

Be Gay Do Crime?

Queerness Visibility and Invisibility in Videogames

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| abstract

Videogames, and media in general, have adopted a more progressive stance on the representation of sexuality: it is common to see LGBTQIA+ stories and characters in movies, games, and books. Different authors in games studies have argued that Queerness visibility in videogames often follows heteronormative rules. Goffman's notion of front stage and backstage can be useful to understand the relationship between Queer visibility, invisibility and heteronormativity. The front stage represents the game itself, the including its portrayal of queer characters and issues, while the backstage refers to the software structures and affordances that often are coded in a "straight way". Results show that Queerness can either be both made invisible and visible by an inclusive representation of it and, at the same time, heteronormative affordances or that an inclusive representation can ignore the revolutionary elements of Queerness, thus depoliticizing it in a subtle way.

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1. Introduction

Crawford (2009) notes that games studies could benefit from a sociological perspective, although sociology's interest for the subject seems underwhelming. However, since Crawford's article, different sociologists have engaged in the study of videogames, recognizing their value in examining processes of production, consumption, and representation (Krijnen & Van Bauwel, 2020). Many authors have tried to examine games from a gender studies perspective, to understand how women and sexual minorities are represented in them (Shaw & Friesem, 2016).

While it is true that videogames, and media in general, have recently embraced a more progressive stance on the representation of sexuality and it is not uncommon to see LGBTQIA+ stories and characters represented in movies, games and books, Queerness visibility often coexists with a suppression of its most disruptive and politically significant aspects (Diamond, 2005). This article uses Goffman's (1959; 1974) concepts of *backstage* and *frontstage* to examine how Queerness can be simultaneously brought to the forefront, while at the same time being pushed to the background, by analyzing the relationship between Queer visibility and heteronormative structures in videogames. The research design mainly consisted in playing and immersing oneself in selected games to produce an ethnographic diary, which was subsequently used to conduct

a Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Forchtner, 2021) of the games themselves. The goal is not to simply analyze Queer representation per se, but also to explore the discursive practices these representations refer to. The dimensions considered in the CDA are the following: presence of Queer characters or themes; the pathways designed for players through affordances (what actions they can take or must take to play “queerly”); the positioning of Queerness within worldbuilding; and the thematization of Queer struggle or oppression. The games selected as a case study were *Baldur’s Gate 3* (Larian Studios), the *The Sims 2* (Electronic Arts), *Life is Strange* and *Life is Strange 2* (Square Enix). These games were chosen for their distinctive characteristics that illustrate how Queerness can be made visible in representation while still adhering to heteronormative discursive practices embedded in game structures or worldbuilding.

In particular, *Baldur’s Gate 3* and the *The Sims 2* offer a dreamscape where Queer oppression is never thematized as such: although Queerness is highly visible, as nearly all characters exhibit some form of queer identity, the absence of struggle towards an oppressive system renders invisible one of the main elements of Queerness, the one that makes it revolutionary, creating a juxtaposition between Queer visibility and invisibility. In *Life is Strange* and *Life is Strange 2*, playing as queer characters requires the players to make morally questionable choices. In these games, Queerness is only achievable through paths that thematize it as criminal, while straight paths, characters and relationships are associated with good morals and selfless choices.

Through these case studies, the aim is to explore the relationship between Queer visibility and invisibility in media and, more broadly, to demonstrate how media research can integrate both the cultural level (representation) and the material level (discursive practices).

2. Gender, Sexualities, Media and Videogames

In *Gender Advertisement* (1979), Goffman examines the way magazine advertisements depict men, women and gendered relations, identifying recurring patterns of gender representation that portray women as weaker and more sexualized, while men as figures of authority. Gender representation in media has been widely studied in social sciences, with research focusing on various perspectives, such as women’s presence in media and how women and men consume or participate in digital spaces (Collins, 2011; Kanai & Dobson, 2016). This body of work reveals that women are often sexualized in their portrayals (Santoniccolo et. al., 2023) or, when absent altogether, suffer from symbolic annihilation (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). In general, representation of gender in mainstream media often presents it as monolithic and unchanging (Brooks & Hébert, 2006). However, recent calls for more diverse representation and the general advances in women’s rights have influenced media portrayals. As a result, women’s representation has become more nuanced and often contradictory, with both “good” and “bad” portrayals existing simultaneously (Gill, 2007; Gauntlett, 2008). What most research points out is how crucial media portrayals are in shaping reality and notions of gender (Popa & Gavrilu, 2015; Wood, 1994; Sharda, 2014). Similarly, different studies examine how and when Queer identities are represented in media alongside gender and sexuality (Scarcelli et. al., 2021). Some scholars explore how sexuality representation in mainstream media could depoliticize discourse around sexuality (Diamond, 2005; Keegan, 2006; Ng, 2013) and note how queer representation often conforms to heteronormative frame-

works in television shows (Gross, 2001; Francis, 2021; Shugart, 2003); others highlight the positive effects of LGBT+ representation on queer youth (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Gillig & Murphy, 2016) and the nuanced ways media portray Queer visibility that could benefit the broader Queer community (Cover, 2022).

