How do representations differ in 'classic' video games compared to modern video games when comparing an original to a remake?

Word Count: **4346**

Student Number: **2108589**

Willow Dallimore

Contents:

List of Images:

Resident Evil 4 (2005) gameplay screen shot of scene where Ashely meets Luis 2/3.

Source: [(Online) Capcom, 2005, Page 22)]

Resident Evil 4 (2005) gameplay screen shot of scene where Ashely meets Luis 3/3.

Source: [(Online) Capcom, 2005, Page 22)]

Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023) gameplay screen shot of scene where Ashely meets Luis 1/2.

Source: [(Online) Capcom, 2023, Page 23)]

Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023) gameplay screen shot of scene where Ashely meets Luis 2/2.

Source: [(Online) Capcom, 2023, Page 23)]

List of Figures:

Abstract:

This case study will explore the representations of gender and race in video games and they it has changed overtime. Video games have historically included problematic, sexist depictions of female characters (Bloomberg, 2022). Racial minorities are frequently excluded from videogames however, when they are included, they are often subject to harmful stereotypical representations (Dill et al, 2005).

Negative representations within video games are particularly troubling since, studies show, that they effect player's real-life perceptions of minorities. Burgess et al (2011) found that games with stereotypical representations of black men made players less trustworthy of racial minorities. Their study also found that playing games with overly sexual representations of women made players less likely to speak up after witnessing sexual harassment (Burgess et al, 2011).

However, modern video games are including more positive representations of minorities (Mullane, 2022). This could be due to the fact more women and other minorities are becoming interested in gaming despite it previously being a male dominated industry (Stone, 2020). Encouraging this increase would align with the United Nations Sustainability Goal 4. Increasing the number of minorities in the industry would be ensuring inclusivity and 'opportunities for all' by 'educating' them on games production and increasing the diversity of employees (United Nations, 2023).

Comparing a remake against an original game will highlight the differences in representation altered for modern audiences. Resident Evil 4 (2005) and Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023) will be a point of comparison in this case study. For my second semester Major research project I will be creating concept art and a pitch for a video game remake, improving problematic representations of gender and race.

Introduction:

Representation within video games is a widely debated topic.

This case study will explore the difference between representations in modern games and 'classic' older titles.

According to studies, some players believe modern video games include too much representation of topics such as gender, race, and sexuality whereas many others see this as an improvement from many classic video games and their problematic depictions of these elements (Le Ngoc, 2023). Studies have shown a systematic over-representation of adult white male characters in video games with an under representation of females and other ethnic groups when compared to real life statistics (Williams et al, 2009).

Williams et al (2009) also found, if included, these characters played minor roles often with stereotypical sexists or racist depictions. This is problematic considering, in their studies, Burgess et al. (2011) found that representations of gender and race within video games can affect player's tolerance of social issues such as racism and sexism; this study will be explored further later.

Harmful representations within games has become an issue, especially considering video games and the gaming industry has become a mainstream source of entertainment with millions of global players.

The industry is a rapidly growing market, being worth over $197 billion in 2022, which is a notable increase from its value of $155 billion in 2020 (Mrkonjić, 2022). Due to technological advances, video game graphics are constantly improving and pushing the boundaries of what is possible within the game engines, Billcliffe (2019) believes that this is one of the contributing factors as to why there has been an increase in of video game remakes and remasters.

What are Video Game Remasters and Remakes?

ALAN WAKE <u>REMASTER:</u>

A video game remaster is a rerelease of an original game that has been enhanced by improving assets such as models, sound effects, lighting, and other aspects. In an article, Main Leaf (2023) defined the point of a remaster as bringing an older game up to the 'current standards while keeping the core gameplay intact'. The article explains that, when developing a remaster, technical aspects are typically improved, such as optimisation and console compatibility. Remasters are essentially the same core game with enhanced assets and visuals to update the experience for modern players (Main Leaf, 2023).

These two images are a comparison of the same cutscene in the original Alan Wake (2010) and the Alan Wake remaster (2021). This shows the visual improvements to the graphics and models, with added definition with enhanced textures. The lighting has also been altered to be a bright blue rather than pink. Archer (2021) suggests the lighting in the Alan Wake remaster is noticeably softer and more lifelike.

