roleplayers.

Several other responses are each mentioned twice: *Time spent attending meetings, time spent attending social events, time spent assisting friends*, and *goal of attending social events.*

RQ 4: To what extent do observed in-game communication behaviors cluster?

Ninety-seven pairings (38 percent) of observable communication behavior were found that were consistent more than 50 percent of the time. There were 253 potential pairings. For instance, this means that in 90 percent of the instances where an individual was observed practicing a trade skill, she or he was also observed talking in character. These pairings are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Clustering of Observed Communication Behaviors with Consistency Higher than 50 Percent

Percentage of Consistency	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming
100%	selling items	P	fighting another player	P
100%	selling items	P	roleplaying tag on	R
100%	fighting another player	P	roleplaying tag on	R
100%	roleplaying tag on	R	talking in character	R
100%	talking in character	R	fighting another player	P
100%	talking in character	R	selling items	P
90%	practicing a trade skill	R	talking in character	R
90%	practicing a trade skill	R	roleplaying tag on	R
90%	practicing a trade skill	R	fighting another player	P
90%	practicing a trade skill	R	selling items	P
90%	talking in character	R	talks about computers	P
90%	talking in character	R	buying items	P
90%	talking in character	R	anonymous tag	P
90%	roleplaying tag on	R	anonymous tag	P
90%	roleplaying tag on	R	buying items	P
90%	roleplaying tag on	R	talks about computers	P
90%	fighting another player	P	talks about computers	P
90%	selling items	P	talks about computers	P
90%	buying items	P	fighting another player	P
90%	anonymous tag	P	fighting another player	P
90%	selling items	P	anonymous tag	P
90%	buying items	P	selling items	P
90%	in a group	n/a	in combat	P
85%	talks about computers	P	buying items	P

Table 4.2. Clustering of Observed Communication Behaviors with Consistency Higher than 50 Percent (cont.)

Percentage of Consistency	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming
85%	gives items to others	R	talking in character	R
85%	gives items to others	R	roleplaying tag on	R
85%	gives items to others	R	fighting another player	P
85%	gives items to others	R	selling items	P
80%	anonymous tag	P	buying items	P
80%	anonymous tag	P	talks about computers	P
80%	traveling to a new zone	R	talking in character	R
80%	traveling to a new zone	R	roleplaying tag on	R
80%	traveling to a new zone	R	fighting another player	P
80%	traveling to a new zone	R	selling items	P
80%	practicing a trade skill	R	anonymous tag	P
80%	practicing a trade skill	R	buying items	P
80%	practicing a trade skill	R	talks about computers	P
80%	gives items to others	R	traveling to a new zone	R
80%	gives items to others	R	talks about computers	P
80%	gives items to others	R	buying items	P
75%	buying items	P	discusses personal life	R
75%	gives items to others	R	practicing a trade skill	P
75%	gives items to others	R	anonymous tag	P
75%	uses emotes	R	buying items	P
75%	uses emotes	R	selling items	P
75%	uses emotes	R	fighting another player	P
75%	uses emotes	R	roleplaying tag on	R
75%	uses emotes	R	talking in character	R
70%	in a group	n/a	talking out of character	P
70%	task oriented	P	takes leadership responsibility	P
70%	in a group	n/a	task oriented	P
70%	anonymous tag	P	discusses personal life	R
70%	traveling to a new zone	R	talks about computers	P
70%	traveling to a new zone	R	buying items	P
70%	traveling to a new zone	R	anonymous tag	P
70%	practicing a trade skill	P	discusses personal life	R
70%	practicing a trade skill	P	traveling to a new zone	R
70%	gives items to others	R	discusses personal life	R
70%	gives items to others	R	assisting others	R
70%	uses emotes	R	gives items to others	R
65%	in a group	n/a	in a guild	n/a
65%	in a guild	n/a	task oriented	P
65%	assisting others	R	roleplaying tag on	R
65%	assisting others	R	talks about computers	P
65%	assisting others	R	fighting another player	P
65%	assisting others	R	selling items	P
65%	assisting others	R	talking in character	R
65%	loots kills	P	welcomes new group members	R
65%	uses emotes	R	anonymous tag	P
65%	uses emotes	R	talks about computers	P
65%	uses emotes	R	traveling to a new zone	R
60%	in combat	P	talking out of character	P
60%	in a group	n/a	discusses game mechanics	P
60%	in combat	P	task oriented	P
60%	anonymous tag	P	assisting others	R
60%	assisting others	R	discusses personal life	R
60%	relationship oriented	R	anonymous tag	P

Table 4.2. Clustering of Observed Communication Behaviors with Consistency Higher than 50 Percent (cont.)

Percentage of Consistency	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming	Behavior	Roleplaying or Power-gaming
60%	in a guild	n/a	welcomes new group members	R
60%	traveling to a new zone	R	discusses personal life	R
60%	traveling to a new zone	R	assisting others	R
60%	practicing a trade skill	R	assisting others	R
60%	uses emotes	R	practicing a trade skill	R
55%	in a guild	n/a	in combat	P
55%	in a guild	n/a	talking out of character	P
55%	in a guild	n/a	discusses game mechanics	P
55%	in a guild	n/a	loots kills	P
55%	in combat	P	discusses game mechanics	P
55%	talking out of character	P	discusses game mechanics	P
55%	takes leadership responsibility	P	discusses game mechanics	P
55%	assisting others	R	buying items	P
55%	task oriented	P	welcomes new group members	R
55%	relationship oriented	R	discusses personal life	R
55%	traveling to a new zone	R	relationship oriented	R
55%	gives items to others	R	relationship oriented	R
55%	uses emotes	R	discusses personal life	R

In 29 of the consistent pairings (29.9 percent), both behaviors tended towards roleplaying. In 15 of the consistent pairings (15.5 percent), both behaviors tended towards power-gaming. In 41 of the consistent pairings (42.3 percent), one behavior tended towards roleplaying and the other towards power-gaming. Eleven of the consistent pairings (11.3 percent) showed a relationship between a neutral behavior and a power-gaming behavior. One of these pairings (1.0 percent) showed a relationship between a neutral behavior and a roleplaying behavior.

