

“HUEHUEHUE I’m BR”: spam, trolling and griefing in online games

“HUEHUEHUE eu sou BR”: spam, trollagem e griefing nos jogos on-line

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the reputation of aggressiveness of Brazilians in multiplayer online games, with special attention to a group known as HUEHUEs, or HUEs. It starts with descriptions of some of these players' actions and of the ways in which they perform their identification with Brazil. The discussion progresses according to the three categories usually encountered in the literature about toxic behaviour in online environments: spamming, trolling and griefing. The conclusion is that Brazilians are not the only players to behave aggressively in multiplayer games and that the HUEHUEs are not the most violent gamers. Their actions are not a novelty on the internet, but the peculiarities of the way they act, on the other hand, differentiate those Brazilians from players of other nationalities.

Keywords: Games. Brazilians. Griefer. Troll. HUE.

RESUMO

O artigo trata da reputação de agressividade dos brasileiros em jogos multiplayer online, em particular um grupo conhecido como HUEs ou HUEHUEs. O tema é discutido a partir da descrição de algumas ações desse grupo de jogadores e dos modos como operam sua identificação com o Brasil. A discussão é encadeada conforme as três categorias em que a literatura pré-existente costuma entender o comportamento tóxico em ambientes on-line: o envio de spam, a trollagem e o griefing. Conclui-se que a agressividade nos jogos multiplayer na internet não é privilégio dos brasileiros, e que os HUEHUEs estão longe de serem os jogadores mais violentos no cenário internacional. Nota-se que as ações dos HUEHUEs não constituem novidade na internet, mas, por outro lado, as singularidades de seu modo de agir diferenciam os brasileiros dos jogadores de outras nacionalidades.

Palavras-chave: Games. Agressividade. Griefer. Troll. HUE.

Introduction

Domestic access to the internet in Brazil remains a privilege of less than half of its population, and connection speeds are low (CGI, 2013). Despite that, there is significant Brazilian presence on the net, both because of the size of the country's population and because of Brazilians' appreciation of online activities. The latter can be seen, for example, in the fact that, since 2005, Brazilians stay online for longer than internet users of any other country (Ibope, 2006, 2013). Their predominant online activities are sociability and entertainment. This heavy use of the internet for social interaction tends to be attributed to the friendly

and warm nature of Brazilians (Silva, 2005; Ruvolo, 2014). However, analyses of the tracks left by Brazilians on the internet point to a different scenario, full of aggressions and symbolic violence (Recuero, 2013). This text is about aggressive behaviour on the part of Brazilians on the internet. Its focus lies on multiplayer games, the environment in which the association between Brazilian nationality and aggressiveness in online interactions is more prominent at the moment.

Although games are less popular than other forms of entertainment and online social interactions in Brazil, 33% of Brazilians that access the internet use it to play games (CGI, 2013). In absolute numbers, this corresponds to almost 25 million people playing online. Amongst them, there is a group that stands out by their use of specific disruptive practices and direct association with Brazil. It's not a fixed group, or even previously organized: although sometimes players coordinate actions, in most cases they aggregate spontaneously. The most common trigger for this to happen is the use of memes that characterize them, amongst which are "HUEHUEHUE", "BR", "Eu sou BR" and images associated with

■ **Fig. 1:** Representation of Brazilian online gamers. Unknown author.



Source: Forum Multiplayer Game Online Hacking (MGOH).

Brazil, as shown in Figure 1. These players are often referred to as HUEHUEs, or just HUEs, a nickname derived from the HUEHUEHUE meme. Even in contexts in which the HUEHUEHUE meme does not appear explicitly, the actions of HUEHUEs are called *hueing* ['huezagem'].

Toxic behaviour¹ in games and on the internet is neither a privilege of the HUEHUEs, nor of Brazilians. Literature on the matter usually divides disruptive

¹ This use of the word 'toxic' derives from the expression "toxic disinhibition", with which Suler (2005) characterizes the disinhibition effect that results from certain conditions of social interaction such as

actions in online environments into three categories: spam, trolling and grieving. 'Hueing' bears similarities with all of them, but it also has some differentiating peculiarities. This suggests situating the behaviour of HUEHUEs in the broader context of toxic interaction on the internet can be a good way to identify its characteristics. To this end, the next section presents a general description of the HUEHUEs, based on data collected on the internet. This is followed by a discussion of 'hueing' that is based on the categories of disruptive online behaviour commonly encountered in previous literature on the subject. The conclusion recalls how some aspects of the behaviour of the HUEHUEs fit into those categories and highlights the imprecision on the differentiation between spam, trolling and grieving, which is independent of the situation or location where such behaviour happens. The differences between the HUEHUEs and other spammers, trolls and grievers are the main point of the conclusion.