Among media content, videogames offer unique opportunities for study due to their interactive nature, which distinguishes them from other media such as books and movies. Sociological inquiry into videogames has examined the three pillars of media studies identified by Krijnen and Van Bauwel (2015): production, consumption, and representation. The gaming industry's complexities as well as the production process make it an interesting field for the analysis of a rising market and its labor conditions (Boulton & Cremin, 2012). Despite significant female representation among gamers in both the U.S. and Europe (Biscop et. al., 2019), videogames are still largely seen as a male-dominated hobby, with minorities and women placed at the margin of the industry as characters, gamers, and industry workers.

Gender-focused research in videogames studies has focused on the misogyny and sexism in the industry (Jenson & De Castel, 2013; Cho, 2022; Foust 2023), on how women decide to game and how they are perceived in the gaming community (Phan et. al., 2012; deWinter & Kocurek, 2017; Lopez-Fernandez et. al., 2019; Kelly et. al., 2022; Labrador et. al., 2022; Crothers et. al., 2024; Botto & Falzea, 2025), how gender is represented in games and the effects of hegemonic masculinity in gaming culture (Ivory, 2006; Roberts, 2012; Kondrak, 2015; Biscop et. al., 2019; Casagrande-Bristot et. al., 2019; Conway, 2019; Blomquist, 2021; Eklund & Zanescu, 2024). Research on sexuality and Queerness in videogame, similarly explores the experiences of Queer players (Blanco-Fernandez & Moreno, 2023; Di Cesare et. al., 2023) and their negotiation of identity as gamers (Humphreys, 2012; Shaw, 2012, 2013). Other studies examine Queer game production and the role of Queer workers within the industry (Ruberg, 2019; Mejeur et. al., 2020), or the way videogames represent Queerness and the role played by sexuality in them (Shaw, 2009; Shaw, 2014; Shaw, Friesem, 2016; Biscop et. al., 2019; Kosciesza, 2022; McLaren, 2023; McPhail, 2023). Despite some games allowing players to “play queer”, scholars note that these affordances often remain rooted in heteronormative design, especially in portrayals of family life, romance and sexual relationships (Consalvo, 2003; Greer, 2013; Pulos, 2013). This article moves in a direction similar to the papers just mentioned, aiming to investigate the possibilities of “playing Queer” and the discursive practices underlying representations of Queerness and homosexuality in videogames.

3. Methodology and Material

As discussed in the previous paragraph, a rich tradition of research exists in both game studies and the study of gender and sexuality in videogames. Consequently, the methodology of this article is inspired by previous works that examine how Queerness manifests in gaming. Building on Goffman's (1959; 1974) concept of front stage and backstage, this article seeks to explore which aspects of Queerness – its themes or elements – made it to the stage, and which remain in the backstage. The tool used to analyze these dimensions is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as described by Fairclough (2013), as it allows to investigate political meanings embedded within discourse and representations of gender and sexuality. Although focused on different media types, this study's methodology is influenced by Cannito and Mercuri

(2021) and Colombelli et. al. (2024), particularly in the construction of a matrix of dimensions to analyze Queerness and sexuality within the selected games. Lastly, the works of Greer (2013), Consalvo (2003) and Pulos (2013) on *Dragon Age*, *Fable*, *The Sims* and *World of Warcraft* informed my decision to explore similar games by attempting to play “Queerly”, examining the possibilities and limitations imposed by their affordances and narrative structures.

Playing these games extensively helped build an autoethnographic diary (Jensén, 2012) that shaped the conclusions I have reached. In videogames, affordances broadly refer to what the player can do and how they can interact with the environment – including environments, characters, and objects – (Bentley & Osborn, 2019). This concept is central to this analysis, as the heteronormative structure that guides gameplays (even Queer ones) in the games selected is built on these affordances (Greer, 2013).

