

LESSON: SINISTER SEDUCTRESS (60 MINUTES)

In this lesson or series of lessons, students will watch the "Sinister Seductress" video from the Feminist Frequency series *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, and will explore the exploitation of gender in the development of grotesque female villains and enemies in video games. Students will also explore this problem in the context of myths and folklore, where students will analyze this trope as part of a long tradition of villainizing women and female sexuality.

LEARNING GOALS

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

1. Explore the development of grotesque female villains and enemies in video games;
2. Consider the history of villainizing women and female sexuality in myths and folklore;
3. Interrogate the harmful nature of these perpetuated myths in the lived experiences of women.

MATERIALS

- Computer
- Projector
- Printed copies of "Sinister Seductress" note companions
- Video game examples and computer access

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]**

As a class, have students focus on the word 'witch' and what it suggests. Prompts include what they envision when they think of witches, where they have seen witches represented in media, and what they know of the history of witches. This conversation can lead students to begin making connections to other villainized women in media and society, and to begin identifying a pattern themselves of these types of figures in history, media and society. **[20 MINUTES]**

During Action!

Watch the "Sinister Seductress" video (places to pause due to time constraints or opportunities for embedded discussion and/or activities below):

- 00:55 Critique of The Vagary in *Doom 3*
- 01:40 Myth and Misogyny
- 04:00 "Grotesquely Female"
- 05:10 Exploiting Femaleness
- 07:05 "Sexualized Evil Women"
- 07:50 Deceptive Sexuality
- 09:55 Positive examples of female villains **[15 MINUTES]**

Differentiated Instruction:

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

LESSON: **SINISTER SEDUCTRESS****After: Consolidation & Connection**

Focus on the Salem Witch Trials as an example of the tradition of villainizing women. Ask students to work in groups to see what they can find out about the trials doing a quick web search. The following are a few resources:

<https://www.salemwitchmuseum.com/education>

<http://www.history.com/topics/salem-witch-trials>

<http://nationalgeographic.org/interactive/salem-interactive>

[15 MINUTES]

Discuss this historical event using the above resources as a starting point alongside what the students learned, and ask students to make connections to how women are talked about and treated today both in media and in society. Make explicit connections to the video and the development of female villains. **[5 MINUTES]**

POST-VIDEO ACTIVITY OPTIONS**Linking Mythology and Contemporary Times**

In this activity students will be asked to create a 5 minute presentation in any medium of their choosing (powerpoint, prezi, blog, video, creative monologue, etc.) where students will compare a myth or folktale that places women in a position of loathing, disgust or fear with a contemporary example of the trope from media (books, video games, movies, tv shows).

Students will then present to the class, where the goal of this activity is to encourage students to see that the way many female villains in video games are designed is part of a larger pattern dating centuries with real implications for real women.

Extension activity: Ask students to make the final step in this pattern – how the myth and contemporary example they chose might influence how a real woman (actress, public figure, etc.) is viewed and identify the consequences of such treatment.

Name: _____

Date: _____

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: “Sinister Seductress”

Myth & Misogyny

Myths and folklore throughout history have perpetuated the belief that women are inherently evil, from the myth of Pandora or the corruption of humanity by Eve in the garden of Eden to the widespread persecution of witches. Video games with sexualized female villains and enemies continue this tradition, exploiting the femaleness of these characters as something to be feared or overcome by male players.

Exploiting Gender Through the “Grotesquely Female”

Female villains or enemies exhibit “grotesquely female” qualities when their gender is positioned as the root of disgust or fear. Female sexuality is made grotesque through the manipulation of physical characteristics (i.e. the female body) or actions (i.e. seduction) that in other instances would be attractive so that these characters are found repugnant because of their gender.

Critique of The Vagary

Myth, folklore & Misogyny

“Grotesquely Female”

Name: _____

Date: _____

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: "SINISTER SEDUCTRESS"

<p>Exploiting Femaleness & "Sexualized Evil Women"</p>	
<p>Deceptive Sexuality</p>	
<p>Positive examples of female villains</p>	