A total of 41 communication behaviors (42.3 percent) were observed with at least 80 percent consistency. The highest level of consistency was found in observed pairings of power-gaming communication behaviors. Ten of the power-gaming behaviors (62.5 percent) were observed with at least 80 percent consistency. Only eight of the roleplaying behaviors (27.6 percent) were observed in pairs with at least 80 percent

consistency. Of the mixed roleplaying and power-gaming pairings, 22 communication behaviors (53.7 percent) were observed at or above 80 percent consistency. One pairing was between a neutral behavior and a power-gaming behavior, and accounts for one percent of pairings like it.

RQ 5: To what extent do the clusters from R4 correspond to types of players?

In the communication behaviors that were observed with at least 80 percent consistency, over half (53.7 percent) were a consistent pair made up of one power-gaming and one roleplaying behavior. Of the remaining pairings, 24.4 percent consisted of two power-gaming behaviors, and 19.5 percent were made up of two roleplaying behaviors. The one neutral and power-gaming behavior only accounted for 2.4 percent of these pairings.

The five communication behaviors which appeared most often in these pairings each occurred nine times: *fighting another player*, *roleplaying tag*, *selling items*, *talking in character*, and *talks about computers*. The frequency of occurrence for all five items is the same in ninety percent of the cases. Almost all of the occurrences of these behaviors were a one, two, or three (low frequency). Of those people showing low frequency in all of these behaviors, six individuals (33.3 percent) initially identified themselves as roleplayers, though this number increases to thirteen individuals (72.2 percent) after they were provided with a definition of the playing styles. Only two individuals (11.1 percent) showing a low frequency of these five behaviors reported

being power-gamers. The remaining three individuals (16.7 percent) categorized themselves as either not sure or neither.

The overall frequency of behaviors indicated that of the people who had a low frequency of the five most consistent behaviors (*fighting another player*, *roleplaying tag*, *selling items*, *talking in character*, and *talks about computers*), sixteen of them (88.9 percent) were power-gamers. Only two roleplayers (11.1 percent) were found to have a low frequency in these behaviors. However, these two are the only observed roleplayers, thus all the roleplayers were seen to have a low frequency of these behaviors, whereas only approximately nine out of ten powergamers had a low frequency of all five communication behaviors.

RQ 6: To what extent can we predict the type of player based upon the sex of the character?

Of the female characters, only one of seven, or 14.3 percent reported being a power-gamer. Five, or 71.4 percent, indicated they were roleplayers both before and after they were given a definition of the playing styles. The remaining female character indicated she was a roleplayer only after she was given the definition of what it means to be a roleplayer. Her initial response was that she was neither.

Five of the female characters (71.4 percent) gave survey responses that were indicative of a roleplaying style. The remaining two female characters (28.6 percent) gave responses indicative of power-gamers. Observed communication behaviors, however, indicated that five female characters (71.4 percent) displayed playing styles

more closely aligned with that of a power gamer. Only two of the female characters (28.6 percent) tended to display roleplaying behaviors.

Two male characters (15 percent) believed they were power-gamers. Only two other male characters (15 percent) identified themselves immediately as roleplayers. Three of the male characters (23 percent) did not feel that they were either type of player. The remaining six male characters (46 percent) classified themselves as roleplayers only after being given the definition. Initially they responded as *neither* or *not sure.*

Four of the male characters (30.8 percent) provided survey responses indicative of a power-gaming playing style. Eight male characters (61.5 percent) indicated through their survey answers that they had roleplaying styles. One male character (8 percent) indicated that he was neither a roleplayer or power-gamer by his responses. In observation of communication behaviors, though, all the male characters displayed power-gaming tendencies.

RQ 7: To what extent can we predict the type of player based upon the sex of the player?

Both women players reported being roleplayers both before and after being given a definition. Both women also indicated by their survey responses that they displayed tendencies towards roleplaying styles. It is also interesting to note that only women displayed mostly roleplaying communication behaviors during observation. However, with women making up only 10 percent of the sample, it is difficult to draw any conclusions from this.

Of the men players, three reported being power-gamers (16.7 percent). Three others did not classify themselves either type of player (16.7 percent). The majority of players who were men reported themselves to be roleplayers (66.7 percent). Seven of these twelve men (38.9 percent) initially reported they were either *not sure* or *neither*. The other five (27.8 percent) reported they were roleplayers both before and after being given the definition.

Eleven of the men players (61.1 percent) gave survey responses that indicated preferences towards roleplaying. Six of these players (33.3 percent) who were men gave responses indicating they were more likely to be power-gamers. One did not show any leanings towards either style. During observation, all the men displayed behaviors that tended towards power-gaming.

RQ 8: To what extent are the percentages of agreement between the observed type of player and the surveyed typed of player the same?

In a comparison of the self-reported playing styles with the survey responses, all three of the individuals who reported themselves as power-gamers also gave responses that indicated power-gaming tendencies. Twelve of the fourteen individuals (85.7 percent) who saw themselves as roleplayers also gave responses indicating tendencies towards roleplaying. One individual reported being neither playing type, and his responses were evenly split between indicating a roleplaying or power-gaming style. Of the two players who were not sure of their playing styles, one tended towards roleplaying and the other towards power-gaming.

In comparison, observation yielded a different picture of playing styles. Again, all three individuals who indicated they were power-gamers also had communication behaviors that were observed to be more typical of a power-gamer. However, only two of the fourteen participants (14.3 percent) who indicated they were roleplayers also displayed communication behaviors consistent with a roleplayer. The other 12 tended to engage in communication behaviors more consistent with a power-gamer. The three individuals who indicated *neither* or *not sure* displayed more power-gaming tendencies.

When directly comparing the surveyed responses and observed communication behaviors, only eight of the twenty individuals (40 percent) gave survey results that indicated a playing style consistent with their observed behavior.

What does it all mean?

The research questions asked have presented some interesting results that give us more insight into our social constructs of sex and the virtual world. The results have also exposed some of the limitations of this study. The limitations provide an excellent opportunity for future research. All of these elements are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Within the context of feminist standpoint theory, the sex differences within communication can be examined without worry of ignoring individual differences. While one accepts individual difference, one can also look at how society holds man and woman to be different and work to change these perceptions. As Tannen argues, the only way to find difference is to study interaction, not an isolated individual (Tannen, "Display of Identities" 225). Thus, this study has looked at the interaction of individuals in the on-line gaming world to determine what communication behaviors are mirrored from our society within it. The results show us the extent to which there is a relationship between playing styles, communication behaviors, and the sex of players and characters. The results also provide some clues about the types of problems one encounters when studying a virtual society.