HUEHUEs

HUEHUEs can be encountered with relative ease in multiplayer games and are mentioned in various places in the internet. Empirical data was collected through cascading searches made between January and July 2014, starting on *Google*, with the meme 'HUEHUEHUE' as a keyword. The results of these initial searches led to websites, generic forums, game forums, newspapers and blogs². These findings suggested new keywords and expressions, such as 'BR?BR?', 'Brazilian' and 'gibe moni plos'. This material was used to contextualize and exemplify 'hueing'.

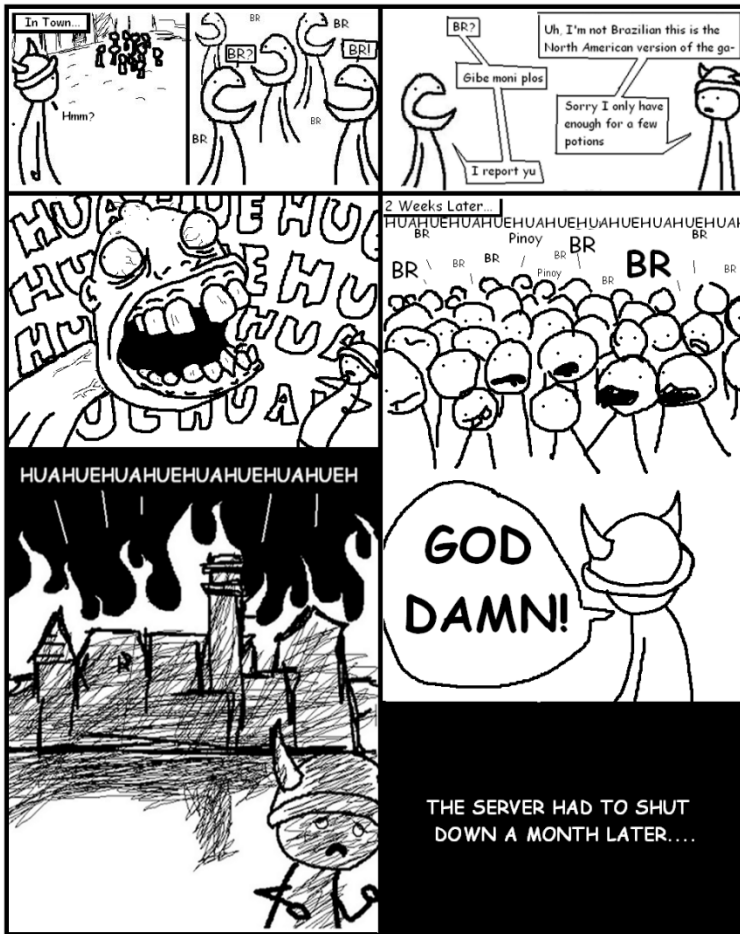
The origin of the HUEHUEs is attributed to conflicts that occurred in 2003, in the game *Ragnarok Online*. Playing in servers located in the USA, in which communication was mainly in English, Brazilians searched for one another with the question "BR?" and communicated in Portuguese in the public chat. From the point of view of the other players, that did not understand what was being said, their conversation was nothing more than noise and was overloading the channel. The repetitions of "BR?BR?" had the same effect, to the point of crashing the game's server. Figure 2 shows a comic from an unknown author that describes the story of Brazilians in *Ragnarok*.

As a solution to the complaints of the North-American players, a Brazilian *Ragnarok Online* server was created. However, Brazilians continued to use USA's

anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipsistic introjection, dissociative imagination and minimization of authority

2 *Know Your Meme, Urban Dictionary; Reddit; Steam; League of Legends, Dota2, World of Warcraft, Tecmundo, Folha de S. Paulo, etc.*

■ **Fig. 2:** How the HUEHUEs 'ruined' Ragnarok. Unknown author.



Source: lolbot.net

servers, which had better performance and maintenance. Administrators of private servers attempted to protect USA players through the prohibition of any language other than English language in the public chat. Those who disobeyed were banished.

