

FANTASY IMITATING REALITY:
Gender and discourse in the console role-playing
game *Lost Odyssey*

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Marianne Ekman

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
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<p>Peliteollisuuden suosio on kasvanut viime vuosina. Koska ihmiset viettävät yhä enemmän aikaa pelien parissa, on aiheellista tutkia myös pelien maailmaa. Tähän asti tutkimuksien näkökulma on ollut se, miten pelaajat kommunikoivat keskenään ja miten pelit vaikuttavat pelaajien identiteetteihin. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkoituksena oli tarkkailla kielenkäytön ja sukupuolen suhdetta konsoliroolipelissä nimeltään <i>Lost Odyssey</i>. Erityinen kiinnostuksen kohde oli, miten sukupuoli luodaan diskurssin avulla kyseisessä pelissä. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa tarkkailtiin, vastasiko sukupuolien esittäminen todellisuutta. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli myös luoda pohjaa mahdollisille tuleville ja syventäville tutkimuksille.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa tallennettiin pelin kaikki keskustelukohtaukset, joissa pelin päähahmot olivat pääroolissa. Näistä kaikista kohtauksista valittiin satunnaisesti kahdeksan kappaletta varsinaiseen analysointiin. Nämä kohtaukset litteroitiin ja tutkittiin diskurssianalysimenetelmin. Lisäksi hahmojen ulkoasua ja ääntä arvioitiin, koska peleissä ne ovat merkittävässä osassa uskottavien pelihahmojen luomisessa. Konsolipeleissä visuaalisuus on erittäin tärkeässä roolissa.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että fyysinen ulkomuoto ja ääni ovat oleellinen osa hahmojen sukupuoli-identiteettien luomisessa. Lisäksi voitiin havaita, että pelihahmot vastasivat suurin piirtein todellisuudessaakin vallitsevia käsityksiä sukupuolesta ja sukupuolirooleista. Tässä mielessä voidaankin sanoa, että fantasia imitoi todellisuutta. Tutkimuksen rajallisuuden takia tutkimustuloksia ei voida soveltaa kaikkiin konsoliroolipeihin vaan lisätutkimusta tarvitaan.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tuloksia voidaan soveltaa jatkotutkimuksessa. Tutkimusaihetta voi laajentaa roolipelihahmojen identiteettien analysointiin ja kenties eri roolipelien vertailuun.</p>	
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1. Introduction

The game industry is growing and people are spending more time and money on various console games. Games as a phenomenon have interesting implications as they affect people in various ways. A prevalent way to regard console games is to think that they are responsible for the increased violence; however, this is an uneducated and narrow way to view games. One might say that they can influence how people perceive the world. It can also be thought that they reflect how our society actually functions. These observations about games are influenced by how language is used in them.

Language use in different texts, such as news texts, advertisements, and short stories, is analysed through various means. This is done in order to reveal 'the hidden agenda' behind the text, such as how subjectivity is portrayed in news texts. One could speculate whether the way language is used in role-playing games might also reflect several attitudes towards gender. To begin with, it might show what the game developers expect of male and female discourse. Secondly, it might offer an insight what these game developers expect that the players see characteristic of female and male game characters. After all, the whole game experience is affected if the main characters are not believable.

Games have developed greatly in the last ten years. Technological developments have influenced this; however, more attention is nowadays paid to details as the game industry has proven to be a lucrative one. Previously characters in role-playing games were somewhat one-dimensional as they often had only short lines. This was also due to the technological capacity of games, as there were limits to what one could put in one game. Nowadays the role-playing games resemble movies, as the characters have their own voice actors, and can even express various emotions through facial movements. In addition to technical developments, also the stories have evolved. They have gained more depth and more effort is put into creating authentic characters.

The purpose of this study is to analyse how gender is constructed through discourse in the console role-playing game *Lost Odyssey*. This topic is worth examining as previously little attention has been paid to actual games, while some have researched how gamers interact with each other while playing. An example of this is the work of Vuorinen (2008) who analysed spoken discourse of teenage boys playing a role-playing game called *Final Fantasy X*.

Another type of research related to games can be seen in the book of Williams, Hendricks and Winkler (2006) which focuses on how gamers create their identities through fantasy games, and how these games influence individuals and societies. Language use is a vital part of constructing a game; therefore it offers ample material for various analyses.

Gender in language use has been widely researched and many theories have been formed about gender and language (see for example Harrington et al. 2008; Kroløkke and Sørensen 2006). However, some researchers such as McIlvenny (2002) and Wodak (2008) criticise that sometimes people focus too much on the stereotypical variables of male and female language use. Thus in this study the aim is not to solely focus on the differences between the language use of the male and female characters. The purpose is to analyse the context of the game on a wider scope in order to discover how the gender of characters is portrayed. Furthermore, the goal is to see if the gender identities in the game imitate the norms associated with real people.

There are several reasons why *Lost Odyssey* was chosen for this study. To begin with, it is fairly new; therefore one could be quite certain that the game would take advantage of the use of actual speech and voice actors. In addition, it is in English, and it has also got good reviews from game critics. Furthermore, the producer of the game is known for another successful role-playing game series *Final Fantasy*. All the above-mentioned were indicators that the quality of the game would be good and the game worth examining. In addition, both sexes are represented in the game; therefore one can make a comparison of them. Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the gaming world portrays these gender identities, as most of the game developers are usually men. For example, the creator of *Lost Odyssey*, Hironobu Sakaguchi, is a man.

The focus in Chapter 2 is to introduce some central terms used in this study. In addition a brief overview of the research concerning discourse and gender will be discussed. Chapter 2 also contains the research questions of this study. In Chapter 3 the role-playing game *Lost Odyssey* will be introduced and a description of the gathering of the data will be given. In addition to the data, also data analysis methods will be discussed. The results of the data analysis will be introduced in Chapter 4 which will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Finally the study is wrapped up in Chapter 6 with suggestions for further studies. In the Appendices one can see the images of the main characters and the transcribed extracts of *Lost Odyssey*.

2. Discourse and Gender

Language and gender is an area of research that has continued to interest many scholars for a long time. As Bucholtz (2006: 43) states, nowadays the study of language and gender is increasingly the study of discourse and gender. Since this field of research interests so many researchers, a myriad of theories relating to discourse and gender have been developed. The following section discusses some of these theoretical approaches. In addition, central terms used in this study will be defined. Finally, the research questions of this study will be presented.

2.1 Discourse and discourse analysis

There is no single correct definition of discourse, which results in the fact that there is no one correct way to analyse it. A very succinct way to define discourse is to say that it is language use in speech and writing. However, there are also other more complex and intricate definitions. Bucholtz (2006: 44) discusses that there are two main definitions of discourse within the field of linguistics. The first one focuses on various linguistic units and how they help build larger units. From this point of view, discourse “is the linguistic level in which sentences are combined into larger units.” While the first definition of discourse focuses on linguistic form, the second definition views function more salient. According to this viewpoint, discourse is language in context. Thus discourse is how language is used in social contexts. The latter definition has been favoured in the study of language and gender as it offers a broader view of discourse. However, in practice “both definitions are often compatible” as it is hard to ignore either approach in discourse analysis. (Bucholtz 2006: 44)

There has been debate that the before-mentioned definitions of discourse are not suitable for language and gender research, as they are too narrow for sufficient analysis. However, it is also argued that some non-linguistic definitions of discourse are too vague. An example of this is the Foucauldian view, which defines discourse as “historically contingent cultural systems of knowledge, belief, and power”. It is suggested that the linguistic approach and the Foucauldian view should be combined in order to gain a better insight into social phenomena. (Bucholtz: 2006: 44-45) It is no wonder that there are so many approaches to analysing discourse as there are so many various ways to define discourse itself.

There are multiple theories concerning discourse analysis. According to Bucholtz (2006:45), discourse analysis “is a collection of perspectives on situated language use” with similar theoretical outlines and methodological approaches. The predominant view is that social reality is created and reproduced through discourse to a great extent. Paltridge (2006) defines discourse analysis in a similar way. It studies how people communicate and with the help of language “achieve certain communicative goals” (Paltridge 2006: 9). It also focuses on how people communicate beliefs and ideas (ibid). The analysis looks beyond mere words, as there are other aspects that affect the presentation of beliefs and the social world. These include, for instance, images, nonverbal communication, and written text.

