Poshumanismo y creación de identidades y sexualidades queer y racializadas: un análisis de 'Steven Universe'

Posthumanism and the creation of racialised, queer identities and sexualities: An analysis of 'Steven Universe'

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RESUMEN

El artículo analiza cómo la serie de animación *Steven Universe* refuerza y desafía concepciones actuales sobre racialización, género y cuerpo capacitado. Usando teorías feministas, poshumanistas, queer, sobre diversidad funcional y raza, estos conceptos son considerados tecnologías cuyos componentes pueden ser estudiados, deconstruidos y reconstruidos por el objeto técnico que es el dibujo animado, una herramienta cuyo significado es coestablecido por el público. Utilizando este marco conceptual para analizar la narrativa de la serie y para crear encuestas orientadas a entender cómo las nociones del público sobre género y raza pueden influir en la narrativa de la serie, el artículo concluye que *Steven Universe* crea un relato queer que pretende desmantelar nociones contemporáneas sobre género, raza y diversidad funcional. Sin embargo, al utilizar los componentes que forman estas tecnologías, la serie puede reproducir representaciones estereotípicas si no tiene en cuenta los imaginarios adscritos a ellos.

Palabras clave: animación, ciencia-ficción, poshumanismo, racialización, género, sexualidad, diversidad funcional, Steven Universe.

ABSTRACT

This article analyses how the cartoon show *Steven Universe* both underpins and defies normative understandings of race, gender and able-bodiedness. By referencing theories from feminist, posthumanist, queer, critical race thinking and crip studies, these concepts are considered technologies whose components can be examined, disassembled and reassembled by the technical object that is the cartoon, which is considered a tool whose meaning is co-established by the audience. By using this conceptual framework to analyse the show's narrative, as well as to create several surveys that seek to comprehend how people's notions of gender and race may influence the narrative of the show, the article concludes that *Steven Universe* creates a queer narrative aimed at dismantling contemporary notions of gender, race and able-bodiedness. However, because the show relies on the components that form these technologies to trouble them, it may fall on stereotypical representations if it overlooks the imaginaries embedded on them.

Keywords: animation, science fiction, posthumanism, race, gender, sexuality, able-bodiedness, Steven Universe.

1. Introduction

Contemporary popular culture has been seen as a site for both reinforcing and challenging current notions of race, gender and able-bodiedness. For instance, science fiction and animation are regarded as amenable for envisioning new conceptions of the body and subjectivity (Dunn, 2016; Eshun, 2003; Halberstam, 2008; Halberstam, 2011; Womack, 2013) due to their drive to rewrite reality, their capacity to toy with plausibility and, in the case of animation, its ability to distort human form.

However, Halberstam (2008) has proved that animation can be used to naturalise heteronormative visions of love and family. And McRuer (2005) has warned about the incorporation of dissident subcultures in mass media via depictions that trivialise, naturalise and domesticate their potential threat to the dominant culture.

Following these concerns, my aim is to reflect on how science fiction cartoon shows can underpin and defy current politics of embodiment at the same time. I will do so by arguing that race, gender and able-bodiedness are technologies whose components can be examined, disassembled and reassembled by the cartoon, a technical object.

My understanding of these categories as technologies is reminiscent of Foucault's notion of the *device* (1985, in Torrents, 2017). I seek to highlight their utilitarian and artificial facet: they are *created* to *produce* bodies that are disciplined and controlled according to the needs of one social structure. By arguing that cartoons have the ability to manipulate their components, I conceive the cartoon as a tool: it can alter or reinforce human's conceptions of the body.

Due to the interaction between the body and the object, I regard the cartoon as an object in the process of becoming. It is conceived season after season by the author, and its meaning is established as it is interpreted by the audience, who has their own understandings of gender, race and able-bodiedness, which have been shaped by other systems of signification.

To explore this, I will analyse the U.S. show *Steven Universe* (SU). Its main character is Steven Universe, a boy who lives on Earth and is raised by three *gems*. The gems belong to an alien species that use female pronouns to refer to themselves and have the ability to shape their bodies at will and make weapons emerge from them. The show

uses the concept of fusion, the temporary union of two or more gems to create a super-individual with enhanced powers, to explore the affects between them.

Consequently, SU has been praised for its positive depiction of queer characters, (Brammer, 2017; Dunn, 2016; Mey, 2015; Smith, 2016). Despite the good reviews, it has been criticised for its representation of those gems who have been perceived by the audience as black (Kingston, 2016; Riley, 2016). Therefore, the show can be a good example of the dual nature of animation in its relation to current representations of the body.

Since the connection between body and technology, fusion and the emphasis on sharing relationships between different kinds of living creatures are key elements for the plot, I examine how a posthumanist vision of the show allows for the understanding of the queer narrative of SU. The second topic that concerns me is how the notion of race influences the creation of these queer identities.

It was precisely by asking how posthumanism and, more specifically, how queer and feminist authors theorised the relationship between the human and the technological, that I decided to regard gender, race and able-bodiedness as technologies and to see the cartoon as an object in conversation with other non-human and human entities. These two ideas are the common thread in the analysis section, and they will be explained in more detail in the literature review.

The literature review has two parts. Firstly, I discuss how technology influences the vision we have about our corporeality and subjectivity, as well as our understanding of the world. Secondly, I examine how we can think about race, gender, and able-bodiedness as technologies. I have included able-bodiedness in the analysis due to its relevance in the show.
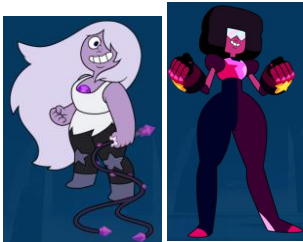
Before the literature review, I explain the methodology of the research. I have analysed 21 episodes of the show in which fusion is performed. To understand how pre-established conceptions of race and gender may influence the interpretation of these episodes, I surveyed seven people from different races and genders. The article ends with some concluding remarks.

2. Methodology

2.1. Episode analysis

The research is based on the analysis of 21 episodes in which the act of fusion between gems of a different kind is performed. When the fusion appears in several episodes, the episode selection includes the fusion's debut and other episodes relevant for the plot. The election of fusion as the centre of the analysis is due to its importance for the queer, anti-racist and posthuman narrative of the show.

The analysis focuses on the gems that perform the act and the resulting fusion. How the gems are racially coded, the role they adopt when fusing, and their original weapons are taken into account, to establish how all of these aspects influenced the resulting super-individual. Why these gems fuse is also studied.