The games chosen for this analysis are *Baldur's Gate 3* (Larian), *The Sims 2* (Electronic Arts), *Life is Strange*, and *Life is Strange 2* (Square Enix); played collectively for approximately 200 hours. The dimensions identified for the CDA are the following: the presence of Queer characters or themes; the paths and affordances the games designed for players (what they can and must do to play “Queerly”); the positioning of Queerness within worldbuilding; and the thematization of Queer identity. While this article does not directly investigate game production or consumption patterns – except for the autoethnographic approach chosen – the conclusions drawn here can inform future research into how Queer players engage with games and how affordances are constructed within game code. The games chosen serve as archetypal examples that illuminate relation between queer representation and the discursive practices behind it. A key challenge of this article is to look at representation, widely studied from a cultural perspective, while taking a materialistic approach.

4. Results: Playing Queerly

In the following subparagraphs I will describe the games chosen for the case study, their characteristics, and the gameplay, in order to introduce the analysis presented in the discussion section.

4.1. *Be gay do crime? Queerness representation in life is strange*

Life is Strange is an episodic game that follows the story of Max Caulfield, a teenage girl who goes back to Arcadia Bay, her hometown, to attend Blackwell Academy, a private school where she can study photography. Immediately, the player is made aware of Max's apprehension about her homecoming, knowing she will have to face her former best friend Chloe, whom she has not contacted since moving away shortly after Chloe's father sudden death. In episode 1 of the game, Max has been in Arcadia Bay for two weeks and has not yet reached out to Chloe. The player is quickly introduced to the other students of the academy and to some other NPCs. Overall, the game characters follow the tropes present in many high school dramas from the USA: the rich spoiled kid (Nathan Prescott), the nerdy sidekick with a crush on the main character (Warren Graham), the bully (Victoria Chase), and the mysterious handsome teacher (Mark Jefferson). Throughout the game, the player is encouraged to explore the story of all the characters, even the minor ones, using its gameplay mechanic. Max can go back in time and change

the outcome of the events that she already saw unfolding, and the player is invited to explore different outcomes. Minor decisions shape the story in subtle ways, while major choices are presented with a time-stop and split-screen visualization of two choices.

Max discovers her powers when she witnesses Chloe's murder at the hands of Nathan: shocked by her friend's death, Max unwillingly triggers her ability to rewind time, allowing her to prevent it. Reunited with Chloe, Max learns that her old friend is investigating the disappearance of Rachel Amber, Chloe's best friend. It is implied that the two may have been more than friends and, regardless of the player choice, Max reacts with what could be defined as jealousy, defining some sort of implicit love triangle between Max, Chloe and Rachel. The topic of Max's sexuality is interesting: players can choose how to interpret it freely, so there is not strong canonical evidence of Max being interested in Chloe or women in general; however, they can decide to kiss Chloe almost immediately, a choice framed as significant, and Max seems to be jealous of Rachel and extremely interested in getting close to Chloe, often ignoring Warren flirtatious attempts in the process. Chloe's queerness is at the same time extremely visible thanks to her characterization as an odd element within the community, her rebellious nature and her relationship with Rachel and Max, and at the same time, it's never openly discussed. Queer representation, as such, is on the 'front stage' (Goffman, 1956), while the implications of this representation are made invisible and pushed in the 'backstage' (*ibidem*).

Throughout the game, players can build relationships with other NPCs, but that with Chloe is clearly the center of the narrative, as her and Max try to discover what happened in Arcadia Bay to Rachel. At some point in the game, Max discovers that her powers have side effects such as making her weak, and they impact the surroundings: Arcadia Bay start to be interested by strange weather phenomena, and Max has visions of a giant tornado hitting and destroying the town. She also finds out that she can go back to precise moments in time using photography and she does so with unintended consequences: the lesson is clear, changing the past and using this power comes with a price.