Discussion

Given that 85 percent of the people interviewed identified their own playing style, we can conclude that most people in Everquest™ were comfortable categorizing themselves as roleplayers or power-gamers. Their survey responses also closely matched the way they categorized themselves. Only 11.1 percent of the individuals who reported a playing style did not give survey responses that indicated a tendency toward that playing style. Thus, it does seem possible to categorize people as either a power-gamer

or roleplayer based on the survey instrument. On the other hand, these self-categorizations did not match up with the observed playing styles in most cases. This seems to indicate either that respondents have social bias against being perceived as a power-gamer that causes them to skew their survey responses, or that there is a flaw in the instruments. I tend to believe it is a problem with the observation instrument for several reasons.

First of all, in hindsight, the observation was conducted in such a way as to highlight those activities that are more indicative of power-gaming. To be privy to more significant amounts of conversation, the observation was designed so that the observer would participate in a group setting with the subjects. In most cases, groups were only available in instances where the primary objective of the group was to hunt in a certain spot and kill creatures to gain experience. This reveals a certain amount of bias inherent in the structure of the game. While communication behaviors deemed to be roleplaying did occur in these situations, they did not account for a significant amount of most participants' time due to the amount of task-oriented behavior that was required for the group to continue to exist. Failure to achieve task-oriented results tended to end in the dissolution of the group before observation could be completed. Future research will need to find a way to observe individuals in non-hunting settings and still be privy to their conversations. One possible way to do this may be to include guild activities in observation, though one must be wary of bias due to the personal relationships that would be necessarily established between the observer and the subjects for an observer to join a guild.

Another problem with the observation is the coding of certain communication behaviors as power-gaming or roleplaying. The initial coding of the behaviors was based upon the research showing that men tend to communicate to achieve status and women to build community. Based on the hypothesis, power-gamers should have had the same communication behaviors as men, because their goal is also status. However, it seems that the true goal of the power-gamer is to achieve status by beating the game. In Everquest™, this most likely means achieving level 60. All other behaviors that might otherwise show status, such as *fighting another player*, become irrelevant to the primary goal of getting levels. This may have led to too many behaviors being attributed to power-gamers, thus skewing the observation results towards power-gaming. For example, three of the five most consistently observed behaviors were coded as power-gamer traits (*fighting another player*, *selling items*, and *talks about computers)*, yet almost 90 percent of power-gamers showed negligible frequency of those behaviors. This causes there to be a majority of communication behavior pairings which are consistent, yet are made up of both a roleplaying and a power-gaming item. Categories such as *obtaining items*, *accumulating money*, *completing quests*, *exploring new areas*, *buying items*, *selling items*, *looting kills*, *fighting another player*, *talking about computers*, and possibly *anonymous tag* need to be carefully scrutinized before being attributed to power-gamers in the future. I believe that if these behaviors were recoded, it is very likely that we would find a majority of these pairings are made up of roleplaying behaviors. More research is needed to investigate closely the goals of the power-gamer and what communication behaviors can be attributed to him or her.

While this problem in coding does help explain the difference between the gaming style classifications in the survey and observations, it does not address the fact that men did tend to display in observation more communication behaviors commonly associated with men than women did. For while the coding may not have captured the essence of the power-gamer, the activities observed were still coded based on male communication behaviors. Even men who indicated that they were roleplayers in the survey still acted in ways that were coded as power-gaming. The low number of women players actually involved in the study makes it difficult to generalize about the playing styles of women. However, we must remember that feminist standpoint theory is not looking specifically at the individuals. As mentioned previously, Tannen argues it is the interaction between the sexes that creates difference. Thus, we are able to make some generalizations about the sexes due to the interaction that was occurring between group members actually or perceived to be of the opposite sex, even if those group members did not end up participating in the study. It is in this one instance that observation meets expectations by showing all men tend to be power-gamers (or having male communicator styles) and all women tend to be roleplayers.

However, given the problems inherent in the observation noted above and the low percentage of participation by women, we should look skeptically at this result. The survey provided a different perspective, with almost two-thirds of the men indicating they were roleplayers, both in self-classification and in their answers to the survey. Also, even though the survey was able to show that three roleplaying goals and activities (*time spent with friends*, *goal of spending time with friends*, and *goal of assisting friends*) were more

consistently found together in people who indicated by their survey responses that they were roleplayers rather than power-gamers, it is important to note that all three self-professed power-gamers also scored highly in these roleplaying goals and activities. So even if we are limited in our ability to generalize about women, the results indicate that men do not strictly adhere to one playing style. However, we should note that power-gaming styles were only found among men, not women. This result does merit further investigation, as it seems to indicate either a lack of sufficient women participants (who might also be power-gamers and thus show diversity in both sexes) or a problem in coding of the survey instruments (which could incorrectly attribute to men too many activities as roleplaying). Additionally, both women immediately classified themselves as roleplayers, while many men had to have the style defined for them before they would identify themselves as roleplayers. Future research should work to determine if this difficulty is limited to just men, and if so, why men have this difficulty.

So why did roleplaying men still display communication behaviors that are typically assumed to be male? It is possible that the relationship between power-gaming and male communication styles and roleplaying and female communication styles is simply nonexistent. This fits with the already discussed differences between male communication behaviors and power-gaming. It also explains why roleplaying men still display male communication behaviors in game. While roleplayers and power-gamers may play the game for different reasons than what were accounted for in creating the instruments, the sex-oriented communication styles of the men may still be evidencing

themselves. Future research may want to discard the notions of power-gaming and roleplaying, opting instead to simply look for communication styles.

There is another possibility, however, which presents an interesting mirror of society. Roleplaying behaviors were the ones most consistently reported together in the survey, whereas power-gaming behaviors were not consistent at significant levels. Also, as noted above, it is likely that a recoding of the observation instrument would also yield the highest consistencies among roleplaying behaviors. Thus, if one reported a high or low score for a roleplaying goal or time spent roleplaying, that individual was more likely to report a similar score for other roleplaying behaviors. However, one power-gaming behavior was not necessarily indicative of any others. This seems to indicate that the communication behaviors associated with power-gaming are inherent to the structure of the game. Even if one is a roleplayer, to interact within the societal context of the game, one must undertake certain power-gaming behaviors. Thus, it is not so much the presence of power-gaming traits that indicates a power-gamer, as it is the absence of any roleplaying behaviors or goals. Arguably, women trying to participate in a societal structure that is predominantly male have the same experience as these roleplayers in a power-gaming world.