In this study, discourse is understood as language use in social contexts. While linguistic form is important in discourse, I believe that the function of language is even more important. Thus this study focuses on how language use creates and reproduces social reality in *Lost Odyssey*. Therefore, in this paper discourse analysis is defined as the study of language use in context. It investigates how discourse affects and reflects reality. Furthermore, it investigates the issues that might influence language use, for example what effect gender norms have on discourse practices.

2.1.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

It is difficult to present a single exhaustive definition of critical discourse analysis, as there are so many different viewpoints (Paltridge 2006, Weiss and Wodak 2003). However, there are some characteristics of CDA that all researchers seem to agree with. Paltridge (2006: 179) summarises that CDA focuses on how language use influences and is affected by social and political contexts. Bucholtz (2006: 57) defines CDA as viewing language “as a primary force for the production and reproduction of ideology”. On a similar note, Weiss and Wodak (2003: 12) state that CDA has a special interest in studying if there is a connection between language and power. Researchers study how power relations are portrayed in discourse. They also study how people use discourse practices in order to establish differences in power. Thus language can be used to enforce unequal power relations. This can be done, for instance, by certain word choices or simply not allowing a certain party to participate in interaction.

Language does not have power on its own. Language becomes powerful only when people with power use it to their advantage. CDA is often employed from the point of view of the oppressed and the language use of those in power is the focus of research. However, power

relations can also be manipulated with language for the benefit of the weaker party. It is suggested that interdisciplinary research is especially beneficial for CDA, as it will result in better understanding of various social phenomena. (Weiss and Wodak 2003: 14-15) Furthermore, Bucholtz (2006: 58) criticises that CDA does not take into account how participants understand and use the texts created to influence them. Thus it is encouraged that an interdisciplinary methodology is adopted in order to gain better insight of how language use actually influences power relations.

2.1.2 Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA)

Some feel that critical discourse analysis is dominated by white middle-class male researchers, while the studies of female researchers have not been acknowledged to a satisfactory degree. To correct this deficiency, feminist critical discourse analysis has been developed. (Wodak 2008: 193) However, as Bucholtz (2006: 43) cautions, it should be remembered that there is no single form of feminism which all feminist academics adhere to.

Wodak states that the main goal of feminist critical discourse analysis is to identify ‘gender’ “as a variable or factor in investigating social phenomena”. She further explains that many feminists view that many social problems are gendered, thus feminists do not view ‘gender’ or ‘sex’ as separate factors. This means that gender affects all theories and methodologies in all studies. (2008: 193) Wodak cautions that feminist critical linguists should not focus too much on gendered identities, as there are often other identities more salient than gender identity (2008: 194). For instance, when visiting a doctor, the doctor’s professional identity is more pronounced than gender identity. Wodak further argues that it is important to take the context into consideration. She also states that the dichotomist view of distinguishing between ‘men’ and ‘women’ is outdated. (2008: 194-195) Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006: 156-157) further criticize that the early field of feminist research oversimplified issues, and thus “women’s communicative competencies” were often undervalued.

In my opinion, at times FCDA is frowned upon mostly due to its name. The word ‘feminist’ does have some strong connotations associated with it, as some might believe that the sole purpose of this methodology is to point out how men oppress women. However, that single word does not define the entire essence of the approach. In addition, as Wodak (2008: 194-195) points out, FCDA is a valuable tool for analysis as long as people employing it remember that there are also other more salient aspects in discourse than mere gender. Also

Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006: 61) remind that FCDA is constantly evolving and changing, as it should be kept in mind that no research method is perfect in its initial form.

2.2 Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis was developed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson in the 1960's, and it has been quite popular among language researchers ever since. Paltridge (2006: 108) summarises that the focus of conversation analysis is on the spoken discourse in a social context. The text is analysed in order to see what sort of phenomena occur in the data (ibid). Thus only the text is considered in the analysis, and all other factors that might influence the conversation are not considered. I believe that social phenomena can be thoroughly analysed only when other aspects affecting discourse are taken into account. Thus conversation analysis was not appropriate for this particular study.

As there are so many approaches to research language and language use, Table 1 summarizes the main aspects of the before-mentioned research methodologies. The table also represents a couple of researchers that have influenced the development of each approach. This list is not exhaustive, but it might help clarify the differences and similarities of the approaches.

Table 1. A brief summary of language use research methodologies

Name of the theory	Main principles	Influential scholars
Discourse analysis	The social world is created and reflected through discourse. Focus on language use in social contexts.	Zellig Harris, Norman Fairclough, Michel Foucault
Critical discourse analysis	Language, power, ideology connected. Power relations are reflected in and enforced through language use.	Norman Fairclough, Michel Foucault, Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak
Feminist critical discourse analysis	Language, power, ideology, and gender connected. Gender influences social phenomena.	Deborah Cameron, Michelle Lazar, Deborah Tannen, Ruth Wodak
Conversation analysis	Focuses on spoken discourse in a social context. All relevant information is presented in the collected data.	Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, Gail Jefferson, David Silverman

2.3 Gender, sex and sexuality

One might think that arriving at a simple definition of gender would be easy; however, this is not the case. One prevalent way of thinking is that one's sex defines one's gender. Nevertheless, it has been established that this definition is not completely accurate anymore. There are several theories that separate the terms sex and gender from each other. Paltridge (2006: 32) states that one's sex can only be influenced by surgical procedures while gender is a social construction. McIlvenny (2002: 6) further explains that gender is something people 'do' instead of by simply 'being'. However, McIlvenny criticises that even recently people view 'doing' gender through gendered stereotypes. He gives the example of "how men 'do' masculinity by 'doing' masculine things" (ibid).

Then there is also sexuality, which is not automatically determined by one's sex or gender. Paltridge (2006: 37) clarifies that the core issue of sexuality is desire. It can rarely be controlled and influenced through conscious efforts. One can decide not to act on desire, but desire is something that comes from within. Furthermore, Paltridge (2006: 37) states that the study of discourse and gender becomes more problematic when sexuality is added to the mix. This is due to the fact that then also sexual desire must be considered in addition to other factors, and that is not a simple task.

2.4 Discourse and gender

Paltridge (2006: 31) explains how in the past the study of discourse and gender focused on "the biological category of *sex*". In a similar line of thought, McIlvenny (2002: 2) states how it was believed that one speaks in a certain way "because one *is* a man or a woman". Nowadays researchers focus on gender, which is socially constructed (Paltridge 2006: 31-32). Even though people can influence their gender image quite easily, it is often constructed unconsciously. People have certain manners, specific ways of using language which signify gender (ibid). In addition, also other people influence one's gender image through interaction.

McIlvenny (2002: 23) argues that conversation analysis can illustrate "*how* people 'do' gender...but it cannot explain *why* that conduct may be oppressive or say what other conduct is possible or desirable." Thus in this study discourse analysis methods are employed instead of conversation analysis. Even though discourse analysis is a useful tool to investigate the relationship between discourse and gender, it is not an easy task as there are various factors

affecting the interpretation of the issue. This is further influenced by the fact that there are so many different theories and viewpoints of the relationship between language use and gender.

Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006: 90) argue that “the use of voice has not been sufficiently researched within gender” studies. This lack of comprehensive research has led to the lack of theory concerning the field of gender and communication. The following Table 2 illustrates the pattern of voice which seems to be “agreed upon in a Euro-American context”. (ibid)

Table 2. Sounds of Gender (Kroløkke and Sørensen 2006: 90)

	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
Pitch	high	low
Timbre	light	dark
Resonance	easy	forceful
Breath	weak	strong

Perhaps the use of voice has not been thoroughly researched as most people think that the recognition of gendered voices is based on common sense and intuition. This makes partial sense; however, as it has not been sufficiently researched, we cannot be certain that studies on voice would not present some surprising results.