Fusion	Gems	Season	Episode	Title
Opal	Amethyst and Pearl	1	12	"Giant Woman"
Sugilite	Amethyst and Garnet	1	20	"Coach Steven"

Alexandrite	Amethyst, Garnet and Pearl	1	32	"Fusion Cuisine"
		3	1	"Super Watermelon Island"
Stevonnie	Connie Maheswaran and Steven Universe	1	37	"Alone Together"
		2	9	"We Need to Talk"
		3	11	"Beach City Drift"
		3	18	"Crack the Whip"
		4	4	"Mindful education"
Garnet	Ruby and Sapphire	1	52	"Jail Break"
		2	12	"Keystone Motel"
		2	22	"The Answer"
		3	5	"Hit the Diamond"
	Garnet remains fused during most part of the show. The episodes selected depict the love relationship between her two gems, Ruby and Sapphire.	4	13	"Gem Heist"
		4	15	"That Will Be All"
Malachite	Jasper and Lapis Lazuli	1	52	"Jail Break"
		2	10	"Chile Tid"
		3	1	"Super Watermelon Island"

Rainbow Quartz 	Pearl and Rose Quartz 	2	9	"We Need to Talk"
Sardonyx 	Garnet and Pearl 	2 2 3 4	11 15 24 2	"Cry for Help" "Friend Ship" "Back to the Moon" "Know Your Fusion"
Smoky Quartz 	Amethyst and Steven Universe 	3 4	23 2	"Earthlings" "Know Your Fusion"

Table 1. List of characters and episodes analysed
For the references of the images, please see *7. References*

2.2. Surveys

The surveys' aim is to understand how individuals perceive notions of race and gender in cartoon characters, in order to assess possible ways in which these notions would influence the interpretation of the plot. Therefore, the survey adopts a qualitative approach. Due to time limitations and the extension of the article, seven people –three men, three women, and one person who does not identify as either– have been surveyed. Since the gems have been mostly coded as either Asian, black, or white, five people selected belong to these groups, one did not regard themselves as having a race and one

did not want to disclose theirs. However, this article *does not* intend to explore how people understand the characters according to their own race or gender.

The respondents had to watch nine short clips, each of them depicting an act of fusion, and answer a few questions concerning the race and gender of the fusions as well as of the individuals involved. The questions were decided using the second part of the literature review as a reference.

The first question asked to identify the character as either Asian, black, white, belonging to a race that is neither the previous three or belonging to no race. Because *Asian* encompasses many races, the question left space for the respondents to reflect on this category if they wanted to. The second question asked which characteristics made them choose one option of the first question: the physical characteristics of the character, its accent or way of speaking, its clothes, its role in the clip, the soundtrack used to depict it, or other factors.

The third question asked the participants to consider if each character was either a woman, a man or a non-binary character. Secondly, they were asked to elaborate it, by stating whether the use of pronouns to refer to that character, their physical traits, their clothes, their role in the clip or if another factor helped them to come to that decision. For an example of one survey, please see section *6. Appendix*.

To give a more complete understanding of the relationship between the human and the cartoon, I use articles published in blogs and online media when it is important to notice the reaction of the audience towards certain characters or narratives in the show.

3. Literature review

3.1. The posthuman and the cartoon as a technology

"Thinking about technology is inseparable from thinking through technology". Torrents uses this quote of Lamarre (2009, in Torrents, 2016:149) to highlight the need to analyse not only the content of Japanese cartoons (*anime*) but also the cartoon show in itself, as a technical object. Torrents, via Lamarre, argues that, to understand anime, we need to analyse how its materiality, the fact that it is moving image, determines the way its message is transmitted to the audience.

What both authors hold is a vision of the technological as something connected to the human in multidirectional ways, which influence the technical, the biological and the social. When Rebecca Sugar, the creator of SU, argues that one of the reasons she created this cartoon show is because talking about queer identities is fundamental for kid's development (Tremeer, 2016), she is referencing one of the ways in which technology influences how humans see themselves.

Braidotti (2013), Kember (2011) and Preciado (2008) sustain that, in contemporary societies, our bodies and subjectivities are highly mediated by technology. For Kember, this is one more chapter of the ongoing relationship between humans and technologies. The author affirms that technology is constitutive of the human, and argues that human affectivity has always been maintained, regulated and governed by traffic with artificial objects. Due to this connection between the human and the technological, Kember, via her commentary of Haraway and Braditotti's work, advocates for a feminist perspective that includes the technological.

Feminists' discourses about the technological have been of high concern in the last few decades. For instance, Schneider explains that one of the innovative aspects of Haraway's thought is her vindication of the intimate physicality of our relations to non-humans, in front of a standard feminist line on technology that has equated it with "abstract masculinist rationality, militarism and the rape of the Earth" (2012:294).

Haraway's feminist theories have the potential to unveil how some branches of feminist thought have relied on one of the sets of binaries, the female/nature equation in opposition to the male/technology one, that have underpinned women's oppression in the West for centuries. As I will elaborate in the upcoming paragraphs, the challenges that current uses of technology pose for humanity's subjectivity and corporeality urge for a more elaborated picture.

For instance, in the same line of Haraway's views on the technological, Wilson (Kirby and Wilson, 2011) has been engaged in analysing how human affects have been central to the building of computational devices and the imagining of computational worlds. Wilson regards affectivity as a feminist concern, due to the Western social hierarchy

that over-privileges cognition and reckoning and under-privileges feeling and bodily states.

For Kember (2011), the feminist embrace of the technological can be an act of resistance. She cites Haraway and Braidotti, as both theorists reject the Cartesian myth that women, animals, machines and monsters were equivalent in their status as outsiders and inferiors –vis-à-vis an essentially white, male, cishetero and able-bodied subject perceived as the universal measure of all things. Braidotti herself has analysed how popular culture has represented the relationship with women and the non-human, through the depictions of the *monstrous mother-machine* that can be seen in films like *Alien* (1994, in Kember, 2011) and of the *techno-eves* (Braidotti, 2013), which portrayed women's sexuality as both threatening and irresistibly attractive.

As a response to the humanist understanding of the world that classifies it through binaries, Braidotti (2013) articulates a vision of human subjectivity (a posthuman one), based on its interconnectedness with both our species and non-anthropomorphic elements. For her, we inhabit a nature-culture continuum that is both technologically mediated and globally enforced. Her understanding of this continuum is influenced by her assertion that we have become *biomediated* bodies, and that technologies have a strong bio-political effect upon the embodied subject they intersect with.