Finally, we should note that the sex of the character did not seem to be any more indicative of playing style than any other data. The distribution of power-gamers and roleplayers among male and female characters were almost identical. When asked to categorize themselves, 15 percent of male characters and 14 percent of female characters identified themselves as power-gamers. When looking at player type as indicated by

survey responses, female characters were composed of approximately 29 percent power-gamers and 71 percent roleplayers, whereas male characters were made up of 31 percent power-gamers and 62 percent roleplayers, a very similar ratio. In observation, all the male characters displayed primarily power-gaming behaviors and almost three-fourths of the females did. While there are some differences here, they are not significant enough to be able to identify playing style by character sex.

Implications for Future Research

This study has created a great many opportunities for future exploration into playing styles, communication behaviors, and the gaming community. While no link was confirmed between power-gaming and the communication styles of men, and roleplaying and the communication styles of women, some interesting questions were brought to light. In discussing what future research should be conducted, we should recognize not only the questions raised by this study, but also the problems that it faced. There are a few key limitations that need to be considered.

First of all, the sex of the subjects is only determinable by self-reporting. As Emily Laber explains "the game companies do not officially monitor sex ratios, and since male players can create female characters and vice versa, there is no accurate way to judge how many women and girls are playing" (par. 5). Additionally, one cannot simply gauge by the sex of the individual who owns the gaming account, as multiple people can play through one account. Unfortunately, these factors could cause some false reporting of player sex by individuals. However, the on-line survey is at least as reliable as other

survey methods, so the risk of this is minimal (Cooper, et al. 156). In addition, just as one account can host multiple players, one person can have multiple characters or even multiple accounts. Thus, it is possible that one person could be studied more than once as different characters, however unlikely that may be given the number of individuals on a particular server. Given the lack of sexual diversity found in this survey, getting accurate reports of the sex of participants is crucial for several reasons.

The self-assessment part of the survey indicated that men seem to be more hesitant to classify themselves as roleplayers than women are. Samples with more women in them need to be used to discover if this is the case, and also to see if women are more hesitant to classify themselves as power-gamers. If this is the case, researchers should ask why to determine if there is a sex link between how men and women are expected or expect themselves to play.

This study has also provided some direction for communication research into sex differences. Feminist standpoint theory has again proven effective at exploring sex differences in interaction without fear of stereotyping individuals. Basing this work in feminist standpoint theory creates the risk of the same "uniquely situated individual" problems that have haunted other gender studies. However, I believe that this is balanced out by the interaction that occurs in the game, necessary in Tannen's view to illustrate the key differences between men and women.

Given this theoretical base, results from this study can only be used to further understanding of the relationship between the social constructs known as man and woman, and should not be used to examine the behavior or goals of individual men and

women. The results indicate that there may be some communication differences between men and women, despite the overlap of playing styles between the sexes. Once again, a larger, more sexually diverse sample needs to be utilized to see if this is the case. Additionally, unless a link between playing styles and communication styles can be found, these studies should code directly for communication styles and not attempt to use playing styles as a parallel way of determining communication behaviors. Researchers may want to attempt to modify other communication instruments coded for sex roles, such as the BSRI, in an effort to compare findings in this environment with previous research. Though these instruments do suffer from the weaknesses indicated by feminist standpoint theory, they may end up being useful if modified for the gaming environment and with a thought to the social constructs of sex rather than the individuals.

Research about sex and the gaming community could also build off these findings to determine if the ratio of women to men is really as low as this research indicates. If so, it is time to examine why this is the case. Perhaps there really is an inherent bias in the interface of most games towards men or power-gamers, or both.

This survey also found that the sex of the character and the sex of the player are not as consistent as previously thought. Roberts and Parks found that "most people presented their on-line gender in a way that matched their 'real-life' gender [meaning biological sex in this case]" (535). This study did not find that to be the case, with almost three-fourths of the female characters reportedly being played by men. Thus, simply assuming that the sex of the character matches the sex of the player is not adequate. Research needs to be done to determine if this is the result of a shift in the societal

acceptance of gender-switching, or if the small sample size of this study has not yielded accurate results.

Secondly, the study indicates that people can be identified primarily as roleplayers and power-gamers. Future exploration of these two styles needs to seek to better understand the goals of each style. Are *obtaining items*, *accumulating money*, *completing quests*, *exploring new areas*, *buying items*, *selling items*, *loots kills*, *fighting another player*, *talking about computers*, and *anonymous tag* truly power-gaming indicators? As discussed in the opening of this chapter, the survey instruments, especially in regards to observation, did not succeed in correctly assessing communication behaviors as roleplaying or power-gaming behaviors. The first option to fix this would be to recode the instruments with the new understanding of power-gaming as a pursuit of "winning" the game. In this case, for the survey, *obtaining items* and *accumulating money* would be considered neither roleplaying nor power-gaming. *Completing quests* and *exploring new areas* would be coded for roleplaying. In observation, being *in combat* would be seen as the primary communication behavior for power-gamers. *Fighting another player* would be made into a roleplaying behavior. The remaining power-gamer behaviors would be neutral. Roleplayers would be determined by the presence of roleplaying responses, while power-gamers would be identified by their lack thereof. The second option would be to be code specifically for communication behaviors as male or female, without trying to establish the link between communication style and playing style. This would follow basically the same coding as originally, but there would not be an attempt made to link the playing styles with sexual communication behaviors.

Researchers may also want to take a closer look at the relationship between playing styles and the amount of time played per level. While there were not enough people in this sample to determine if this were the case, there may be a relationship between the power-gamer and speed with which that person is leveling.

Additionally, this study has indicated that power-gaming communication behaviors may be inherent to at least this on-line multiplayer game, if not others. Future instruments need to take this into account and determine if one can measure power-gaming style based on the absence of roleplaying behaviors instead of the presence of power-gaming behaviors. Also, studies might try to compare playing goals and actual time spent in an activity to see if disparities indicate communication behaviors which are necessary to play the game, but run counter to the preferred playing style of the player.

