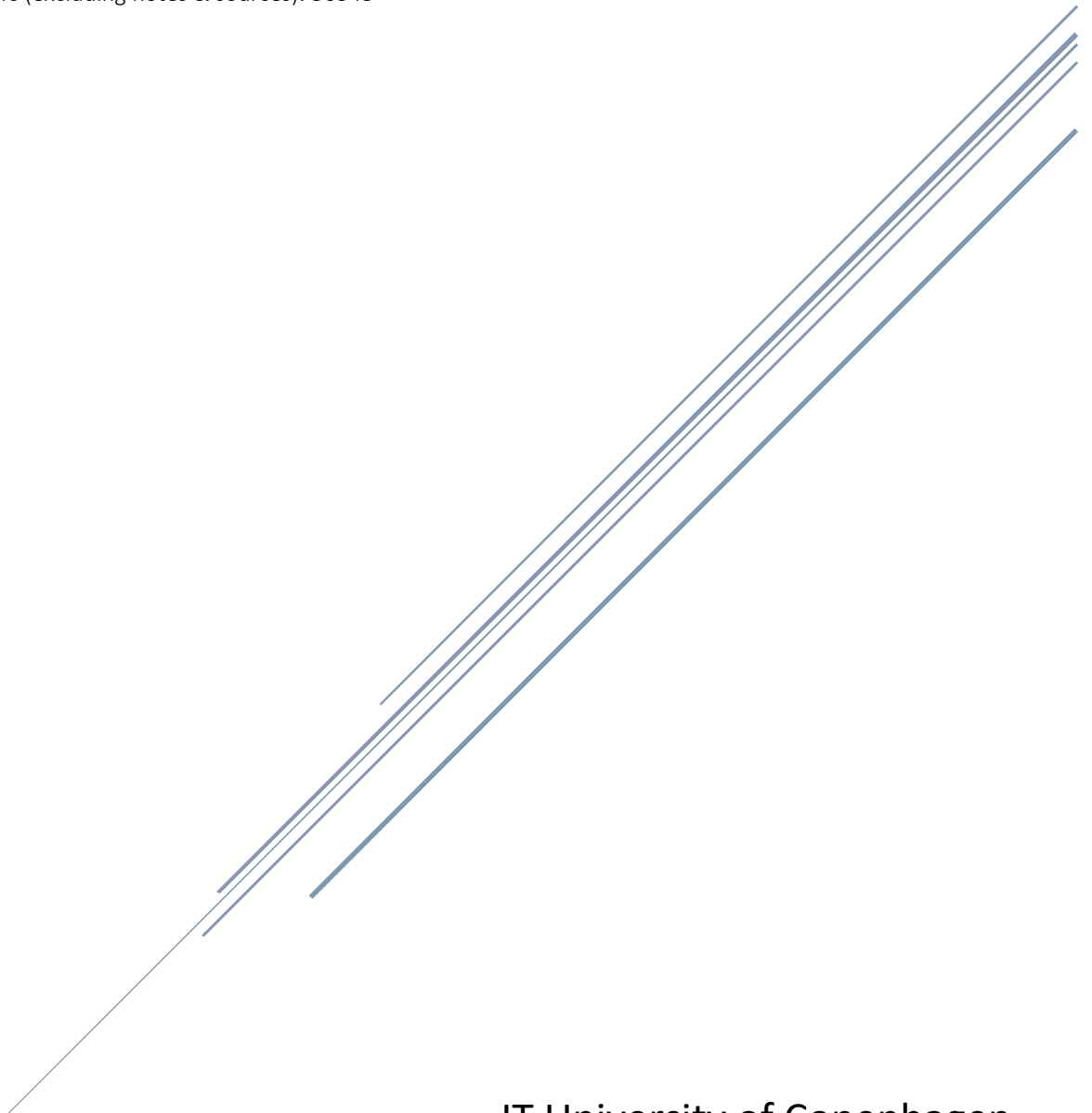


# *It Takes One to Fight One: Sublimity, Technology, and Player as Contained Monster in *Prey**

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*“We spent years trying to put what you can do into us.*

*We never tried putting what we can do into you.”*

– Alex Yu, *Prey*<sup>1</sup> (2017)

