Adam's Genesis Game:
Parallels of the Motivations Linking the First Man to the Modern Gamer

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Religion transmutes the existential angst of humankind into everyday actions that, for better or worse, are engrained in our psyches. At its fundamental level, religion is why a large proportion of humans act. People act in the name of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Scientology, Unitarian Universalism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and countless other belief systems.[1] Religious texts, regardless of the sect of society to which they belong, are literary documents that illustrate humanity's eternal search for meaning. Even for those that do not believe in any particular religion, the allegories of religious texts are unquestionably relevant to modern culture, pervading into art forms as classic as Milton's Paradise Lost, Dante's Inferno, and Shakespeare's Hamlet. They have proven the ability to incite massive societal upheavals. Modern civilizations often base their foundational ideals in religious traditions, from the conventions of the Gregorian calendar to the inscription on the back of the U.S. penny. The influences of the best-selling book of all time, the Bible, are even more widespread than the book itself.

Humans, religious and unreligious, can derive meaning from Genesis as a literary text, if nothing else. While topics described within the book allow some to develop existential reassurance, others find interest in the implications of Genesis due to its explanations of humankind. As God reveals his final creation, Adam, one wonders which aspects of man were so innate that they were portrayed thousands of years ago as the central characteristics for humanity. Theologians such as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik attempt to distil those qualities with in-depth text study. The establishment of this framework in the Bible, accepted by at least three major world religions, is one of society's most ancient milestones. Despite its age and consistency, the original characterization of Adam is parallel to a modern and rapidly evolving marvel—video gaming.

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[1] There are currently an estimated 2.1 billion Christians, 1.3 billion Muslims, 857 million Hindus, 382 million Buddhists, 25 million Sikhs, 15 million Jews, and 814 million other religiously identified people worldwide. That amounts to 5.5 billion people, or 79% of the world population (Rosenberg, 2005).

In the thirty-nine years since the release of Atari's Pong in 1972, videogames have permeated every aspect of human culture. Players prefer games that give them freedom to excel and to relate to other characters. Ludology, the study of games, attempts in part to understand what drives so many people toward gaming. Recent studies show that the world invests 3 billion hours per week gaming (McGonigal, 2011). With a magnitude of players on the same scale as religious believers, it is evident that both subjects have the capability of being extremely impactful on society. In fact, examining the two in relation to each other might lead to insights on how gaming will develop with time. In particular, understanding Adam's motivations in Genesis, one of the most influential stories in the Western belief system, can help explain the popularity of gaming. Ludology explains how games play upon human mentality; the creation story of the Bible, as a narrative, reveals how humans acquired this mentality. The biblical motives of Adam in the first chapter of Genesis are parallel to the psychological basis of competence, autonomy, and relatedness in modern gaming, and understanding them will allow game designers to impact the world with more engaging creations.

Text Study of Genesis

The following paragraphs will examine the text of Genesis and, more specifically, the commentary of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, which serve as the underpinnings for drawing parallels between the theology concerning Adam and the mentality of modern video gamers.

Delving into the text of the Pentateuch, the five books of the Torah, reveals archetypal undertakings of Adam that are directly analogous to those of the average gamer. Genesis 1 recounts God's verbal creation of the world. God manipulates the entire world with the mere suggestion, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule…the whole earth" (Genesis 1:26).[2] At the onset of an idea, God is instantly instilled with the power to implement creative visions. With seemingly no effort, "God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). The nuanced language is pivotal in defining Adam's relationship to God. As the commentaries on Genesis write, "Every human has irreducible worth and dignity, because every human is fashioned in the image of God" (Lieber, 2001, p. 10). Relating Genesis to gaming makes each phrase in the relatively sparse description crucial, from the creation of man and woman together to God's charge to "fill the earth and master it" (Genesis 1:28). These tasks are the essence of Adam's mission throughout the first chapter of the Bible and are surprisingly similar to those entrusted to gamers.

