

Superpatriarchy Meets Cyberfeminism: Facebook, Online Gaming, and the New Social Genocide

By Breanne Fahs and Michelle Gohr

“The revolution will not be tweeted.”—Malcolm Gladwell, *Small Change*

“We know the consequences of this instinctively; we feel them. We know that having two thousand Facebook friends is not what it looks like. We know that we are using the software to behave in a certain, superficial way toward others. We know what we are doing ‘in’ the software. But do we know, are we alert to, what the software is doing to us? It is possible that what is communicated between people online ‘eventually becomes their truth’?... Different software embeds different philosophies, and these philosophies, as they become ubiquitous, become invisible.” —Zadie Smith, “Generation Why?”

Introduction

As the balance between “reality” and “cyberreality”—or the Internet and “outernet”—continues to fluctuate, questions arise about how cyberspace will continue to alter social relationships, politics, leisure, and conceptualizations of selfhood. The power of social networking alone—seen not only in the ongoing coverage of revolutionaries using the Internet in Egypt and the Middle East, but also in the powerhouse success of *The Social Network* and in the ever-growing use of sites like Facebook, Twitter, social simulations

such as Second Life, and MMORPG's (massively multiplayer online role playing games) like World of Warcraft—has created mass upheavals in contemporary understandings of communication, connection, and surveillance. Consider this: Facebook represents the most widely visited site in the world (Bosker 2010), with more than 500 million active users, 50 percent of which log on daily, with the average user attracting an average of 130 friends (Facebook 2011). Clocking in slightly lower, Twitter now boasts upwards of 105 million users—with 300,000 new users per day—who collectively produce over 55 million tweets per day on average (Bosker 2010). One of the most widely played online games, World of Warcraft, has over 11.5 million players (20 percent female)—a sum that totals more than the population of Cuba or New York City. Players play approximately 22.7 hours a week and generate \$800 million for the company each year (Jai 2010). Further, U.S. citizens spend more than 28 hours per month surfing the web and average more time on the Internet per day than any other country (Bosker 2010). The Internet is so powerful and omnipresent that the revenue of a single online game is greater than the entire GDP of Samoa (Jai 2010); users spend more than half of their work lives surfing the Internet (Jai 2010).

Despite this massive investment of time, energy, and social life devoted to online spaces, little scholarly attention has been paid to the implications of such use, particularly as it relates to gender and social identities. As such, this paper first traces existing work on the relationship between patriarchy and language and then considers the ways cyberfeminists have, in the past, envisioned cyberspace as a utopic project of selfhood. We next examine the potentially dangerous aspects of two key elements of

viral reality: nonymous spaces (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), in which users embody and reflect their actual physical selves and personalities that exist outside of cyberspace, and anonymous spaces (e.g., Second Life, World of Warcraft), in which users create and maintain an idealized “fantasy” self completely separate from their “real world” selves, while also grappling with the existing literature on social networking and cyberspace. In doing so, we argue that, while cyberspace offers a variety of ways to subvert, play with, and disrupt traditional ideas of gender, it has also erupted into a new kind of “superpatriarchy” that results in the erasure of women, intensified (and fetishized) surveillance of women’s movements and bodies, constructions of a hypermasculine consumer, erosion of social life, and reduction of strategies to resist these new manifestations of power. As such, we argue that the Internet has essentially failed in its task to subvert gendered realities and instead created a hyper-realized version of men’s patriarchal access to women, intensified surveillance and cyberstalking, and increasingly obscured ideas about women outside of pre-prescribed, mainstream conceptualizations of the always-available gendered body.

Throughout this paper we will be discussing how cyberspace offers different sites of communication (anonymous and nonymous), and how the differences between the two result in similar, but unique, discourses surrounding women and how they are expected to perform their gender. The discussion compares social networking sites such as Facebook to popular online video games such as World of Warcraft as a means to illustrate how the massive amounts of time and social transactions made online are simultaneously reshaping and reinforcing societal ideas surrounding traditional gender

roles. Because the world is now consumed and indeed nearly non-functional without the Internet, cyberspace has begun to have severe and far-reaching impacts on the way people worldwide react to gender. Because gender and behavior in relation to online spaces is relatively understudied, it is critical that we begin to consider how the Internet is beginning to shape the collective understanding of gender and performance.

Patriarchy as a Dangerously Intangible Idea

Like many forms of social and political oppression, the power of patriarchy lies in the fact that it is intangible. As a myth, it has the power to exist as an omnipresent force, much like the idea of a corporation or money. It casts long shadows in the workplace, social life, sexual exchanges, the realm of domesticity, and, of course, in cyberspace (Haraway 1991). The set of rules created through the mere *idea* of patriarchy has succeeded in subverting and controlling the most prominent cultures and societies around the world: “It is because males have had power that they have been in a position to construct the myth of male superiority and to have it accepted; because they have had the power they have been able to ‘arrange’ the evidence so that it can be seen to substantiate the myth” (Spender 1980). Because no recognizable characteristics can constitute a mere idea, we generally fail to criticize exertions of power that arrive via intangibility; relying upon corporeal and tangible characteristics of oppression has long constituted a serious problem for those subjected to mechanisms of power (Butler 1990). Thus, we have unknowingly allowed the force of patriarchy to fester across our

society for centuries and to extend its grasp into nearly every aspect of our existence (Spender 1980).

Much feminist scholarship has examined the reach of patriarchy and its influence on language as written and verbal language dictate reality and, in doing so, *produce* subjects (Butler 2005). If “language is our means of classifying and ordering our world: our means of manipulating reality” (Spender 1980), this becomes even more true within cyberspace, where gendered, raced, classed, and sexualized subjects are constructed and produced through more abstract channels. Unlike the social environment, where language can rely upon other bodily cues and face-to-face contact (Butler 2005), in cyberspace we have *nothing but language* to rely upon as a reality-shaping force.

To counter this, one can argue that cyberspace instead has the potential to offer users a creativity of expression far beyond that possible in corporeal realm through popular applications such as Skype, which allows for voice/video chat; deviantART, which allows users to create and display unique artwork, and other graphics and projects, podcasts; and more. Nonetheless, even while cyberspace can be seen as a liberatory site for expression and communication, it remains a volatile interface through which users construct new or alternate identities. Cyberspace also reduces much of the interpersonal dimensions of language present in face-to-face communications. Unlike voice/video chatting, written language is undoubtedly the most easily manipulated medium of online communication, making it the most widely used and the most relied upon. Such language creates new cultures and cybersocieties. Even through Facebook

users create and maintain their image through writing—whether via posting on a friend’s wall (which shapes the nature and outside perception of a relationship), commenting on an uploaded photo (which defines and shapes the perception of the photo), or rewriting their bio (which shapes and defines the user herself/himself). Although these options also exist as a part of Second Life’s social network, users generally maintain and present these two “selves” (the Facebook self vs. Second Life self) in very different ways (Yee, Bailenson 2007, Dimiccio, Millen 2007). Consequently, while language is tainted by and formed through patriarchy, racism, and homophobia within the corporeal realm, it takes on hyper-realized significance when dictating meanings that *only* exist online. This creates a number of different problematic outcomes, particularly from a gendered lens. First, the homogenization of patriarchal language subverts the very nature of cyberspace (which is inherently loosely defined, destabilized, and subject to constant fluctuation) by instead prioritizing the symbolic order of patriarchy. In other words, the combination of sensory deprivation/manipulation combined with language’s power to construct reality results in a system of patriarchy far more intense than the one experienced face-to-face. Cyberspace becomes, most simply, a superpatriarchy. Additionally, unlike the “outernet,” or the actual day-to-day reality outside of cyberspace, Internet socialization not only recreates the basic tenants of patriarchy (e.g., “male-as-norm” ideals), but it also results in the virtual erasure and obliteration of female existence altogether.