## Introduction

Monsters are everywhere! Under the bed, hiding in the closet, and starring in our favorite books and movies. Games are no exception, either. In fact, monsters have been a part of games, since even before the dawn of video games. Abounding in such arcane tomes as the *Monster Manual*<sup>2</sup> for the tabletop role-playing game *Dungeons & Dragons*<sup>3</sup>, lurking between the pages of *Choose Your Own Adventure*<sup>4</sup> style books, and residing in other such pulpy bestiariums of the modern era, monsters of all shapes and sizes have consistently been cast as the go-to antagonistic force in adventure, fantasy, and science fiction games since the 1970s<sup>5</sup>.

In a more recent trend, however, some games have explicitly sought to question or subvert the presumed otherness of monsters, reframing them as misunderstood, but fundamentally relatable creatures, as in the game *Undertale*<sup>6</sup>, or literally enabling players to embody and play as one, as seen in *Evolve*<sup>7</sup>. Having slaughtered innumerable monsters across countless games with little or no hesitation, players are being asked to reflect more critically on their own actions and understanding of what truly makes a monster – a moral shift suggesting that perhaps the description is more fitting of the players themselves, whether literally or in a more philosophical sense.

In this paper, I aim to investigate and correlate these two game phenomena: that of the contained, made-to-order monster and the emerging trope of the player-as-monster. I argue that the latter is in some ways the consequence of the former. In the first part of the paper, traditional definitions of monsters are presented and contrasted with the ontological containment of monsters in games. It is argued that the game monster has been deprived of its sublime qualities and that this loss is intimately related to the role technology in games. Following this, the concept of the player-as-monster within the action-based medium of games, is introduced and proposed as an extension of the argument so far. In the second part, this line of reasoning is illustrated through a multi-faceted analysis of *Prey*<sup>8</sup>, a recent video game that elegantly reifies the arguments of this paper through both themes and game mechanics. Drawing on the game’s thematic multiplicity, three distinct perspectives on the player-as-monster are formulated. In the third and final part, the argument is revisited and critiqued, additional perspectives are provided, and the implications for further research are briefly considered.

## == PART ONE ==

### A monster sublime

Traditionally, a number of different monster definitions have been put forward by scholars. In his book *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, Stephen Asma chronicles the multifarious ways in which monsters have been conceptualized and represented in mythology, folklore, and pop culture. As beings ripe with symbolic qualities,

he writes, “the monster is [sometimes] a display of God’s wrath, a portent of the future, a symbol of moral virtue or vice, or an accident of nature. The monster is more than an odious creature of the imagination; it is a kind of cultural category, employed in domains as diverse as religion, biology, literature, and politics.”<sup>9</sup>

Another definition is given by Julia Kristeva, suggesting that monsters are “what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.”<sup>10</sup> Kristeva emphasizes the transgressive qualities of monsters, arguing for their fundamentally abject and indefinable nature. Complimenting this definition are the notions of monster as “tokens of fracture within the human psyche”<sup>11</sup> and “figures of chaos and disorientation within order and orientation”<sup>12</sup> as presented by Richard Kearney and Timothy Beal, respectively. While these definitions are almost as heterogenous as the monsters they attempt to describe, they share an understanding of monsters as being fundamentally impossible to describe. Monsters are, in a word, ineffable.

This terminological collapse or short-coming of our faculties of reason, is an important part of why monsters fill our minds and hearts with terror, as Jaroslav Švelch highlights with a famous passage by H. P. Lovecraft: “The Thing cannot be described – there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order.”<sup>13</sup> The monstrous defies and violates even our categories of reason and sense-making. However, just as monsters are wont to instill terror, so too do they also fill us with a sense of unspeakable awe. This combination of awe and terror, argues Asma, places monsters within the domain of the sublime, as understood by Immanuel Kant.<sup>14</sup>

According to Kant, the sublime exists in the mind only: “For what is sublime, in the proper meaning of the term, cannot be contained in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility.”<sup>15</sup> Literal monsters do not exist, and yet they occupy our collective minds, as we find ourselves simultaneously attracted and repulsed by their very idea, in a curious and complex aesthetic relation described by Kant as *negative pleasure*.<sup>16</sup>

Kant further distinguishes between two categories of the sublime: the mathematical and the dynamic. The mathematically sublime is that which regards absolute *magnitude* as “our imagination strives to progress toward infinity, while our reason demands absolute totality as a real idea, and so our power of estimating the magnitude of things in the world of sense, is inadequate to that idea.”<sup>17</sup> The mathematically sublime is not an object, but rather “[...] the attunement the intellect [gets] through a certain presentation that occupies reflective judgment.”<sup>18</sup> The mathematically sublime then, is concerned with the relation of certain ideas, and not objects.