Despite these visual improvements and other changes, this is the exact same scene from the same gaming experience. This is not the case when comparing Resident Evil 2 (1998) and Resident Evil 2 (2019).

RESIDENT EVIL 2 <u>**REMAKE:**</u>

Another way an older game can be given new life and presented to the next generation of gamers is through a remake. Bhardwaj (2022) explains that 'a remake is a modern version of a classic video game rebuilt from scratch'. It is essentially making an entirely new game based on the previous one, which is usually a classic (Hayton, 2020). A remake takes the concept of the original game and improves and edits it for modern audiences through gameplay and graphics.

Unlike a remaster, a remake does not simply improve the textures and models while keeping the core game intact and improving it; a remake completely rebuilds the game, starting development from scratch. Hayton (2020) explains that a remake and its original game are 'essentially different games, even if they use the same story, setting, music art or gameplay ideas'.

Playkey Team (2019) agree with Hayton (2020); in an article comparing both versions of Resident Evil 2, they wrote that 'all Capcom left from the original RE2 is the characters and plot.' Playkey Team (2019) go on to explain that, although the overall circumstances are the same, the writing and scenes were changed in the Remake to have a more 'meaningful and dramatic' narrative.

Since video game remakes follow the same concept as the original game, with the same overarching story beats and characters, directly comparing a modern remake against the original game will show and highlight the specific elements of representation that were altered for modern audiences.

For this case study, I will explore how elements of representation differ in 'classic' video games to modern games. Analysing multiple sources from different time periods will allow me to see how elements of representation within games are perceived in relation to when they were released and whether modern games have more positive or negative representations of aspects such as gender and race.

AIM:

To research how representation of race and gender is portrayed in modern games in relation to older games, directly comparing Resident Evil 4 (2005) and its modern remake Resident Evil 4 (2023) to see how the representations within the game have been altered for modern audiences.

OBJECTIVES:

- Explore the representation of gender in 'classic' video games compared to modern video games.
- Explore the representation of race in 'classic' video games compared to modern video games.
- Compare the representations within Resident Evil 4 (2005) and its modern remake Resident Evil 4 (2023).
- Explore why representations within video games of elements such as race and gender have changed overtime.

Methodology:

For this case study I will be solely using secondary research. I was advised that I should use this case study and my secondary research to inform the direction I should take my primary research in the second semester in relation to my Major Research Project. For this study, quantitative research is needed to compare the representations in relation to the time in which the source was published. However, I still aim to find insightful, high-quality sources to investigate these areas.

In relation to the comparison between an original game and its modern remake, I will be using Resident Evil 4 (2005) and Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023) as my direct point of comparison. This is because the original is almost twenty years old, qualifying it as a 'classic' game and the remake came out in 2023, hence it is relevant and contemporary.

I created a Research Map to help identify all the areas I would have to cover in this case study. I identified many aspects of representation in video games that could be explored, however decided to keep the topic concise and opted to focus on two: gender and race.

How do representations differ in 'classic' video games compared to modern video games when comparing an original to a remake?

Representation

Gender

Race

Comparing

Remake

Different element of representation:
- Gender
- Race
- Sexuality
- Religion

It is important to keep in mind the project scope- I can't focus on all these elements in the time frame and wordcount.

For this case study I will focus on Gender and Race.

Problematic representations, sexualisation and objectification of female characters. Gender stereotypes.

Stereotypical depictions of race, harmful connotations.
How do representations in video games effect the player?

Difference in representation? Compare older sources to modern sources.

• Clearly define 'remake' for reader. Have an example of this to present to reader: Remake vs Original.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

Race:
Original includes problematic Asian stereotypes -'Dragon Lady' and exaggerated 'feisty', flirtatious Hispanic stereotypes.

Gender:
Costume changes- more practical less obviously sexualised for the male gaze. Luis no longer makes degrading comments about Ashely's body.

After creating the research map, I created a Key Word to make finding relevant sources easier.

How do representations differ in 'classic' video games compared to modern video games when comparing an original to a remake?

