

# The Transgressive Technology of Horror Videogames: A Literary Undertaking of Monsters and Machines

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Technology, horror, qualitative, transgression, videogames, monster(s)

## INTRODUCTION

Horror video games are an important site for technological examination. This presentation will explore the specific conjunction between the information medium of video game technology (within the game) and the cultural phenomenon of the representation of technology predicated in games. I will, then, discuss the nature of information dissemination mediated by technology, in relation to both monster and player, in horror video games. Using a qualitative methodological approach from Mia Consalvo and Nathan Dutton, combined with my contribution of understanding horror (power, networks, sensation), this presentation will discuss the perception technology encourages once inundated in horror games. Through this perspective, the significance of technology in horror games contributes to overarching Western cultural ideologies concerning the role of technology. Four games will be discussed as examples; these games will elucidate the relationship between technology, the monster, and the player as a mediated and carefully curated connection. Niall Scott, in the introduction to the novel *Monsters and the Monstrous*, asserts that “the monster as metaphor continues to be a powerful expression of the imagination and the rational” (2007, pg. 1). The monster itself is set in opposition to humanity; as such, by its very nature, monsters provide a reflection of humankind. The monster is, in its antagonism, a signifier of what society presents as fundamentally different and unlike ‘acceptable’ society. At its very foundation, by representing transgression and dissimilarity, a society’s conception of monsters is an inextricable reflection of its fears. As fears reveal fundamental anxieties shared within society, the study of a society’s monsters can provide insight into its culture.

## BIO

Chelsea Russell is a third year PhD student at York University/ Toronto Metropolitan University where she is in the Communications and Culture Program. Her dissertation research analyzes female robots in videogames by focusing on feminist and affectual practices and questions of the posthuman. Currently, she is a SSHRC funded lead research assistant on young people, digital capitalism, and the videogame platform Roblox under Dr. Natalie Coulter. Further, she is currently working on a project focusing on *Magic: The Gathering* and non-male players called “Barriers to Entry” under Dr. Michael Nixon. She has a chapter on the Anthropocene in the edited collection *Showing Theory to Know Theory* (Szanto, 2022), and an upcoming paper on female robots in the *Neutral Cinema Studies Journal* (2022). Furthermore, she is on the board of editors for the UK-based videogame journal *Press Start*.

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