Cyberfeminism and the New Utopia

Historically, not everyone has seen the Internet as a conduit for “superpatriarchy,” as cyberspace has long been heralded as a new space of resistance through which people—particularly those subjects oppressed through traditional interactions—can transcend the physical and sociocultural biases present in face-to-face interactions. For women, the Internet has always offered an androgynous environment where they can pose as men, try on different gender identities, and create new fluidities in gendering the self. Cyberfeminist founders like Sadie Plant (1997), Susan Luckman (1999), Anna Munster (1999), and Donna Haraway (1991) have long purported a utopian vision of cyberspace where gender inequalities would cease as soon as the virtual world became accessible to women. Writing before the Internet boom and the popularization of social networking, they argued that, as more people become wired-in, “cyberspace has the potential to allow communicants to become disinhibited from sexualized bounds and explore true freedom of expression” (Siegel, Dubrovsky, Kiesler, and McGuire 1986, 160). In this feminist utopia, online interactions between men and women “transcend the socialized constraints on their communicative expressiveness and adopt a more androgynous style of interaction” (Sussman and Taylor 2000, 391).

Although early cyberfeminists like Plant argued more politically radical ideologies, particularly that women could naturally and intuitively use the Internet and must therefore immerse themselves in the technical realm, Luckman and Munster argued that “this approach reduces complex technological systems into mere tools and ignores their historical contexts of production and use” (Consalvo 2002). Plant argued that what women brought to the Internet would destabilize men’s dominion over them:

“Cyberspace is out of man’s control: virtual reality destroys his identity, digitalization is mapping his soul and, at the peak of his triumph, the culmination of his mechanic erections, man confronts the system he built for his own protection and finds it is female and dangerous” (Plant 1996, 181). Because women could insist upon anonymity, cyberfeminists labeled the Internet as “an idealized public sphere; a space epitomizing the heralded ‘level playing field’” (Luckman 1999, 41). She also argued that critical interrogations of the Internet must continue in earnest, primarily because access to the Internet remained gendered, classed, raced, and geographically located (Luckman 1999). Additionally, speaking of the potential to destabilize *all* identities, Haraway (1991) warned that “the socialist feminist cyborg does not need to be young, Western or well-educated to be able to utilize her position to pry open the fissures in the hegemony of the white, capitalist patriarchy. Rather, the socialist feminist cyborg recognizes not only difference in aesthetic and social senses but, more importantly, she does not take for granted a particular set of ostensibly privileged class locations” (44).

Cyberfeminists collectively argued that cyberspace, rather than creating a hyper-masculine reality, actually frees women to choose gender more consciously, present themselves in ways unimaginable in the physical realm, and experiment with gendered personalities in a relatively safe and constructive space that wards off traditional policing of gender. If women choose to perform as “men,” they can do so freely and without restraint. Women can try on power (Plant 1997). They can assume different identities, races, genders, sexual identities, classes, locations, and nationalities. They can enter and exit virtual spaces previously denied them. They can access information about, and

become, middle-gendered/ androgynous beings free from traditional gender norm constraints. As Suler (2002) argued, “people choose a specific communication channel to express themselves” (459). Perhaps cyberspace offers an infinite space for development and resistance to traditional gender roles, as women continually choose different “channels” for expression. “Cyberfeminist authors contend that it enables a transgression of the dichotomous categories of male and female, constructing transgender or even genderless human identities and relations” (Zoonen 2002, 6). Contemporary cyberfeminists recognize the inherent value in a potentially genderless online space for the development and growth of women’s social selves (Burgess 2009), also noting that the Internet has inherited a vast number of gendered problems due to its inception within a patriarchal culture (Terry, Calvert 1997; Daniels 2009; Brophy 2010). Still more, embracing androgyny has the power to destabilize gender as a totalizing category of experience (Luckman 1999); if people can recognize gender as a performance (Butler 1990), this may undermine patriarchy’s ability to promote unspoken and unseen hierarchies and “truths” about women and men.

Dystopian Jaunts into Cyberspace

Given the strength of cyberfeminist analyses of cyberspace—particularly in highlighting its potentially liberatory power—cyberspace still remains relatively unscrutinized and uncritiqued in its current manifestations. Perhaps now more than ever, cyberspace must be conceptualized as a *new discriminatory space*. Though the Internet offers freedoms from some of the oppressive hierarchies found in the “outernet,” cyberspace is still “modeled on the power structures and hierarchies of the dominant discourse in the

‘outernet’” (Carstarphen and Lambiase 1998, 121). Such a relationship—where the “outernet” and Internet compete to both define and themselves *dominate* each other—functions as a sort of mutual parasitism, where one form of patriarchy feeds off of the other (Foucault 1980a). This form of patriarchal interaction results in a particularly effective and powerful feedback loop that, in turn, leads to an ever-strengthening superpatriarchy. As Foucault (1980) argued, the most effective form of power enables power-holders to “gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes, and modes of everyday behavior” (125). In the new superpatriarchy, not only do the powerful have superficial and tangible access to the bodies of individuals in the “outernet,” but also the minds and behaviors of individuals at an ever deeper level within the Internet. Having access to people’s “cyberselves” results in nearly unlimited access to their language (and how they create language), attitudes, behaviors, and ideas. In essence, cyberspace *removes* the barriers that once allowed individuals to resist in private spheres and instead grants unlimited access to them at a deeply personal and perpetually maintained and updated level (e.g., ongoing “status updates”).