The second chapter of Genesis, a chapter that less well known, is significant in that it proposes an alternative depiction of the biblical creation story. It is in understanding the contrasting views of Adam in

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[2] Biblical references from *Etz Hayim Humash*, cited below.

each of these stories that one can personify Adam with respect to ludology. Genesis 2 redefines creation as when "the Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being" (Genesis 2:5). The second creation story also reinstates Adam's divine charge. He is tasked "to nurture and conserve the garden, by the labor of his hands" and to name the living creatures of the earth (Lieber, 2001, p. 15). Yet, even with the creation of myriad organisms, the lonely landlord lacks assistance. The text states that God remarked, "[i]t is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him" after which He "fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman" (Genesis 2:18, 22). Core differences spanning the two creation stories allow modern Jewish thinkers to provide a variety of explanations, some of which correlate to ludology.

Creation sparks discussions of relatedness to God in modern Jewish theology. The foundations in Genesis point to existential loneliness and angst that is inherent in humanity throughout the ages. This doubt leads much of society to religion, and it is perhaps the intimate connection with Adam's complex sentiments that causes so many to theorize about the beginning of the Bible. Modern philosophers tend to respectfully disagree with nuances in each other's interpretation of the text, if not with entire theological constructs. One leader in the Conservative movement of Judaism, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, derives from Adam's reactions to God the concept of "radical amazement." He explains that God is in search of Adam, or humankind, and that one can experience the divine in everyday life through an emotional, rather than academic, sense by standing in awe of the world (Heschel, 1959). Alternatively, Rabbi James Jacobson-Maisels, an author from the same movement as Heschel, believes that a connection with God can be achieved by understanding God and the self as a single entity, thereby establishing a relatedness similar to Adam's devotion to his surroundings (Cosgrove, 2010). One of the most renowned philosophers on Genesis and the impetus of many of the above theories is Rabbi Dr. Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Similarly, he attempts to understand existential loneliness and, in doing so, defines Adam's personality in a way that makes Soloveitchik's theology the most exceedingly relevant to gaming.

In his book, The Lonely Man of Faith, Rabbi Soloveitchik distinguishes between the two stories of Genesis in order to characterize two divergent personalities of Adam and provide an explanation for the seemingly different stories. This theory is extremely impactful in Judaic studies and its analytical perspective comprises the basis of connectivity between religion and ludology. It will be increasingly apparent in the next section that Adam's theological depiction corresponds to the psychological descriptions of gamers. To establish the first personality of, Adam 1, Soloveitchik points to four cardinal sources in the text. First, he

recognizes that the Adam created in chapter 1 of Genesis[3] is *b'tzelem elokim*, or made in the image of God, while there is a physical description for the creation of Adam 2. The two Adams are different beings charged with different responsibilities. In the early portion of Genesis, Adam must fill the earth and subdue it, whereas his counterpart in the second portion must tend to the Garden of Eden. Next, Soloveitchik discusses the interpersonal relationships of Adam and Eve. As he writes, "In the story of Adam [1], both male and female were created concurrently, while Adam [2] emerged alone, with Eve appearing subsequently as his helpmate and complement" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 11). Finally, Soloveitchik focuses on the Hebrew terms used for God in each story and concludes that, as there is a different term used in each story, one can derive two entirely different concepts of the first human. With these distinctions, Soloveitchik personifies two divergent perspectives of Adam.