Conclusions

In summary, it seems that it is possible, for the most part, to classify people as either a roleplayer or power-gamer. What is more tenuous is any link between the power-gamer play style and the communication strategies commonly attributed to men. While such a link may exist, it is difficult to isolate due to the same kind of structurally imbedded male biases found in Rommes' study of internet interfaces in Amsterdam (499); in other words, certain male communication behaviors seem to be integral to the playing of the game. Though this link between communication and play styles may be elusive, there does seem to be evidence that men and women are using different

communication styles in the game itself and that the virtual world may mirror our own more closely than some might like.

This study avoided the difficulties that previous studies have had in discovering difference by utilizing feminist standpoint theory to make generalizations about the social sexual constructs, without endangering the individuality of every member of those sexes. This allowed for the use of Tannen's work and other ideas based off of the separate worlds hypothesis without fear of stereotyping. The results hint at confirmation for Tannen's arguments and for other studies that have discovered communication differences between the sexes. Feminist standpoint theory has proven itself as a strong launching point for research into this virtual arena.

The computer gaming industry indicates that it believes women are important to their on-line communities, yet this study indicates that perhaps women are not making up as large of a percentage of the playing population as is commonly believed. It does seem that there may be a male structure to the playing of the games that discourages female play. Though this may discouraging, it is interesting to note that men are gender switching at higher rates than previously observed, possibly to make up for the imbalance in gender proportions.

The virtual world may be the new frontier, but it seems to be firmly rooted in the conventions of the societies that bore it. Structural rules that seem to encourage male communication styles may be limiting access by women to the virtual societies, or at least reinforcing male communication behaviors in men. The power-gamer and the roleplayer do exist, but they do not seem to have as much of a relationship to the sex of

the character or the player as one might have thought. More research into the communication styles of men and women in on-line gaming will not only help to improve these games, but also bring about greater understanding of the society that creates them.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Everquest™ Classes and Races

Overview of Classes

The choice of what class to play is really one of personal preference. They all have advantages and disadvantages. One major factor in your choice of class is whether you plan on grouping or playing alone. There are some classes that just aren't suitable to play solo. Read the descriptions carefully before picking a solo class. Of course, every class is fun to play in a group, and grouping is really encouraged in the game design. Therefore, I would suggest you choose your class based upon how you would like to play in a group. This needs to fit your personality and how you like to play within the game. I see the classes in three categories (with some crossover of categories):

1. Fighter Types - or tanks as they are referred to in the game - including Warriors, Paladins, Rangers, Shadow Knights, Monks, and maybe Rogues. Clerics, Shaman, Druids and Bards can fill this role in a pinch, as can the pets of Necromancers and Magicians, but not very efficiently. These classes see the most action. They are always at the forefront of every battle, and they rarely find themselves out of the action. If you like wading into every battle, shouting bonzai, and hacking off heads and limbs, this is for you. Because every party can use multiple fighters, you will never be at a loss for a group. However, these classes are tougher to solo and lack the means to travel and to extricate themselves from tough battles that the magic classes have. The first time you have to run back to town to buy stuff, you will really envy that magic user's gate spell. The lack of the ability to bind can also be frustrating to a tank. It is also very expensive to buy equipment for most of these classes, and heaven help you if you die somewhere

where you can't retrieve your corpse, forcing you to repurchase all of your armor all over again.

2. Magic Support - including Clerics, Enchanters, Shaman, Bards, and Druids, and to some extent Magicians and Necromancers (though they really fit the third category better). These classes, while possessing some offensive skills (especially the Shaman, Bard and Druid), are far more valuable in how they enhance the skills of other party members. Most of them are very difficult to solo (except the magician, druid and necromancer). Their primary role is to buff the fighters with enhancements and defenses and debuff the monsters to make them easier to hit and kill, then stand back and let the fighters do the dirty work. Their role in a battle is then support by healing, charming, etc. They are also very useful for traveling, healing, sneaking around and other non combat related stuff. You may enjoy these classes better if you are the type who likes to role play more than just kill and level. The healers are also supposed to keep track of the hit points of each party member and keep them from dying. If you chose one of these classes, you should be happy with the fact that while you may not be the hero that demolished the monster, you were the one who made it possible for that hero to do his job. Every party needs one or two of these classes, especially the healers.

3. Magic Attack - including Wizards, Necromancers and Magicians, and to some extent Druids. These classes have the ability through firepower and summoning to quickly kill monsters when the fighters start to get low, and most importantly, kill off the monsters who break off and run for help before they can summon their big brothers to whoop your butt. This is especially true of the wizard, who has no crossover and really

only fits into this category, yet does it best of them all. Except for the wizard, These are the best solo classes in the game. If you play one of these classes, you have to be prepared to sit back and patiently bide your time while the fighters bash at the monsters, conserving your mana to strike where it is most effective and, for necromancers and magicians, directing your pet to the most useful area. You should also be prepared to spend a lot of the game staring at the inside of your spellbook, meditating to get back spent mana. (Moyer, "Everquest Classes")

Description of Classes

Bard - The Bard's stock-in-trade is his ability to play songs. His songs are actually spells of a sort, and their magical affects last as long as the Bard continues to sing and play the correct instrument. They have some passing knowledge of the Warrior ways (mainly for self-defense), but their main focus is always their art, and so they will never be as skillful as Warriors.

Cleric - The Cleric is a holy man endowed by his patron deity with the power to heal, and, to a lesser extent, call upon the wrath of his deity to smite his foes. Prayer is how the Cleric gains his ability.

Druid - A Druid is completely at home in the outdoors, and is a friend to all animals. Because of this, no animal will ever attack him unless first attacked by the Druid. They are spellcasters whose focus is all things natural, allowing them to call upon nature for aid. They share some woodland skills with their Ranger brothers

Enchanter - The primary focus of the Enchanter's art can be summed up by the name of the arcane order to which he belongs: Enchanter. Their spells are crafted to enchant people, places, and things. This art allows them to charm beings and make them fight for their new master, or magically enhance the capabilities of their allies. They also have some skill in offensive spells, but are never as skilled as a Wizard.

Magician - Magicians are the summoners of the arcane arts, and wield the power to call forth everything from a loaf of bread to a huge Fire Elemental to fight for them.

While not as adept at offensive spells as the Wizards, Magicians still wield considerable power in this area as well.