Representation

Video Games

Inclusivitiy

Sexualisation

Effect

Games Industry

Gender

Race

Stereotypical

Harmful

Objectifcation

Resident Evil

Diversity

Response

Empowering

Contemporary

Classic

Remake

Remaster

Gamers

Positive
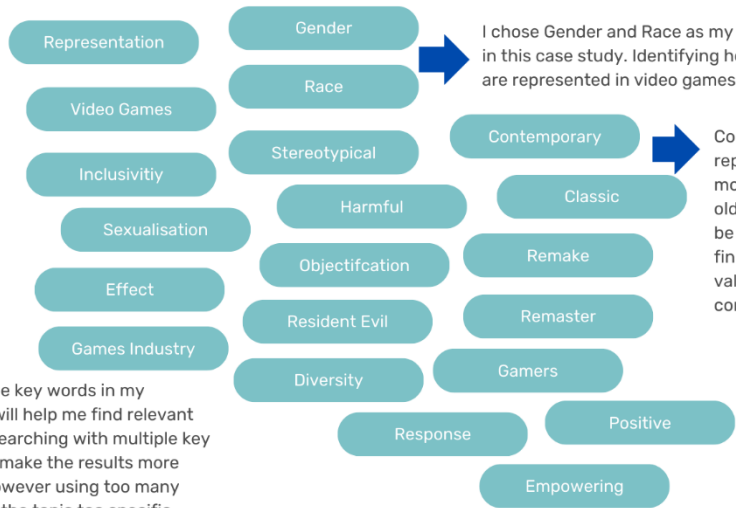
I chose Gender and Race as my two areas of focus in this case study. Identifying how these elements are represented in video games will be crucial.

Comparing representations in modern games to older 'classics' will be important, must find contextually valid sources to compare.

KEY WORD SEARCH

Using these key words in my searches will help me find relevant sources. Searching with multiple key words will make the results more concise however using too many may make the topic too specific.
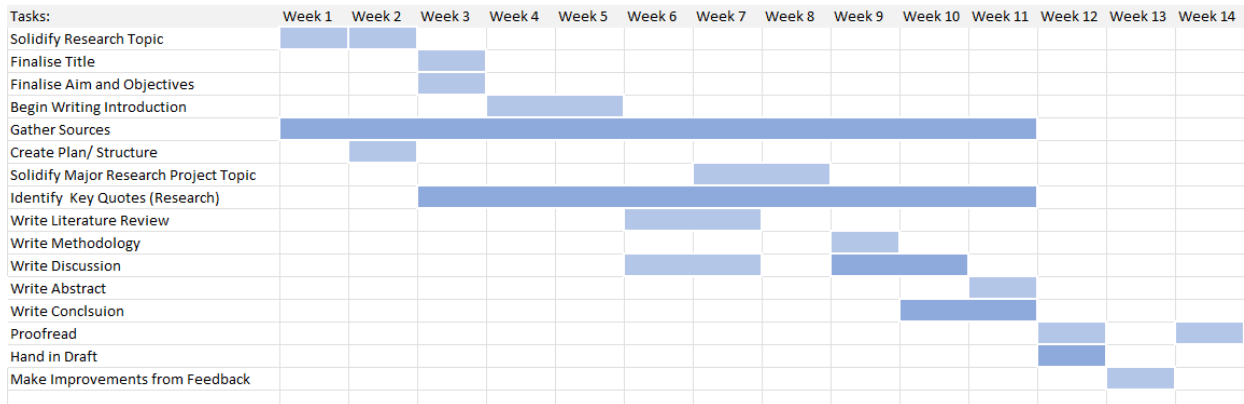
Time Management:

Tasks:	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14
Solidify Research Topic	█	█												
Finalise Title			█											
Finalise Aim and Objectives			█											
Begin Writing Introduction				█	█									
Gather Sources	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
Create Plan/ Structure		█												
Solidify Major Research Project Topic							█	█						
Identify Key Quotes (Research)			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
Write Literature Review						█	█							
Write Methodology									█					
Write Discussion						█	█		█	█				
Write Abstract											█			
Write Conclsuion										█	█			
Proofread												█		█
Hand in Draft												█		
Make Improvements from Feedback													█	

I created a Gantt Chart to help track my progress throughout this case study and help me with time management. This helped me identify all the tasks that needed completing for this project and tackle the workload each week by allocating appropriate time for each to be completed thoroughly. I chose to map out the tasks by week to help me structure the chart around my weekly lectures and the content I would be focusing on in these sessions.