Conversely, the dynamically sublime concerns itself, not with magnitude, but *might*. Nature, according to Kant, is where we traditionally encounter the dynamically sublime: “Hence nature can count as a might, and so as dynamically sublime, for aesthetic judgment only insofar as we consider it as an object of fear.”<sup>19</sup> The great extremes of natural phenomena, like thunderstorms and erupting volcanoes, are all terrifying to behold. And yet, we admire and even delight in their viewing from places of safety. Through a window, for example – or in front of a TV screen.

This ability to inspire both fear and admiration, is what Asma terms the sublime thesis: “Whether you are confronting God in a religious ecstasy or confronting the onslaught of unstoppable monsters, you feel *helpless, powerless* [original emphasis] by comparison.”<sup>20</sup> Despite the seemingly undesirable feeling of powerlessness, we nonetheless indulge in this negative pleasure, gleefully exposing ourselves to monster movies and horror stories. The conflation of the divine and the destructive is for example epitomized in the iconic movie monster *Godzilla*, whose nature, origin, and ultimate role has been symbolically interpreted as both an admonition against unchecked scientific arrogance and the violently corrective forces of nature.<sup>21</sup>

### **From the closet to the cage**

While monsters have historically maintained much of their ineffable, indeterminate status in literature and movies, the same cannot be said of monsters in games. Rather, a new kind of monstrosity is emerging, shaped by what Švelch, citing Deleuze, calls a shift toward “societies of control”.<sup>22</sup> Tracing the origin of monster containment from medieval bestiaries through the aforementioned monster manuals, Švelch writes: “This new monstrosity is shaped by the fundamental features of video games. Video games are rules-based phenomena and their rules are encoded in the games’ software. This makes the new monstrosity knowable and unambiguous. Video games emphasize action and its effects in the game worlds. Their monsters therefore become targets of the player’s agency and are defeatable.”<sup>23</sup>

In a game, everything must be quantified, defined, and understood, if not by the players, then at least by the developers. The monster is no longer a being of sublime awe and terror, but an ontologically encoded entity, whose ultimate purpose – more often than not – is to be outsmarted and defeated by players. No longer unknowable beings hiding in the closet, monsters have been caged within a datacentric culture obsessed with control. Games – namely video games – argues Alexander Galloway, are activities “defined by rules in which players try to reach some sort of goal.”<sup>24</sup> More to the point, they are about actions: they presuppose, on some level, the agency and *power* of players to achieve the goals presented to them.

A paradox, or outright contradiction, rears its ugly head: monsters, by virtue of their sublime qualities, have traditionally made us – the viewers – feel powerless. Yet within the medium of games, the power is invested in the player, with monsters being delimited and enthralled by the rules-centric nature of games. Gone, it would seem, is the might of the monsters. This signifies on some level a change in the dynamically sublime powers – or *power dynamics* – of the monsters, a new kind of sublimity rising to take its place.

In his book, *American Technological Sublime*, David Nye argues for the historical development of what he, alongside others, terms the technological sublime.<sup>25</sup> Retaining elements of both the mathematic and dynamic, this new kind of sublimity differs in its emphasis on technological advancement. Eugene Shinkle, referencing Nye, summarizes the development thusly: “Where the European Enlightenment [that is, Kant among others] regarded nature as something to be admired from a distance, early American settlers saw it as an obstacle to be overcome, and public

works like dams, canals and railway bridges, which demonstrated humanity's control over natural forces, were powerful sources of sublime sensation."<sup>26</sup> Less impressed by the Colorado River than by the Hoover Dam, the technological sublime marks an important shift in attitude toward man-made, rules-based phenomena.