Adam 1 and Adam 2 differ mainly in their goals and outlooks on life. Soloveitchik constructs their personalities out of the few facts that Genesis provides in order to give meaning to the separate stories. For example, he writes that, "Adam [2] explores not the scientific abstract universe but the irresistibly fascinating qualitative world where he establishes an intimate relation with God" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 22). According to Soloveitchik, one can infer this trait from the literal inspiration that gave Adam 2 life. In the same manner, Soloveitchik bases his thesis upon the idea that Adam 2 is created without a partner and is, therefore, a lonely man of faith (Soloveitchik, 2006). This concept, while crucial to the rabbi's understanding of his own existential struggles, is not immediately relevant to gaming. Rather, in refocusing Soloveitchik's characterization of Adam 1 in contrast to the second chapter of Genesis, the portrayal of Adam 1 is clarified. Given this perspective of Adam 1, it is possible to detect crucial foresights into motivational factors of the gaming industry.[4]

The Convergence of Religion and Gaming

While Soloveitchik may have ascertained certain attributes concerning Adam's character, his theology does not directly apply itself to ludology. The topics initially appear unrelated and heterogeneous. Soloveitchik would never have dreamed of rooting a technological theory in his biblical commentaries. However, in defining the perspective of Adam, he essentially constructs the personality of a modern gamer. Unbeknownst to Soloveitchik in 1992, his theory is immediately relevant and parallel to commentaries on gaming mentality. One such example of modern theories in ludology emanates from game psychologists Drs. Scott Rigby and Richard Ryan, who aim to "gain a greater mastery of game psychology that will give us more confidence, freedom, and choice in how we engage

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[3] While Soloveitchik labels these personalities "Adam the first" and "Adam the second". They are labeled "Adam 1" and "Adam 2" for the sake of clarity.

[4] As we have narrowed down Soloveitchik's hypothesis to the study of Adam 1, we can now refer to him as Adam.

games, both now and in the future" (Rigby & Ryan, 2011, p. 13). Using the model called the Player Experience of Need Satisfaction (PENS), they present one of many theories on why people game. Rigby and Ryan have extensive knowledge both in the field of gaming and in psychology, allowing them to deliver unique insight on the factors engaging players worldwide. In the following paragraphs, the theories presented in their book, Glued to Games, will serve as a centerpiece, tying together Soloveitchik's characteristics of the original Genesis identity and three qualities leading gamers to embrace videogames.

Majesty and Competence
One of the essential facets of human nature that drives everyday action is the struggle for competence. Rigby and Ryan describe the complex as follows in Glued to Games:

> Competence refers to our innate desire to grow our abilities and gain mastery of new situations and challenges. Even watching infants at the earliest stage of development, we can clearly see the innate energy for competence at work as the child learns to master movement, language, and problem solving. Hundreds of research studies have validated that this innate mastery motive operates in each of us and influences us in our personal and professional lives.

Evidently, every human has a predetermined instinct to master his or her surroundings that presents itself as consciousness forms in infants. Games satisfy the desire for competence by providing a constant stream of optimum challenges, positive feedback, and endless opportunities to improve. Specifically, musical performance, first-person shooter, sports, driving, and platform games provide gamers of all age the opportunity to master new skills (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). Humans' innate desire to conquer myriad tasks leads to the expounding of abilities through digital media, acquiring dexterities otherwise impossible or impractical.

Correspondingly, Adam lives his life based on his physical state and the task assigned him. This leads the first man to master the world in the same manner as his creator. Soloveitchik interprets the notion of living in God's image while subduing the earth as, "attention to the functional and practical aspects of his intellect through which man is able to gain control of nature" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 12). Adam is essentially a scientist making use of quantitative experimentation to provide the sensation of conquering his surroundings. This fulfilling search for knowledge has parallels to the elation of game accomplishments, as will be explained in the following paragraphs. Soloveitchik further explains that Adam's majesty stems from, "the possibility of reproducing the dynamics of the cosmos by employing quantified-mathematized media which man evolves through postulation and creative thinking… Adam is overwhelmed by one quest, namely, to harness and dominate the elemental natural forces and to put them at his disposal" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 13). Adam's tendencies mirror those of God during creation and are indicative of humanity existing *b'tzelem elokim,* in God's image. It is with this mindset that Adam

commences his search for knowledge and majesty in a world flourishing with newfound life yearning to be discovered.