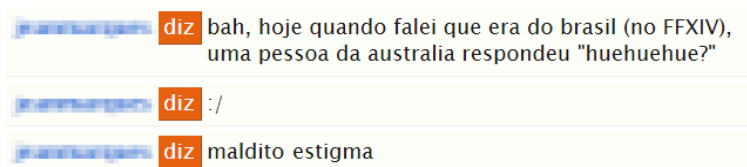
Needless to say, many Brazilians were banned on the spot. A huge uproar in the Brazilian community occurred. In a certain Brazilian forum [...] they would organize raids and clans to fight English Speakers on english [sic] servers.

[...]

Huge groups would reach max level and travel in packs on PVP [player versus player] servers and ask "BR?" [...] If you failed to reply in Portuguese, they would camp you, sometimes for hours speaking poorly worded english insults suggesting you log off. This led to an intense hate of Brazilians on these RO servers. Huge clans would form anti-BR Brigades and hunt down Brazilians. It became an all out war. (GreenEyedMonster, 24/06/2012)

Since then, similar stories have taken place in various other games, like *Tibia*, *World of Warcraft*, *League of Legends*, *Tera*, and *DotA 2*. Today it is still not rare that Brazilian servers (when they exist) have worse performance or are updated less frequently than the American ones, so Brazilian players still prefer USA servers. Unsatisfied, other players organize petitions to block IP addresses from Brazil, refuse to play with Brazilians and even expel Brazilian players because of their nationality. In many cases, the victims are not HUEHUEs, but the association between 'hueing' and Brazil has become generalized (Figure 3).

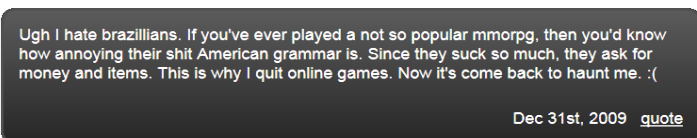
■ **Fig. 3:** spontaneous testimony of association between Brazil and the meme HUEHUEHUE in the social network site *Plurk*. The three texts were posted in sequence by the same person and read: Today when I said I am from brazil [sic] (in FFXIV [*Final Fantasy XIV*]), someone from australia [sic] answered with "huehuehue?":/Damn



Fonte: a autora.

However irritating, the repetition of the HUEHUEHUE meme would be insufficient to justify the current level of rejection of Brazilians in online games. Part of the data found in game forums show three other characteristics or attitudes deemed unpleasant: ignorance or bad use of the English language, Brazilian players' lack of skill and their tendency to ask for things in-game (Figure 4).

■ **Fig. 4:** Complaints about Brazilian players due to lack of knowledge of English (top), incompetence (centre) and tendency to ask for things (bottom).



I never played LoL or HoN, and only ever played dota back in WC3. I have heard rumors about Brazilian players being among the most notoriously bad players, but I figured it was just the community's scapegoat when they had a bad game or just an overdone stereotype. Man was I ever wrong. I must have played at least 10 games now that have been ruined because of Brazilian players.

Another phenomenon I've personally seen is the fact that Brazilians tend to ask for handouts in games where trading resources is an option. I'm not sure where this comes from. Perhaps Brazilian culture is more sharing than mine? If it is a more sharing culture, then the Brazilians I have encountered are not particularly reciprocal or courteous about their requests.

Sources: top, *Lolbot.net* (2009). Centre, *DotA2* forum in *GameFAQs* (2012). Bottom, *Reddit* (2012).

However bitter, complaints by foreign players rarely are as hard as the description of *hueing* encountered in an article in *Folha de S. Paulo*. That Brazilian newspaper adopted a vocabulary that deliberately criminalized the actions of the HUEHUEs, describing them as "assault" and "pillage". The article also spoke about "begging" and included a specific style which it called "creative begging", comparing it to street artists that perform for financial compensation. The fact that this type of behaviour wasn't mentioned by any other source, the apparent lack of knowledge of game vocabulary and the differences in some descriptions compromise the reliability of the "tactics most used by toxic players in online games" list published by that newspaper. Despite its incoherencies, the article was widely shared in blogs, forums and social networks, even by gamers. With rare exceptions, the sharing consisted of nothing more than simply copying and pasting the article and, aligning with the newspaper, harshly criticizing the HUEHUEs, recommending "Don't be a HUEHUE BR... That's not cool!³". Even in the rare occasions in which the article's generalization of *hueing* to all Brazilian players was contested, the use of terms associated with criminal practices to describe actions in online games was not questioned. However, with the possible exception of insisting in speaking Portuguese in servers in which the official language is English, the other practices of the HUEs don't differ from destructive behaviour common in games and other online environments.