As the storm looms over Arcadia Bay, Chloe and Max realize that the extreme weather phenomena, tornado included, are a direct consequence of Max messing with time. Max and the player have to face the last difficult choice of the game: let Chloe live and watch the tornado destroy the city, or go back in time, not saving Chloe, never using time warping powers and thus saving the whole town, while also putting in motion a series of event that would lead to Rachel's killer's arrest. Throughout the game it is clear that Chloe should not be alive, as Max must save her life about seven different times and every time she does so, her body takes a heavy toll and some strange meteorological phenomenon unfolds. If the player decides to save Chloe, her and Max move around a destroyed Arcadia Bay in the finale, with Max looking distressed as she watches the destruction she caused; if the player decides to save the town, Max kisses Chloe goodbye (if the player flirted with her throughout the game) and goes back to the bathroom where she cries softly while Chloe is killed by Nathan. Max will later attend Chloe's funeral with Warren and the whole community. This last choice reinforces Chloe's role and place within the community and the narration: as pointed out by Butt and Dunne (2019), she is Queer not simply for her – presumed – interest in women, but for being an outlier within the community; as such Arcadia Bay represents the heteronorm (Butler, 1990) that Max embraces if she were to decide to let Chloe go. Chloe's existence is per se a problem within the game world that leads to a catastrophic ending if left unchecked. The last major choice of the game – let Chloe live or save the town – represents a tension between a "righteous" moral choice and a selfish one (Butt, Dunne, 2019): in the first

case Max chooses community and family instead of Queerness, possibly opening up to a relationship with Warren; in the second she chooses Queerness, sacrificing everything else in the process. This tension between the right – heteronormative – choice and the Queer one is particularly interesting as it is embedded in the game affordances: even when players choose to play Queerly they are brought to a heteronormative path: whatever the player chooses, Max and Chloe's relationship is marked by tragedy, a trope that is often used in the depiction of Queer relationships (Biscop et. al., 2019).

This tension is present even in the second instalment of the game, *Life is Strange 2*, that follows the story of two brothers, Sean and Daniel Diaz, who witness their father Estaban – a Mexican migrant – getting shot by a policeman after a small altercation with a neighbor. Before his death, Estaban emphasizes the importance of the bond Sean will build with Daniel. When Estaban is killed, Daniel unlocks telekinetic powers and kills the policeman who shot him. Panicked, Sean flees with his brother to protect him from the consequences of what just happened. Without a clear plan, Sean decides to leave the country to go back to his father's hometown in Mexico and keep Daniel safe, without telling him what happened with the policeman. The gameplay revolves around helping the two brothers survive their journey, with a core – covert – mechanic centered around a morality points system. The player can then choose if they want to teach Daniel that the end justifies the means, meaning that they can steal or do other morally grey actions to survive, or teach Daniel that their father's values are important, and they need to do the right thing regardless of their situation, avoiding harm or illegal activities. *Life is Strange 2* offers four different endings, determined by how the player decided to raise Daniel, and what kind of moral code they use for the final decision.

As in the previous instalment, Sean has the possibility to pursue two romantic interests: either Finn or Cassidy, two people he meets while working briefly on a marijuana farm with Daniel. Unlike Max, Sean's sexuality is presented with more clarity, as the game starts with him discussing his crush on a girl with his friend Lila. However, more attentive players may notice a picture on his phone of him holding a bi pride flag. Additionally, during a conversation with Finn, Cassidy, and their friends the player can choose to have Sean state his preference for women, both men and women, or no one.

While the players can decide Sean is attracted to men and have a crush on Finn, pursuing a romance with him requires making a morally ambiguous choice. Regardless of player's actions, Finn and Daniel will develop a bond that will eventually lead to Daniel showing his powers to Finn. As Sean, Daniel, Finn and Cassidy are working for a drug dealer, Finn suggests using the two brothers to participate in a heist, exploiting young Daniel's powers to steal from the criminals. Players can choose to refuse the plan without antagonizing Finn but doing so will prevent Finn from kissing Sean and declaring his feelings to him. In contrast, Cassidy immediately opposes Finn's plan out of concern for Daniel's safety, acting as the voice of reason. Consequently, while the game allows for homosexual romance, it locks it behind a morally dubious choice, that would endanger the little brother that Sean – and the player – were entrusted to care for.

As such *Life is Strange 2* presents the same tension between Queerness and heteronormativity as its predecessor: Cassidy represents reason, family values, morality, while Finn is the Queer element, the element of disruption and morally dubious choices. It is important to note that the moral element of the choices is not explicit within the game: the players know only that the choices they made affect Daniel somehow and discovers in what way they did just at the end of the game. As such, while Sean's sexuality gets fully in the 'front stage' (Goffman, 1956; 1974), the way it is framed and connected to

moral choices stays completely away from the players' gaze. Considering the elements observed for the CDA, *Life is Strange 1* represents Queerness using contextual elements, without ever naming it explicitly, while *Life is Strange 2* is more explicit in its portrayal of Queer characters. Similarly, both games do not necessarily thematize their world as homophobic, but the openly Queer characters are framed as an element of disturbance within this world. In both games the path designed through the affordances presents heteronormative elements: in the first instalment Queerness leads inevitably to tragedy, while in the second the only possible Queer path is tied to morally dubious choices.