All games innately reflect Adam's conquests, represented simply in the desire for perpetual triumph. Even the earliest of game theorists understand that "[t]he final ingredient for making a learning environment more interesting is the evocation of the learner's curiosity. For this, one needs to provide an optimal level of informational complexity" (Loftus, 1983, p. 42). Without myriad knowledge to pursue, a task seems superficial to the gamer and is unable to incentivize repeated play through the appeal to majesty. Many game designers refer to this quest in the same terms as that of the Holy Grail, pointing to self-improvement and personal advancement as intrinsic reward structures (Howard, 2008). It is this aspect of need satisfaction that leads Israeli scientists to believe that "video game addiction may be a medium for satisfaction of arousal and reward" (Weinstein, 2010, p. 268). Reward structures are noticeably prevalent in game design, indicating an industry-wide attentiveness to player incentives. This application of competence demonstrates tangible improvements to society reminiscent of Adam's scientific contributions.

While many designers employ rewards to excite gamers, some interpret humankind's inclination toward mastery in a general sense, applying the same theory that Soloveitchik, Rigby, and Ryan explored to a general acquisition of knowledge in video game worlds. One common belief is that "[u]nderstanding the repertoire is a matter of competence, and it can affect both content (for example recognizing a quote) or form (being able to interpret the conventions of comic books)" (Egenfelt-Nielsen, Smith, & Tusca, 2008, p. 185). Alternatively, others find epic quests "meaningful because they immerse players in dramas of initiation, defined as a gradual movement up through formalized 'levels' of achievement into a progressively greater understanding of the rules and narrative in a simulated world" (Howard, 2008, p. 26). Whether through a thorough understanding of puzzling surroundings or a denoted rank to provide direct feedback on players' actions, games are compelling in that they allow for self-improvement and mastery. Games fulfill Adam's aspiration of self-deification to live *b'tzelem elokim*.

One quintessential example of competence through pseudo-apotheosis is the Pokémon series. The slogan and theme of the game, "Gotta Catch 'Em All", is explicitly instilled into the name of the protagonist, Ash Ketchum (a play on "Catch 'Em"), and the world-renown, widely-translated theme song:

I wanna be the very best	I will travel across the land
Like no one ever was	Searching far and wide
To catch them is my real test	Each Pokémon to understand
To train them is my cause	The power that's inside…
	(Siegler & Loeffler, 2007)

FIGURE 1. Humans have the competence to evolve other creatures in the *Pokémon* series, such as this goldeen. (WikiWallpapers, n.d.)

The principal goal of the game, spanning all editions, is to catch all the mythical Pokémon creatures, thereby filling the Pokédex. Pokémon creatures in a trainer's possession can level up, learn new abilities, develop more powerful attacks, and even evolve into advanced species. Each new species is documented in a Pokédex, a virtual encyclopedia of the trainer's knowledge of his or her surroundings. In a religious analogy, Pokémon undoubtedly take the place of animals that humankind is charged to dominate (it is impossible to deny the resemblance of a "goldeen" to the average goldfish). A "Pokémon Master," moreover, is one who proves sufficient knowledge of the different elements in the game by training a strong team of obedient creatures.

Pokémon is a manifestation of Adam's archetypal inclination toward mastery. As of 2007, Pokémon's original Red and Blue variations are the second most popular Gameboy and Gameboy color games of all time (The Magic Box, 2007). The series achieved that status by evoking in its audience an atavistic quality of competence—a characteristic first depicted in the opening chapter of the Bible.

The quality of competence seen from Pokémon pervades all genres of gaming, signifying its significance in game design. An exemplary survival horror game, BioShock, forces the player to genetically alter the protagonist, providing a sense of mastery through the ability to manipulate surrounding elements. Alternatively, players of the monumental game Foldit can now solve genetic protein folding problems in reality by manipulating multi-colored chains on their screens. Unfathomable genetic advances and modern medical marvels demonstrate the competence a human can achieve when acting under the same motivations as Adam.