As such, the Internet has not become a site of resistance, but rather, an even more powerful socializing force in our lives; it does so in part by creating deeper and more lasting ties between individuals and cyberspace, by creating fewer and fewer mechanisms by which people can “opt out” of online intrusions, and by shaping social life such that people consciously recognize these intrusions less and less often (Sofsky 2007). Contrary to some of the more utopian visions of cyberspace, Shimanoff (1980) has suggested that, while behaviors in face-to-face interactions are rule-governed

through direct, language-based “male power displays,” online spaces only utilize *latent* gendered characteristics of language as status indicators and thus serve to bolster lopsided power dynamics along gendered lines. Thus, the cyberfeminist assumption that cyberspace offers a safe, androgynous environment, free from male bias, overlooks the basic nature and history of how the Internet was born. As discussed by Zoonen (2002), not only was the “‘actor network’ of human and technical actors involved in the development of the Internet as a technology is almost 100 percent male” (and military based), but the information technology (IT) industry itself has historically been and largely remains a prohibitive and chauvinist culture (11).

Because online interactions are generally limited to text-based communications, these “pre-existing” gender indicators laced in our language create a culture where users project ideologies influenced by patriarchal social conditioning onto other users (Jones 1998, Wilson 1992, Rodino 2006, Ames, Burcon 2011). Butler has described this as democratic censorship or “silencing” (Butler 2005), while Baldwin (1973) wrote, “You know, it’s not the world that was my oppressor, because what the world does to you, if the world does it to you long enough and effectively enough, you begin to do to yourself.” For example, people often fail to critically analyze the ways that Twitter accounts eerily mimic the patriarchal fantasy of stalking women, as people (particularly men) can follow women’s every move, thought, action, or goal throughout their day (Haron, Yusof 2010, Dowdell, Bradley 2010). Although Twitter allows for anonymity, its basic use is intended for nonymous interaction with other users. Thus, while Twitter could theoretically have some subversive qualities (e.g., women assuming male

privilege or using Twitter in non-personal ways), Twitter users typically engage in use that involves disclosure of their personal lives. Some women embrace this mechanism of disempowerment through such nonymity, and thus recreate a cycle whereby their bodies and actions are watched and followed by “choice.” The rather extensive literature on cyberstalking has recently identified Twitter as another mechanism through which people can threaten, intimidate, and control women (Haron, Yusof 2010). Thus, normative ideas about gender and gendered scripts are communicated via the technologies that promote the constant monitoring and watching of women by others.

As another example of cyberspace promoting taken-for-granted gendered scripts, consider the phenomenon of online gamers choosing an “idealized” corporeality—the body they would most want to inhabit—and how such bodies often conform to the idealized corporeality of patriarchal society. While this may seem to be a site through which transgendered individuals find solace from the corporeal constraints of society (see Hegland and Nelson’s 2002 work on transgender identity manifestations in cyberspace), “though many of the cross-dressers presented [in the study] are clearly conscious of the messages they send, they nevertheless prefer to dress to the extremes of femininity and embrace age-old stereotypes that conflate femininity with an overt sexuality” (156); “Creating [such] an identity that is meant ‘to be looked at,’ and solely for the purposes of consumption by the male gaze does little to erase the imprint of male desire on the female body so deeply-rooted in culture, history, and social convention” (157). Thus, although the Internet and anonymous spaces theoretically offer its users liberation, too often participants bring pre-existing biases and cultural

understandings of gender, further degrading the understanding and conceptualization of acceptable gender performance. Such moments represent not only individual choices in using technology, but also instances where the patriarchy of the “outernet” meets the patriarchy of the Internet with intensified ferocity.

Nonymous Spaces: Facebook and Twitter

Shockingly little feminist writing has addressed the social and political implications of Facebook—particularly given its global scope, ever-growing number of users, and multifaceted marketing campaigns. Facebook users spend an average of 30 minutes per day—more than they spend reading books—using Facebook, primarily as a tool for “social connection” (Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert 2009) amidst a platform described by writer Zadie Smith (2010) as “falsely jolly, fake-friendly, self-promoting, slickly disingenuous.” Existing studies of Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites cluster around several common themes: the erosion of social life (Morrison and Gore 2010; Muise, Christofides, and Desmarais 2009), increasing rates of loneliness and social isolation as an irony of increased Facebook and social networking usage (Ahmed and Hamilton 2009; Amichai-Hamburger 2003; Caplan 2007; Ceyhan and Ceyhan 2008; Freberg et al. 2010; Kim, LaRose, and Peng 2009; Young and Rodgers 1998), the creation of different versions of the self (Back et al. 2010; Bargh and McKenna 2002; Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs 2006), future directions for social networking trends (Boyd and Ellison 2008), connections between Facebook and social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007; Tong et al. 2008), links between narcissism,

personality types, and social networking usage (Buffardi and Campbell 2008; Bumgarner 2007; Correa, Hinsley, and de Zuniga 2010; Gangadharbatla 2008; Harigatti 2007; Orr et al. 2009; Ross et al. 2009), and the lack of political participation and activism inspired by Facebook usage (Vitak et al. 2011; Valenzuela, Park, and Key 2009). Surprisingly few studies have even *mentioned* gender, let alone critically analyzed the clear gendered implications of both Facebook and Twitter, suggesting that the invisibility of the superpatriarchy in cyberspace facilitates its continued expansion and growth. Further, with the recent announcement that Facebook would go public, questions exist about the “corporate personhood” of Facebook and how that might interface with the already-troubling gender politics embedded within Facebook as it exists today.

Radical feminists in the late 1960s and early 1970s warned of the dangers that occur when men demand constant access to women’s bodies, emotional labor, and sexual labor. As Marilyn Frye (1993) argued, “Total power is unconditional access; total powerlessness is being unconditionally accessible. The creation and manipulation of power is constituted of the manipulation and control of access” (95). Facebook and Twitter essentially intensify these concerns, bringing women’s whereabouts into focus throughout their social networks, providing nearly complete access to their images, thoughts, and, most importantly, *movements*. Even though users can monitor how much access others have to their pages—which itself generates a false sense of security and control over this content—women also typically neglect the bigger problems of corporate monitoring of the self, “friending” those who they do not know well, “friending”

those who could give others access to their accounts, and assuming ethical use of their data (particularly photos). One could argue that Twitter represents glorified cyberstalking, while Facebook generates unconditional access to women around the clock and in many spheres. Constantly updating one's "status," informing others of their location (and often other details like food choices, clothing, "baby bellies," secret longings, and other disclosures), and permitting assessments such as "like" or commenting on women's photos and images suggest that these early warnings from radical feminists remain as relevant as ever.