4.2. Everyone (and no one) is Queer

The other two games analyzed in this paper offer the possibility to freely engage in homosexual relationships. In the case of *The Sims 2*, players interact with a dollhouse, creating their "sims" and families, simulating daily life, and having them find a job, pursue higher education, build friendships and romance. In this article, I will focus on the second instalment of the series due to its notable aspects, such as character creation and the aspiration points system¹. In *The Sims 2* players define their sims' personality through a point system and select a lifestyle aspiration from options like pleasure, family, knowledge, money, popularity or romance. Overall, the game offers the possibility to create a wide array of different personalities, even if it does not give many options regarding gender expression, that is treated as a binary variable. What was revolutionary at the time that *The Sims 2* was produced, was the fact that it allowed players to create gay characters who could enter joint unions – though marriage was reserved for heterosexual couples. Any NPC could be gay, as a sim would accept flirting and romantic interactions from another regardless of gender, given that their relationship score was high enough. The only constraint added by later expansions of the game is the attraction system, where the player can choose what the sim will find attractive and repulsive in others. However, this will not prevent sims from possibly engaging in romantic relationships with someone who has characteristics they dislike, albeit it will be more difficult to build a relationship with them. Sims will not react to other sims' choices in relationships, except for congratulating after weddings or joint unions. In the game, thus, the non-existence of sexuality in general comes with the non-existence of homophobia or gender oppression, an element underlined by Consalvo (2003) in her analysis of the game.

Even if the game has no objective, it has an aspiration point system: every morning, the sims will randomly receive wishes and fears, and they will fill an aspiration meter when their wishes are granted, while if their fears come true, they will lose aspiration points. These wishes and fears are based on the sim's lifetime aspiration. Interestingly, even though the game seems to present a landscape where sexuality does not exist, as everyone is potentially attracted by anyone, family sims will receive more points if their wish of "seeing a relative marry" comes true, compared to the wish "of seeing a relative in a jointed union". Thus, while homosexuality per se does not exist in this game, there is still some sort of heterosexist undertone that places heterosexual weddings as more valuable than homosexual joint unions. While the affordances of the game guarantee the possibility to freely refuse 'straight paths' (Greer, 2013), they punish somehow those

1. However, it is interesting to note that in the most recent instalment, *The Sims 4*, the developer gave players the possibility to choose their sims' sexual orientation and gender identity. During character creation, players can choose to dress males in feminine clothes and vice versa, and gender is broken down to biological characteristics, such as "can pee standing"/"cannot pee standing", or "can get pregnant"/"can get other pregnant".

who decide to play Queerly. This element is particularly interesting, as it shows that while the game world can be presented as almost a Queer utopia where oppression and discrimination do not exist, the affordances can still be designed in a heteronormative way.

Baldur's Gate 3 is a completely different gaming experience: drawing its mechanics from the famous tabletop game Dungeons & Dragons, the game follows a group of adventurers that end up being together after being infected by a Mind Flayer's tadpole, a parasite that threatens to transform them in monstrous, soulless creatures that have no sense of self. Players can either choose pre-made characters or create their own, and the character creation system allows to choose gender identity independently of appearance. As the player explores the game world, they must be careful in not displeasing their companions too much, as they can decide to permanently leave the party or turn on the player. The game is designed for multiple replays, with difficulty options that allow a genuine roleplaying experience, meaning the players can play their character according to a background they imagine, without worrying about losing the game due to their choices. This freedom in gameplay is reflected also in the way the game treats sexualities, as players can freely pursue romantic relationships with any companion, regardless of their character's gender expression, sex, or race. *Baldur's Gate 3* features companions who are all pansexual, or rather, have no sexuality. No character openly identifies as pansexual, and similarly to *The Sims 2*, there are no issues of apparent homophobia, as the player will naturally encounter homosexual couples never presented as such, but introduced as lovers, without any additional label. Both *Baldur's Gate 3* and *The Sims 2* thus present a post-sexuality world, where the categories of hetero, gay, pan or bisexual themselves seem to not exist. The analysis of these cases is particularly interesting if it is approached using the notion of front stage and back stage (Goffman, 1956) as Queerness – especially in the case of *Baldur's Gate 3* – is represented in a sensitive way and it definitely gets the front stage if the players decide so; however, the elimination of oppression from the games worlds marks the erasure of the political struggle that defines Queerness: a Queer utopia, without a tale of liberation from the heteronorm (Butler, 1990), presents a pacified version of Queer struggle, failing to represent a fundamental aspect of Queerness, namely being the odd element in a society that rejects one's being. In both games affordances are mainly designed to leave the players freedom regarding sexuality, even though in *The Sims 2* there are some heteronormative elements that give more value to heterosexual families. In general, both games paradoxically make Queerness invisible while, at the same time, making it visible.