This section merely scratches the surface of discourse analysis and gender studies. The scope of this study limits the extent to which these issues can be discussed. The issues mentioned in this text were chosen as they would best suit the purpose of this study. Wodak (2008: 196) wisely recommends that all research should incorporate various methodologies, as all phenomena are influenced by different variables. This is beneficial also because it is not sensible to try to develop new theories as there already are a multitude of suitable theoretical approaches (ibid). Furthermore, I believe that many methodologies deep down have many similarities even though many approaches have somewhat different focus on matters. Thus in many cases applying different methodologies in a comprehensive study is inevitable as various approaches overlap in principle. In addition, this makes it difficult to choose only one approach as some disciplines with some similarities have useful viewpoints for studies of discourse and gender. In order to get a truly comprehensive result it is necessary to combine the most useful aspects of each approach for analysis. Nevertheless, Paltridge (2006: 215)

discusses that there are people who caution the simultaneous use of different methodologies. Trying to adapt too many theoretical approaches can lead to not being able to focus on anything properly. However, as the methodologies and their principles are somewhat alike, it is inevitable that an interdisciplinary approach is employed in this study.

2.5 The research questions

The research questions of this study are the following:

1. How is gender portrayed through discourse in the role-playing game *Lost Odyssey*?
2. In what way does the representation of gender identities in *Lost Odyssey* conform to the gender norms defined in reality?

3. Data and Methods

In this chapter data and methods will be discussed. First a brief overview of the nature of role-playing games will be given, as not all are familiar with the genre in question. Then greater focus is given to the target of analysis in this study, namely the console role-playing game *Lost Odyssey*. How the data was gathered will be explained in detail, and finally the methods of analysis in this study will be discussed.

3.1 Console role-playing games

In console role-playing games the player controls the main character/s, and tries to accomplish certain objectives. Like any story, these games have certain plots and set sequences of events. Therefore players have a limited impact on the progress of the game; however, certain actions can have various consequences. The aim of role-playing games is to develop the characters and accomplish certain goals, such as saving the world. Usually the game setting is good battling evil. In role-playing games much emphasis is placed on the story and especially on the characters. Characters have specific identities, and these identities are built through visual means as well as language and speech. The games provide ample data for researchers interested in the use of language in fictional narratives. For further information about role-playing games, see for example the work of Louet (2001) who has conducted a very comprehensive study about various role-playing game genres. The role-playing game analysed in this study falls under the category of fantasy (console) role-playing games.

3.2 Lost Odyssey

Lost Odyssey is a console role-playing game published by *Microsoft Games Studios* in 2008 for *Xbox 360*. The game was created by two Japanese video game developers *feelplus* and *Mistwalker Game Design Studio*. Like most role-playing games, also this one was first published in Japan. Even though English is considered to be the lingua franca, naturally also the game was originally in Japanese. *Lost Odyssey* has been translated into English, including the speech sections, which is an asset also for this study. The team of translators of *Lost Odyssey* consists of Edgar M Cooke, Yumiko Eshima, Minoru Naito, Miho Murano, Naomi Yokoyama, and Eiichiro Kojima. This means that no single person was responsible for the translation of the game. English-speaking voice actors have been used to represent characters in the game.

The game setting is an imaginative world, in which there are three states on the brink of a war. Due to the influence of another advanced parallel world, people have harnessed the use of magic. Meanwhile, the other world is being tainted by human emotions. Therefore, five individuals are sent from the parallel world on a mission to study people and see whether these emotions are meaningful. These five individuals seem to be immortal. Due to their seeming immortality, they have travelled the world for a thousand years and experienced what it means to be human.

As these immortals are planning to return to their home world, and report their findings, one of these immortals, Gongora, betrays the other four; Kaim, Sarah, Ming and Seth. Gongora erases the memories of the four because they are the only ones who can stop his plans of world dominion. They are doomed to travel the world as mere shells of themselves void of all emotion. In the beginning of the game the player views the events through the amnesia-ridden Kaim's eyes. As the story progresses, these immortals find each other and start to gain their memories back. They remember Gongora's plans, and realise that he must be stopped. Along the way these four immortals meet up with five mortals, who in turn help them to fight the tyrant Gongora.

Both sexes are well presented in the game. Of the immortals, Kaim and Gongora are male, while Ming, Sarah and Seth are female. Of the mortals, only Cooke is female, while Sed, Mack, Tolten and Jansen are male. Cooke and Mack, who are still children, are Kaim's and Sarah's grandchildren. Sed is Seth's child, and he appears to be middle-aged. While the

immortals do not age, their children are normal mortals who cannot escape the effect of time. The adult characters also have titles and professions. Kaim is a mercenary and lieutenant, Seth is a pirate, Ming is a queen and sorceress, Jansen is a thief and sorcerer, Sarah is a sorceress, Sed is a pirate and Tolten becomes a king during the game.

3.3 Gathering the data

Gathering the data for this study was fairly easy as the data is always accessible and it is always constant. I decided that the movie sequences in *Lost Odyssey* offered the most suitable material for this study since they cannot be influenced by the actions of the player. Therefore the characters in the sequences are truly unaffected by the player, and thus authentic. As these sequences occur throughout the game, the only way to see them all is to play the game. As I played the game I recorded these sequences in order to be able to view them multiple times. The whole data was collected under the period of three weeks. I recorded each instance in which at least one main character took part in the conversation.

I recorded the speech sequences with the help of *USB 2.0 Video Grabber* produced by *Delock*. There were some technical problems with the grabbing of the speech events. These were mostly caused by the time constraint and the lack of efficiency of my laptop. In addition, the *USB 2.0 Video Grabber* was not the best choice for grabbing the clips, as it left the recordings black-and-white. This is due to the fact that *Lost Odyssey* has a signal of 60 Hz while the *Delock* version is capable of grabbing a signal of 50 Hz. The problem was acknowledged already before grabbing the events; however, the time constraint of this study dictated that the 50 Hz model would be used. The lack of colour could be ignored as otherwise the sound and image was of good quality, thus the analysis of the clips could be efficiently conducted. For future reference, a device capable of recording also the colours of the game would be a 60Hz video grabber, for example *Pinnacle Dazzle Platinum*. Both of the above-mentioned devices can be easily purchased on the Internet.

After completing each of the four CDs of *Lost Odyssey*, I randomly selected two clips I would then analyse. I deleted the other events, as they took so much space on the hard disk. I decided to save two clips from each CD as I was certain that these would offer me ample material for the analysis. This means that there were eight clips altogether to be analysed. The overall duration of these clips was 37 minutes and ten seconds. After the eight clips were

determined, I transcribed the events. The duration of each extract and the transcripts of the speech events can be viewed in Appendix II.

3.4 Methods of analysis

As the focus of this study is the use of language, qualitative analysis methods were used. As defined in earlier, the aim is to analyse how discourse practices are used to portray and affect gender image. Before actually analysing the actual recorded events, I briefly looked at the appearance of the main characters. I also listened to their voices in order to hear if there were any surprises. I could have focused only on the actual discussions and how words are employed in order to create gendered characters. Nevertheless, I decided to include these visual and audio aspects in the analysis as well since I believe that they are essential parts in creating the character identities in *Lost Odyssey*. As was already mentioned in Chapter 2, this is the reason why I decided not to use conversation analytical methods. I believe that discourse analysis gives a more realistic picture of any phenomena, as it allows taking other issues besides mere words into consideration.

I could have chosen to analyse only a couple of characters in order to see how their gender identities are constructed; however, I decided not to do so in order to get a more general idea of the research subject. Focusing on one or two characters could be wise if one wanted to focus on more specific issues. As a similar study has not been conducted on *Lost Odyssey*, I decided that a general overview would be useful before focusing on more specific issues. In future studies more in depth analysis would be possible as the foundation for further study has been created with this paper. The data gathered for this study offers ample material, and fewer clips would have been sufficient for this paper. However, I decided to include all eight clips in order to ensure that data analysis would not be monotonous. I studied each clip multiple times and made notes of the main issues that arose upon viewing these clips. In the following chapter the main points will be presented.

4. Results

In this chapter an overview of the main findings of the analysis will be given. First the visual and audio aspects will be addressed. After that the focus will be on the recorded speech events. The results will be further discussed in Chapter 5. See Appendices for pictures of the main characters and transcripts of the discussions.