Facebook also reinforces and intensifies many aspects of patriarchy that occur offline, particularly the creation of the *hypermasculine consumer* who must always "like" corporations and be a "friend" of big business. While one can also "like" non-profits, Facebook has become a mechanism for corporate advertisement and big business power. Indeed, Facebook so adeptly shapes consciousness that people often fail to realize or effectively challenge or confront Facebook about the fact that no *dislike* feature exists on Facebook; one cannot *dislike* a corporation with bad business practices (e.g., Walmart, Exxon Mobil), just as one cannot *dislike* a person's sexist, racist, or homophobic comment. Some challenge this problem by writing critical comments or creating separate blogs or pages to critique unethical corporate practices, but this remains an inherently limited option in comparison to true challenges for the ways Facebook shapes consciousness by refusing to allow *disliking* things. As a key example, many people confront racist, sexist, and homophobic comments on Facebook but have few options for how to confront those attitudes aside from (passive-

aggressively) “defriending” someone. Language is once again geared toward consumption, particularly around corporate and patriarchal priorities like cars, oil, food, sports teams, and corporate spaces. By creating a virtual hotbed of uncritical consumerists within the highly capitalistic framework of Facebook—and then glorifying this even further through the grotesquely successful *The Social Network*—Facebook has succeeded in becoming the new face of superpatriarchy. Facebook is both noun and verb—one uses Facebook, just as one can actively “Facebook” another person. The corporation becomes a medium of use and control, shaping consciousness and intensifying its efforts for addictive compliance. More and more corporations demand that we “like them on Facebook,” taking on personhood and demanding a social relationship (*The Corporation* film warned of this). Far from seeing corporations as sociopaths, Facebook conceptualizes them as allies in shaping people’s behavior, spending, and social relationships.

Additionally, Facebook also expertly directs people to reproduce, always in a hyper-managed, hyper-experienced manner, the same political and social priorities of the “outernet,” all while giving consumers the illusion of agency and choice about how to use Facebook. For example, women learn to carefully select Facebook photos to present their best image (often with much agony over such self-presentation), people rate others’ comments and photos (further objectifying women), and people write on each other’s “wall”—a kind of graffiti that judges, mocks, supports, or otherwise intrudes upon one’s own self-expression. The variability in how people use Facebook perhaps makes it all the more dangerous, as options for hyper-personalization (e.g., users can

arrange people into groups who can see and not see their material; people have the option to post or not post; people can block others from writing on their walls or seeing their profile; one can slyly “defriend” someone else) prevent users from remembering that Facebook still controls the terms of communication, dialogue, and “options” available. (Perhaps one of the best strategies to combat Facebook’s dominance over social life is to practice a healthy mix of sabotage and/or abstention: avoid it altogether, create fake profiles, lie incessantly on Facebook, or to “like” groups, people, and organizations that criticize Facebook).

In Facebook, you don’t simply create a self; your self is made by others, within a patriarchal lens, always with a clear sense of power embedded in each action. For example, when anyone changes their relationship status, this information is broadcast publicly. For women, this serves as a further extension of the public insistence that she broadcast her sexual availability and continues to function inside that paradigm. Assumptions of heteronormativity are rampant, as outing oneself as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered can result in cyberbullying, “defriending” en masse, or worse. When one attempts to deactivate one’s Facebook account (if one can even *find* the deactivate button!), the available “reasons” for doing so (one must choose one) include comments like, “I find myself on Facebook too much, with little time for anything else.” One can choose an “Other” option where they must “write something,” again signaling the difficulty of leaving Facebook permanently. (Incidentally, Facebook also puts up images of “friends” who will “miss you” if you leave Facebook—eerily reminiscent of pressures to remain accessible in other realms). Nothing is excluded

from the lens of a well-managed reality; all behavior must be accounted for, even departures. Meeting friends becomes synonymous with “Facebooking them.” Interacting with classmates often requires a Facebook account to do so (especially in rural classrooms nationwide). A breakup becomes an opportunity to “Facestalk” an ex-partner, track their behavior, and suffer through the consequences of such unlimited access. In the world of Facebook, we are always subject to surveillance. Facebook never truly *goes away*, even when deactivated.

Anonymous Spaces: Second life and World of Warcraft

MMOs present a unique formula that could potentially subvert traditional ideas about gender and the physical self: They are adventure/quest/simulation games where large numbers of players interact through an entire virtual world. Similar to the longstanding idea of role-playing games (RPGs) such as Dungeons and Dragons, players assume the role of a fictional character in a fantasy world and can control the way they look, dress, interact, speak, fight, and what powers and skills they possess. Even when the player exits the game, the game continues to exist and evolve as if in the real world. MMO environments are highly social spaces that depend upon socializing as well as building and destroying alliances with other players.

In World of Warcraft, players choose a race, class of fighter, and a faction that they will belong to and fight for. Each of the two factions embodies a different set of ideologies and lore that the players explore as they go on quests to “level up” and proceed through

a story by conquering other races and lands using their unique racial and class abilities. Players may team up with other faction members to accomplish various goals or defeat difficult monsters, or progress through the immersive story solo:

Over the course of his or her life, your character will brave thousands of quests, learn new and powerful abilities, amass (and likely spend) vast fortunes of gold, and find hundreds of powerful weapons, enchanted rings, artifacts, suits of armor, and more. Essentially, the core gameplay of World of Warcraft revolves around fighting monsters and completing quests. Another aspect of the life of a hero is the constant struggle between the Alliance and the Horde. Even though there are currently no all-out wars, tensions are high, and small skirmishes regularly take place all over Azeroth where players from both sides fight each other. (World of Warcraft Cataclysm 2012)

While similar in principle in that gameplay takes place in an online virtual world between thousands of people, Second Life is a virtual simulation in which players can participate and help create and maintain a real online world that mirrors our own, including an independent economy and commodities. Conversely, Second Life has been well known to also offer players an environment in which to express more deviant, often sexual behaviors less accepted in society such as “clipping” (sex between two people of the *My Little Pony* fandom) and yiffing (sex between two people of the furry role playing community). . Both games, however, represent massive online communities of real people playing imagined personas in limitless fantasy worlds. According to Yee’s (2004)

Daedalus Project, approximately “80% of MMORPG players play with someone they know in real life...a romantic partner, family member, or friend on a regular basis.” Yee (2004) reports that players derive gratification from a sense of achievement and cooperation through the building of social relationships in the game.

While emulating the experience of face-to-face interactions through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter evokes ideas about surveying women’s ideas, thoughts, and movements, anonymous spaces like Second Life and World of Warcraft offer users a different basis for understanding gendered cyberspace. Although MMOs now require players to register their legal name and gender when creating an account, these changes do not affect game play, and have been met with hostility by many female players in particular and the gaming community as a whole, indicating the underlying enjoyment of anonymity within the community (Lee 2010). However, while anonymity is easily obtained and retained in both World of Warcraft and Second Life, there are options available for public/friend only display of nonymity. Regardless, these two genres still vastly differ from sites such as Facebook in their basic intended premise and structure, which is centered on the virtual creation and maintenance of a separate (fantasy) self and role playing as opposed to the exhibition of an already existing person/personality. The recently implemented real ID system in WoW “offers a great way to stay connected with people you know in real life,” (Battlenet 2012) but is not openly accessible or shared with other players; instead, players preferring anonymity among strangers use a nickname known as a BattleTag. Similarly, Second Life allows players to fill out biographies and post images of themselves, but unlike Facebook these

games/simulations are not based on the nonymous foundation of networking and reconnecting with friends and family, but rather adventuring, roleplaying, and simulating experiences unobtainable in the real world.