Monk - Monks are dedicated to the pursuit of shaping their bodies into a pure weapon, and because of this they nearly shun all weapons and most forms of armor. They are very religious as well, and the gods are known to bless them, not by prayers and spells, but by magically enhancing their attacks.

Necromancer - These are the dark brotherhood of the arcane arts, dabbling in death. Through evil spiritually based spells, they are able to animate dead bodies and skeletons to do their bidding, as well as having spells which leach life from their victims.

Paladin - Paladins are the very picture of a holy knight, fighting for the cause of good in all aspects of his life. They share some of the power of a Cleric, and a good deal of the fighting ability of a Warrior, but have a few powers all their own.

Ranger - The Ranger is a meld between a Warrior and a Druid, sharing some of the skills of both. They are at home in the outdoors.

Rogue - They are the secretive, mysterious class of the world, who sneak about in the dark. Some say they are assassins, and some that they are nothing but common thieves, but the truth lies somewhere in the middle, and they are capable of both. They are quite skilled with many weapons, but they cannot stand toe to toe with a Warrior and prefer to make the kill by a sudden attack from the rear, at which they are extremely skilled. They would much prefer to not be discovered at all, or if they are, to not be there

for their opponent's blow to land. The darker skills of picking locks and stealing are also their forte.

Shadow Knight - The evil twin to the Paladin class, Shadow Knights derive all of their powers from the evil gods whom they serve. They are a meld of Warrior and Necromancer, and share some of their abilities and spells.

Shaman - They are similar to the Cleric, but are more of a tribal witch doctor and are typically found amongst the more primitve races. Their primary focus is largely healing and other Clerical type spells, but they also have a good deal of offensive spells.

Warrior - Warriors are the masters of armed combat, in all its many forms. They are at home on the battlefield, and are trained to take punishment as much as dole it out, so their Hit Points are the highest of any class.

Wizard - Wizards are the master seekers of knowledge, and their talents and spells are focused on this goal. They use powerful spells to not only see things from afar, but to transport them there as well. This thirst for arcane knowledge has also made them the true masters of the strongest form of defense: offensive spells of pure destruction. In their ability to do magical damage, they have no rivals.

(Verant Interactive, "Classes")

Races

Overview of Races

The developers seem to have done a good job of balancing the races so that no race stands out as more advantageous than another. The biggest factors in choosing a race seem to be the faction system, infra & ultra vision, and starting location. Class seems less of a factor, since if a race is able to be a certain class it is usually pretty good at it. The faction system is important since NPC's in the game dislike players of certain diametrically opposed races. Remember that there is a reason the difficulty rating of the evil races is listed as high. A dark elf in a human city will find it hard to buy or sell anything, be constantly ripped off by the few merchants who will deal with him, and could find himself attacked and killed just out of principle. If you choose an evil race, be prepared to be disliked everywhere you go, but even the good races tend to prefer to hang with their own kind. Your buying and selling prices will always be best in your home city. Infravision is very important because it is really dark at night. If you choose one of the human races, just prepare for the necessity of staying near light sources until you can afford to buy something to see with (and a lantern is not all that effective). Finally, if you plan on grouping with buddies of other races, check the map and see where you are starting, since it can take 20 to 30 hours of game time to get powerful enough to travel beyond your home city. It will be a long time before your Gnome Wizard can meet up with your friend's Erudite Necromancer (Moyer, "Everquest Races").

Description of Races

Barbarian - A hardier variety of the Human race that comes from the cold and rugged northlands. Because of the harsh environment, and their warlike culture, they are better suited to being Warriors than Humans, and are generally unwashed and rugged – possessing very few social graces.

Dark Elf - The Dark Elves are the evil brethren of the Woodland and High Elves. Their skin is blueish-black, their hair white, and they share the pointed ears and sharp features of their Elven brethren. Due to their life under the earth, and dedication to evil gods, they have the ability to see perfectly in the dark.

Dwarf - Dwarves are short, but extremely strong (much more so than Humans) and dexterous. They appear to be small, burly humans, and are never seen without beards and mustaches.

Erudite - The final variant of the Human race. Being the exact opposite of the Barbarians, the High Man prides himself on his intellectual abilities and social graces, to the almost total exclusion of the physical disciplines.

Gnome - Gnomes spend most of their lives in their underground burrows and rarely come to the surface. They resemble Dwarves to some extent, but have a ruddy brown skin and are more wiry and gnarled. Their hair is white, and somewhat sparse.

Half Elf - Half-Elves, being a blend between humans and Woodland Elves, share some of the strengths and weaknesses of both races. They most closely resemble humans, except for their slightly pointed ears and sharper facial features.

Halfling - Halflings are stocky little people that most closely resemble humans, but they are extremely agile, dexterous, and very light of foot.

High Elf - The High Elves are much more intellectual than their Woodland kin, and are the "royalty" of the Elven races (with the exception of their Dark brethren). They share the appearance of their Woodland kin, but are thinner, more beautiful, and more pale in skin.

Human - Normal humans. The standard race by which all others are judged.

Iksar – [no description available on site, but are reptilian creatures]

Ogre - Ogres are incredibly massive beings, with their average height being about 10', and weigh well over four hundred pounds, which makes them a truly immovable object. Due to their size, they are the strongest of all the races and are tied with the Trolls in pure Stamina. Conversely, they are the stupidest race, whose lives mostly consist of smashing things and eating them.

Troll - Trolls typically stand about 8' tall, are extremely strong, ugly, stupid, dirty, and green of skin.

Wood Elf - The Elves appear somewhat human at first glance, but their very sharp features and pointed ears set them apart. Elves are weaker than humans, but more than make up for this with their amazing agility and superior dexterity. They equal the High Man in their intelligence and wisdom, but are much more fair and charismatic. (Verant Interactive, "Races")

Class and Race Charts

The following chart shows the base attributes for each Race (in blue) and then for each Class that is available to players of that Race (in white).

The attributes are, from right to left: Strength, Stamina, Agility, Dexterity, Wisdom, Intelligence, Charisma, and a set of bonus points which the character distributes upon character creation to any of the base attributes. No more than 20 bonus points may be put into any one skill.

After character creation, these attributes may only be further increased by items, which yield bonuses.