4.1 Physical appearance of the characters

The clothing of the main characters varies greatly (see Appendix I). Seth wears a short dress, long boots and armour to protect her arms. She is also the only female who battles with a sword. Sarah wears pants that almost look like a dress, and indeed the top of her clothing resembles a dress. The most revealing outfit has Ming, whose clothing can be best described as a revealing bodice with sleeves. The bottom half is covered by high boots and some sort of divided skirt, which still reveals quite a lot of skin. Cooke has a short skirt with more cloth on the sides. While the clothing of the adult female characters differs, a common characteristic is that the chest area is quite open. Much less skin can be seen of the male characters. Kaim and Tolten wear armour, while Jansen, Mack and Sed have clothes that seem to have many layers.

The characters look young and fit. They are also quite good-looking. One might say that Sed is an exception from this, as he is quite old. Nevertheless, he is not unattractive by any means. The adult female characters have quite shapely figures as they have fairly large busts. None of the characters has very short hair. The hair length varies from medium length to long. All of the characters are white and look somewhat like westerners.

4.2 Characters' voice

Upon listening to the voice of the main characters, one can hear that they comply with the list of characteristics of gendered voices created by Kroløkke and Sørensen (2006). Table 2 in section 2.4 presents the categorisation. In the game female characters have quite high voices, while the men have lower voices. Nevertheless, there are a couple of exceptions. To begin with, Mack has a high voice; however, this can be explained by the fact that he is still quite young. Also Tolten has a higher voice than the rest of the adult men in *Lost Odyssey*.

There are points in the extracts in which the characters laugh. It was quite easy to distinguish the difference between male and female laughter. In extracts 1, 2 and 6 the laughter of females can be best described as giggling. In extract 8 Gongora provides an example of insane laughter, which has a quite low tone. Other examples of male laughter can be heard in extract 2 with the Numaran soldiers laughing, and in extract 6 when Jansen laughs after Kaim is revived.

4.3 Power, authority and respect

CDA and FCDA introduced in Chapter 2 see a clear link between discourse and power. FCDA further argues that also gender is involved in the mix. There is evidence of this in the data. To begin with, nearly all authority figures in the game are male. The soldiers in extract 2 are male. In addition, all the other country leaders besides Ming are men. Ming as the Queen of Numara is an exception; however, even her authority is diminished by a male military leader. Also Seth as a pirate captain is an authority figure of sorts. The arch nemesis Gongora is very powerful in the game, and this can be seen also through his language use. In extract 4 he controls the discussion by leading comments. He also tries to manipulate the characters in both extracts 4 and 8. By controlling the discussion he clearly shows that he is in power, and that the others are weaker than him. In Example 1 Gongora manipulates the conversation by offering a piece of information but then decides to withhold it. He also refuses to return the characters' memories which is another indication that he is in power. While Kaim tries to assert his own power by demanding that Gongora should give their memories back, his authority is diminished by Gongora's refusal. The weaker party (Kaim) tries to gain some power but his efforts are thwarted by the person in power (Gongora).

Example 1 (CD2: extract 4):

Gongora: How pathetic! (*sigh*) Do you know why I ordered you to Grand Staff? So that our mission would be a swift success.

Kaim: And what is that mission?

Gongora: That will not be revealed to traitors like you.

Kaim: We're not traitors!

Gongora: What do you think you can do about it?

Kaim: You will return our memories!

Gongora: I think not.

In Example 2 Gongora accentuates the fact that he is again in control and increases the main characters' despair by stating that they can do nothing to stop him. Section 2.1.1 introduced how CDA focuses on how power relations are portrayed through language use. Examples 1 and 2 are good examples of this, as Gongora enforces the fact that he is in power through language use. By doing this he is accentuating that the others are weaker than him.

Example 2 (CD4: extract 8):

Gongora: I have won.

Kaim: What do you mean?

Gongora: Do you want to save them? Break the mirrors! Do it yourselves! Yes, that's it! Use that and destroy the mirrors! But after you do so, we will never be able to return! My time has come! Grand Staff is not my only weapon! I have prepared storage tanks of energy everywhere!

(laughs) And with its power, I shall control the world! I shall lock your memories away for all eternity! *(insane laughter)*

The game's main characters have silently chosen a male leader: Kaim. It is never explicitly said that Kaim is the leader; however, it can be inferred from the context. To begin with, in extract 1 as Seth and Kaim are leaving, Kaim wants to wait for Jansen. Seth questions this, but she accepts Kaim's decision as he is the leader of the team. In addition, when the main characters run into trouble, they turn to Kaim for help and leadership. In extract 5 Mack and Sarah shout Kaim's name when they are in pain. Also in extract 8 Sarah turns to Kaim in order to come up with a way to save their grandchildren. In extract 4 Kaim stops Seth from lunging head on at Gongora, as he thinks it is not wise. In Example 3 Jansen says that they should leave, but it is Kaim who makes the decision. Jansen is more an advisor and Kaim as the leader makes the actual decision.

Example 3 (CD4: extract 8):

Jansen: I don't think we should stay here any longer.

Kaim: Let's go.

Jansen: Yeah, right.

Seth also acts as the leader in many situations. In the beginning of the game Kaim is quite withdrawn so Seth does most of the communicating. Seth is the one who approaches the children in extract 2 (after Jansen has upset Cooke). She also ultimately defeats Gongora in extract 8 by sacrificing herself to save the others. In addition, in extracts 2 and 3 she commands Jansen not to do something stupid. In extract 6 she invites the rest of the party to come aboard her ship. In the same extract Cooke addresses Seth as *Captain*. It should also be remembered that Seth was a pirate queen in the past. An interesting additional point is that Seth is a man's name.

Respect is closely related to power and authority, as it is often given to those in powerful positions. Even though Tolten is a king, he does not receive much respect from the others. Only at the end of the game does he finally get some authority. Gongora manipulates him quite easily for most of the game. In extract 6 Jansen addresses Tolten as "*Golden Boy*" which expresses that Jansen does not respect Tolten. He is not addressed as a king or a man but as a boy. In extract 8 Sed addresses Tolten as "*Your Graceness*". The correct form would be 'Your Grace'; however, it could be that it is a mixture of Highness and Grace. It could also be that the ending -ness is added there to tease Tolten. After all, the ending -ess can be seen

in female titles and professions, such as princess, waitress and actress. Tolten's whole demeanour shows that he is weaker than rest of the male characters (and even the female characters). That could be the reason why he is addressed as "*Your Graceness*". In addition Example 4 illustrates that him being so weak is not desirable. In the example below Seth, Sed and Jansen are referring to Tolten. Seth and Sed both agree that Tolten should be more daring and aggressive, a real man.

Example 4 (CD3: extract 6):

Seth: Yeah, he's still wet behind the ears, but I think we can make something of him.

Sed: A daredevil, right Momma?

Cooke: Daredevil?

Jansen: Yeah, a real macho man. Hmm...

The respect given to others can be seen in language use. When seeing Seth for the first time Jansen exclaims "*What a woman!*" while he addresses his escorts as "*girls*" (CD1: extract 1). While Jansen's exclamation is slightly derogatory, he still views Seth to be more mature than his "*girls*". He could have called Seth a babe, but he did not. In Example 5 the soldier wants to give his girl flowers in order to get her in bed. This indicates that the soldier does not really respect his girlfriend. While Jansen likes the way the man thinks, he still calls him "*that guy*" instead of man or soldier. Thus it implicates that he does not really value the man even though his line of thinking is to his liking.

Example 5 (CD1: extract 2):

Soldier 3: Yeah! If I bring her these flowers, getting her in the sack would be a snap. (laughs)

Jansen: Hmm, I'm on the same wavelength with that guy! Hey, let me get some of that action.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, discourse creates and reproduces social reality. There are many obvious instances of this in *Lost Odyssey*. For instance, when Gongora underlines that he has power, he is both reflecting the fact that he is superior to the others and also making them believe so. Another example is when Sed addresses Tolten as "*Your Graceness*". He can be seen to be ridiculing Tolten, thus Tolten's authority is reduced. At the same time Sed's level of power is increased, even though based on status Tolten should have more power than Sed. Simple actions and words choices can have an impact on social relations, just like in the above-mentioned examples. Thus it can be said that the study of discourse can offer insights into various social phenomena.

4.4 Romantic and platonic love

Love is an important theme in *Lost Odyssey*. Basically the representation of love in *Lost Odyssey* can be divided into two categories: romantic and platonic love. As Mack and Cooke are Kaim and Sarah's grandchildren, and Sed is Seth's son, it clear that their love for each other is the platonic, familial kind. In extract 6 Sarah shouts to Cooke and Mack that she and Kaim love them. In Example 6 Jansen is not proclaiming familial or romantic love for Kaim, he is just happy that Kaim survived.