In World of Warcraft, players are immersed in a fully realized world where they create their own ideal self, or avatar, through which they may choose their gender, skin color, race (human, elf, dwarf, etc.), powers/abilities, and even create personal character back stories or associate personality traits with the avatar. Additionally, players explore, quest, socialize, and battle. Here people can forego realistic, personal physical indicators and embrace a creative environment that more closely resembles Haraway's idealized cyberspace. For example, in Second Life, users can forego all human qualities altogether and instead inhabit an avatar that resembles a small bulldog, or even a tree, while in WoW players have the option of choosing to be an olive green Orc, or a cyan Dranei, which closely resembles a mythical satyr; both significantly differentiate the user from their true selves outside of the Internet, as opposed to Facebook, which is more likely to reflect the true self if used as intended. While Facebook theoretically portrays the "true" physical being behind cyberreality, Second Life masks the "true" physical being behind a creative, "idealized" self (or avatar). Within the blogosphere, players learn to advertise in-game achievements for these popular online games in order to establish social standing both in and out of the game. Second Life and World of Warcraft each command millions of players/users (Jai 2010) and remain largely understudied (as a result of such new and rapidly developing technology), particularly for gender discrimination and power differentials during game play. While extensive

literature has documented the gaming industry's ongoing mistreatment toward and discrimination against women (Nakamura et.al 2005; Miller, and Summers 2007; Jenson 2010), particularly in their hypersexualization within video games (Dill 2007), little research has addressed the lived oppression of women during their online interactions. Existing studies of these games (typically called Massively Multiplayer Online games or "MMOs") focus on adolescent development (Griffiths 1993; Griffiths and Hunt 1995) and aggression (Irwin and Gross 1995; Kestenbaum and Weinstein 1985; Huesmann 1994), but rarely focus on women's experiences aside from personal online blog entries (Lee 2010; Pierce 2010). Additionally, a fair amount of scholarship has tackled the idea of avatar identities and race/class/gender subversion through such idealized character embodiments (Nakamura 2001), but generally fail to acknowledge the real world and/or ideological implications for such actions (Bessiere, Seay, Kiesler 2007).

Nevertheless, women still represent only a minority of online gamers across a majority of the less casual genres, even with a recent dramatic increase in the number of women players (Entertainment Software Association 2012, O'Leary 2012). Although accurate statistics reflecting gender dynamics of all online gamers is difficult to obtain and often draws from an unrepresentative pool, recent estimates suggest that 42% of online players are female with an average age of 37 (Sliwinski 2011). However, most current literature gives little information about the various types of games played and often makes the mistake of lumping all game play (mobile phone, PC, and console) together as a homogenous conglomerate (Shaw 2011, Sliwinski 2011, O'Leary 2012). This

erases the different gender dynamics in different types of games and gamers which, in turn, alters the discussion around the varying motivational factors and game play styles each medium attracts (e.g., platform shooters, MMOs, RPGs, etc.) (Williams, Consalvo, Caplan Yee 2009). One cannot meaningfully compare the gaming culture of an online role playing game with a first-person shooter (FPS). Although MMOs have begun moving towards what some may consider a more standard FPSs style “pick-up” game play (e.g., dungeon finder raids) that allow players to interact outside of their guild, social circle, etc., difference of communication and community lies in the idea that individuals actively choosing one game genre over another (i.e. rpg over fps) will have significantly different styles of communication and indeed prefer associating with individuals of similar taste (Shaw 2012). Similarly, MMORPGs offer players an immersive, reportedly addictive play style that is distinct from that of a typical FPS (Halo franchise) or other gaming genres (Snodgrass et. al. 2012, Zhong 2011) in that this style overflows into the player’s real life and relationships (Zhong 2011). Furthermore, even with the massive increase in female players, discrimination within certain gaming genres has changed little as evidenced through the recent harassment charges among the fighting game community and resultant backlash against female gamers (O’Leary 2012).

Given this, women often find it difficult to immerse themselves in some of the more stereotypically “hardcore,” or time consuming, challenging cyberspace gaming cultures (O’Leary 2012); further, when we consider that the video game industry (and indeed most technological industries) remains highly male-dominated (West 2009), patriarchal

implications emerge (Shaw, 2011). Because women have historically been systematically excluded from gaming based on patriarchal notions of male superiority, this has led to several self-fulfilling prophecies: Men maintain intensely gendered stereotypes, are regarded as inherently more important and more human in the gaming world, become primary consumers of gaming, and inspire game designs geared toward male fantasies and male consumption. While there has been a shift in the gaming industry toward the development of more female friendly games, these games often marginalize women and only serve to further reinforce harmful gender roles through games such as Butterfly Dress Up, or Cooking Mama. Similarly, MMO environments offer excessive amounts of power to the acceptable collective ideology (patriarchy) because of the anonymity allowed to players. However, compared to face-to-face interactions, online anonymity promotes false stereotypes and the degradation of women, just as it offers users the opportunity to assume and “use” a female body in order to create and maintain such ideologies. Further, it perpetuates racist, homophobic, and xenophobic ideas about how bodies move and circulate in the social economy; in a space where difference could be celebrated, it is reviled. MMOs not only allow access to women in this virtual space, but they also encourage men to literally take over the bodies of women and discard *actual* women players (Dill, Thill 2007, Dill, Brown, Collins 2008).

Similar to Hegland and Nelson’s (2002) research on transgender cyber identity, online crossdressing communities, while empowering individuals previously excluded to the fringes of society, also has a deleterious effect on women; essentially, by literally

inhabiting and becoming the idealized notion of femininity (similar to MMOs), gender lines and norms are exponentially strengthened, thereby harming women's ability to adopt a more androgynous presence while simultaneously bolstering the acceptance of transgendered individuals as their idealized self. While anonymous spaces have immense potential for identity exploration, it exists as a double-edged sword, as individuals inadvertently affect how identities function in the larger social network. This behavior serves an idealized patriarchal fantasy: women exist only as constructed by men and in service of men, while actual autonomous, thinking, feeling women are transformed into irrelevant sidebars.

Gender Hacking

The occurrence of gender-swapping or gender hacking—where male/female players become women/men in order to receive social benefit—reveals the ultimate manipulation and patriarchal impulse within cyber-reality (Gregory 2011, Poiso 2010, Yee 2010). Although research on gender hacking argues that “female avatars are treated better and more likely to receive gifts and help from other players (who are mostly men)” (Yee 2004), similar scholarship also argues that “in games where third-person perspective is used, men prefer to stare at a female body rather than a male body” (Yee 2004). Research on gender swapping in cyberspace rarely explores the meaning behind gender hacking, preferring instead to rest with andocentric ideas that rarely delve below surface-level interpretations. For example, saying that female avatars are “treated better” not only legitimates male domination and control over the bodies

and psyches of women, but utterly fails to acknowledge that men (playing female avatars) still maintain a privileged and esteemed position within cyberspace. While many feminists argue that gender hacking is just another method for men to maintain control and power over women's bodies (Vella 2010; Yee 2004) this argument fails to explore the larger motivations behind this phenomenon. By playing female characters, men control women's bodies, language, and "womanness." With this power, men not only literally and physically create and maintain the "female" gender, but completely erase femaleness and replace it with *their* own idealized, biased notions of "perfect femininity" in a patriarchal environment.