Representation Within Games, Comparing 'Classics' to Modern Games:

Historically the video games industry has been very male dominated, most games being catered towards and representing heterosexual white male characters as their leads (William et al, 2009). Research shows a systematic over representation of white, adult, males in video games and a systematic under representation of women and ethnic groups. Not only are women and non-white characters underrepresented, but they are also often portrayed negatively, using harmful stereotypes (William et al, 2009).
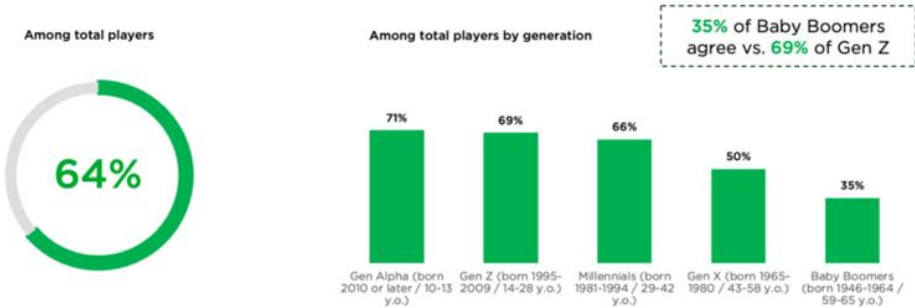
However, according to Mullane (2022), the last decade of gaming has had a large increase in other representations within games, including more 'women, people of colour, disabled, and other marginalised communities' portrayed in a positive light, in central roles.

A study conducted by Le Ngoc (2023) focused on representations within video games, her study found that almost two-thirds of gamers believed positive representations of diversity in video games mattered. The results showed 64% of participants agreed with this statement, however looking at the results by generation, 71% of younger games agreed compared to 35% from older generations. This shows that, according to the findings of Le Ngoc's (2023) study, representation of diversity within video games is most important to younger players.

Most gamers think diversity matters and that share increases with each new generation

Attitudes towards the statement "Diversity in games is important to me" | % Completely agree/ Strongly agree/ Agree
Base: Total players

35% of Baby Boomers agree vs. 69% of Gen Z

Among total players: 64%

Among total players by generation:
- Gen Alpha (born 2010 or later / 10-13 y.o.): 71%
- Gen Z (born 1995-2009 / 14-28 y.o.): 69%
- Millennials (born 1981-1994 / 29-42 y.o.): 66%
- Gen X (born 1965-1980 / 43-58 y.o.): 50%
- Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964 / 59-65 y.o.): 35%

Source: Newzoo Global Gamer Study 2023 (Global weighted average across 36 markets)
Q: DEI Statement - Diversity in games is important
Base: Total players (n=58,040), Generation Alpha players (n=4,867), Gen Z players (n=22,574), Millennial players (n=18,690), Gen X players (n=9,989), Baby Boomer players (n=1,920)

Representation of Women:

People often assume that gaming is male centric hobby and that this is why games tend to be catered towards male players (Lynch et al, 2016). Historically, that would be accurate, however, recent studies show that as of 2021 women make up 50% of gamers (Webb, Davies, and Jessop, 2023). Stone (2020) celebrates the number of women interested in modern gaming as it is a notable increase from 38% in 2006.

In her webpage article, Stone explores the history of women in the gaming industry and the relation of this to the representation of women within video games.

Stone (2020) explains that, due to the current increase of interest in gaming from women, this is why representation of female characters within video games are improving. She explains that female players want to play games with heroic, central female characters.

Lynch et al (2016) are in agreement with Stone, they suggest female gamers consistently chose games featuring non sexualised women and that, most women who disliked video games expressed it was because they included female characters as 'sexual objects'.

In both versions of Resident Evil 4, Ashely Graham is the daughter of the president who has been kidnapped by a cult in Spain. Leon Kennedy, the playable protagonist, is a government agent sent to locate and rescue her.

It could be argued that this plot line follows Guintcheva's (2022) description of gender stereotypes within video games. She states that 'male characters are active, powerful, dominant', while the female characters are 'passive, often sexualised, in need of protection and are the object of the male gaze.' This trope is seen within the original Resident Evil 4. King (2023) describes Leon in the original game as an 'aggressive protector' who 'takes care of everything' while Ashely is constantly presented as weak and useless.