Example 6 (CD3: extract 6):

Kaim: Jansen...

Jansen: Kaim! You're back! I can't believe it! I thought you were dead. I mean, we, we gave up on you.

Kaim: You're spitting in my face.

Jansen: Hahaha, spitting in your face. Hahhah, hey, I love you too, ya big lug! Haha!

In extract 1 one type of romantic love can be seen when Jansen arrives at the scene with apparently paid women. It is not said that the women are prostitutes; however, it is implied in the fact that Seth pays them to leave. The sexual nature of the relationship between the three women and Jansen is implied in Example 7. In the scene Kaim inquires why Jansen did not come earlier. It is apparent from Jansen's reply that real love is not in question, it is more about his desires.

Example 7 (CD1: extract 1):

Kaim: Why are you late?

Jansen: Can't you tell? A man's gotta do certain 'things' before leaving on a mission like this, and I did what I had to do.

A similar kind of desire can be seen in Example 8 when one of the soldiers wants to pick one of the protected flowers for his girlfriend. The motive behind picking the flower is of sexual nature.

Example 8 (CD1: extract 2):

Soldier 1: Hey, those are tenderflora. You know, the ones that'll make you happy.

Soldier 3: Ooh, I've heard good things about them.

Soldier 1: Aahhah, you're thinking about your girl, aren't ya?

Soldier 3: Yeah! If I bring her these flowers, getting her in the sack would be a snap. (laughs)

Jansen: Hmm, I'm on the same wavelength with that guy! Hey, let me get some of that action.

In extract 7 Ming admits that she has fallen in love with Jansen. She does not say so outright, but it is quite clear from the context (see Example 9). In the same example Jansen also implies

that also he has fallen love with her. Also the fact that they kiss further confirms the point. Finally in Example 10 Jansen proclaims his love for Ming. Ming shouts “*Nooo!*” as she cannot bear losing him, not because she is appalled by his proclamation of love. These are examples of true romantic love.

Example 9 (CD4: extract 7):

Ming: I’m so glad I met you.

Jansen: ... You know, a-a-and I-I’m serious when I fall in love, I mean, you know...

Ming: Shhh. So queens shouldn’t fall in love?

Example 10 (CD4: extract 8):

Jansen: Declaring my love to you at the end before dying... Noble, isn’t it? I, I always wanted to play the dying hero, but really, not really, I don’t feel good. Any thoughts?

Ming: Jansen...

Jansen: I love you, Ming...

Ming: Nooo!

5. Discussion

In this section the main results reported in Chapter 4 will be further discussed. In addition, the implications of the results will be speculated.

5.1 The importance of physical appearance and voice

At first glance it is quite obvious that physical attributes play an important role in influencing gender image in *Lost Odyssey*. They conform to the norms associated with the physical appearances of men and women. One might even say that some aspects are overly accentuated. Thus it is easy to distinguish of which sex each character is. Women have big busts and wear clothes that reveal at least some skin. The chest area is quite open as often is also in real life in women’s clothing. Men on the other hand have clothes that reveal very little. While Tolten and Kaim wear actual armour suited for battle, Seth is the only female who has at least some armour. I suppose someone might think that men having long hair would be feminine; however, that is not the case in *Lost Odyssey*. It might even be that the fact that Kaim has long hair and does not care if his hair is on his face makes him even more masculine.

Section 4.2 presented evidence that the women in *Lost Odyssey* giggle while men laugh. The extracts provide evidence that the manner of laughter is influenced by the gender of the person laughing. I believe that if a male character giggled, his masculinity would be

diminished. On a similar note, it was apparent that nowadays also voice is important in creating gender of a game character. After all, it would have been quite strange if a male voice actor with a low voice was used to represent Ming. Furthermore, it was interesting to see that Tolten had a quite high voice compared to the rest of the male characters. He was somewhat insecure for most of the game, so it can be speculated that his voice was so high on purpose. His armour is golden and shiny, which gives an impression of vanity. That and his voice decrease his authority, thus making him seem less masculine.

5.2 Power relations

It is quite obvious that the male characters in the game had the most power and authority (Tolten is an exception). The only females that had some power were the main female characters. Nevertheless, even the female characters mostly resigned to the leadership of Kaim. In some cases women were nothing but objects of sexual desire. Some might see these instances as devaluing women; however, I do not think that is the case. I believe that in some cases women are devalued in order to mirror how ridiculous men can be. For instance, in Examples 5, 7 and 8 it was somewhat obvious that the joke was on men. In addition, the power relations between genders can be regarded as reflecting our own society in reality. After all, most of the people in power are men and it can be argued that it is easier for men than women to get authority.

One should also remember that there are two powerful female characters in the game. To begin with, Ming is the Queen of Numara, even if she is merely a figurehead in the beginning of the game. Furthermore, Seth is a very powerful woman in the game. After all, it is she who saves them all by sacrificing her own life. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that the most powerful female character in the game has some attributes that are associated with masculinity. First of all, she is a pirate, which is traditionally considered to be a male profession. Secondly, her name is a man's name. Thirdly, she wears some armour and fights with a sword. The same cannot be said of the rest of the female characters. However, this can also be an indication of the impact reality has on fiction. After all, also in reality powerful women are seen to possess some masculine attributes or are encouraged to act in a more masculine manner in order to be more authoritative.

As was discussed in section 2.1.2, Wodak (2008) criticises that some feminists overemphasise the impact of gender in certain phenomena, as in some instances gender might not be as

significant a factor as some believe. This is important to remember; however, it is quite understandable that gender is seen to influence discourse always on some level. After all, it is quite difficult to separate gender from analysis, as it is such a salient and obvious part of human beings. Gender is portrayed through names, appearance, clothes, word choices, sound of voice, just to name a few. Even though eliminating gender as one of the most important factors influencing social phenomena is laborious, it is essential in order to arrive at truthful descriptions of discourse and reality. Thus Wodak (2008) is right in reminding people to be aware that at times there are also other identities more salient than gender identity. For instance, in my view Seth's identity as a pirate captain very often overrides her gender identity in *Lost Odyssey*. Nevertheless, it is difficult to distinguish how much her gender influences her behaviour and language use. In a sense viewing all language use to be affected by gender is an easy solution as disregarding it as a factor is so difficult. Perhaps gender ceases to be seen to influence discourse in role-playing games when truly androgynous game characters are created.

5.3 Heterosexuality

Like in life and in most fictional stories, love is an important theme in many role-playing games, and *Lost Odyssey* is no exception. The love of life and family encourages the main characters to fight Gongora. Ming and Jansen falling in love is an important part of the plot of the game. Love is a usual theme, and also the representation of love is often quite predictable. To begin with, the only kind of romantic love shown in *Lost Odyssey* is heterosexual love. The evidence of this was presented in section 4.4. Just as was discussed in section 2.4, adding desire to the equation is problematic. Analysing desire is problematic; however, I believe that in a sense it is also problematic to incorporate desire in games with good taste. Thus creating a role-playing game with homosexuality would present a challenge. The easiest solution is to create a traditional love story between a man and a woman. I suspect that it would cause quite an uproar if the heroes in a role-playing game were homosexuals, as it would be something that gamers are not used to see in a game. Perhaps there would be people who do not accept homosexuality; however, I believe the greatest shock for the audience would be due to the fact that homosexuality is considered a taboo. In that sense it is no wonder that romantic love between a man and a woman is the usual representation of desire in games.

5.4 Findings in a nutshell

It is quite clear to see that physical attributes have a significant role in creating gendered characters. Also voice has an important role nowadays as technical developments enable the use of real voice actors in games. With appearances and voice alone one can make a huge impact on how masculine or feminine a character is. Also language use affects the gender identities of the characters in *Lost Odyssey*.