5. Conclusions

The CDA conducted gives some interesting insight in the way Queer representation in videogames could be studied. The key findings are summarized in table 1 and show that the four games could fall in two macro categories: games that give the players a vast array of options to represent Queerness while making some revolutionary aspects of it invisible; games that thematize Queer struggle and oppression without naming Queerness explicitly and presenting straight patterns in their affordances.

Table 1. Summary of the key findings of the CDA.

Category 1		
The Sims 2 Baldur's Gate 3	Presence of Queer themes/Characters	Affordances/possibility to play Queerly
	Every character's Queerness is decided entirely by the players.	Complete freedom to play Queerly
	Queerness in the worldbuilding	Thematization of Queerness
	No recognition of Queerness that is just a background element	Depoliticized, absence of Queer struggle.
Category 2		
Life is Strange 1 Life is Strange 2	Presence of Queer themes/Characters	Affordances/possibility to play Queerly
	Some are canonically Queer, players have the possibility to choose the main characters sexuality. Characters' sexuality could be implicitly or explicitly Queer.	The possibility to play Queer is locked behind morally dubious choices or tragic paths.
	Queerness in the worldbuilding	Thematization of Queerness
	Canonically – explicitly or not – Queer characters are presented as elements of disturbance within the games' worlds.	Queerness as struggle, as tragedy and, in some instances, as crime.

The first case, represented by *The Sims 2* and *Baldur's Gate 3*, is characterized by the absence of Queer struggle and the consequent depoliticization of Queerness, as it is rendered orphan of its revolutionary element. If potentially, everyone is Queer, no one really is: as such Queerness occupies both the front and the back of the stage (Goffman, 1956), it is invisible and visible at the same time. In the second case Queerness manages to reach the front stage – although sometimes not explicitly – but in the backstage the affordances, largely invisible to the casual player, still direct it into a heteronormative path, marked either by tragedy or immorality.

Moreover, this paper highlights the difficult relationship between materialistic approaches and cultural approaches. In this case, the materiality is given by affordances, that are, in a way, discursive practices embedded in the game algorithm by the developers and that shapes the possibilities and experiences of players. Affordances in the second category are fundamental in understanding how and where the depoliticization of Queerness occurs. Representations, in this case, refer to the array of Queer themes and characters presented in the games: games of the first category offer an inclusive representation, affordances that give the players complete freedom without however, offering a critical political stance. Thus, this analysis further supports the existing literature about the possibility of the coexistence of heteronormative affordances and inclusive representation but also highlights how depoliticization of Queerness could be subtle and could happen also in games that are praised as inclusive, like the ones analyzed. This article has chosen to look at representation using both Goffman and the more materialistic approach of the CDA, other contributions could further explore this relationship between affordances, political discourse and representation.

For its nature, this contribution does not aim at giving an encompassing explanation of how Queerness is represented in videogames, however the categorization offered could be useful for the analysis of other videogames or pieces of media. This contribution is also written by a Queer person and, as such, there are some autoethnographical in-

sights on how certain representation of Queerness may affect Queer players, especially with regards to the difficult relationship in the game representations between Queer revolution and sexuality. The fact that all of these games are capable of representing sexuality and Queerness in a respectful and inclusive way, while also failing in politicizing it, could put Queer players in a difficult position: while being appreciative of being in the spotlight after years of invisibility in the media industry, for some could be difficult to relate to the heteronormative affordances and paths these games are built on. As such, future research could explore further these aspects by interviewing Queer players. In the relationship between Queer visibility and invisibility, heteronormative affordances and inclusive representation, there is a space for a more revolutionary conceptualization of Queerness that embraces the underdog, the monster – represented by Chloe and Finn in *Life is Strange 1* and *2* – that could exist in the practice of Queer gamers. Future research could look more closely into how Queer players embrace or refuse the monstrous. While this contribution focuses on representations and the relationships between discourse, Queerness and its political core, others could – following Krijnen and Van Bauwel's (2020) categorization – focus more on the way Queerness in games is consumed and resignified by consumption or, instead, focus on how Queerness is produced by the game industry, how certain choices are taken and how heteronormative affordances are constructed.

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