Dignity and Autonomy

Gamers' personalities, however, are not dictated exclusively by a drive for apotheosis. Videogames provide a sense of dignity by leaving players fully accountable for their actions. Depending on the narrative, this freedom can range from a choice of avatars to a liberal, sandbox environment. Rigby and Ryan summarize this phenomenon as a form of autonomy:

> Autonomy needs reflect our innate desire to take actions out of personal volition, and not because we are "controlled" by circumstances or by others. Experiencing a sense of choice and opportunity in our lives, and acting in ways that truly reflect our wishes, result in a satisfaction of this intrinsic autonomy need.

In everyday life, autonomy is gained through rigorous, lethargic processes. Games, however, offer the player the opportunity to achieve a certain level of freedom within the confines of the game, whether provided through a choice of power-ups, or a level design process. As Rigby and Ryan understand autonomy, "[w]hile in the molecular world we hope for just a few moments to ourselves each day and dream of having more freedom to pursue our interests, in digital worlds there is a constant menu of opportunities from which we get to chose" (p. 44). In other words, where reality may constrain humankind in the search for autonomy, games serve as an instant plug-in to freedom and volition.

Soloveitchik's theological concept of dignity is parallel to the concept of autonomy in Glued to Games. The theologian's view of humankind as seen in Genesis 1 is relatively straightforward: "man is a dignified being and to be human means to live with dignity" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 14). Dignity is the stepping-stone that places Adam above the surrounding nature so that he can rule it with his majesty (Soloveitchik. 2006). However, dignity is not limited to humankind's relationship with the world. His comprehension of dignity between modern humans is, perhaps, the most relevant aspect of Soloveitchik's Adam characterization. This is a tension of autonomy between species, eras, and even generations. According to Soloveitchik, "[m]an of old who could not fight disease and succumbed in multitudes to yellow fever or any other plague with degrading helplessness could not lay claim to dignity. Only the man who builds hospitals, discovers therapeutic techniques, and saves lives is blessed with dignity" (p. 16). An ever-advancing society allows each generation to overpower the previous through increased understanding of the world. This phenomenon incites perpetual poise and syncopation on innovation with each passing year, or else, generational shame. Soloveitchik understands the link between competence and autonomy as extremely intimate. He recognizes that "[c]ivilized man has gained limited control of nature and has become, in certain respects, her master, and with his mastery he has attained dignity as well" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 17). Overarching pride and volition are extensions of Adam's prowess; autonomy is as inherent in humankind as the skills through which it can be obtained.

On occasion, video games can appear confining and superficially contradict the notion of dignity. They introduce obstacles, difficult levels, and the sporadic dead end that makes a player shut down the console. Yet, simultaneously, these games are outlets that provide freedom which some may lack in everyday interactions. Founder of All Games Productions, All Games Network, and co-founder of the G-4 television network, Scot Rubin, reflected on the experience as follows:

> In this world you are in complete control. You know exactly what the rules are and sometimes you are omniscient in this world. In some games you can even be omnipotent and omnipresent, like playing god. Depending on the game, you usually expand your powers to control the game world as time goes on. Playing a video game

can be fun because it allows you to escape to a world which is "perfect" as compared to the world in which we live in… you can do things you normally would not do. (Newman & Simons, 2004)

Autonomy is the reason for which sandbox modes and cheat codes are readily available to gamers worldwide. It is a means of escapism that provides the player a sense of dignity otherwise sparse in reality. The sense of achievement is commonplace in the virtual world and is an essential component in the learning curve of a game. As James Paul Gee writes in Why Video Games are Good for your Soul, "[g]ames like Rise of Nations allow players to take a perspective looking down on a world composed of diverse civilizations. From this god-like perspective, players meld their growing skills and knowledge as world builders with the many smart characters and objects they control in the game" (p. 86). Once more, autonomy and competence coexist as the player makes use of an elevated position to develop unique talents. In one study of gamers unlocking characters, it was determined that "[s]ince they all wanted to be the first to discover a new feature about the character, there were numerous times when one player would put off answering another player's question about a new move until they have fully understood it themselves" (Hung, 2011, p. 140). The researchers did not, however, view this act as selfish. Rather, because the players eventually shared their information, their actions were interpreted as autonomous. The overwhelming urge to conquer a topic before instructing others is demonstrative of the same struggle Adam portrays in Genesis through his search for dignity.