It is interesting to see that the gender identities in *Lost Odyssey* for the most part seem to correspond with the gender norms of real life. One might think that since fantasy bends the rules of reality, creators have more leeway in creating characters and stories. After all, in most fantasy role-playing games magic is somehow involved. In addition, in some games one sees characters with physical attributes that are not possible in real life, such as people having tails or long pointy ears. One has to wonder why then the characters' gendered persona often imitates the norms set in reality. This may be due to several reasons. To begin with, the creators of the game might do it unconsciously without even questioning the commonly accepted gender identities. The creators most likely were aware what is considered feminine and masculine, as the physical appearance, behaviour and voice all contribute to creating gendered characters. Creating female characters with too many masculine attributes (or vice versa) might not have even crossed their minds. In addition, it could be that in doing so they would have created characters which differ from the norms of real life. This could have led gamers not to believe the characters, and this might have alienated some of the audience of the game. In addition, part of the appeal of role-playing games is that the player is able to experience the plot through the characters. If the player cannot identify oneself with the heroes, the gaming experience deteriorates, and this leads to diminished profits for the game producers.

6. Conclusion

In this study the console role-playing game *Lost Odyssey* was investigated in order to see how gender is constructed in it. Discourse analysis was the core method of investigating the data of eight *Lost Odyssey* extracts. Upon studying the data, it became apparent that visual and audio aspects are important in creating believable female and male characters. The characters' gender identities also comply with the western gender norms. However, even as this study provides interesting results, they cannot be generalised. Below the limitations of this study will be addressed and topics for future research will be suggested.

6.1 Limitations of this study

Due to the narrow scope of this study, the results of analysis are only relatively conclusive. A truly in-depth analysis was not possible as this paper has its limitations. Discourse analysis was deemed most suitable for studying the relationship between gender and discourse in the game; however, the chosen method presented a problem. To begin with, arriving at simple definitions of discourse, discourse analysis and gender is an arduous task. One can also say that discourse analysis gives perhaps even too much leeway for interpretation. By this I mean that it is difficult to define which issues affect certain factors and which issues might be inconsequential. In this study it was hard to ignore certain aspects outside the extracts as I believe that also they influence the characters' gender image. In this sense conversation analysis would have been a good choice as it would have determined that all relevant information was included in the collected data.

The game was first published in Japan by Japanese game developers, thus it can be speculated whether the game should be analysed by a specialist in Japanese culture. My western point of view affects the analysis of the various ways gender is constructed in the game. Furthermore, my gendered expectation might be another aspect influencing my perceptions. In short, another researcher might arrive at altogether different results by analysing gender and discourse in *Lost Odyssey*.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

As this study has certain limitations, the topic of gender and discourse in role-playing games is not fully covered. This study is a general overview of the field, and further study could focus on more specific issues. In addition, studying gender is not the only possible research topic. One could have also studied how character identity is portrayed through language use in the game. Furthermore, the methods chosen for this analysis are not the only methods that can be employed for analysis. In addition, as *Lost Odyssey* was first published in Japanese, one with sufficient knowledge in Japanese and English languages and cultures could compare the Japanese version with the English version. It would be interesting to see if the game is somehow altered to suit better western expectations. Furthermore, one could study also other aspects of the game. For instance, one could analyse the 'Story' passages of the game. These passages have been translated by Jay Rubin, a Harvard professor of Japanese literature. These interesting passages are similar to short stories. They are presented in written form; however, also sound and background play an important role in creating the atmosphere of the passages.

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Appendix I: Main characters of *Lost Odyssey*



Kaim Argonar



Sarah Sisulart



Seth Balmore



Ming Numara



Jansen Friedh



Tolten



Sed



Mack and Cooke

Appendix II: Extracts of *Lost Odyssey*

CD1- extract 1 (duration: 2.35 min.)

Seth: Why aren't we leaving? We should've already been gone by now.

Kaim: I'm waiting for somebody.

Seth: What? Who?

Kaim: There's somebody else on the team.

Seth: Huh? I haven't heard about that.

Kaim: I have.

Giggling can be heard.

Jansen: Eeh, heh. You guys are the greatest... Yeah, thanks for holding me up. Hey, gang... gggood morning everybody! Eeeh, hehhehheh... thanks... you guys are seeing triple.

Seth: What the? THIS is the other guy?

Kaim: Yeah...

Jansen: Whoa! Baby. What a woman. I can't believe my luck!

Seth: He reeks of booze.

Kaim: Why are you late?

Jansen: Can't you tell? A man's gotta do certain 'things' before leaving on a mission like this, and I did what I had to do.

One of the girls: Don't be such a stiff.

Jansen gives kisses to the three girls.

Seth: Ogh! What a jerk!

Jansen: Thank you my lovelies! Do or die Jansen is now off to meet certain death!

The girls: We'll miss you! Oh Jansen, come back to us! We still have that bottle for you!

Jansen: Oh that is so sweet! I know, I know. Oh don't say that. That is so nice. Awww...you girls... I'm already missing you... Hey can't I just have fifteen more minutes? Fifteen for her, for her, for her. That's forty-five minutes. That's...

Seth: Gah! Like we would wait for you, you worthless drunk!

Jansen: That hurt. That's not very nice.

Seth: You poor things. You know what? You're free to go. Thanks for bringing him to us. (gives the girls money)

The girls: Aah (giggling). Thank you! You're such a doll. You come and play with us next time, honey!

Seth: Hey, don't touch me. Get out of here. Shoo!

Jansen: Awww... That's not very nice. Okay, bye bye girls. Don't cry. I'll be back. Don't worry. OK. Bye again.

The girls: Bye Jansen, bye!

Seth: Great! Just what we need. More useless baggage!

Jansen: Heyhey, that's not nice. I'm going to come in real handy! You know, you can count on it!

Seth: Who's counting on what?

Jansen: Whoa, auh!

Seth: Hmph!

Jansen: Hey man, you are so angry... What is your problem. Hey, uhh.. you ready?

CD1- extract 2 (duration: 4.30 min.)

Seth: Wow, that's an unusual color for a flower.

Jansen: Whoa, no kidding. Girls like flowers. Hey, mind letting me have one. Ow!

Cooke: Don't pick'em!

Jansen: Hey you little brat! Next time, say that before you hit someone. You got that kid?

Cooke: Shut up you old geezer!

Jansen: G,geezer? Old? Oh I'm going home.

Seth: Did you plant these flowers?

Cooke: Nah-uh. They're just flowers that grow around here. Mom says they're really rare. What are they called again?

Mack: Tenderflora.

Cooke: Yeah, what he said. Mom loves these flowers. They never wilt. She says they make people happy, too. Mom feels sorry for them since they're so pretty, and people just pick'em whenever they want.

Seth: You know, I bet there are lots of people out there who would pick a flower if they knew it could make them happy.

Mack: It's because they're growing here that makes you happy.

Seth: You're right! You know, if you leave them here, then they can make everyone happy.

Cooke: You're the only one who's ever said that. You must be a good person!

Seth: (giggles) Well thank you.

Cooke: Um, what's your name? I'm Cooke and this is my little brother Mack.

Seth: Cooke. Mack. Got ya. I'm Seth. Nice to meet ya. Kaim?

Kaim remembers a lost memory.

Jansen: Kaim? Hey snap out of it buddy. Cut it out! We're pals now, right? You're giving me that look again!

Kaim: They were blooming...

Jansen: What?

Kaim: Back then...

Jansen: Back what?

Seth: Back then? Back when?

Horses whinny. Soldiers arrive.

Soldier 1: Check it out, it's those prisoners the queen just released.

Soldier 2: Yeah, this looks suspicious. What are you characters up to?

Cooke: Hey stay back! Watch out for the flowers! Please...

Soldier 1: Hmm? Flowers?

Seth: Hey, if you wanna pick a fight do it someplace else!

Soldier 1: Hey, those are tenderflora. You know, the ones that'll make you happy.

Soldier 3: Ooh, I've heard good things about them.

Soldier 1: Aahhah, you're thinking about your girl, aren't ya?

Soldier 3: Yeah! If I bring her these flowers, getting her in the sack would be a snap. (laughs)

Jansen: Hmm, I'm on the same wavelength with that guy! Hey, let me get some of that action.

Seth: Don't even go there, Jansen!

Jansen: (sighs) Alright.

Cooke: Hey, you can't have them!

Soldier 3: What's with you kid? Outta my way! (pushes Cooke aside, she falls down)

Cooke: Agh!

Seth: Cooke! Are you okay?