Braidotti articulates her posthuman philosophy, based on a recomposition of both subjectivity and community in conversation with non-human bodies (both biological and technological), as a response to the fact that humans have become geological agents. For her, we have to become posthumans because the global economy is already a post-anthropocentric one: it ultimately unifies all species under the imperative of the market. Its excesses, Braidotti argues, threaten Earth's sustainability. This is possible, the author continues, because advanced capitalism both invests and profits from the scientific and economic control and the commodification of all that lives. In that structure, contemporary embodied subjects "have to be accounted for in terms of their surplus value as bio-genetic containers on the one hand, and as visual commodities circulating in a global media circuit of cash flow on the other" (2013:119).

In this neo-capitalist structure, Braidotti explains, entire populations are re-classified on

the basis of the genetic predispositions and vital capacities for self-organization: "Because genetic information, like psychological traits or neural features, is unevenly distributed, this system is not only inherently discriminatory, but also racist" (2013:117). To support this, she uses Foucault's definition of racism, the linkage of forms of political control with the estimation of risk factors that result in the configuration of entire populations in a hierarchical scale. Braidotti concludes that this new form of racism is not determined by pigmentation, but by other genetic characteristics.

Braidotti's view on the global impacts of the contemporary alliance between capitalism and technology is similar to the one of Preciado (2008), whose main concern is how it influences sex, gender and desire. The author states that, under current capitalism, sex, sexuality, sexual identity and pleasure have become objects used for the political management of life. This management, the author argues, takes place through the dynamics of the advanced techno-capitalism. For Preciado, we live in a pharmaco-pornographic regime in which new technologies of the body, such as biogenetics or surgery, and of representation, such as film or cybernetics, infiltrate and penetrate life as never before. In fact, Preciado argues that all these technologies are able to exert control because they enter the body to form part of it: "They dissolve in the body; they become the body" (2008:110).

In this regard, Halberstam (2008) also establishes connections between biotechnologies and media in his theorisations about the concept of *transbiology*. Halberstam explains that the transbiological refers to the new conceptions of the body within the new technologies of cloning and cell regeneration, as well as by IVF methods. For Halberstam, all of these scientific advancements, as well as animation or technological toys, question and shift the location, the terms and the meaning of the artificial boundaries between humans, animals and machines.

Like Braidotti and Preciado, Halberstam argues that human subjectivity is strongly influenced by technology: "The transbiological can be conjured by hybrid entities or in-between states of being that represent subtle or even glaring shifts in our understandings of the body and of bodily transformation" (2008:266). Halberstam adopts this approach in order to analyse how animation can either reinforce or subvert heteronormative

representations. He argues that animation has the potential to distort, manipulate and mess with human form in a way that makes humanist ideals like heterosexual love and individualism seem creepy.

Precisely, writing about SU, Dunn (2016) explains that the potential of cartoons to distort pre-existing norms and identities is enabled because viewers tend to expect a certain degree of magic to define one cartoon show's set of narrative rules and images. Therefore, we can argue that the transbiological influence is bi-directional: the subversions depicted in cartoons, a non-biological entity, are already expected by the biological entity that is the audience.

Braidotti (2013) and Preciado (2008) affirm that, in order to counteract the pernicious effects on bodies and subjectivities of the new regimes of power emanated from advanced techno-capitalism, it is necessary to develop denaturalising and disidentification operations from normative values. As Dunn and Halberstam argue, this process can be performed through animation, one of the sites in which pharmaco-porn-power is exerted.

In fact, in her research on technological anime, Torrents (2016) encountered two complementary ways of understanding the corporealities that emerge from the relationship between body and technology. One considers the body as a product, a finished corporeality with impassable limits. The other one regards it as a process, as an entity linked to the idea of change; it is a body that resists control. In my opinion, the latter conceptualisation is what opens the door for turning our technologically mediated bodies into sites of resistance. It allows us to think about the body as an open field for experimentation and redefinition of the current understandings of race, gender, sexuality and able-bodiedness that seek to constraint its multiple possibilities.

In order to use this asset in an effective way, it is necessary to examine which are the elements that construct concepts that are the foundational basis of systems of oppression. For the purpose of this research, these categories are race, gender, sexuality and able-bodiedness.

3.2. Race, gender, sexuality and able-bodiedness as technologies

Braidotti's views on race can be considered technological: certain biological traits (genes) are understood as constitutive of categories that, through acting as (conceptually prosthetic) devices attached to certain bodies, serve to classify entire populations for utilitarian reasons.

The malleability of the definition of race and its utilitarian facet is exposed in critical race thinking. Lewis explains that, in Europe, racialization is grounded in old notions of race as a biological characteristic and "notions of culture as the marker of difference" (2013:877). Hill Collins (2000) argues that racialization involves attaching racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group. In the U.S., Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explain that each disfavoured group has been racialised in its own way and according to the needs of the majority group at particular times in history. For the authors, whiteness is a normative state that sets the standard and promotes the definition of other populations as the opposite. Within this, Hill Collins (2000) situates a system of *colorism*, in which human beings with lighter skin tones are better positioned than those with darker skin tones.

Hill Collins, as well as Stoler (1995), decipher the ways in which race is coupled with sexuality and class. For Stoler, their conflation served to affirm the colonial order: it gave to white women the category of guardians of European civility, and thus, anchored them to domesticity, denied their sexual desire and protected them, since they were framed as the desired objects of colonised men. Non-white women, on the contrary, were perceived as the object of the white male gaze.

Hill Collins (2000) analyses how racism created the image of the white woman as the measure of femininity, whereas the black one became a pernicious, and even animal, deviation from it. She argues that African-American women's lives are regulated by a set of *controlling images*, stereotypical depictions aimed at covering the oppressions and violence emanated from race, gender and class that these women may suffer, by framing these oppressions as inevitable outcomes emanated from black women's behaviour. She explains that these images not only shape the relationships between black and white people in the U.S., but also condition those between black men and black women. This is due to the fact that these images tend to portray black women as

masculine and assertive (*the black lady* and *the matriarch*), as bad mothers (*the mammy* and the *welfare mother*) or as having an excessive sexual appetite (*the jezebel*).

Other racialised people have their own controlling images. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argue that Asians are depicted as the perfect minority group –quiet, industrious, with intact families and high educational aspiration and achievement–, a fact that causes resentment among other disfavoured groups. It is also negative for those Asian subgroups that are likely to be in need of assistance.

Even though we cannot disassemble gender and sexuality from race, it is worth examining these two notions specifically from a technological perspective: Western notions of homosexuality and heterosexuality are conceptual narratives that have been deployed in order to discipline those subjects who pursued pleasures without a procreative telos or who performed gender non-conforming practises (Foucault, 1981; O'Rourke, 2005; Valocchi, 1999). Striker, Currah and Moore (2008) consider that the purpose of gender is similar to the one of race and class: it is a set of practices and variable techniques through which a potential biopower is cultivated, harnessed, and transformed, or by means of which a certain kind of labour or utility is extracted.