Toxic behaviour in online interactions

Practices considered disruptive, aggressive or inadequate for online social interactions tend to be categorized as spam, trolling or griefing. Previous literature associates each type to specific actions or sets of actions and discusses each category individually. Thus, there are texts that talk about spam, trolling or griefing separately, as if they it was possible to clearly distinguish one from the other. Although these divisions might be clear in typical cases, it is not always possible to discern what is spam, what is trolling and what is griefing. The borders between these practices are fuzzy and they are not mutually exclusive; therefore, one doesn't necessarily appear isolated from the others.

The next sections of this article will follow the literature and that typical categorization. Later on, however, spam, trolling and griefing will be treated as simultaneous or combined manifestations, which comes closer to the practices of the HUEs and to the truth of social interactions throughout the internet.

3 Title of a post published in the blog *Donas de Casa que Jogam WoW* (Housewives that play WoW). Available at: <<http://www.donasdecasawow.com.br/nao-seja-um-huehue-br-isso-nao-e-legal/>>, 21 May 2013. Access: 17 July 2014.

Spam

The most common action of the HUEs is the repetition of the HUEHUEHUE or BR?BR? memes, which makes a situation very similar to that of the sketch of the British group Monty Python that inspired the use of the word 'spam' in the internet⁴. The original meaning of the sketch, in which repetitions of the word spam serves as both redundancy and noise, making communication unviable, also applies to the automatic and massive sending of emails both for commercial ends and for phishing⁵. This is the context in which the word spam has been most frequently applied in the last few years, but the word remains valid for all mediated interactions in the internet, including online games. In the context of games, Hess (2003) presents a brief and efficient description of spam as "[c]opious amounts of unwanted text whose volume is so great it renders its content useless or pointless", and describes the act of spamming as "generating so much text that its sheer quantity is offensive regardless of its content" (p. 29). It is not difficult to find the HUHUEHUE meme used to spam in blogs, forums and social networks, the HUEHUE's preferred target is the public chat of games. Spamming the chat accelerates the passing of text through the screen, making it difficult or even impossible for players to communicate.

In an early text about disruptive online practices, Stivale identifies different motivations for spamming and proposes that, instead of closed categories, it would be more productive to think of the various types of spam as a line that goes from play ("comic spam", which corresponds to inoffensive provocations between players) to violence ("aggressive spam", in which messages are ostensibly hostile and are intended to offend and insult). Between those two extremes lie ambiguous situations ("ambiguous spam", which can be interpreted both as play and as aggression) (1997, p. 133). This ambiguous zone tends to be wider in international interactions, as cultural differences between those involved facilitate misunderstandings, such as playing taken as offense or insults interpreted as jokes. 'Hueing' seems to take advantage of that, as the

4 In the original sketch, that was aired for the first time in the 1970s, a waitress describes the items of a menu in which everything includes spam. A client asks for something without spam. The word spam is repeated by her, by a customer and by a group of Vikings who sing 'spam spam spaaaam, beloved spam, spam, spam, wonderful spaaaam'. Other characters such as a tourist using a dictionary and a historian talking about viking invasions, all repeating the word spam and increasing the communicational noise to entropic levels.

5 *Phishing* is a type of electronic fraud to access private data, mostly usernames and passwords, bank details, credit card numbers and codes, etc.

HUEHUEs act on the borders of what, for players from other countries, constitutes aggression. However, the width of intercultural ambiguity means that practices that did not have the intention of being aggressive can also be misunderstood. The repetition of BR?BR?, for example can express a sincere desire to find other Brazilian players to form teams, as the ability to communicate can be key to the group's success. This unintentional spam, originally benign, is no less annoying to those who are not seeking to form teams with Brazilians, since it makes their communication harder.