While one could argue that female players also have power over masculine stereotypes through gender hacking, this often stems from a different motive: Women's minority status in the MMO world often requires them to escape degradation by hiding and blending into the male persona. More than 50 percent of gamers have engaged in gender swapping, primarily because they received positive social attributes for being "female" in a male-oriented world (Hussain 2008). Male players reported gender swapping into a female body as a positive experience, while women reported misery and ridicule for swapping into male bodies (Cole 2007, Eklund 2011, Lee 2010). Men, thus benefit far more from their ability to subsume a female persona than do women assuming a male persona. As in the "outernet," women take on male bodies and male roles in part to avoid discrimination and sexism: "many female gamers register under male identities to avoid stalking, harassment, and the general annoyance of guys" (Lee 2010). Even so, within anonymous spaces one is often required to designate certain

characteristics when registering for an account. Cyberspace still attempts to maintain hegemony through standard outernet classification (M or F when registering for a World of Warcraft account) and simultaneously allows for often harmful subversion and distortions of gender through flawed and biased representations of chosen categorized gender. Even though this may give transgender individuals power to subvert their physical sex in an anonymous online community, such categorization bring with it often harsh, hegemonic performance expectations and pressures (Laukkanen 2007).

A New Social Genocide: Extermination of Women in Cyberspace

Cyberspace presents several new layers of patriarchal domination that women must contend with. While Facebook and Twitter allow unlimited access to women's actual movements and ideas — all while creating a masculinized hyperconsumer — MMOs allow men to take over women's gender for sport, while women must assume the male gender for mere survival. This closely references Judith Butler's (1990) politics of the performative that allows us to "conceptualize digital culture as a resource through which 'girl' gamers are mobilized and potentially reformulated, experiencing their gaming identities in contradictory ways, and fragmenting the category 'girl' in the very act of articulating their place in a male dominated gaming culture" (Beavis and Charles 2007, 691). Female gamers fragment their identity and inhabit a false persona simply for protection and legitimization from the online community (Jensen 2010). "Each of these 'roles,' however, is tenuously maintained within a community that most commonly reads female participation in sexualized terms: mothers at events describe themselves as

'cheerleaders,' female players risk being labeled as 'halo hoers,' and promotional models become 'booth babes'" (Taylor, Jensen, and de Castell 2009, 239). The message remains clear: Women willingly conform and indulge in such patriarchal notions, as Second Life and World of Warcraft facilitate the genocide of true femaleness online. The idea of *woman* and *female* is being completely erased from anonymous cyberspace and replaced by a mere shadow of the feminine *only as imagined through a powerful patriarchy hive-mind*.

Through this process, an interesting reversal occurs: While women are controlled through media and advertising in the "real world" and through such outlets are told how to speak, act, and think, the threat to women *within* cyberspace may be even more *real* and intense. Rather than directing women how to speak, men literally speak for women; rather than tell women how to act, they take women's bodies and act for them; rather than tell women how to think, men monopolize women's minds and thoughts so that women literally no longer have a voice or even a presence in the virtual world. This brings up perhaps the most dangerous consequence of all: the near total erasure of women from cyberspace, and thus, from the consciousness of the Internet.

When reflecting upon these relatively new manifestations of patriarchy, it becomes clear that, while the Internet offers a variety of subversive and novel ways of constructing gender—including opportunities to try on new selves, self-publish on blogs, connect with massive numbers of people, or create new modes of information dissemination and retrieval—it also remains fraught with new modes of disempowerment that threaten and

undermine women's quest toward empowerment. If the circulation and implementation of patriarchal ideals goes unchecked in the "outernet," these ideals pose an even greater threat when matched with the anonymity of MMOs like Second Life, the corporate takeover of Facebook, or the virtual stalking of Twitter. Faced with this new superpatriarchy, we must collectively decide how to resist, whether such resistance can truly grow within cyberspace, and why it remains essential that we fight hard against the erasure of women in *all* worlds, "real" or otherwise.

References

- Ahmed, Murad, and Fiona Hamilton. 2009. "'Facebook' is adding to problems of loneliness, say Samaritans." *The Times*, December 31.
http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/mental_health/article6972066.ece
- Ames, Melissa (ed.), Burcon, Sarah Himsel (ed.). 2011. *Women and Language: Essays on Gendered Communication across Media*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc.
- Amichai-Hamburger, Yair, and Elisheva Ben-Artzi. 2003. "Loneliness and Internet use." *Computers in Human Behavior* 19: 71-80.
- Back, Mitja, Juliane M. Stopfer, Simine Vazire, Sam Gaddis, Stefan C. Schmukle, Boris Egloff, and Samuel D. Gosling. 2010. "Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization." *Psychological Science* 21(3): 372-374.

- Baldwin, James, and Nikki Giovanni. 1973. *A Dialogue*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Bargh, John A, Katelyn Y. A. McKenna, and Grainne M. Fitzsimons. 2002. "Can you see the real me? Activation and expression of the 'true self' on the Internet." *Journal of Social Issues* 58(1): 33-48.
- BattleNet. 2012. Battle.Net Social Community. <http://us.battle.net/en/realid/>
- Beavis, Catherine, and Claire Charles. 2007. "Would the 'real' girl gamer please stand up? Gender, LAN cafés and the reformulation of the 'girl' gamer." *Gender & Education* 19(6): 691-705.
- Bessiere, Katherine, A. Fleming Seay, and Sara Kiesler. 2007. "The ideal elf: Identity exploration in World of Warcraft." *Cyberpsychology and Behavior* 10(4): 530-535.
- Bosker, Bianca. 2010. Google Ranks Top 13 Most Visited Sites On The Web. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/28/most-visited-sites-2010-g_n_593139.html#s94499&title=13_Bingcom.
- Bosker, Bianca. 2010. Twitter user statistics REVEALED. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/04/14/twitter-user-statistics-r_n_537992.html.
- Boyd, Danah M., and Nicole B. Ellison. 2008. "Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13: 210-230.
- Brophy, Jessica E. 2010. "Developing a corporeal cyberfeminism: Beyond cyberutopia." *New Media Society* 12: 929-945.
- Buffardi, Laura E., and W. Keith Campbell. 2008. "Narcissism and social networking web sites." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 34(10): 1303-1314.