This last vision is similar to Rubin's (1975) theory of the sex/gender system. Rubin argues that gender is a cultural construct based on an interpretation of biological sex. It is aimed at establishing a power hierarchy that privileges the male over the female via the commodification of the latter, regarded as an object to be exchanged by men to perpetuate kinship systems. Rubin's theory has been problematised to the extent that Butler (2007) questioned the neat divide between sex and gender by claiming that sex is already gendered.

The complexity of gender –shown by its intricate connection with sex–, and its effectiveness as a technological device lay on how its components have been conceptualised. For instance, Edelman and Zimman (2014) argue that discourse is what brings the body into existence. Their ethnographic work with trans men shows how surgically unaltered genitals are usually discussed in online spaces not as sites that would reveal a failed masculinity, but rather as viable and desirable features of their male bodies. Kulick (1998) also explains that Brazilian *travestis* use feminine pronouns

and grammatical forms to distinguish themselves from men.

Edelman and Zimman (2014) highlight that certain particular body parts are constructed as either *female* or *male*. For example, fingernails tend to be perceived as female, whereas the muscles of the arm belong to the masculine. The ascription of meaning to body parts is also mediated by heteronormative imaginings, since the vagina tends to be associated with heteroerotic practises and the anus is associated with homoerotic ones (O'Rourke, 2005). And the main criteria for transforming intersex children's genitals into male or female ones are their chances to engage successfully in heterosexual intercourse (Feinberg, 1998).

What's more, Preciado (2008) argues that body parts are regulated by different regimes of power. They explain that nose surgery is regarded as a cosmetic surgery because the nose is regulated by a pharmaco-pornographic power in which an organ is considered as an individual property and a market object. On the contrary, Preciado claims that the modification of the penis and the vagina are deemed as sex change operations, a fact that encloses genitals in an almost sovereign regime of power that considers them state property. Spade (2006) links this differential treatment by stating that sex-reassignment surgeries are performed in accordance with an institutional narrative that reasserts the man/woman binary based on heterosexual desire.

It is necessary to consider how the process of gendering body parts interferes with those biological traits that determine race. Bhanji (2011) regards skin as a container of oppressions that ultimately influence how trans bodies are regarded –and privileged– inside the trans community. For them, mainstream discourses that frame transing as a homecoming, a journey from a wrong and dangerous body to a good and safe one, may in fact veil racialised trans' experiences, because even after transing, their body would not become a safe space since the oppressions concomitant to their race will prevail. Like Delgado and Stefancic (2001), Bhanji concludes that whiteness is the normative state of the trans condition.

Another trait to define gender is desire. In her ethnographic research on U.S. femme, gender-blender and transgressive identities among Black lesbians in New York, Moore (2006) explains that couples tend to be formed by one partner who is perceived to be

more feminine than the other. It is also the case for Thai toms and dees (Sinnot, 2004). Feminine dees are perceived only as such due to their desire towards a tom, a masculine woman. Otherwise, dees would be perceived as simply women. The relationships between toms and dees are socially seen as less transgressive than the ones between two masculine men, two feminine women or two toms (Boellstorff, 2006).

Other features that define gender are the ones that, following Halberstam's theorisations about female masculinities (1998), I consider *prosthetic*. For Halberstam, masculinity can be detached from biological maleness since it can be performed through extensions, both material –like artefacts, clothes or haircuts– and psychological –such as attitude. It should be noted that these extensions have already been signified as masculine, in a process similar to the one accounted by Edelman and Zimman (2014) and O'Rourke (2005) with body parts. Because of this, I argue that since prostheses expose the artificiality of gender, they have the potential to subvert it.

As a matter of fact, prostheses are already used to trouble normative understandings of the able body. For Mussies and Maliepaard (2017), the connection between the human and the technological may evolve from a relationship that helps the subject to overcome their handicap and become as *functional* as everybody else, to a one in which human beings are more advanced when compared to the average able-bodied person.

Crip theorists have long been engaged in blurring the lines between who is considered an able person and who is seen as disabled. Breckenridge and Vogler (2001), as well as McRuer and Bérubé (2006), remind us that no one is ever more than temporarily able-bodied. In fact, McRuer and Bérubé suggest a techno-related definition of *able-bodiedness*, arguing that being able-bodied means "being capable of the normal physical exertions required in a particular system of labour" (2006:8). Inspired by queer theory, Breckenridge and Vogler (2001), as well as McRuer and Bérubé (2006), analyse how liberal societies are built on a notion of compulsory able-bodiedness.

For Sandahl (2003), queering and cripping are theatrical and everyday practices deployed to challenge oppressive norms, build community, and maintain the practitioners' self-worth. However, Sandahl is critical with how these two identities intersect in the lives of those who embody the two, by stating that some queer crips

simultaneously experience the queer community's ableism and the disabled community's homophobia. For Sandahl, gender identity is already difficult to embrace by disabled subjects, since some of its mannerisms are based upon how able people move.

Like race and queerness, disability is incorporated into mainstream narratives in ways that either commodify it or dilute its potential for subversion (McRuer, 2005). Sandhal (2003) and McRuer (2005) account for the coexistence of images that either depict the disabled as a completely impaired subject, or as a person whose impairment is inconsequential, insofar as it does not deprive them from achieving amazing goals. McRuer identifies two more images, an exotic one that makes disability strange and a realistic one, which minimises the difference between the viewers and viewed.

4. Analysis

My stand on the mutual influence between the human and the technological makes me adopt a two-sided approach when understanding how SU is capable of creating queer identities. It is not enough to analyse how the story inside the cartoon show enables their creation. It is also important to note how people understand what they see and hear. Therefore, following Torrents (2016), the cartoon show must be thought not only as a product with a meaning in itself –its main narratives, universe and characters–, but also as a technical object always in the process of becoming, since its meaning is established as it is interpreted, always in conversation with other systems of signification.

This is why I will firstly reflect on how the respondents of the survey regard gender in the characters that participate in the fusions. As I have argued, gender is a technology formed by different components that have been previously signified. My purpose is to understand what they are and how they may interact with each other, in order to identify how they might influence the narrative of the show.

4.1. The human and the cartoon

Many respondents of the survey rely on discourse to assign a gender to the characters of the show. The fusions Opal and Sardonyx are regarded as women because Steven calls them so. Steven is considered a man, among other characteristics, because of his name,

whereas some respondents doubted of Alexandrite or Jasper's gender identity because their names do not sound feminine, an interesting statement since the gems are named after real-life stones with no sex or gender.