However, this narrative could not be altered as a remake must follow the overall storyline of the original game (Bhardwaj, 2022). Since they could not change this narrative direction, they altered the other aspects, such as representation. King (2023) explores the problematic elements of gender representation within the original Resident Evil 4. He references a feature in the original game where players could use their gun scopes to upskirt Ashely, recalling that a gaming magazine from this time suggested equipping a sniper rifle scope to get a better look up her skirt. The game also actively encouraged this behaviour, adding in dialogue lines of Ashely scolding the player if they were looking rather than removing the ability entirely (Henley, 2023). Henley (2023) suggest this feature is problematic in the consensus that it makes light of violating consent rather than condemning it. Henley (2023) further explains that this feature represents Ashely as an object, sexually degrading her for the player's amusement.

In his study, Ivory (2009) further explores this issue. Across his assessment, he found that female video game characters were proportionally more likely to be portrayed in a sexualised fashion when compared to their male counterparts. His study also revealed a link between the sexualisation of female characters and their strength, stating that the more 'scantily clad' they were, the more likely they were to be presented as capable and strong (Ivory, 2009). This contrasts King (2023) and Henley's (2023) observations in relation to Ashely since, despite being sexualised, she is still presented as weak and incapable.

Mullane (2022) agrees with Ivory (2009), he suggests that strong female characters in video games are not a 'new concept', however, they have historically been over sexualised. Although, he suggests that representations of women within video games are improving (Mullane, 2022). Bloomberg (2022) agrees with Mullane (2022) and explains the games industry has a long and troubled history of sexism and gender stereotypes. He continues by stating that, historically, women in games have been presented as 'pawns, victims and objects of male desire'. However, he references Horizons Forbidden West (2022) as a game with positive representations of women, the main female protagonist being portrayed as 'smart and resourceful.' Bloomberg (2022) also suggest that video game's representation of women has become more positive in recent years.

We see this in the portrayal of Ashely in Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023).

Following the same overarching narrative as the original game, the character Ashely Graham is kidnapped, and Leon is sent to rescue her. Unlike in the original, Ashely is not constantly undermined. Instead, she does her best to aid Leon and is shown on multiple occasions to be able to defend herself. And, thankfully, the ability to look up her skirt was not included in the remake- she now wears shorts that prevent players from looking at her underwear. However, many fans did get upset about this change (Appendix A, Appendix C, Appendix D), referring to it as censorship (Appendix E). Henley (2023) disagrees, explaining that removing harmful elements from video game remakes is not 'censorship'.

Representation of Race:

As referenced earlier, William et al (2009) suggest that white males in video games are overrepresented and ethnic groups are underrepresented.

Hackney (2018) agrees with this, explaining that the underrepresentation of minorities in video games 'foster feelings of inferiority and exclusion'.

Across their research, Dill et al (2005) found a pattern of infrequent appearances of minority characters in video games and that, if they are present, they are represented with negative, stereotypical depictions.

Burgess et al (2011) explore this further, explaining that video games were prone to including racist stereotypes. They reference a study by Glaube et al (2001) where it was found Asian characters were most likely to be included in fighting games as martial artists, that black characters were often depicted as 'violent criminals' and Hispanic characters were presented as flirtatious and 'feisty'.

However, Norwood (2021) explains that, despite the gaming industry's problematic history of racial stereotypes, there has been an increase in positive representation.

Williams (2023) contributes the 'drastic changes' from the original to the resounding success of Resident Evil 4 Remake. He highlights the changes to Luis Serra's character as a positive change. Luis is a Spanish scientist, and, in both games, he serves as a companion to Leon during his mission. Williams (2023) states that Luis 'shines far brighter' in the remake, due to surviving longer into the narrative, hence having more scenes and more developed characterisation.

In a different article, Argüello (2023) agrees with Williams (2023) that the characterisation and representation of Luis in Resident Evil 4 Remake is less problematic. He explains that, in the original game, Ashely was subjected to 'awful and sexist comments', many of these being degrading sexual jokes from Luis. These jokes were excluded from the remake, showing an improvement in both representation of gender and race, since Ashley is no longer being degraded or sexualised, and Luis is not being depicted with the overly flirtatious Hispanic stereotype Glaube et al (2001) highlighted in their study.

Across their research on racial representation in video games, Burgess et al (2011) suggest women of colour were particularly underrepresented across the games they sampled.