Nature's sublimity may defy language, but it is certainly not impervious to direct human intervention. Nye explains how the Americans of 18<sup>th</sup> century were "swallowing the world not through language but through direct action. They were assaulting the natural world [...] literally reworking the landscape [...] vigorously projecting themselves into the world, mixing their labor with it, and building internal improvements."<sup>27</sup> This anthropocentric view of nature, with its emphasis on the actions taken *against* it, could readily be applied to most game worlds and their players. As breathtaking as the landscapes and wildlife featured in video games like *Red Dead Redemption 2*<sup>28</sup> may seem, they are ultimately man-made artifacts shaped by the expectancy of player actions, their sublimity owed more to the technological advancements required in their creation, than to the simulated nature put on display.

Similarly, video game monsters are indebted to a different kind of sublimity than that of the ineffably dynamic. Lovecraftian horrors may defy the written word but will necessarily submit to the tyranny of code in games like *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*<sup>29</sup>. And while the epic boss battle against Cronos in *God of War 3*<sup>30</sup> does inspire both awe and terror, the admiration is ultimately directed toward – not the towering deity of Greek myth – but the marvels of technology enabling its ludic representation. However formidable in stature, the god eventually falls by a sword wielded by players, forged by developers, and sharpened by the empowering, action-based medium of games.

Technology then, has become the bane of monsters. In a society of control, little freedom is offered to that which has traditionally transgressed borders and disrupted systems. Švelch summarizes this with concern: "If video games are indeed training grounds for our lives in control societies, they teach us that even monstrosity, formerly relegated to the fringes of human experience, can be made visible and manipulable. In video games, like in surveillance systems, the hidden is to be revealed and the dangerous is to be eliminated."<sup>31</sup>

Defanged and detained by the man-made forces of technology, the game monster has been reduced to a manipulable object, a contained creature exploitable for its resources. The question is then what becomes – not of monsters – but of the players eliminating them in the virtual world of games. In the following, I will present the concept of the player-as-monster, arguing that the technological containment of monsters in games implies a displacement in and of where and what the real monstrosity lurks.

### **Whoever who fights monsters...**

The trope of the monstrous protagonist is neither new, nor unique to games, and as such has been investigated by scholars of different fields. Janice Hawes, in a study of one particular Icelandic saga, describes how the hero, Grettir, is forever changed by the confrontation with Glámr, a monstrous draugr who "although defeated in battle, acquires power over the future of the saga hero and stunts the growth of the hero's physical prowess. In addition, after

acknowledging the noble qualities and fame of the hero, Glamr predicts that the hero will now become an infamous and rejected outcast on account of the deeds his strength allows him to accomplish."<sup>32</sup> Citing another scholar, Kirsten Hastrup, Hawes continues: "Not only does the fight with Glámur change the nature of Grettir's relationship to society, but in one sense, he has also reached the point of no return in moving across the boundary between the human and the non-human world."<sup>33</sup>

The power acquired by the hero is what allows them to vanquish the monster – but it is also what ultimately transforms them, alienating them from society in much the same way as the monster. Video games are ripe with such monstrous heroes, their powers often technological in origin: the genetically enhanced Space Marines of the *Warhammer 40,000*<sup>34</sup> setting and the transgressively mutated monster hunters of the *Witcher*<sup>35</sup> series are just two examples of technologically enhanced transhuman game protagonists who must abandon their humanity – willingly or otherwise – to defend the very same. This is one way in which the power afforded to players by the game is commonly framed: through a justification by the fiction of the game.

In a much more real sense, to borrow Jesper Juul's<sup>36</sup> distinction between the rules and fiction of games, it is not the fiction, but the rules – clinically formulated and unwaveringly upheld by computer processing – that truly empower players to understand, emulate, and ultimately destroy whatever pixelated horror is pitted against them. Confronted with hordes of encoded monsters, castrated of their transgressive sublimity, the real sublimity on display is technological in nature. It is not the monsters, however grotesque and deformed, that inspire awe and terror, but our ability to simulate them in virtual worlds, endlessly beating them in games of our own design.