The show uses feminine pronouns to refer to all gems but Steven, and the respondents acknowledge this as a defining factor when gendering a character. This is highly important for the reading of the show. Gems are outside human conceptualisations of sex and gender: they do not reproduce through sexual intercourse, and they are basically made of the gem and a mutable body form made of light. Yet the show *does not* identify them using the neutral *they*, but rather chooses pronouns that mobilise certain imaginings about gender and sex. Despite this, only one respondent regards discourse as the only factor that matters in the gendering process.

As Edelman and Zimman (2014) argued, certain body parts are gendered. Having long hair –or a bob cut–, a defined bust, full lips or a tight waist helped to define one character as a woman. Having a muscular complexion, a square jaw or a body with no defined waist were considered as masculine traits. The materiality of the cartoon character defined specific gendered physical characteristics. Voice was relevant to define if somebody was a man or a woman. And because the cartoon is moving image, it was easier to attach mannerisms to body parts: Sapphire, coded as a woman, carries her hands and arms delicately; Pearl, also considered a woman, is light on foot and elegant, and Amethyst moves her hips and long hair in a sexy way while she dances.

Clothes and objects were also signs of gender. Wearing a pink sword and a shield was considered a sign of being a woman. One of the main reasons to code characters like Rose and Sapphire as women was because they wore a dress. Rainbow Quartz (RQ) was coded as such because she wore what it resembled a typical sport outfit that U.S. women wore during the eighties.

In fact, RQ is coded as a woman also because, in the clip, her moves are not only sensual, but also directed towards a male character, Steven's father Greg. This fact points at an idea of gender conflated with heterosexual desire. In a similar way like the ones described by Moore (2006) and Sinnot (2004), desire is relevant to trouble Ruby's gender identity. Some respondents argued that she was difficult to classify because of

her relationship with Sapphire, a character that has been mostly coded as a very feminine woman. One respondent even answers that Ruby can be either a homosexual woman-alien or a non-binary alien. Another person considers that this connection is relevant to define Sapphire, but not Ruby.

Ruby, Jasper, Stevonnie and Smoky Quartz (SQ) are the characters with less consensus regarding their gender. Ruby and Jasper are perceived as performing a female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998), since the respondents tend to argue that even when these characters are recognised using female pronouns and may have physical characteristics associated with femininity, they have other physical characteristics, wear clothes or perform attitudes that are traditionally associated with masculinity.

Stevonnie and SQ are the only fusions so far in which Steven, the only gem perceived both by the show and the respondents as a man, participates. The fact that they have Steven's physical characteristics or wear some of Steven's clothes is what makes their gender ambiguous, especially because these traits are combined with the ones of Connie and Amethyst, coded as women by the participants. This trend, also used to define Sardonyx, Sugilite or Malachite's gender, could be interpreted as regarding the body as a process, because respondents acknowledge the individuals' influence on the resulting fusion. The ambiguity of Stevonnie and SQ is emphasised because no character uses gendered pronouns to refer to them.

These results suggest that that SU is able to mobilise the components that create the notion of gender in ways that complicate it or even dilute it. However, even when the show uses them in ways that adhere to conventional notions of gender, the posthumanist narrative of the show in general, and how fusion operates in it in particular, enable the show to create narratives that queer its characters.

4.2. A posthuman narrative

Identifying gems as female puts its associated gender, women, in the middle of a posthuman narrative. Gems are an example of the perils of an era in which one species subsumes all that lives under the claws of its production system (Braidotti, 2013). Because gems colonise planets and extinguish its organic life, Crystal Gems rebelled against Homeworld, the original planet of the gems, who wanted to colonise the Earth.

In fact, the rulers of Homeworld, the Diamonds, placed a geo-weapon in the centre of the planet, which would destroy it if activated.

The militarised gem society is highly hierarchised according to each gem's functions, which are directed towards achieving the goal of expanding the empire. Their reproduction is controlled according to the needs of the Diamonds, and their role is determined by their powers and the utensils that emerge from their bodies. Gems have totally integrated body and technology, leading to a scenario similar to the one of the pharmaco-pornographic societies described by Preciado (2008): technologies melted with the body are used for the political management of life.

Thus, the female/woman subject in SU is both the cause of regimes of exploitation and commodification of all that lives and the source of alternative understandings of the relationship between the body, the technology and other forms of life. With this understanding, the show destabilises the man/woman binary associated with the nature/culture one. However, Steven is the centre of the action, and due to his condition as the son of a male human and a gem who was the leader of the rebellion, he has the potential to destabilise Homeworld. Because of that, the show has the risk to antagonize most of the gems in a way that resembles the humanist system in which the male figure is the universal measure of all things. In this sense, the way the Diamonds rule their empire can have similarities with the image of the monstrous mother-machine.

Due to the characteristics of the gems and how they are produced, their society is not structured by a sex/gender system. In fact, Homeworld gems refer to Steven as *Rose*. Rose Quartz gave up her physical form and her conscience to give birth to Steven, who has her gem in his navel. Since the stone is what constitutes the core of the gem being, Homeworld gems do not see Steven as an human individual –with a sex and a gender adscription–, but just as Rose with another appearance.

Despite the non-existence of sex and gender inside the cartoon in itself –and its subsequent understandings about sexuality–, the show has been praised for its depiction of (human) LGTBI identities. As I have argued, it is because viewers interpret the cartoon show applying to its characters those imaginaries that conform human ideas of sex, gender and sexuality. This leads to the creation of gender ambiguous characters,

and also to the construction of gems as subjects that transcend conventional femininity: Rose Quartz, represented as a very sensual alien wearing a princess-like dress, is a powerful and charismatic warrior and leader. This interaction also enables the consideration of the love relationships between gems as lesbian ones and fusion as the ultimate queer act in the show.

4.3. Fusion as a queering act

From the viewers' perspective, fusion is highly queering. On the one hand, gems fuse to face threatening situations, and the result is a super-individual with enhanced powers and new weapons. However, this quasi-militarist act, traditionally connected to the masculine realm, is only possible if the gems who perform it share an affective bond, a domain traditionally associated to the feminine (Kirby and Wilson, 2011). On the other, fusion is performed through a dance between the gems accompanied with music, and its moves tend to have a highly erotic subtext. In the case of the fusion between Steven and his human best friend Connie, the queerness of the dance lays on the fact that, the first time they fuse, she adopts the male role, grabbing Steven by his waist and leaning her body towards Steven's.