Trolling

Trolling is an expression generally interpreted as a reference to trolls, beings of the Scandinavian mythology that, in the most popular version, live underneath bridges and collect tolls from those who wish to pass. Donath (1998) raises the possibility of a different meaning by recovering a message published in a newsgroup in 1995, which alerted that one of the group's participants could be *'trolling a baited line'*:

Are you familiar with fishing? Trolling is where you set your fishing lines in the water and then slowly go back and forth dragging the bait and hoping for a bite. Trolling on the Net is the same concept - someone baits a post and then waits for the bite on the line and then enjoys the ensuing fight. (Unknown author, 1995, extracted from Donath, 1998, p. 14/26)

Although the first image is better known, the analogy with fishing is a better description of trolling on the internet, which consists of provoking participants of an online forum, message board, game, etc. with the intention of inciting fights and confrontations with impertinent comments, by ridiculing or inferiorising others.

Morrisey (2010) focused on the pragmatics instead of the contents or the social and cultural aspects of trolling. Based on the Theory of Relevance (Wilson and Sperber, 2005), the author identifies three basic aspects of trolling: the "first order intention", the "informative intention" and the "stimulus", which in this text will be denominated 'ostensive stimulus'⁶. The 'first order intention' is the

⁶ The denomination "first order intention" is parallel to Morrisey's "high order intention", which, although derived from the idea of "communicative intention" in Wilson and Sperber, is not exactly the same. The adoption of the adjective "ostensive" to stimulus, on the other hand, comes from Wilson and Sperber, as Morrisey does not use this qualification. The expression "informative intention" comes from Wilson and Sperber and is also used by Morrisey.

troll's general plan; what he really wants to achieve by trolling. The 'informative intention' is what the troll says or does; the content he utters. The 'ostensive stimuli' is the strategy used by the troll to achieve his first order intention – it's the bait that the troll expects someone to bite, the toll to cross the bridge.

All trolling has the intention of disturbing others and generate conflict, but this can be achieved in different ways. The most common method is to ridicule one person or a small group of people, in front of a bigger community. In these cases, the pleasure of trolling increases in direct proportion to the ranking of the players that react to the provocation (or, in some communities, the player's reputation). For example, in some occasions the first order intention of 'gibe moni plos'⁷ is not really to receive items or game coin, but to irritate other players until they lose control. In these cases, the HUEHUE annoys a player (normally an experienced one) insisting on the 'gibe moni plos' until the other player reacts in an aggressive way and then threatens to report him to the game's administrators for racism (with the memes 'I report u' and 'thas raciss'). Like in any case of trolling, losing control and reacting to the provocations is 'taking the bait', which makes the provoked player look foolish – and, supposedly, makes the HUEHUE look smart.

This same example is peculiar in the utteration of its informative intention. The HUEHUE asks for money, but does it in a childish way, nearly a *noob talk*⁸. This is one of the peculiar things about 'hueing': HUEHUEs portray themselves as ugly (as in Fig. 1), act foolishly and ridicule themselves. Versions of a video that's on the web exemplify this form of 'self-trolling' in relation to the comparison of Brazilian players with monkeys (Fig. 5).

Knowing the first order intention of trolls, that is, what they want to achieve by trolling, is not the same as knowing why they troll. Some reasons for trolling reported in previous literature include fun, vengeance, prejudice, anger and self-empowerment. Amongst those, entertainment is the most generalized reason: independently of how or where they act, all trolls say that they enjoy the results of their actions. This is true even with those who target vulnerable groups, such as those trolls studied by Herring et al. (2002). Other than having fun, those trolls seem to have other reasons, such as a search for control and

7 The meme 'gibe mony plos' is a corrupted version of give me money please, used for begging. The repetition of this meme is common and can be considered a form of spam.

8 A 'noob' is a newcomer (newbie), specially one that behaves arrogantly. Thus, 'noob talk', or 'noob language', is the way of expression typical of presumptuous newcomers. Noob talk frequently includes excessive phonetic writing, childlike or supposedly inventive expressions that make it difficult to understand what is said.

■ **Fig. 5:** Association between HUEHUEs and gorillas, with subtitles in Portuguese. In the original video, a child and a gorilla baby play on different sides of a glass pane. After a while, the gorilla mother comes to interrupt the play, taking her baby away from the glass and the human child. In the image: on the left, initial frame of the original video. Centre, altered frame of the video, in which the child's head is replaced by that of a HUEHUE. On the right, frame of the final sequence of the video, in which the mother takes her baby away, with subtitles in Portuguese that read: GET AWAY FROM THIS MONKEY. The language indicates that the alterations were made by Brazilians. Unknown author.