FIGURE 1. *The Sims* provides a God-like autonomous environment for the player to direct the lives of avatars with infinite possibilities. (The Sims 4, 2013)

One game in particular that exhibits dignity and autonomy of the player is The Sims. The series presents the player with no goal other than to direct every aspect of an avatar's life (or multiple avatars' lives). As one advertisement states, "create simulated people and build their homes, then help your Sims pursue careers, earn money, make friends, and find romance… or totally mess up their lives… There is no right and wrong way to play this game" (Nielsen, Smith, & Tusca, 2008, p. 172). The lack of direction in The Sims allows total flexibility in gameplay. The user can design houses, vacation structures, and downtown venues based on certain expansion packs. Additionally, each version of The Sims has inherent cheat codes specifically targeted to the player. These cheats generate infinite resources and hidden abilities for the average gamer to take full advantage of the sandbox that The Sims

represents. The volition which The Sims is uniquely capable of providing as a series was no doubt pivotal in earnings its place as the most popular PC game of all time (The Magic Box, 2007). Even with the limitless possibilities available, most players refrain from external help for the sake of maintaining the dignity and responsibility with which they are entrusted when occupying this godly role. Given complete autonomy in a game modeled similarly to The Sims, a player typically delves into the role of an overseer and exemplifies traits parallel to those that Soloveitchik attributed to Adam.

The Sims is one of many videogames that employs similar appeals to autonomy in order to engage an audience. Spore, for example, is considered a God game because the player monitors the evolution of a species into the space age, at which point he or she receives a genesis device (McGonigal, 2011). Alternatively, the sandbox game Minecraft has no defined goals and demonstrates humankind's gravitation towards freedom of volition in gameplay. The aforementioned examples, exhibiting trends of the modern videogame industry, entice in players the same sense of autonomy that Adam sought after in Genesis.

Collaboration and Relatedness

The autonomy provided by games is further supplemented by a player's ability to interact with others. Videogames define a realm in which those involved can create their own social structures within and without the arena. This sense of relatedness is Rigby and Ryan's final pillar of gaming engagement, which they describe in this manner:

> "Relatedness" refers to our need to have meaningful connections to others. As with competence and autonomy, we see time and again that people seek out quality relationships simply for the intrinsic reward that comes from having a mutually supportive connection with others. Feelings of camaraderie, belonging, and the experience that you matter to others are all part of feeling relatedness.

Videogames are no longer synonymous with isolation. Massive multiplayer online games (MMOs), game wikis, and mobile gaming have defined not only how one plays, but also with whom one plays. In fact, relatedness can apply to non-player characters as well. By providing moments of relevance and cooperative play, even single-player games are adroit at evoking the human desire for relatedness (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). This human characteristic, which is also crucial to Soloveitchik's depiction of Adam, is increasingly relevant in gaming culture.

In distinguishing between Adam's two portrayals, Soloveitchik focuses immensely on the social characteristics of each man in order to lay a foundation for his thesis about being a "lonely man of faith." As Adam 1 is the antithesis to this loneliness, Soloveitchik looks to his creation contemporaneously with Eve as a basis for his collaborative attitude. His theology states that this relatedness "is a natural one, a product of the creative, social gesture in which Adam engages whenever he thinks that