Fusion inside the gem society can be a queering act too. Fusions between gems of the same kind (*homogem fusions*) –which lead to a bigger individual– are allowed as long as they help to accomplish the mission those individuals have. Just like the Western notions of homosexuality and heterosexuality have been used to discipline individuals in order to underpin a certain kind of power, fusions between gems of different kinds (*heterogem fusions*) are forbidden, since they lead to new types of gems that do not adjust to the utilitarian social stratification of Homeworld. Just like queering, heterogem fusions are an act that questions normative states of being.

Two fusions show the consequences of this narrative. Garnet is the fusion of Ruby, a soldier, and Sapphire, an aristocrat. They had to escape to Earth because Homeworld saw the fusion as highly inappropriate and sentenced Ruby to be shattered. On Earth, they realised that being fused is what they wanted to do the rest of their existence and joined the rebellion. Thus, the show connects the struggle for self-realisation with a sense of community that transcends the boundaries of one's own species: to fight for the right to be as one wants to be is to fight for a system that accepts every form of life.

The opposite of this narrative is Malachite, the fusion between Jasper and Lapis. The latter fuses with Jasper to prevent her from harming Steven. While fused, Lapis creates giant chains that keep Malachite in the bottom of the ocean. This act unravels a highly queer narrative. Like Garnet, Malachite is the fusion between a gem with a feminine appearance and another with a masculine one. As Halberstam argued (1998), masculinity can be performed using extensions. Through her uniform, her mannerisms, her physical complexion and her aggressive attitude, Jasper performs masculinity in a convincing way. However, the ability of the femme Lapis to create weapons to control Jasper shows that, in the same way that prostheses can be used to perform masculinity, they can ultimately subdue it.

Once unfused, Jasper will chase Lapis and ask her to refuse. With this plot, Jasper exemplifies the influence on self-perception of those narratives aimed at controlling the body. Following Homeworld's narrative, she conceived heterogem fusion as a trick to make weak gems strong and felt superior for not using it. After fusing with Lapis, she admits that by being Malachite she was more powerful than ever.

The fusion that mostly troubles the show's narratives is Stevonnie. Their racial ambiguity and androgynous look creates a queer subject similar to the ones envisioned by Bhanji (2011) and Spade (2006). Steven and Connie –who have a biological sex and an associated gender– transition to another being that does not adhere to normative notions of either womanhood or manhood. Like Garnet, who *is* the love between gems, Stevonnie *is* an experience, the living relationship between Steven and Connie (Woerner, 2015).

Consequently, Garnet and Stevonnie confirm the importance of the body in the posthuman narrative of SU: no matter if a fusion is made to express a moment or a feeling, or to create a super-individual with more powerful weapons, its motives cannot escape the materiality of the flesh. Fusion is the most eloquent expression of the notion that the body is a process: in "Know Your Fusion", it is presented as a journey to discover the possibilities of the new body.

It is because every act emerges from the body and ends in it, that affect becomes key when structuring a community whose members not only reject to adhere to conventional norms and classifications established by their original society, but are also in relationships with entities with a different corporeality and understanding of the universe (humans vis-à-vis the alien gems).

For instance, Connie's parents end up letting Connie hang out with Steven because they realise that, despite the many differences they may have with Greg and the Crystal gems when it comes to parenting skills, all of them love their children. Another example is the relationship between Steven's parents. They tried to fuse while they were dating, but it was impossible. Despite that, by talking and sharing moments together they established a solid love relationship.

4.4. Disability and the posthuman

Ability is problematised in the show through the antagonism between Jasper, the perfect soldier, and Amethyst, who is supposed to be a soldier but is very small. Jasper notes that since every gem is made for a purpose, those who cannot fit inside this order must be purged. Amethyst embraces this narrative, considering herself as coming out *wrong* and Jasper as coming out *right*. Since the categories are established by one's ability to fulfil a previously assigned duty, this notion of ability is similar to McRuer and Bérube's (2006) conceptualisations of able-bodiedness.

Amethyst will beat Jasper once she fuses with Steven, creating Smoky Quartz (SQ). This victory exposes ability as a technological construction. Steven is troubled because he is the only hybrid between a gem and a human, and he uses this difference to establish a connection with Amethyst. In "Earthlings", right before fusing while confronting Jasper, Amethyst says: "Us worst gems stick together". Steven answers: "That's why we're the best". Since Jasper has systematically failed at establishing affective connections with other gems, she is less able than Amethyst to live within Earth's gem community, and also to fuse and become more powerful.

SQ is the only fusion so far who seems to possess one *defect*. Two of their three arms emerge from the same place. Therefore, we could understand SQ as embracing a concept of *cripping* that is not only similar to the one formulated by Sandahl (2003)

when it comes to its potential to represent a sense of community that also questions normativity, but that is also integrated with queerness, just like the author claimed, because SQ is one of the fusions that most succeeds at troubling gender. The show reinforces the connection between queerness and disability by establishing that a gem can be shattered in Homeworld because she has either come out misshapen or has engaged in a heterogem fusion.

In functional terms, SQ is not less able-bodied than any other fusion. SQ saves Sardonyx, the fusion between Garnet and Pearl, using a yo-yo weapon. By making SQ as able to save the day as Sardonyx, the show displays a relationship between technology and disability similar to the one described by Mussies and Maliepaard (2017). SQ is an *overcomer* (Sandahl, 2003) who is as strong as any other fusion, thus offering a realistic image (McRuer, 2005) of the disabled.

Even when SQ brings disability close in relation to other gems, they are gems nevertheless. They do not age, bear babies or die unless shattered. Crip theorists use age to dismiss ability as a state permanently attached to certain bodies. The non-existence of it in the gem society may create a sense of disidentification when the gem is positioned vis-à-vis the aging human audience, which neither has any ability to summon weapons from their bodies at will to solve their impairments. In the end, the representation of SQ risks to be perceived as a *wondrous* one (McRuer, 2005), a fact that may dilute this fusion's potential for subversion of normative states.4.5. Race and queerness

Race in SU is fundamentally technological and has a class component. Each type of gem is created for a purpose, which also establishes their position in the hierarchy of the gem society. The discourses and punishments that seek to prevent the fusion between gems of a different kind, in order to maintain this structure, resemble the mechanisms that control sexuality in human societies structured around race (Hill Collins, 2000; Stoler, 1995).

Consequently, the narrative of SU intertwines the racial struggle with the sexual one. Those gems who refuse to develop the duties they were born to perform have more chances to engage in fusions with gems of a different kind. By presenting Earth, a former colony, as the place where gems engage in affective relationships that subvert

these norms, the show highlights the utilitarian facet of race in the gem society and its importance for the colonial order.