Švelch notes how in the earliest editions of *Dungeons & Dragons*, everything foreign to the player was categorized as a monster.<sup>37</sup> It is telling then that *Baldur's Gate*<sup>38</sup>, arguably the most famous video game adaptation of the game system, features the wanton destruction of countless fantasy monsters, yet ultimately places its narrative emphasis on the player character's inner struggle with their own latent monstrosity, as the progeny of Bhaal, the god of murder. In a world where everything else is a monster, manipulable and exploitable, the player is the true anomaly.

Empowered by the action-based, rules-centric medium of games, players become the real transgressors and are – like the Icelandic heroes of old – transformed in the process. Wielding the powers of technology – from spellcasting and regenerating health to save game reloading and googling strategy guides – players become monstrous projections of themselves in the virtual worlds of games. And while neither the technological containment of monsters, nor the concept of the monstrous protagonist are unique to games, the power afforded the players by the medium is.

The argument so far has been this: the monstrously sublime has been detained by the action-based medium of games. Players, on the other hand, have been bestowed the power of the technological sublime to quantify and dominate the monstrous, in turn becoming monsters themselves. To better illustrate these philosophical ravings,

however, a more careful analysis of the player-as-monster and the different expressions of player monstrosity will be provided in the following.

## == PART TWO ==

### **Predator and Prey**

The video game *Prey*<sup>39</sup> was developed by Arkane Studios and published by Bethesda Softworks for the PC, Xbox One, and PlayStation 4 in 2017. The game is a first-person shooter with an emphasis on exploration, stealth, and visceral combat encounters, featuring inventory systems, upgrade patterns, and resource management similar to many role-playing games. Conceived as a spiritual successor to immersive simulator<sup>40</sup> titles like *System Shock*<sup>41</sup> and *Deus Ex*<sup>42</sup>, the player is afforded a great deal of freedom to solve different problems – whether they be related to monsters, traps, or traversal.

In the game, the player assumes the role of Morgan Yu, an amnesiac scientist marooned on Talos I, an advanced space station orbiting the moon. Once a thriving hub of scientific discovery, the derelict space station has become infested by a hostile species of viscous aliens, known as the Typhon. The Typhon assume many different forms, corrupting both man and machine aboard the station, but their most common incarnation is that of the mimic: ink-black, squid-like creatures that can assume the shape and size of coffee mugs, trash cans, and other prosaic objects found on Talos I. As the player is forced to scrounge through whatever resources they can find to survive, the looming threat of the deceptive mimic is omnipresent. In a nutshell, this microcosmic tension perfectly summarizes the theme of the game: *what (or who) is a monster and what (or who) isn't?*

To better their chances of survival, players are encouraged to make use of Neuromods, cybernetic implants that unlock special powers of great potency, ranging from enhanced strength and stamina to teleportation and mind control. The Neuromods, however, are not only responsible for Morgan's amnesia, but in a horrifying twist are revealed to have been developed from Typhon material. The research station, it turns out, was not so much infested by the aliens, as it was built around their discovery. Presenting a counterfactual history of the world, Talos I was constructed in the 1960s in a joint cooperation between the United States of America and the Soviet Union, united by a mutual foe, the Typhon.<sup>43</sup> However coincidental, the world of *Prey* offers an uncannily literal representation of the Cold War-era cybernetics identified by Švelch, in which the "ontology of the enemy" was first developed and weaponized.<sup>44</sup>

#### *Player as literal monster*

The most pronounced kind of player monstrosity in *Prey* is that of the *literal monster*. The Typhon have been rigorously studied by scientists, who have devised different kinds of technological equipment to combat the aliens. One example is the Psychoscope, a pair of goggles that allows the player to study the alien "organisms' exotic neural maps and thus unlock the secrets to their unique abilities."<sup>45</sup> As players scan more monsters with the scope, a

database is created and expanded, detailing the behavior, strategies, and weaknesses of the Typhon, similar to other modern bestiaries, as described by Švelch.<sup>46</sup>

In the most literal sense possible, technology has been used to contain the monsters in the labs and cells of Talos I, in order to extract and exploit their exotic – which is to say sublime – powers. In an equally literal sense, however, this process of exploitation is also what engenders the transformation of the player into monsters themselves. Just as the Typhon mimics their surroundings to lure prey, so too have humans found a way to combat the monsters – through emulation. Typhon tissue can be extracted from slain enemies and recycled into valuable resources. Foremost are the Neuromods and with each added implant the power of the player grows, but so does their monstrosity.