Source: original video, YouTube; changed video, Reddit.

empowering, which directs the trolls to attack more fragile groups, like sick people. Trolls that turn to stigmatized groups (like homosexuals and black people) tend to be motivated by anger and prejudice, that is, "hate towards those the troll considers different or threatening" (Herring et al., 2002, p. 381). Another type of anger was found by Shachaf and Hara (2010), who studied trolls motivated by vengeance: "...he [the troll] is angry because of the way he was treated in the past" (interviewee 6 in Shachaf and Hara, 2010, p. 9/13).

Considering that the history of the HUEHUEs includes prohibition of communicating in their native language, banning for USA servers and several types of insults, it is necessary to consider the hypothesis that, like the trolls studied by the authors previously mentioned, the HUEHUEs are also motivated by anger, prejudice, vengeance and/or need of empowerment. It is important to consider that the normal target of HUEHUEs are USA players, and that episodes of aggression involving Brazilians and people from the USA in online environments is not limited to games, but also includes other cases such as that of the *Fotolog* (Kahney, 2003) and *Orkut* (Fragoso, 2006). Going back to the idea of an ambiguous zone of provocation proposed by Stivale (1997), *hueing* would not be a way of playing that those from the USA consider aggressive, but rather an act of aggression that Brazilians consider amusing.

A common aspect to all conflicts between internet users in the USA and Brazil is the insistence that Brazilians have in speaking Portuguese online. In the case of HUEHUEs, the use of their native language, the deliberate corruptions of

the foreign language and the shared vocabulary of memes act as indentifying marks, which are especially important in the building and strengthening of the community. This is reinforced by the content of the memes associated to Brazilian nationality, as is the case with 'BR?', the use of the flag (Fig. 01) and the use of a caricature of a known Brazilian soccer player as the face of the HUEHUE. The importance of those symbols to the HUEHUEs is not an anomaly. According to Donath (1998), trolling is, before anything, a question of identity, a game of lies and manipulations that involves anonymity and the making of false identities, including the representation of belonging to certain social groups. This last possibility allows us to think of *hueing* as both a type of engagement (for example, part of a nationalist campaign in the internet) and a masquerade; in the Bakhtinian sense more than Goffman's. In Bakhtin,

[t]he mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames (Bakhtin, 1984. pp. 39-40)

As the identifying marks work as references for the identification of other HUEHUEs, this carnivalesque meaning of *hueing* is an invitation the spontaneous joining of these groups. The preference for collective action is one of the main differences between the HUEHUEs and other trolls, as described by the literature, which highlights the preference for individual action (Donath, 1999; Herring, 2002; Shachaf and Hara, 2010). By acting in groups, the HUEHUEs multiply the power of their spam and gain strength to annoy stronger players⁹. However, the denomination *troll* is rarely used in scientific texts about disruptive actions in groups or in games. In these circumstances, it's more common to find the denomination *griefer*.

Griefing

According to English dictionaries, *grief* is intense sorrow, often resulting from someone's death, or the source of that feeling. Informally, the word is also used as a synonym of trouble or irritation. In online interactions, the derivatives *griefing* and *griefers* refer both meanings, by designating players (and their

⁹ As already mentioned, it is not difficult to find references to Brazilians being unskilled players with weak characters. However, it is necessary to consider the possibility that the character used for hueing is not the same that is used when playing 'for real'.

actions) that annoy others, making the game experience be unpleasant, painful or even traumatic. Foo & Koivisto (2004) highlight this as grievers' first order intention, considering that they don't have fun by *playing* the game, but by *ruining* the game of others. It's possible to say that grievers are playing a different game, with their own rules, in which the objective is to compromise the game others are playing and cause pain and sadness. To accomplish this, they use spam and trolling, provoking and ridiculing others. Games' well-defined rules and objectives, allied to a more explicit ambience, facilitate some forms of griefing that are peculiar to games.

Many (but not all) of the action typical of 'huezagem' are mentioned in a compilation of grievers' common practices made by Achterbosch, Miller and Vamplew, which is based on a revision of literature and an online survey. Most of the players that answered the survey, as well as the authors of the revised works, were of Anglo-Saxon origin. The result was confirmation of action such as "*verbal harassment, spamming chat channels, looting other players spoils of war, corpse and spawn camping, blocking players paths and movement, preying on new players, scamming, and disrupting events as well as your own team*" (Achterbosch, Miller and Vamplew, 2013, p.7/8). The list of acts associated with griefing is completed by studies with Asian players that added stalking, extorting, forming gangs, killing (Chen, Duh and Ng, 2009)¹⁰. The information about the HUEHUEs collected for the research in which the present article is based did not mention all these types of griefing, but added others that seem specific to *hueing*: deliberately making grammatical or orthographical errors (especially when insulting other players in English); threatening to report other players for racism; committing suicide mid-battle; playing badly on purpose and act as if not understanding instructions or what the team has agreed to do (despite having demonstrated good knowledge of the English language).