Despite this clear anti-colonialist and anti-racist background, the show has received several criticisms for recurring to negative stereotypes when depicting gems coded as black (Kingston, 2016; Riley, 2016). Due to the episodes' sample, I will focus on three of them: Garnet, Sardonyx and Sugilite. After my analysis, I agree with some of the points made by the two authors concerning the plot involving these characters. However, my study differs from their opinions in significant ways, due to my review of the surveys' results.

4.5. Racial coding of the cartoon characters

From the 18 characters analysed by the respondents, in five cases there seems to be a relatively wide agreement concerning their race: five or more people code them in the same way. Garnet is mostly coded as black, Connie as Asian, and Pearl, Rose and Lapis, as white.

Two participants argued that maybe the absence of any clear racial feature indicates whiteness as the *normative race* (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). However, by looking at the overall results, it is not possible to confirm that: for another respondent, the absence of racial traits means that the character in question has no race at all. It is also worth noticing that even when two respondents consider that thinking about gems as having a human race is not accurate, each of them has coded at least one gem as black. This may hint at the prosthetic nature of race: rather than being a concept that emerges from the body, it is formed by a set of components that adhere to it.

Physical characteristics emerge as a defining factor for race, especially the skin colour. Other relevant characteristics are the hair's colour, composition and style, as well as the physical complexion. Clothes and the soundtrack used to introduce each character can have a racial component for some respondents. Precisely, the race ambiguity of some characters, like the gem Ruby and the fusion Opal, is due to an apparent mismatch between their physical characteristics and their clothes.

Accent seems a determining factor for three respondents to define Garnet's blackness, who is the only one who has a British one. Some respondents have tended to mark accent to define the whiteness of some gems. However, in most of these cases, the actress voicing them is not white. Nobody noticed that Nicki Minaj was voicing Sugilite. This is relevant, since the singer's voice was one criteria used by some critics of the show for coding Sugilite as black and, thus, to argue that through the representation of this character the show reinforced some of the controlling images used to portray Black women.

None of the respondents coded Sugilite as black, and three participants regarded Sardonyx as such. Another criticism made to Sugilite is that she looks like a monster (Kingston, 2016). However, the survey indicates that Malachite is perceived as the less-human fusion by some respondents, due to her body constitution –she has four legs– and her green skin, associated with stereotypical depictions of aliens.

The analysis of the answers seems to suggest that the person's life experiences and their cultural background influence their ideas of race. In fact, even when two people look at the same traits to racialise one character, they may read them differently. The survey shows that the concept of race (and gender) in cartoons seems mediated by human and non-human factors alike, pointing at the possibility of a transbiological (Halberstam, 2008) framework: people can resort to human entities –how friends or famous people talk, think, move or dress– and non-human ones –how other cartoons represent aliens, (East Asian) martial artists or (white) princesses– to decipher the race and gender of the character. In fact, some respondents' answers showed that through their analysis of the characters they were reflecting on their own notions of race and gender.

Because of that, the show has the potential to engage its audience in processes aimed at denaturalising previously established notions of race. However, this does not mean that those who have criticised the depiction of some gems are completely wrong. This is because both Sardonyx and Sugilite's tropes involve two characters that have been mainly coded using two races traditionally casted as oppositional: Garnet (black) and Pearl (white).

4.6. The influence of racial coding in the plot

Sardonyx is the fusion between Garnet and Pearl; Sugilite is the one between Amethyst and Garnet. In the case of the latter, the music that frames the fusion-dance moves of Amethyst and Garnet is the same. Their dancing moves are similar too: they can be considered very sexy and feminine according to conventional gender stereotypes. As a result, Pearl veils Steven's eyes. The fact that a character coded as white censors a display of a black character's sexuality can be problematic, due to the persistence of controlling images that portray it as inadequate (Hill Collins, 2000). When Garnet and Pearl fuse, each of them has a soundtrack for her own dance and dances in a very different way. When the two dance together, Garnet adopts the male role. This representation may remember the racist portrayal of black women as masculinised.

Despite the fact that Amethyst and Garnet's dance suggests that there is more equality between the two of them, the episode "Coach Steven" states that when the two of them fuse the result is the unstable Sugilite. The episode evolves around Pearl's feelings of inferiority: Steven admires Sugilite's strength, and Pearl wants to prove to him that this is not what strength *really* means.

This message is reinforced with a song, performed by Pearl and Steven, which also helps to emphasise the mother-son dynamic between them. Even though the show clearly states in several episodes that the three Crystal Gems are Steven's moms, Pearl seems to conform to the traditional role of the mother, a portrayal that can be controversial because the conflation between whiteness and good mothering has traditionally casted black maternity as a failure.

In the episode "Fusion Cuisine", Steven describes the abilities of each gem that qualify them for being the most appropriate mother and, thus, be invited to the dinner to meet Connie's parents, who think that Steven's family is a nuclear one. He says that Garnet keeps them safe by scaring off the bad guys. This is perceived as a good characteristic, but is still reminiscent of the black matriarch image that casts her as aggressive or performing roles traditionally connected to maleness. Steven adds that Amethyst is a super fun mum, but that she is gross. Finally, he describes Pearl using characteristics connected to the stereotypical image of the mother: always worried about him, a good teacher, approachable and not gross. In the end, Steven will bring Alexandrite, the

fusion of the three gems, to the dinner, a decision that highlights that the three gems are great mothers the way they are and thus can subvert preconceived notions of motherhood. It also helps to visibilise forms of families that are different from the nuclear one.

In the end, Pearl will defeat Sugilite, who is running wild and is a menace to Steven's hometown. Afterwards, Garnet will decide not to fuse with Amethyst anymore, which leaves the latter devastated. Amethyst's pain will be mocked by Sardonyx, who in the episode that introduces her, "Cry for Help", states that she is better than Sugilite.

This episode will reveal that Pearl is tricking Garnet into fusing with her. When Garnet discovers that, she suffers so much internal turmoil that she unfuses into Ruby and Sapphire. The pain of Garnet, Ruby and Sapphire is explored in five episodes, but Garnet finally agrees to fuse with Pearl again to escape a deathly situation, so her consent is partially coerced.

Interestingly, the show states that Amethyst likes to fuse with Garnet for the same reason as Pearl does: she feels powerful. However, this does not end with a reflection on how to make Sugilite a more stable fusion. In contrast, the show explains Pearl's motive to fuse with Garnet by stating that, due to her past as a servant determined by her condition as a pearl, she feels worthless when she does not depend on anybody. Just like in "Coach Steven", the plot ultimately uses Garnet to make the character of Pearl evolve, who in the end realises that she is good the way she is. This has a problematic reading: in the postcolonial system, white women's emancipation has sometimes been built on racialised women's emotional and physical labour.