This is reflected not only in how the player is able to manipulate the world in new ways – casting fireballs, raising the dead, and enthralling Typhon specimens – but also in the way the world reacts to the player: gun turrets hardwired to attack Typhon lifeforms become hostile at the sight of Morgan, and with every added Neuromod, the Typhon hive mind itself sends out waves of powerful enemies to rectify or avenge this transgression, as the player crosses the point of no return, delving deeper into the world of the non-human. By the end of the game – depending on choices made – the power dynamic has been displaced and roles reversed: Morgan is now the real predator and the Typhon have become the prey.

#### *Player as psychological monster*

In another sense, players in *Prey* are afforded the opportunity to behave as what Asma terms the psychological monster: the psychopathological criminals who commit crimes, whether born out of rage, perceived necessity, or cold detachment, violating the laws and ethics of society, placing them, in a sense, in the world of the non-human.<sup>47</sup> As Miguel Sicart, among other scholars<sup>48</sup>, has argued, video games present players with a unique opportunity for making ethical choices and exploring their own virtue.<sup>49</sup>

As the amnesiac chief scientist of Talos I, the player is confronted with their previous actions as part of the Typhon research project and presented with numerous trolley problem style decisions.<sup>50</sup> In a particularly gruesome sequence, the player is given the choice between releasing a dangerous convict or feeding them to the ravenous Typhon. The latter produces a handful of valuable Neuromods, effectively demonstrating how the process of attaining great power begets a monstrous transformation that is not only literal, but psychological and (im)moral as well.

#### *The meta monster*

In a final twist, the player is revealed to not actually be Morgan Yu, but an imprisoned Typhon specimen. The entirety of the game has been an elaborate simulation, conducted by the surviving scientists of Talos I in a desperate attempt to bridge the gap between them and the invading aliens. Depending on choices made by the player – ranging from



Neuromod use to actions of self-sacrifice – the player-monster is either killed outright for their transgressive behavior or offered the choice of friendly cooperation. The player can then proceed to either accept the proposal – symbolized by a handshake between man and monster – or kill the remaining survivors in a final act of irredeemable monstrosity.

The characters addressing the imprisoned Typhon become extensions of the developers, evaluating the actions of the actual player, now framed as a literal detained monster. In a mindboggling demonstration of ludic self-referentiality<sup>51</sup>, the line between the technology employed in the game’s fictional world and ours is blurred, suggesting that the real monster being contained was not, as Švelch points out, those encountered in the game, nor is it, as he argues, the game itself.<sup>52</sup> Given the choice between submitting to the tyranny of the game’s rhetoric or breaking free to cause havoc, the ending of *Prey* suggests that the real monster lurks beneath the simulated surface of diegetic fiction – awe-inspiring, terrible, and impossible to encode and control.

It is the thing from another world. It is the player, and it is monstrous.

### **== PART THREE ==**

#### **Through a glass darkly**

This particular presentation of the player-as-monster arguably suffers from a certain terminological ambiguity. A more rigorous definition of such nebulous concepts as “player”, “monster”, and “game” would add greater resolution to what is currently only a rough sketch. Nonetheless, the monstrous protagonist remains a popular and prevalent trope in video games, and as such is clearly deserving of scholarly effort. Not wanting to revive the trite discussion about games-as-art, it is still worth noting, as Marie-Laure Ryan does, how the medium’s artistic capacity for self-reflection is still developing.<sup>53</sup> One such expression of self-reflectivity, I argue, is the introspective framing of the player-as-monster. As a narrative motif, it is widespread; as a reflection of a society obsessed with control, it is allegorical.<sup>54</sup>

The ambiguity of who or what constitutes the “real” monster, I argue, relates intimately to the duplicitous nature of technology. As we learn in the quintessential monster story – Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* – technology is often the primogenitor of the monster.<sup>55</sup> By analogy, it is the algorithms and processing power of computers that enable the creation of monsters in video games, in a display of technological sublimity. As the errant doctor pursues the Creature with frenzy, he is himself transformed.<sup>56</sup> As are the bloodthirsty players, even if the game fails to (self-)reflect this – after all, few game monsters are as spitefully eloquent as the Icelandic draugr.