Race/Class	STR	STA	AGI	DEX	WIS	INT	CHA	Bonus	Total
Barbarian	*103*	*95*	*82*	*70*	*70*	*60*	*55*	*N/A*	*535*
Rogue	103	95	92	80	70	60	55	30	585
Shaman	103	100	82	70	80	60	60	30	585
Warrior	113	105	87	70	70	60	55	23	583
Dark Elf	*60*	*65*	*90*	*75*	*83*	*99*	*60*	*N/A*	*532*
Cleric	65	70	90	75	93	99	60	30	582
Enchanter	60	65	90	75	83	109	70	30	582
Magician	60	75	90	75	83	109	60	30	582
Necromancer	60	65	90	85	83	109	60	30	582
Rogue	60	65	100	85	83	99	60	30	582
Shadow Knight	70	70	90	75	83	109	65	20	582
Warrior	70	75	95	75	83	99	60	25	582
Wizard	60	75	90	75	83	109	60	30	582

Dwarf	*90*	*90*	*70*	*90*	*83*	*60*	*45*	*N/A*	*528*
Cleric	95	95	70	90	93	60	45	30	578
Paladin	100	95	70	90	88	60	50	20	573
Rogue	90	90	80	100	83	60	45	30	578
Warrior	100	100	75	90	83	60	45	25	578
Erudite	*60*	*70*	*70*	*70*	*83*	*107*	*70*	*N/A*	*530*
Cleric	65	75	70	70	93	107	70	30	580
Enchanter	60	70	70	70	83	117	80	30	580
Magician	60	80	70	70	83	117	70	30	580
Necromancer	60	70	70	80	83	117	70	30	580
Paladin	70	75	70	70	88	107	80	20	580
Shadowknight	70	75	70	70	83	117	75	20	580
Wizard	60	80	70	70	83	117	70	30	580
Gnome	*60*	*70*	*85*	*85*	*67*	*98*	*60*	*N/A*	*525*
Cleric	65	75	85	85	77	98	60	30	575
Enchanter	60	70	85	85	67	108	70	30	575
Magician	60	80	85	85	67	108	60	30	575
Necromancer	60	70	85	95	67	108	60	30	575
Rogue	60	70	95	95	67	98	60	30	575
Warrior	70	80	90	85	67	98	60	25	575
Wizard	60	80	85	85	67	108	60	30	575
Half Elf	*70*	*70*	*90*	*85*	*60*	*75*	*75*	*N/A*	*525*
Bard	75	70	90	95	60	75	85	25	575
Druid	70	80	90	85	70	75	75	30	575
Paladin	80	75	90	85	65	75	85	25	580
Ranger	75	80	100	85	65	75	75	20	575
Rogue	70	70	100	95	60	75	75	30	575
Warrior	80	80	95	85	60	75	75	25	575

Halfling	*70*	*75*	*95*	*90*	*80*	*67*	*50*	*N/A*	*527*
Cleric	75	80	95	90	90	67	50	30	577
Druid	70	85	95	90	90	67	50	30	577
Rogue	70	75	105	100	80	67	50	30	577
Warrior	80	85	100	90	80	67	50	25	577

High Elf	*55*	*65*	*85*	*70*	*95*	*92*	*80*	*N/A*	*542*
Cleric	60	70	85	70	105	92	80	30	592
Enchanter	55	65	85	70	95	102	90	30	592
Magician	55	75	85	70	95	102	80	30	592
Paladin	65	70	85	70	100	92	90	20	592
Wizard	55	75	85	70	95	102	80	30	592
Human	*75*	*75*	*75*	*75*	*75*	*75*	*75*	*N/A*	*525*
Bard	80	75	75	85	75	75	85	25	575
Cleric	80	80	75	75	85	75	75	30	575
Druid	75	85	75	75	85	75	75	30	575
Enchanter	75	75	75	75	75	85	85	30	575
Magician	75	85	75	75	75	85	75	30	575
Monk	80	80	85	85	75	75	75	20	575
Necromancer	75	75	75	85	75	85	75	30	575
Paladin	85	80	75	75	80	75	85	20	575
Ranger	80	85	85	75	80	75	75	20	575
Rogue	75	75	85	85	75	75	75	30	575
Shadow Knight	85	80	75	75	75	85	80	20	575
Warrior	85	85	80	75	75	75	75	25	575
Wizard	75	85	75	75	75	85	75	30	575

Iksar									
Monk	75	75	100	95	80	75	55	20	575
Necromancer	70	70	90	95	80	85	55	30	575
Shaman	80	75	90	85	90	75	60	20	575
Shadowknight	70	75	90	85	90	75	60	30	575
Warrior	80	80	95	85	80	75	55	25	575

Ogre	*130*	*123*	*70*	*70*	*67*	*60*	*37*	*N/A*	*557*
Shadow Knight	140	127	70	70	67	70	42	20	606
Shaman	130	127	70	70	77	60	42	30	606
Warrior	140	132	75	70	67	60	37	25	606
Troll	*108*	*109*	*83*	*75*	*60*	*52*	*40*	*N/A*	*527*
Shadow Knight	117	114	83	75	60	62	45	20	576
Shaman	108	114	83	75	70	52	42	30	574
Warrior	118	119	88	75	60	52	40	25	577
Wood Elf	*65*	*65*	*95*	*80*	*80*	*75*	*75*	*N/A*	*535*
Bard	70	65	95	90	80	75	85	25	585
Druid	65	75	95	80	90	75	75	30	585
Ranger	70	75	105	80	85	75	75	20	585
Rogue	65	65	105	90	80	75	75	30	585
Warrior	75	75	100	80	80	75	75	25	585

(Moyer, "Race and Class Starting Stats")

Appendix B

Observation

Observation Guide

Observation Number: _____ Class: _____
Level: _____ Race: _____
Character Sex: _____ Player Sex: _____
Time spent Observing: _____

Time in Activity
Never Always

Role-playing Tag (r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Anonymous Tag (p)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In Group (p or r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In Combat (p)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Assisting Others (r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Talking in Character (r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Talking Out of Character (p)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discusses Personal Life (r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Discusses Game (p)
(Mechanics, Character Stats) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Takes Leadership Responsibilities (p)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Task Oriented (p)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Relationship Oriented (r)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

	Time in Activity Never Always
Welcomes New Group Members (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Buying Items (p)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Selling Items (p)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Loots Kills (p)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Traveling to New Zone (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Fighting Another Player (p)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Practicing a Trade Skill (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
In a Guild (p or r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Talks about Computers (p)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Gives Items To Others (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Uses Emotes (r)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
_____	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix C

Survey

Time:_____ Day:_____ Zone:_____

Sex of Interviewer

0 **Male** 1 **Female**

Are you 18 or older? **If no, conclude interview.**

How many characters do you have?