It also blurs Garnet as a character. She is the leader of the Crystal Gems in the absence of Rose. Thanks to her future vision, brave attitude and balanced temperament, her partners perceive her as a source of wisdom and strength. It is significant, then, that some of the main conflicts she faces either involve Pearl, a character mainly coded as white, or are caused by acts deriving from personality traits that may resemble the negative stereotypes of black women.

With its explanation of Pearl's pain and the depiction of the problems faced by Garnet, I agree with Kingston (2016) that an anti-racist show that wants to create a narrative

aimed at criticising slavery and post-slavery societies may still rely on the stereotypes used to sustain these systems, an indicative of the hegemony of these imaginaries in people's minds.

The persistence of controlling images in some of the SU characters can hinder their queering. The fight between Garnet and Jasper in "Jail Break", in which the black-coded character is drawn as more slender than Jasper and also as displaying a sensual attitude typically associated with femininity, is more subversive than the pairing of Garnet and Pearl when they fuse or talk about fusion, in which the white-coded character is perceived as more feminine and prudish than the black one.

Although in the cases of characters like Garnet and Pearl there seems to be a consensus on how to racially code them, the show relies on the myriad of characteristics that conform the idea of race to create ambiguous characters. Because race is highly mediated by personal experiences in relation to local and global narratives, it is reasonable to suggest that not everybody would appreciate the same subtext in the tropes and characters presented in SU. Therefore, I argue that the racial representation has to be analysed acknowledging the many readings of one character, on the one hand, and the possible negative impacts on the depiction of racialised groups when some racialised traits are used to portray one character, on the other.

SU's internet fandom is famous for engaging in vivid discussions about the gender and race representations of the show and how they impact the viewers' living experiences (Bullock, 2015; Smith, 2016). In some cases, these discussions have been framed in violent terms (Nguyen, 2015; Romano, 2015).

These debates prove the importance of technology as an entity that both influences the reading of biological bodies and becomes the site of this reading. The fact that some of the potential racial bias of the show have been exposed online by its viewers, and in some cases have been acknowledged by Rebecca Sugar (Glass, 2017), is an example of how the technologies that support the new stage of capitalism described by Braidotti (2013) and Preciado (2008) can be used to create narratives that counter some of the oppressive tropes disseminated through these channels. It is also a reminder of how the

cartoon show is an object whose future is open to new significations, acquired through its contact with human subjectivities.

5. Conclusion

Steven Universe is a show that clearly seeks to create an engulfing queer narrative in which the respect for difference is encompassed with the will to dismantle the boundaries that shape contemporary notions of gender, sexuality, race and compulsory able-bodiedness.

It does so by exposing the artificiality of these categories. They appear as systems to classify individuals –the gems– according to their techno-biological characteristics, with the aim to structure a hierarchy designed to expand the imperial power of Homeworld. By setting the action on Earth, a former colony, the show creates a scenario to envision new readings of the individual, and connects this act of resistance to a conversation on how to create a community that is respectful with all kinds of living creatures and whose survival does not threaten the environment.

In this context, the body is regarded as an entity in constant transformation, and the affects emanated from the experiences shared by these bodies become the backbone of this new community. In some cases, these experiences are prompted by the failure to succeed in establishing these connections using the conventions established by either the human or the gem society. In this regard, the show uses fusion as both a starting and an ending point to discuss the challenges posed by these ideas.

Fusion is also used as a device to destabilise the viewers' notions of gender and sexuality. It does so by displaying a relationship between individuals, who are usually referred to using female pronouns but do not adhere to human notions of sex and gender, in an affective, sensual, feisty, technological and even militaristic manner that transcends the two of them and gives birth to a new super-individual.

Thanks to the narrative, enabled by the materiality of the cartoon, SU disassembles, dilutes and reassembles the components that construct the viewers' notions of gender and sexuality. In a similar way, it tries to trouble the conceptions of race and disability. However, because the show relies on the components that form these technologies to

trouble them, it may fall on stereotypical representations if it overlooks the imaginaries embedded on them.

This is evident when it comes to race. The fact that controlling images about blackness are still attached to those characters with traits connected to this race creates narratives in which their well-being is at the disposal of white-coded ones, creating a privileging of the latter, and of the fusions they participate in, that confirms queer theorists' concerns about the marginalisation of the experiences of people of colour.

In sum, SU is a good example of how animation can envision alternative politics of embodiment at the same time that reinforces normative ones. The analysis shows that technical objects, such as the cartoon show, aimed at influencing how subjects regard themselves and the world around them are at the same time interpreted by the subjects it seeks to influence, who understand them according to their own corporeality, which, in turn, has been shaped by systems of signification transmitted by human and non-human entities alike, cartoon shows included. Being aware of how these factors interact is the key to creating narratives that shatter as much of the constricting narratives derived from contemporary notions of race, gender and able-bodiedness as possible.

6. Appendix

RACE AND QUEERNESS IN 'STEVEN UNIVERSE'

Please, mark the correct answer with an X
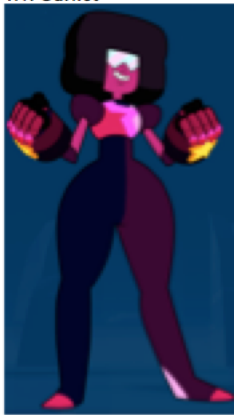
Sex assigned at birth
_MALE
_FEMALE

Are you a...
_MAN
_WOMAN
_NON-BINARY PERSON

Your race is...

CLIP 1. Please, watch the following clip
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oqAHrobbvw

Please, answer the following questions:

1.1. Garnet

A. Do you think Garnet is
_ Asian*
_ Black
_ White
_ Other
_ No race

*According to the fans of the show, characters can be black, white or *Asian*, so this is why I use these categories in the survey. I am aware that Asia encompasses a lot of races and ethnicities, so if you want to reflect on that category, please feel free to do so.

B. What makes you think so?

_ Physical characteristics (Please, write which ones)

_ Accent/way of speaking

_ Clothes (Please, write which ones)

_ Role in the clip (Please, write which ones)

_ Soundtrack of the character

_ Others

C. Garnet is a...
_ Woman (alien)
_ Man (alien)
_ Non-binary alien

D. What makes you think so?
_ Use of pronouns (other characters refer to it as *she*, *he*, *they*...)

_ Physical characteristics (Please, write which ones)

_ Clothes (Please, write which ones)

_ Role in the clip (Please, write which ones)

_ Others

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