Cooke: Yeah...

Jansen: Real mature there, picking on a kid! O'ou! Hey, fine...(Soldier 1 points a sword at Jansen)

Soldier 1: Listen up losers. The Numaran military has the right to seize anything that grows on Numaran soil. Including these flowers!

Soldier 3: It's just a bunch of flowers! It's silly to pick a fight over something so small. Huh, what's with you? Outta the way, kid! It's no big deal, I'm just gonna take two or three.

Mack: No...

Soldier 3: Hmm, what's with you kid? I can't hear you!

Mack: I said no.

Soldier 3: Whoahoho. I still can't hear you! Hahaha. Oh how cute! Hey, check out the tough guy!

Mack: I'm not moving. EVER!

Soldier 3: Hey! Crap... (His horse runs away)

Cooke: Mack...

Soldiers laugh.

Soldier 3: What the hell's got him so worked up?

Soldier 1: Hey we could use this kid as the official flower guard!

Soldier 2: We've got quite the crew of strangers and brats here, eh?

Soldier 3: Why don't all of you get lost? You're mucking up Numara! (laughs)

Cooke: Get your hands off him!

Soldier 3: Ugh!

Cooke: You idiots are the ones who should get lost! Your breath is so bad it wilts the flowers!

Seth: Cooke!

Jansen: Oooh, not bad, I like that. Good choice of words, very nice. Good. Loved it.

Soldier 1: Hey you little brat! That's not how you address a Numaran soldier! Just because you're a kid doesn't mean you can get away with stuff like that!

CD2- extract 3 (duration: 3.05 min.)

Ming: I'll go speak with the King. We've never met, but I've heard he's very wise. I'm confident that he has a ship that can get us past the hypercurrents.

Jansen: (*gulpgulpgulp*) Ahh, wow, that hit the spot! You know I'm finally starting to feel at home here. (*burrp*)

Ming: Are you even listening to me?

Jansen: There's a time and place for that stuff, and this is neither. Tell me, is it really true you can't drink?

Ming: Um, yes...

Jansen: That is so sad. But you are a queen. I mean, don't you have wine or champagne at parties or banquets, hangings, any festive thing like that?

Ming: Um, no...

Jansen: Well, lookit, nobody knows us here. C'mon, just give it a try... I guarantee you'll like it. Really.

Ming sighs.

Jansen: It won't kill you. I promise. In fact, I bet if you take a couple of drinks, you might get your memory back. Yep! Relaxes your mind, and other things...

Ming: You think so?

Jansen: Absolutely. Hey, look at me, you're talking to Jansen here. Bottoms up!

Ming: Ah... Bottoms up...

Jansen: What, you don't like the cheap stuff?

Ming: Um, no, it's just... I've never tasted anything like it before.

Jansen: You don't have to force yourself to drink it.

Ming: No! I want my memory back! If there's a chance this will help, I'll manage to drink it. (*gulpgulp*)

Jansen: Wow! That... Good. Are you okay?

Ming: Whew, I feel very light-headed all of a sudden. It's affecting me like you said it would... Oh, my muscles are so... (passes out)

Jansen: Hey oh! Oh no... Hmm. You know, you're cute when you're asleep.

Seth: Jansen!

Jansen: Agh! What? Oh!

Seth: What the hell do you think you are doing?

Jansen: Ahh, we were just having a serious discussion about, you know, what's going to happen next, and... planning.

Seth: Happen next?

Jansen: Yeah, you know, she's gonna talk to the King and get us a ship, 'cause yours can't float worth a... You know, after all, Gohtza's got the most advanced technology around, we figured we could get a more sea-worthy ship from him. Instead of that... You know... What?

Seth: All right. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt this time but don't try any funny business with Ming.

Jansen: Yeah, well, I'm looking out for her too, you know. I mean, look how restful she looks right now.

CD2- extract 4 (duration: 5.00 min.)

Gongora: The throne of the Gods...

Kaim: Gongora.

Seth: Gongora! (*lunges at Gongora*)

Kaim: Hold on!

Seth: Let go! I'll kill him for what he did to my son and friend!

Kaim: Just how are you going to do that, when he's also an immortal? If you go barrelling in there you'll just be trapped like we were before!

Gongora: Seth, you've got it wrong. It was you who killed Aneira.

Seth: No! It was you Gongora!

Gongora: My dear friend. Did you not realize that the presence of your son was condemning Aneira's spirit to a prison of loneliness and isolation by degrees?

Seth: What?

Kaim: Don't listen to him, Seth!

Gongora: *(sigh)* You know, madness ate away at him. You had no choice but to kill him. When your blade pierced his heart, it may have just as well pierced your own.

Seth: No... No! I didn't kill him! You did it, not me!

Ming: Don't even give it a thought. Shut it out of your mind.

Gongora: What about your orders, Lieutenant Argonar?

Kaim: I'm no longer your pawn! The memory you erased has returned.

Gongora: Oh really?

Kaim: That was clever... Realizing that even death couldn't compare to the pain of being unable to remember. I might as well have been dead these past thirty years, serving as your agent.

Gongora: Those thirty years weren't so bad, now were they? I merely made the best use of your abilities.

Kaim: It was dirty work.

Gongora: Hah, it suited you.

Sarah: There had to be a reason for us to come to this world in the first place. That includes you!

Gongora: What reason could that be? Ahh, so your memories haven't completely returned. My power was indeed effective at that time, meagre though it may have been.

Jansen: Hey, hey, hey. Come on now. You know you just do too much talking and not enough listening. You know?

Gongora: Silence, you idiot!

Jansen: Hey, I ain't shutting up. You're the worthless scum after what you did to my eyes. Oh, by the way, that memory wiping pearl you gave me? Well, see, I used it on someone else. I don't know if that's a problem or not.

Gongora: I know. I saw everything you saw. Remember?

Jansen: Hah, you're the sleezy one, lord eyebrows! Oh, and before I forget... This is the gold you gave me. I really wanna throw it back in your face, and I won't. I'm just an idiot, right? Huh? Is that what you think? Huh? Can you see this old man? Take a look at that. *(Turns his buttocks to Gongora and slaps it)* See that!

Gongora: As if that matters to me. You lowly scum all deserve each other's company.

Jansen: What's that supposed to mean?

Gongora: Your newfound comrades, Kaim, Seth, Sarah, and Ming. They're traitors. Each and every one of them!

Jansen: Traitors?

Kaim: Traitors!?

Gongora: We came here for a noble cause. Then you abused your immortality to try and take over. And I was forced to bring an end to your atrocities. If you think about it, I taught you all a lesson!

Seth: Liar! You're the one who wanted control of this world.

Ming: Seth, calm down!

Gongora: How pathetic! *(sigh)* Do you know why I ordered you to Grand Staff? So that our mission would be a swift success.

Kaim: And what is that mission?

Gongora: That will not be revealed to traitors like you.

Kaim: We're not traitors!

Gongora: What do you think you can do about it?

Kaim: You will return our memories!

Gongora: I think not.

Kaim: Cooke, Mack, stay out of this.

Cooke: It's because of him Mom's dead.

Mack: I'm gonna stay and fight too!

Gongora: Kaim, Sarah... These are your grandchildren? Hah. I'll kill them as I killed your daughter! Only now I'm even more powerful. This time your memories will be permanently locked away, leaving you walking corpses for all time!

Kaim: We'll see which one of us is the traitor!

CD3-extract 5 (duration: 3.55 min.)

Sarah: Cooke? Mack? It's all right. It's me, Sarah. Kaim's here too.

Cooke: Kaim. Sarah.

Sarah: You can come out you two. It's safe.

Cooke: Waaahh! Sarah!

Sarah: It's all right. It's all right now.

Cooke: I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I just wanted to see Mom!

Sarah: I know sweetheart. I know. You miss her. So do I.

Mack: I'm sorry.

Kaim: You had us worried.

Everyone screams from pain.

Mack: It hurts, Kaim! Help!

Sarah: Kaim, Kaim! Such powerful energy. Is this, is this Gongora's doing?!

Kaim: Must be. With magic energy this intense, we may not make it this time.

Cooke: Why? You're immortal!

Kaim: I'm not so sure anymore.

Sarah: I'm scared Kaim. I'm worried about losing my memory again. Or maybe this time, even my body.