1 One
2 Two
3 Three to Five
4 Six to Eight
5 Nine or more

Is this your primary character? (meaning the character you play the most often)

0 **Yes** 1 **No**

What sex is **your character**?

0 **Male** 1 **Female**

What level is this character? (p>r)

_____

What is your *played time* for this character? (p>r)

_____ days _____ hours _____ minutes

1. Think about your goals when you are playing Everquest. **Please indicate how important each of these elements of the game are to you when you are playing.**

	Not Important At All				**Very Important**	
Gaining experience and levels (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Meeting new people (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Participating in "raids" and hunts (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Improving combat skills (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Assisting friends (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Obtaining Items (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Assisting strangers (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Accumulating Money (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Spending time with friends (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Attending meetings (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Completing quests (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Improving trade skills (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Attending parties and social events (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Exploring new areas (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA

2. Think about your activities when you are playing Everquest. **Please indicate how much time you spend engaging in these activities while you are playing.**

	Never				**All of the Time**	
Gaining experience and levels (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Meeting new people (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Participating in "raids" and hunts (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Improving combat skills (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Assisting friends (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Obtaining Items (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Assisting strangers (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Accumulating Money (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Spending time with friends (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Attending meetings (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Completing quests (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Improving trade skills (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Attending parties and social events (r)	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Exploring new areas (p)	1	2	3	4	5	NA

How long have you been playing Everquest?

0 Less than a month
1 One to three months
2 Three to six months
3 Six to twelve months
4 More than a year

In the average week, how many days do you play an on-line role-playing game, like Everquest?

0 0-1
1 2-3
2 4-6
3 7

On the days that you play, how many hours on average do you play an on-line role-playing game, like Everquest?

0 0-2
1 2.01-4
2 4.01-6
3 6.01-8
4 More than 8 hours

Based on your understanding of the terms, do you consider yourself primarily a role-player or a power-gamer?

0 Power-gamer
1 Role-player
2 Neither
3 Not sure

If you were told that **role-players** see interacting with the community as more important than advancement and status and that **power-gamers** see advancement and status as more important than interacting with the community, how would you describe yourself?

0 Power-gamer
1 Role-player
2 Neither
3 Not sure

Some Demographic Questions

1. Are you: 0 Male 1 Female

2. How old are you? _____

3. What is your nationality? _____

4. Observation Number: _____

Appendix D

Participant Demographics

Participant Demographics

Player No.	Level	Time/Level (in minutes)	No. of Char	Primary Char?	Age	Nationality	Character Class	Character Race	Months Playing	Days per Week	Hours per Day	Days Played	Hours Played	Minutes Played	Total Played (Min)
8	10	110	3-5	n	27	USA	Warrior	Troll	12+	2-3	4-6	0	18	20	1100
6	14	116.79	3-5	n	22	USA	Warrior	Ogre	6-12	4-6	2-4	1	3	15	1635
10	11	142.91	1	y	48	USA	Cleric	Dwarf	6-12	4-6	2-4	1	2	12	1572
2	15	172.47	1	y	23	USA	Bard	Half-elf	-	2-3	2-4	1	19	7	2587
1	15	219.27	3-5	n	24	USA	Warrior	Wood Elf	12+	2-3	6-8	2	6	49	3289
18	45	585.27	3-5	y	51	USA	Cleric	Dwarf	3-6	4-6	4-6	18	6	57	26337
15	30	590.43	2	y	18	USA	Paladin	Human	12+	4-6	2-4	12	7	13	17713
3	47	677.98	1	y	23	USA	Warrior	Dwarf	6-12	4-6	2-4	22	3	5	31865
13	35	755.37	3-5	y	21	USA	Cleric	High Elf	6-12	2-3	4-6	18	8	38	26438
20	49	781.73	3-5	y	63	USA	Magician	High Elf	3-6	7	6-8	26	14	25	38305
5	14	225.14	3-5	n	33	USA	Cleric	Dwarf	12+	4-6	2-4	2	4	32	3152
4	14	248.93	6-8	n	42	USA	Paladin	Dwarf	12+	4-6	4-6	2	10	5	3485
14	12	271.58	1	y	22	USA	Shadow knight	Ogre	1-3	2-3	2-4	2	6	19	3259
11	12	327.92	9+	n	30	USA	Enchanter	Dark Elf	12+	4-6	4-6	2	17	35	3935
7	15	450.4	2	y	30	USA	Enchanter	High Elf	6-12	7	6-8	4	16	36	6756
16	42	853.69	3-5	y	34	UK	Rogue	Halfling	12+	4-6	4-6	24	21	35	35855
9	47	1703.23	2	y	21	USA	Ranger	Wood Elf	12+	4-6	4-6	55	14	12	80052
19	43	1721.86	3-5	y	30	USA	Shaman	Barbarian	12+	4-6	4-6	51	10	0	74040
12	49	2065	6-8	y	28	USA	Paladin	High Elf	12+	2-3	4-6	70	6	25	101185
17	48	4411.65	9+	y	41	USA	Ranger	Half Elf	12+	7	4-6	147	1	19	211759

VITA

Todd Muldrew was born in Knoxville, TN on March 14, 1974. He graduated from Farragut High School of the Knox County school system in May 1992. That August, he began his undergraduate work at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. After taking some time away to work, he returned to the University of Tennessee and received his Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication in May of 1998. In August of 1998, he enrolled in the Master's program in Communications at the University of Tennessee, with an emphasis in Speech Communication. From August of 1998 until May of 2000, he coached the debate and forensics team. Then in the summer of 2000, he began teaching Public Speaking, including a section in the spring of 2001 using a computer-mediated classroom. Also during this time, he worked with Whirlpool Corporation as a customer service representative, engaged in several pilot projects for new ways to improve customer satisfaction. The master's degree was received August 2001.

Todd is currently enrolled with the William & Mary College of Law, and began classes August 2001. His expected graduation date is May 2004.