If anything, the monstrous protagonist in video games is not a cautionary tale, but a selling point, a power fantasy legitimized by the game’s fiction and a vestigial Cold War-era attitude of mutual assured destruction. If *Frankenstein* had been conceived as a game, the final chapter would have seen the frenzied doctor take on the Creature in a necromantic exoskeleton of his own, comprised of galvanic lightning rods and wiggling body parts. Or perhaps as in

the original movie adaptation from 1931, in which the Creature is trapped and burned to death, destroyed by the same promethean flame that created it.<sup>57</sup>

The technology that enables us to simulate endless hordes of virtual monsters in games, is the same that permits – or even expects – us to destroy them. This then is the true *essence* of technology. It is not the plasma rifle or superhuman physiology, but what Martin Heidegger calls the *standing-reserve* of nature and what Asma terms its monstrous “playthings”<sup>58</sup>: the attitudinal framework by which the world, with all its sources of dynamic sublimity, is reduced and reframed as a reservoir of resources, to be manipulated and exploited by mankind.<sup>59</sup> Taken apart and put together in new ways – like the macabre sciences of doctor Frankenstein – the sublime might of the monsters has evaporated, and in its place reigns a technological superiority of quantification and control, man-made, though no less monstrous to behold.

William Lovitt summarized Heidegger’s view in this manner: “The modern technologist is regularly expected, and expects himself, to be able to impose order on all data, to ‘process’ every sort of entity, *nonhuman* [my emphasis] and human alike, and to devise solutions for every kind of problem. He is forever getting things under control.”<sup>60</sup> And yet in this act of processing demonstrates a great arrogance on the part of the technologist, or by analogy, the player. As nye, citing one Bryan Wolf explains: “[...] the [technological] sublime entailed a virtual substitution of self for world: it was an egotistical affair conceived in pride and consummated in an incestuous twining of nature back into the self, the NOT ME into the ME [original capitalization].”<sup>61</sup>

The player, effortlessly navigating the technological prison of games, becomes the great devourer, absorbing experience points from monsters, hoarding treasure, and growing fat from strength like so many avaricious dragons of legend. This, in a nutshell, is the promise and threat of video games. Caught between the Nietzschean admonition that whoever fights monsters, “should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster”<sup>62</sup> and the Kantian swelling of the individual in the face of the sublime as we “discover in ourselves an ability to resist which is of a quite different kind, and which gives us the courage that we could be a match for nature’s seeming omnipotence”<sup>63</sup>, games walk a precarious line between condemning the otherness of monsters while simultaneously inviting players to emulate and embrace it.

“Even war has something sublime about it if it is carried on in an orderly way”, writes Kant in one place.<sup>64</sup> And in a society of control, the algorithmically ordered and encoded battlefields are plentiful. Ultimately, the story revolves not around the draugr – or the Typhon – but the hero who faces, defeats, and finds themselves transformed by the monster. Or to quote the opening lines of 2016’s *DOOM*: “They are rage, brutal, without mercy. But you. You will be worse. Rip and tear, until it is done.”<sup>65</sup>

Games, it seems, makes monsters of us all.

## Conclusion

In a paper on the containment of game monsters, Švelch concludes how games, being allegories of societies of control, can also “provide opportunities to question this logic, although these have been largely untapped.”<sup>66</sup> Designers, players, and critics, he argues, “must realize how deeply entrenched in the logic of the twenty-first century informatic control video game monstrosity is.”<sup>67</sup> In this paper I have attempted one such ‘realization’, showing how some games – namely *Prey* – expose and subvert the logic of containment and control by explicitly framing the player as a monster. Despite terminological ambiguity, the player-as-monster – whether in a literal, psychological, or self-reflective sense – is a prominent trope in video games and requires more scholarly attention.

Perhaps overambitiously, I have tried to sketch out and relate this phenomenon to the concept of the technological sublime, the ontological encoding of monsters, and the action-based medium of games. The paradox of game monsters is this: they are meant to fill us with awe and terror, yet in equal part we are expected to destroy them. Nested in this tension between sublimities of the dynamic and the technological, sits the concept of the player-as-monster, both an ontological consequence and a narrative justification, engendered by a society of technological control that simultaneously destroys monsters with one hand and creates new ones with the other.