Cooke: Noo!

Sarah: Kaim! We've got to save them!

Kaim: I know! Sarah!

Sarah: I won't let our grandchildren die!

Cooke: Sarah, what are you doing?

Sarah: No! Stay back!

Cooke: No! We're coming with you!

Kaim: No! Stay where you are!

Cooke: Kaim! What are you doing? Kaim! Sarah!

Sarah: We love you. So very much.

Cooke: Sarah! No!

Mack: Don't leave us! Come back!

CD3-extract 6 (duration: 5.40 min.)

Jansen: Whoa, hey!

Cooke: Kaim, Sarah!

Mack: Are they okay?

Jansen: Kaim! Come on buddy. Snap out of it! Come on buddy. You're immortal, right? Come on!

Ming: Sarah!

Mack: No. Let us do it, Aunt Ming!

Mack and Cooke: Yeah.

Kaim: Jansen...

Jansen: Kaim! You're back! I can't believe it! I thought you were dead. I mean, we, we gave up on you.

Kaim: You're spitting in my face.

Jansen: Hahaha, spitting in your face. Hahaha, hey, I love you too, ya big lug! Haha!

Ming: Sarah...

Sarah: (*coughs*) I'm okay, Thank you.

Cooke: Thank goodness.

Sarah: This time you saved us. Thank you for being so brave, Cooke, Mack.

Kaim: Thanks Jansen.

Jansen: Don't worry about it, buddy. We've got bigger problems. By the way, you can always get a job as an ice sculpture. Kidding!
(*The Nautilus surfaces*)

Everyone: What?

Cooke: Captain?

Jansen: Oh great! Why is Golden Boy still hanging around?

Mack: Who is that guy?

Seth: Everyone, get on board. Ah, you're all safe.

Jansen: Well, we've been kinda through hell and back, I mean, we've been running and fight... Not that you'd care.

Kaim: How did you find us?

Seth: The pendant that I returned to Ming.

Ming: What?

Seth: There's magic energy in it. We've been tracking its output.

Ming: Ah, I see.

Seth: We've gotten a lot of help from this pendant over the centuries.

Ming: Yes we have.

Cooke: Captain! You've got a new ship!

Seth: This is the Nautilus. It belongs to my son Sed.

Sed: That's me.

Cooke: Wow! The great pirate Sed, in the flesh!

Mack: It's great to meet you.

Kaim: So the great pirate Sed is Seth's son. (*They shake hands*)

Sed: Ah, you must be Kaim Argonar... the immortal doing the dirty work for Uhra.

Kaim: That was a long time ago.

Sed: And here we have Kaim's beloved wife Sarah. (*kisses Sarah's hand*)

Sarah: (*Giggles*) Pleased to meet you.

Sed: And Numara's thousand year old queen Ming. (*kisses Ming's hand*)

Ming: It's an honour to meet you.

Sed: Please, go easy on me. (*Sarah giggles*)

Ming: In fact, back then...

Seth: He hadn't even been born then. Wait a minute. Ming, did you get your memories back?

Ming: Yes.

Seth: That's great!

Sed: Welcome on behalf of the Nautilus. I, uh, think you know this pretty boy here.

Ming: King Tolten, why are you here?

Seth: He's been used and betrayed by Gongora.

Ming: So his objective is the same as ours.

Seth: Yeah, he's still wet behind the ears, but I think we can make something of him.

Sed: A daredevil, right Momma?

Cooke: Daredevil?

Jansen: Yeah, a real macho man. Hmm...

Tolten: What?

Jansen: I, I thought something was in your eye. Nothing. Who does your hair?

Tolten: Ahh. Yeah.

Seth: It's okay. He's been abandoned by Gongora. Left for dead.

CD4- extract 7 (duration: 4.35 min.)

Jansen: Do you really mean it?

Ming: I can't say what Gongora might be planning. For him to remain in this world, for his own selfish ends...

Jansen: Not about him. About you. (*sigh*) Don't you wanna stay and save Numara?

Ming: There's something else to stay for, too...

Ming kisses Jansen.

Ming: I'm so glad I met you.

Jansen: Uh, wha, I, ah, huh, ah, huh, uhuh, ah, ah. A bum? Like me? Ahhah. I-I-I-I'm s-sorry. I'm not used to this. You know, g-getting serious like this. And, well, I-I mean, you, see, you're a queen, ah, y-you got a castle, it's, you know, own your own country. You know, a-a- and I-I'm serious when I fall in love, I mean, you know, I don't play around like that, I mean, I know I am good looking, and kinda

irresistible, I, but but, see I never thought you'd get serious about me, and and I gotta tell ya, you being an immortal, and I'm just, you know, just a regular guy... Ah you know, a good sense of humour, you know, but I, you, see, you... I-I don't know what to say. Help me.

Ming: Shhh. So queens shouldn't fall in love?

Jansen: Oh, uhhuh. (*sighs*)

About to kiss again.

Jansen: Hmm? Okay... I know you're there. Kids.

CD4- extract 8 (duration: 9.10 min.)

Gongora: uh, waah! (*Seth strikes Gongora with her sword*)

Seth: We did it!

Sed: Serves you right! You freak!

Kaim: Jansen, that's enough! Drop the barrier!

Jansen: I'm trying but something's not... I'm not sure what's wrong.

Cooke: It won't go away! What's going on?

Tolten: We can't get out!

Sarah: It's magic energy. The magic energy that formed the barrier... It's causing the power to increase! It's eating through!

Kaim: This is bad! Time is moving faster!

Ming: What do we do?

Jansen: No, no, no! It's happening again!

Tolten: Not again!

Sed: Looks like we're gonna be mummies before we lose our clothes...

Mack: Kaim!

Cooke: Sarah! Help us!

Sarah: Kaim! Kaim, the children!

Kaim: Ugh!

Jansen: Ming, I think this is the end...

Ming: No... You can't leave me like this.

Jansen: I'm so glad I met you. You made a guy like me feel like an honorable man. (*coughs*) If only for a little while...

Ming: No! You have to get out!

Jansen: I don't think (*coughs*) that's gonna happen...

Ming: (*sobbing*) Jansen...

Sarah: Cooke, Mack! Get up!

Kaim: Cooke! Mack!

Mack: I can't! I can't move!

Cooke: We'll be okay. Mom is waiting for us. I'm sure we'll see her in the Aurora.

Sarah: Don't talk like that!

Kaim: No!

Tolten: Sed, get up!

Sed: I can't move anymore, Your Graceness... I'm older than you, you know...

Seth: Sed!

Sed: Momma, it looks like I'm going before you.

Seth: Stop talking like that!

Jansen: Declaring my love to you at the end before dying... Noble, isn't it? I, I always wanted to play the dying hero, but really, not really, I don't feel good. Any thoughts?

Ming: Jansen...

Jansen: I love you, Ming...

Ming: Nooo!

Sarah: Can't we do something, Kaim? What will we tell Lirum? She wanted us to take care of them! They're our responsibility! (*sobs*)

Tolten: Hang on, Sed!

Sed: Let me go. I can't hang on anymore! I can't...

(*Gongora arises*)

Tolten: It's Gongora!

Kaim: What!?

Gongora: I have won.

Kaim: What do you mean?

Gongora: Do you want to save them? Break the mirrors! Do it yourselves! Yes, that's it! Use that and destroy the mirrors! But after you do so, we will never be able to return! My time has come! Grand Staff is not my only weapon! I have prepared storage tanks of energy everywhere! (*laughs*) And with its power, I shall control the world! I shall lock your memories away for all eternity! (*insane laughter*)

Seth: You bastard!

Gongora: What are you doing?

(*Seth pushes Gongora towards the mirrors*)

Seth: Break the mirrors!

Kaim: Seth!

Seth: Kaim, hurry!

Kaim: Uaah!

Seth: I'll be seeing ya! We're going back first!

Gongora: Noo! Stoop! Stop! No!

Kaim: Seth!

Ming: Seth!

(*Gongora and Seth disappear into the mirrors*)

Sed: Momma...

Ming: It's okay. You're all right. Just breathe, it's all right.

Jansen: I don't think we should stay here any longer.

Kaim: Let's go.

Jansen: Yeah, right.

Sarah: Seth...