Foo and Koivisto (2004) proposed that all variations of griefing could be understood in terms of four macro-categories: intimidation; *power* imposition, scamming and greed play. The actions of the HUEHUEs, however, would better fit into a fifth category: Making fun of other players. Mocking can be a strategy of power imposition and of cheating, but this is not how it's used by HUEHUEs. To make fun of another player, the HUEHUEs do not make the other seem pathetic, but, instead, ridicule themselves, pretending to be more ignorant or less competent than they really are. This is a type of empowering, but an inside-out takeover. It is better interpreted in relation to Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque,

¹⁰ The authors also refer to insulting and looting, that have already been mentioned

but in reverse. By assuming the role of the buffoon, of the jester, the HUEHUEs escape sanctions that regulate carnival itself, such as time and space frames.

There are others who grieve by mockery, but the tone of their actions is different from hueing. The attacks of the 'Patriotic Nigras', a group of grieferers that terrorized *Habbo Hotel* and later *Second Life*, for example, are also a type of jest. From their denomination to their content (in Morrissey's terms, 2010, their 'first order intention'), however, the Patriotic Nigras act much nearer the aggressive side of Stivale's (1997) ambiguous zone than the HUEHUEs.

Though real-life details are difficult to come by, it's clear that few, if any, PNs are in fact African-American. But their blackface shenanigans, they say, aren't racist in any heartfelt sense. "Yeah, the thing about the racist thing," says ^ban^, leader of the Patriotic Nigras, "is ... it's all just a joke." It's only one element, he insists, in an arsenal of PN techniques designed to push users past the brink of moral outrage toward that rare moment — at once humiliating and enlightening — when they find themselves crying over a computer game (Dibbel, 2008, p. 2/7).

The harsh face of these actions can be seen more clearly in the description of the Nigras, who present themselves as a brotherhood whose mission is to fight racism and "defend the public from AIDS and from *furries*", who they associate with homosexuality. A typical attack in *Second Life* consisted of overloading an area or server with huge cubes illustrated with insults towards *furries*, giant penises and symbols of their organization (Fig. 6). Although they say their attacks are nothing more than teasing, the Nigras have abandoned subtlety in favour of an openly aggressive and offensive type of humour.

The HUEHUEs, on their turn, reverse the aggression by targeting themselves with the stigmas they should consider insults. This is not the same as using humour to alleviate stereotypes and hide violence, but a different way of making fun of others, that rely more heavily on ambiguity, on incongruence; but not necessarily any less offensive or disturbing.

Conclusion

Despite the heavy connotations that have been attributed to them in the past few years, Brazilians are not the only ones that behave aggressively in online games, and are far from being the most violent. Their actions are no different from already known forms of spam, trolling and griefing, as practiced by players of all nationalities. This does not mean that *hueing* is not unique enough to justify

■ **Fig. 6:** Patriotic Nigras' attack on *Second Life*. Scene of the video '*Griefing is Magic*'.



Source: YouTube

the stigmatization of HUEHUEs. Amongst the most obvious differences are the preference for group action and the adoption of identification labels that refer to their nationality. These differences explain the increasing generalization of the association of HUEHUEs with Brazil, which has already surpassed the boundaries of online games and can already be found in forums and social networks.

The most interesting aspect of *hueing* seems to be its ability to turn around both the violence of stigmatization and the principles of the Bakhtinian carnival. The HUEHUEs represent themselves as ugly and feign ignorance and incompetence. With that, they take hold of the insults that other players could use against them and create a stereotype that works as protection. From this point of view, the HUEHUEs seem to practice an extremely refined way of *trolling*, skilfully asserting that “nothing on the Internet is so serious it can’t be laughed at, and that nothing is so laughable as people who think otherwise” (Dibbell, 2008). However, it is also possible that the HUEHUEs really are lousy players who do not understand English, are not capable of noticing the difference between *noob talk* and real games’ jargon and are incapable of anything more creative than merely repeating the insults directed towards them. The big trump of *hueing* is the persistence of both possibilities.

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