

LESSON: NOT YOUR EXOTIC FANTASY (60 MINUTES)

In this lesson or series of lessons, students will watch the "Not Your Exotic Fantasy" video from the Feminist Frequency series *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, and will consider the representation of tribal and indigenous cultures in video games. Students will explore how exotification is used in various contexts, how the process of exotification operates through damaging signifiers and cultural appropriation, and how these representations are entrenched in a history of marginalization and oppression.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson/series of lessons, students/viewers will:

1. Explore the use of exotification, hypersexualization and cultural appropriation in video games and other media;
2. Consider the oppressive historical treatment of tribal and indigenous cultures;
3. Seek out and learn from positive, respectful and authentic representations of culture and race in video games and other media.

MATERIALS

- Computer
- Projector
- Printed copies of "Not Your Exotic Fantasy" note companions
- Laptops or other platforms for independent inquiry

Before: Minds On

If this is the first lesson being used in the *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* series, a preliminary discussion regarding 'critical analysis' as a process of questioning and 'tropes' as identified patterns will help students understand the goal of the videos (helping viewers question the media they use/consume and the broader implications of media). An introduction to Season 1 of the series might also be needed. **[5 MINUTES]**

Exploring the concept of exotification through art: Wangechi Mutu is an African-born artist who uses art to explore the concept of exotification, with a particular emphasis on the treatment of black women in Western media. Select a few images from her website (<http://wangechimutu.com/art/on-paper/>) and discuss her work, guiding students through the process of describing what they see and then extracting meaning from the images. If you are flexible with time, consider having students explore the website on their own and select images to discuss with a few guiding concepts or questions. **[15-20 MINUTES]**



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During Action!

Watch the "Not Your Exotic Fantasy" video (places to pause due to time constraints or opportunities for embedded discussion and/or activities below):

- 00:25 *Far Cry 3* and Racialized Narratives
- 03:15 Exotification
- 04:30 Colour of Skin Linked to Virtue
- 05:45 Design and Ethnic Stereotypes
- 07:15 *Sister Citizen* quote **[PAUSE AND DISCUSS - 5 MINUTES]**
- 07:35 Sexual Assault of Black Women
- 07:55 *Dark Continent of Our Bodies* quote **[PAUSE AND DISCUSS - 5 MINUTES]**
- 09:30 Rare, Respectful Treatments of Culture & Race in Video Games **[20 MINUTES]**

Differentiated Instruction:

- Note companions to help students work through definitions and content, including collaboration following viewing;
- 'Pause and Reflect' opportunities throughout viewing

After: Consolidation & Connection

Have students watch the beginning of the following documentary on Shadeism through the lens of the concepts discussed in the "Not Your Exotic Fantasy" video, prefaced by a discussion about historically-situated exotification and racism and the continued suffering caused by such representations.

"Shadeism": <https://vimeo.com/16210769>

After watching this video, discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups:

- How are concepts such as exotification, ethnic signifiers and stereotypes, and the relationship between virtue and skin colour present in the lived experiences of various peoples and communities?
- How are these concepts rooted in histories of marginalization and oppression?
- How can respectful approaches to media and representation impact the way we view and experience race and culture? **[15-20 MINUTES]**



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POST-VIDEO ACTIVITY OPTIONS

1. Comparing Representations

Using concepts such as exotification, ethnic stereotypes, hypersexualization, and racialized signifiers, select and analyze 2 representations of culture and race from a broad range of media, including: video games, movies, tv shows, or magazines/media/other advertisements.

Step 1: For the first representation, select an example that you believe perpetuates a harmful, racialized narrative or image. Identify the who/what/when/where/why/how of the piece:

- Who is being represented?
- What is happening in the representation?
- When was this piece created, and what is the historical context?
- Where was this representation used and/or who was the intended audience?
- Why do you think the culture or race being represented is being portrayed in this way?
- How does this representation reinforce narratives of exotification, stereotype, hypersexualization, and racialized signifiers?

Step 2: For the second representation, select an example that you believe represents race and culture in a way that is respectful and authentic. As an extension, consider how you would describe an authentic representation of race and culture. Consider the above questions from step 1 for this representation to guide your analysis.

Step 3: Compare both representations, using the following questions to guide your comparison:

- Who is being represented in each example?
- What are the differences and similarities between each representation?
- How does historical context factor into the creation of these pieces?
- How does audience or use impact the development of these representations?

Step 4: Reflect on the difference of experience when interacting with each representation, with an emphasis on considering the following question:

- How does this comparison assist you in understanding the importance of respectful representations of diverse cultures and peoples?
- By extension, what are some ways that respectful representations of culture and race can become more common in a variety of media forms?



Name: _____

Date: _____

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: “Not Your Exotic Fantasy”

Exotification

An approach deployed in video games and other media that attempts to add an “exotic” tone to creative works by portraying people of colour, and particularly women of colour, based on often sexualized signifiers. Exotification perpetuates notions of difference and otherness in these characters without contributing to a respectful, authentic sense of culture.

Damaging Signifiers of Exotification

- Mystical Powers
- Skimpy Clothes and Body Paint
- Hypersexualization of Exotified Bodies

Far Cry 3 and Racialized Narratives

Exotification

Colour of skin linked to virtue



FEMINIST FREQUENCY

Name: _____

Date: _____

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: "NOT YOUR EXOTIC FANTASY"

Design and Ethnic Stereotypes	
Sexual Assault of Black Women	
Cultural Appropriation	
Rare, respectful treatments of Culture & Race	