collective living and acting will promote his interests" (Soloveitchik, 2006, p. 27).[5] Almost instantaneously, Adam is aware of the practicality of collaboration, a value that runs through academic societies even in modern times, most recently extending its confines into the realm of videogames. Soloveitchik clarifies that gregariousness is a "primordial urge to come together in face of opposition" and that "[t]he difference between man associating with others and animals flocking together consists, of course, in the fact that while the mute creatures react in a mechanical, spurious and purposeless way, eloquent and wise man acts intelligently and technologically" (p. 28). Here, the theologian portrays a base necessity, rather than a complex spiritual ideal.[6] Adam, as characterized above, contains the same inherent need that Rigby and Ryan describe in gamers. Modern human rely upon contracts, treaties, and collaboration because of the belief that "a successful life is possible only within a communal framework," just as Soloveitchik believes Adam would have ascertained shortly following his creation (p. 30). The archetype for social interaction as described in Adam's characterization lays the groundwork for modern gaming's concept of relatedness.

Studies have shown that the social habits Adam must have possessed are similarly influential in the engagement of gamers. For example, "[s]ocial relationships and the specific time and flexibility characteristics ("easy-in, easy-out") in multiplayer browser games have been suggested as the main cause for enjoyment in Germany" (Weinstein, 2010, p. 269). Players are supportive of each other through online walkthroughs, team strategy games, and the occasional opportunity to converse with one another (Hung, 2011). In his research on the learning curve in games, Dr. Aaron Chia Yuan Hung found that "[d]uring training, players are essentially collaborating to discover new knowledge…[T]hey had to organize the training such that there was opportunity to test out new moves on one another, which can be difficult since everyone wanted to be the first to discover a new move" (p. 138). Games provide the perfect avenue for collaboration. Multiplayer options are increasingly popular and massive multiplayer online role-playing games, or MMORPGs, have seen a steep increase in recent years to "facilitate community formation by offering support and a sense of belonging" (Howard, 2008, p. 27). As Soloveitchik explained them, these societies are a means to achieve mastery and dignity through unparalleled, cooperative experience. In a world teeming with mobile gaming, MMORPGs, and an emphasis on teamwork, relatedness has evidently become a central pillar of the gaming

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[5] Interestingly enough, Soloveitchik supports his arguments with the social contract theory, believing that it has no chronological specifications. As a result, he writes "there is no contradiction between the Biblical story of the creation of Adam [1] and the social-contract theory" (Soloveitchik, 2006).

[6] Soloveichik goes so far as to state that Adam [1] would not understand the phrase, ""[i]t is not good for man to be alone," which God utters in the second creation story (Genesis 2:18,22). He would interpret it, rather, as a statement of man's limited capacity to work without partners.

experience in much the same way it would have intrigued Adam in his Genesis experience.

Perhaps the most significant and explicit portrayal of relatedness is in the MMORPG World of Warcraft. In 7 years of existence, World of Warcraft has claimed the title of the most popular massive multiplayer online game to grace the Internet (Snow, 2007). World of Warcraft is unique in that

FIGURE 2. *World of Warcraft* guilds account for the game's appeal to relatedness in a similar sense to Adam's appreciation of social connectivity. (Genzoman, 2009)

it offers players endless opportunities to react with one another. Trade, conversation, battle, and cooperation through guilds are pinnacle to this game's domination of the industry. The community of World of Warcraft not only thrives within the virtual land of Azeroth, but also externally in a boisterous blogosphere that explores every aspect of the environment. With 5.93 billion years of collective gameplay in Azeroth, the same amount of time that has passed since humans first stood on hind legs, the gamers of World of Warcraft have collected unfathomable quantities of information into their wiki, an openly modified community website (McGonigal, 2010). One cannot examine this game without a comprehension of its implications on an evolutionary scale. World of Warcraft was destined, like Adam in Genesis, to construct a societal structure on a macro scale in order to advance within the confines of a new world. This collaborative spirit, often absent in today's civilizations, is an incentive for increased gameplay and engagement within World of Warcraft's target audience.