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### **Web**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choose\\_Your\\_Own\\_Adventure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choose_Your_Own_Adventure)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeons\\_%26\\_Dragons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeons_%26_Dragons)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immersive\\_sim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immersive_sim)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_Manual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Manual)

<https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Psychoscope>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_Marine\\_\(Warhammer\\_40,000\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Marine_(Warhammer_40,000))

[https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Talos\\_I](https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Talos_I)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem)

<https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Typhon>

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<sup>1</sup> Arkane Studios.

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_Manual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_Manual)

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeons\\_%26\\_Dragons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dungeons_%26_Dragons)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choose\\_Your\\_Own\\_Adventure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choose_Your_Own_Adventure)

<sup>5</sup> Švelch, 2018: 3-5.

<sup>6</sup> Toby Fox.

<sup>7</sup> Turtle Rock Studios.

<sup>8</sup> Arkane Studios.

<sup>9</sup> Asma: 13.

<sup>10</sup> Švelch, 2018: 2.

<sup>11</sup> Švelch, 2018: 2.

<sup>12</sup> Švelch, 2018: 2.

<sup>13</sup> Švelch, 2018: 3.

<sup>14</sup> Asma: 186-187.

<sup>15</sup> Kant: 266.

<sup>16</sup> Kant: 265-266.

<sup>17</sup> Kant: 268.

<sup>18</sup> Kant: 268.

<sup>19</sup> Kant: 271.

<sup>20</sup> Asma: 192.

<sup>21</sup> Asma: 26-38.

<sup>22</sup> Švelch, 2013: 194.

<sup>23</sup> Švelch, 2013: 195.

<sup>24</sup> Galloway: 1-10.

<sup>25</sup> Nye: 1-45.

<sup>26</sup> Shinkle: 97.

<sup>27</sup> Nye: 37.

<sup>28</sup> Rockstar Studios.

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- <sup>29</sup> Headfirst Productions.  
<sup>30</sup> Santa Monica Studio.  
<sup>31</sup> Švelch, 2013: 203.  
<sup>32</sup> Hawes: 20.  
<sup>33</sup> Hawes: 20-21.  
<sup>34</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space\\_Marine\\_\(Warhammer\\_40,000\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Marine_(Warhammer_40,000))  
<sup>35</sup> CD Projekt Red.  
<sup>36</sup> Juul: 1-23.  
<sup>37</sup> Švelch, 2018: 6-8.  
<sup>38</sup> BioWare.  
<sup>39</sup> Arkane Studios.  
<sup>40</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immersive\\_sim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immersive_sim)  
<sup>41</sup> Looking Glass Studios.  
<sup>42</sup> Ion Storm.  
<sup>43</sup> [https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Talos\\_I](https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Talos_I)  
<sup>44</sup> Švelch, 2018: 3-4.  
<sup>45</sup> <https://prey.fandom.com/wiki/Psychoscope>  
<sup>46</sup> Švelch, 2018: 3-4.  
<sup>47</sup> Asma: 203-225.  
<sup>48</sup> Zagal: 1-2.  
<sup>49</sup> Sicart: 101-105.  
<sup>50</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley\\_problem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trolley_problem)  
<sup>51</sup> Nöth: 12, 253-257.  
<sup>52</sup> Švelch, 2013: 203.  
<sup>53</sup> Nöth: 286-287.  
<sup>54</sup> Švelch, 2013: 203.  
<sup>55</sup> Asma: 151-154.  
<sup>56</sup> Cottom: 60-70.  
<sup>57</sup> Whale.  
<sup>58</sup> Asma: 26-30.  
<sup>59</sup> Heidegger: 17-20.  
<sup>60</sup> Heidegger: xxvii.  
<sup>61</sup> Nye: 37.  
<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche: 89.  
<sup>63</sup> Kant: 272.  
<sup>64</sup> Kant: 273.  
<sup>65</sup> Id Software.  
<sup>66</sup> Švelch: 203.  
<sup>67</sup> Švelch: 203.