- Bumgarner, Brett A. 2007. "You have been poked: Exploring the uses and gratifications of Facebook among emerging adults." *First Monday* 12(11).
<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/2026/1897>.
- Burgess, Kimberly R. 2009. "Social networking technologies as vehicles of support for women in learning communities." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 122: 63-71.
- Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 2005. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.
- Caplan, Scott E. 2007. "Relations among loneliness, social anxiety, and problematic Internet use." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 10(2):234-242.
- Carstarphen, Meta, and Jacqueline Johnson Lambaise. 1998. "Domination and democracy in cyberspace: reports from the majority media and ethnic/gender margins." In *Cyberghetto or Cybertopia?: Race, Class and Gender on the Internet*, ed. E. Bo. Connecticut: Praeger.
- Ceyhan, A. Aykut, and Esra Ceyhan. 2008. "Loneliness, depression, and computer self-efficacy as predictors of problematic Internet use." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 11(6): 669-701.
- Cohen, Aaron M. 2009. "Closing the gender gap in online gaming." *Futurist* 43(6): 10-12.
- Cole, Helena, and Mark D. Griffiths. 2007. "Social interactions in massively multiplayer online role-playing games." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 10(4): 575-83.

- Consalvo, Mia. 2011. "Cyberfeminism." In Encyclopedia of New Media. SAGE Publications. http://www.sage-ereference.com/newmedia/Article_n57.html.
- Correa, Teresa, Amber Willard Hinsley, and Homero Gil de Zuniga. 2010. "Who interacts on the Web? The intersection of users' personality and social media use." *Computers in Human Behavior* 26: 247-253.
- Daniels, Jessie. 2009. "Rethinking cyberfeminism(s): Race, gender, and embodiment." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 37: 101-124.
- Dill, Karen E., and Kathryn P. Thill. 2007. "Video game characters and the socialization of gender roles: Young people's perceptions mirror sexist media depictions." *Sex Roles* 57(11): 851-64.
- Dill, Karen E., Brian P. Brown, Michael A. Collins. 2008. Effects of exposure to sex-stereotyped videogame characters on tolerance of sexual harassment. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 44(5):1402-1408.
- DiMicco, Joan Morris, Millen, David R. 2007. Identity Management: Multiple Presentations of Self in Facebook. *Proceedings of the international ACM conference on Supporting group work, USA*, 383-386.
- Dowdell, Elizabeth Burgess, Bradley, Patricia K. 2010. Risky Internet Behaviors: A Case Study of Online and Offline Stalking. *The Journal of School Nursing* 26(6): 436-442.
- Eklund, Lina. 2011. Doing gender in cyberspace: The performance of gender by female World of Warcraft players. *Convergence* 17(3) 323-342.
- Ellison, Nicole, Charles Steinfield, and Cliff Lampe. 2007. "The benefits of Facebook 'friends': Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites."

Journal of Computer-Meditated Communication 12(4): 1143-1168.

Ellison, Nicole, Rebecca Heino, and Jennifer Gibbs. 2006. "Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment." Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 11(2): NP.. Available: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue2/ellison.html>.

Entertainment Software Association (ESA). 2012. 2012 Sales, Demographic, and Usage Data. <http://www.theesa.com/facts/gameplayer.asp>.

Facebook. 2011. Press Room. <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>.

Foucault, Michel. 1980a. The History of Sexuality: Vol. I. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage.

Foucault, Michel. 1980b. Power/Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. Gordon, Colin. New York: Pantheon Books.

Freberg, Karen, Rebecca Adams, Karen McGaughey, and Laura Freberg. 2010. "The rich get richer: Online and offline social connectivity predicts subjective loneliness." Media Psychology Review 3(1). Retrieved from http://mprcenter.org/mpr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=213&Itemid=177.

Frye, Marilyn. 1993. Separatism as power. In The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, ed. H. Abelove, M. A. Barale, and D.M. Halperin. New York: Routledge. 91-98.

Gangadharbatla, Harsha. 2008. "Facebook me: Collective self-esteem, need to belong, and Internet self-efficacy as predictors of the iGeneration's attitudes toward social networking sites." Journal of Interactive Advertising 8(2): 5-15.

Gladwell, Malcolm. 2010. Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not be Tweeted. *The*

New Yorker.

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell.

Gregory, Clairellyn Rose. 2011. Who Gender-Bends and Why? A Qualitative Study of World of Warcraft (Master Thesis). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses. (UMI No. 1506905)

Griffiths, Mark D. 1993. "Are computer games bad for children?" *The Psychologist: Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* 6: 401–407.

Griffiths, Mark D., and Nigel Hunt. 1995. "Computer game playing in adolescence: Prevalence and demographic indicators." *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 5: 189–193.

Haraway, Donna. 1991. "Cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century." In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Harigatti, Eszter. 2007. "Whose space? Differences among users and non-users of social network sites." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13: 276-297.

Haron, Haryani, Yusof, Farahidah Bt. Mohd. 2010. Cyber stalking: The social impact of social networking technology. *International conference on Education and Management technology (ICEMT)*, Malaysia, 237-241.

Hegland, Jane E., and Nancy J. Nelson. 2002. "Cross-dressers in cyber-space: Exploring the Internet as a tool for expressing gendered identity." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies* 7(2/3): 139-161.

- Henley, Nancy. 1977. *Body Politics: Power, Sex and Nonverbal Communication*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Huesmann, L. Rowell. 1994. *Aggressive Behavior: Current Perspectives*. New York: Plenum.
- Hussain, Zaheer, and Mark D. Griffiths. 2008. "Gender swapping and socializing in cyberspace: An exploratory study." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 11(1): 47-53.
- Irwin, A. Roland, and Alan M. Gross. 1995. "Cognitive tempo, violent video games, and aggressive behavior in young boys." *Journal of Family Violence* 10: 337–350.
- Jai. 2010. World of Warcraft statistics made easy for you!. <http://walyou.com/world-of-warcraft-statistics/>.
- Jenson, Jennifer, and Suzanne de Castell. 2010. "Gender, simulation, and gaming: Research review and redirections." *Simulation & Gaming* 41(1): 51-71.
- Jones, Steve (ed.). 1998. *Cybersociety 2.0: Revisiting Computer-Mediated Community and Technology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE publications, Inc.
- Kestenbaum, Gerald I., and Lissa Weinstein. 1985. "Personality, psychopathology, and developmental issues in male adolescent video game use." *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 24: 325–337.
- Kim, Junghyu, Robert LaRose, and Wei Peng. 2009. "Loneliness as the cause and effect of problematic Internet use: The relationship between Internet use and psychological well-being." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12(4): 451-455.
- Lakoff, Robin. 1975. *Language and Women's Place*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Laukkanen, Marjo. "Young queers online: The limits and possibilities of non-heterosexual self representation in online conversations." In *Queer Online*:

- Media, Technology, and Sexuality, edited by Kate O'Riordan, and David J. Phillips, 81-100. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Lee, Dave. 2010. "Girl gamers still being left out." BBC World Service.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-10883404>.
- Luckman, Susan. 1999. "(En)gendering the Digital Body: Feminism and the Internet." *Hecate* 25: 36–48.
- McCormick, Naomi, and John Leonard. 1996. "Gender and sexuality in the cyberspace frontier." *Women & Therapy* 19(4): 109-119.
- Miller, Monica K., and Alicia Summers. 2007. "Gender differences in video game characters' roles, appearances, and attire as portrayed in video game magazines." *Sex Roles* 57(9):733-42.
- Morrison, Catriona M., and Helen Gore. 2010. "The relationship between excessive Internet use and depression: A questionnaire-based study of 1,319 young people and adults." *Psychopathology* 43(2): 121-126.
- Muise, Amy, Emily Christofides, and Serge Desmarais. 2009. "More information than you ever wanted: Does Facebook bring out the green-eyed monster of jealousy?" *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12(4): 441-444.
- Munster, Anna. 1999. "Is there postlife after postfeminism? Tropes of technics and life in cyberfeminism." *Australian Feminist Studies* 14(29): 119–131.
- Nakamura, Lisa. 2001. "Heading hunting in cyberspace." *The Women's Review of Books* XVIII(5): 10-11.
- Nakamura, Rika, and Hanna Wirman. 2005. "Girlish counter-playing tactics." *Game Studies* 5(1): NP. Available: http://gamestudies.org/0501/nakamura_wirman/.

O'Leary, Amy. 2012, August 1. In Virtual Play Sexual Harassment if All too Real. *New York Times*, pp. A1.

Orr, Emily S., Mia Susic, Craig Ross, Mary G. Simmering, Jaime M. Arseneault, and R.

Robert Orr. 2009. "The influence of shyness on the use of Facebook in an undergraduate sample." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12(3): 337-340.

Paris, Natalie. 2011. "Americans spend most time on the Internet." *The Telegraph*, March 28. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1940196/Americans-spend-most-time-on-the-Internet.html>.

Pierce, Tess. 2010. "Singing at the digital well: Blogs as cyberfeminist sites of resistance." *Feminist Formations* 22(3): 196-209.

Plant, Sadie. 1996. "On the matrix: Cyberfeminist simulations." In *Cultures of Internet, Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies*, ed. R. Shields. London: Sage.

Plant, Sadie. 1997. *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women + The New Technoculture*. London: Fourth Estate.

Poisso, Lisa. 2010. "The WoW Factor." *WoW Insider*.
<http://wow.joystiq.com/2010/12/22/the-wow-factor-page-2/>.

Rodino, Michelle. 2006. Breaking out of Binaries: Reconceptualizing Gender and its Relationship to Language in Computer-Mediated Communication. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 3(3): 0.

Ross, Craig, Emily S. Orr, Mia Susic, Jaime M. Arseneault, Mary G. Simmering, and R. Robert Orr. 2009. "Personality and motivations associated with Facebook use." *Computers in Human Behavior* 25: 578-586.

- Shaw, Adrienne. 2011. Do you identify as a gamer? Gender, race, sexuality, and gamer identity. *New Media and Society* 14(1):28-44.
- Shimanoff, Susan. 1980. *Communication Rules: Theory and Research*. California: Sage.
- Siegel, Jane, Vitaly Dubrovsky, Sara Kiesler, and Timothy W. McGuire. 1986. "Group processes in computer-mediated communication." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 37: 157–187.
- Smith, Zadie. "Generation Why?" *The New York Review of Books*.
<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/25/generation-why/>.
- Snodgrass, Jeffrey G., H. J. Francois Dengah, Michael G. Lacy, Jesse Fagan, David Most, Michael Blank, Lahoma Howard, Chad R. Kershner, Gregory Krambeer, Alissa Leavitt-Reynolds, Adam Reynolds, Jessica Vyvial-Larson, Josh Whaley, and Benjamin Wintersteen. 2012. Restorative Magical Adventure or Warcrack? Motivated MMO Play and the Pleasures and Perils of Online Experience. *Games and Culture* 7(1):3-28.
- Sofsky, Wolfgang. 2007. *Privacy: A Manifesto*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Spender, Dale. 1980. *Man Made Language*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Suler, John R. 2002. "Identity management in cyberspace." *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 4(4): 455-460.
- Sussman, Nan M., and Diane Tyson. 2000. "Sex and power: gender differences in computer-mediated interactions." *Computers in Human Behavior* 16:381-394.

- Taylor, Nicholas, Jen Jenson, and Suzanne de Castell. 2009. "Cheerleaders/booth babes/ Halo hoes: Pro-gaming, gender, and jobs for the boys." *Digital Creativity* 20(4): 239-52.
- Tiffany A. Pempek, Yevdokiya A. Yermolayeva, and Sandra L. Calvert. 2009. "College students' social networking experiences on Facebook." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 30: 227-238.
- Tong, Stephanie Tom, Brandon Van Der Heide, Lindsey Langwell, and Joseph B. Walther. 2008. "Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13: 531-549.
- Valenzuela, Sebastián, Namsu Park, and Kerk F. Kee. 2009. "Is there social capital in a social network site? Facebook use and college students' life satisfaction, trust, and participation." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14: 875-901.
- Vella, Kathleen. 2010. "The benefits of gender swapping online." In *Online Conference on Networks and Communities*.
<http://networkconference.netstudies.org/2010/04/the-benefits-of-gender-swapping-online/>.
- Vitak, Jessica, Paul Zube, Andrew Smock, Caleb T. Carr, Nicole Ellison, and Cliff Lampe. 2011. "It's complicated: Facebook users' political participation in the 2008 election." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 14(3): 107-114.
- West, Matt. 2008. *Wooing girl gamers*.
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/ptech/02/28/women.gamers/index.html>.

Williams, Dmitri, Mia Consalvo, Scott Caplan and Nick Yee. 2009. "Looking for gender: Gender roles and behaviors among online gamers." *Journal of Communication* 59(4): 700–725.

Wilson, Fiona. 1992. Language, Technology, Gender, and Power. *Human Relations* 45(9):883-904.

World of Warcraft Cataclysm. 2012. Beginners Guide: What is World of Warcraft. from <http://us.battle.net/wow/en/game/guide/>.

Yee, Nick, Bailenson, Jeremy. 2007. "The Proteus Effect: The Effect of Transformed Self-Representation on Behavior." *Human Communication Research* 33(3):271-290.

Yee, Nick. 2004. The Daedalus project. <http://www.nickyee.com/daedalus>.

———. 2010. Gender Bending. <http://blogs.parc.com/playon/2010/07/23/gender-bending/>.

Young, Kimberly S., and Robert C. Rodgers. 1998. "The relationship between depression and Internet addiction." *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 1(1): 25-28.

Zoonen, Liesbet van. 2002. "Gendering the Internet claims, controversies, and cultures." *European Journal of Communication*, 17(1): 5-23.