The collaborative spirit of gameplay is as popular in casual games as it is in World of Warcraft. New applications, such as Apple's Game Center, make it possible for players to instantly update scores from mobile games and collaborate in ways previously unimaginable. This ultimately has the effect of making games a more communal experience. With these technological advances in casual games and virtual societies blossoming in MMORPGs, developers are attracting new players with appeals to relatedness—appeals that place modern gamers in direct parallel to Adam.

Gaming Incentives as Game-Changers in the Modern World

Whether or not we participate in them, games similar to World of Warcraft demonstrate potential cultural implications on the same magnitude as religion. Video gaming has skyrocketed in popularity since

its inception four decades ago and is increasingly relevant in modern society. With a relatively brief history, however, it is impossible to foresee the lasting implications of gaming in modern society. Recently, ludologists have theorized that games are much more pertinent than previously believed. One prominent game designer at the forefront of her field, Dr. Jane McGonigal, posits that videogames are not only a useful exploit, but have the potential to revolutionize modern society and solve real world dilemmas.

In her book, Reality Is Broken, McGonigal defines factors of player engagement similar to those in Glued to Games. However, her analysis of society leads McGonigal to understand that,

> We don't have an endless stream of opportunities to do something that matters right now, presented with clear instructions, and finely tuned our moment-by-moment capabilities. Without that kind of creative and logistical support, there's no easy way to go after epic goals and successfully achieve them in our everyday lives. (McGonigal, 2011)

Presumably, our world does not live up to the standards we expect from videogames—standards represented through Genesis. McGonigal recognizes that gamers involved in projects such as the World of Warcraft wiki are enthralled by their grandiose gaming accomplishments and lack similar experience in daily life. With this foundation, she argues that collaborative games with real world themes will provide avenues to worldwide problem solving if the games can properly engage their players. These "collaborative superpowers" allow everyday users to actualize their mastery of their virtual environments, as evidenced by games such as Foldit and Spore. McGonigal understands her industry as follows:

> The great challenge for us today, and for the remainder of the century, is to integrate games more closely into our everyday lives, and to embrace them as a platform for collaborating on our most important planetary efforts.
> If we commit to harnessing the power of games for real happiness and real change, then a better reality is more than plausible—it is likely. And in that case, our future together will be quite extraordinary. (McGonigal, 2011)

The goal is clear: to allow for practical advancement of society through gaming by inciting more gameplay worldwide. McGonigal, Rigby, Ryan, and their colleagues define the emotional foundation that incentivizes gamers. Understanding the inherent human basis for this psychology is the key to incorporating ludology theories into modern games. Developers can employ these tactics to revolutionize the widespread use of collaboration on a scale predicted by McGonigal and modeled by religious history.

Solidifying the Parallels of Theology and Ludology

If religion has driven a majority of humanity throughout recorded history, then games are humanity's avenue. However, it follows that one should

ask, "Why games?" and "Why connect them to religion?" Essentially, religion and videogames mark two monumental entities whose widespread implications are the foundation for potential social change. Religion, one of the most ancient societal accomplishments, a crucial pillar of culture providing meaning to everyday life, has proven itself as a motivating factor throughout history. The relevance of religion in such globally known turning points as the crusades, the ninety-five theses, or the Holocaust is inarguable. In contrast, gaming is a new societal phenomenon. Its lasting impacts are difficult to predict, but current research suggests that they will be on the same scale of magnitude as those that are religiously motivated. Hence, in examining religion as a pillar of society, it is possible to ascribe a similar trajectory toward gaming. Addressing the direct parallels between the two allows for continued validity in the predictions.

Religion and gaming relate in their psychosomatic portrayals of humanity. Religion attracts Adam through appeals to mastery, dignity, and societal improvement in the same manner that videogames attract players through appeals to competence, autonomy, and relatedness. The parallels of atavistic motivations explain not only why we game, but also why we have an inherent inclination toward gaming. Global transformation is, therefore, a probable result of the gaming revolution. Only in understanding their predecessors—those monumental ideals dating back to Genesis—is it truly possible to imagine the future impacts of games on the world.

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