Both versions of Resident Evil 4 defy this finding by including Ada Wong, a Chinese American spy. However, there are issues with the representation of Ada in the original Resident Evil 4.

Representation of Gender and Race:

Chan (2023) explores the problematic nature of Ada's representation in the original Resident Evil 4. She explains that Resident Evil 4 heavily leans into action movie tropes such as cheesy one-liners and violence as well as some more problematic tropes such as the 'Dragon Lady' stereotype. Pham (2021) defines this trope by stating 'the dragon lady manipulates her sexuality toward deadly ends.' Pham references a character called Ling who fits this stereotype, who used her sexuality as a 'disguise for her role as a spy'. This directly mirrors Ada's character in both the original Resident Evil 4 and the Remake. Chan (2023) adds that the 'Dragon Lady' is usually portrayed as 'deceitful, mysterious, villainous, and domineering'. Commonly, these characters are dressed in sexualised, stereotypical Asian-inspired costumes to emphasize their foreignness (Chan, 2023).

In the original Resident Evil 4, Ada's costume matches this description.

She wears a sexualised, stereotypical Chinese style dress despite the fact this would be extremely impractical for the game's setting. She wears a dress with a side split and has much of her skin exposed despite her characters being a professional spy. This links back to Ivory's (2009) observation that female video game characters with more provocative costumes are more likely to be presented as powerful.

Her reimagined design includes a turtleneck jumper dress with most of her skin covered, which is much more practical for her narrative. This outfit still has some impractical, sexualised elements, such as the leather stiletto boots- however, it is a vast improvement from the original, especially since it no longer reflects the Dragon Lady trope.

In the 2005 version of Resident Evil 4, Ada's dialogue was performed by a Canadian voice actress named Sally Cahill. In the Resident Evil 4 Remake, Ada was voiced by an Asian voice actress for the first time across the franchise. This authentic casting should have been a positive aspect for Ada's character, however, the new actress faced lots of online backlash for her portrayal of Ada. Lily Gao's performance differed from the original as she no longer spoke with an exaggerated sexual tone. This resulted in Gao receiving harassment, abuse and even death threats from some players online (Appendix G, Appendix H, Appendix I). This reaction is disheartening considering that Resident Evil 4's representation of Ada is less sexualised and stereotypical in both aspects of gender and race. Chan (2023) quotes Gao in her response (Appendix J), Gao reflected on representations perpetuating harmful stereotypes, such as the 'sexualised, eroticised, and mysterious Asian woman' – this aligning with the problematic Dragon Lady Trope present in the original game.

SCENE COMPARISON:
Resident Evil 4 (2005) and Resident Evil 4 (2023):

To explore the direct difference in representation, I will discuss a specific scene that is present in both Resident Evil 4 (2005) and Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023). A direct comparison will specifically highlight problematic aspects and how they have been altered.

Ashely and Luis Introduction:

After he has located and rescued Ashely, Leon introduces her to a companion he met during his excursion, Luis. This scene serves as the introduction between Luis and Ashley.
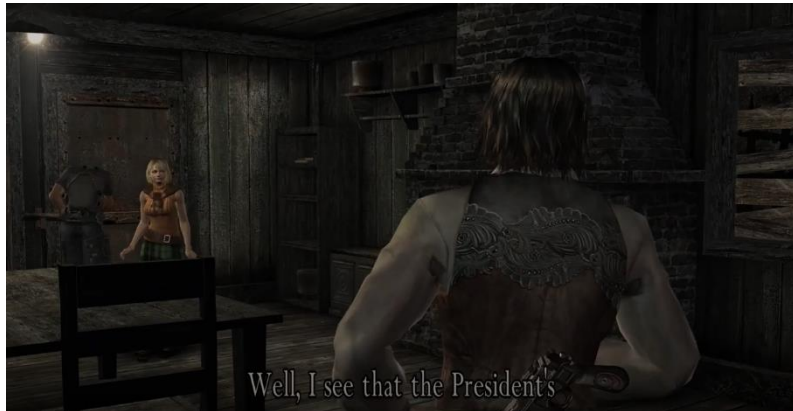
Luis: "Well, I see that the President's equipped his daughter with ballistics too."

Ashely: "How rude!"

REMAKE SCENE:

Luis: "Hey, I see you found your missing señorita."

Ashely: "The señorita has a name, and it's Ashely."

The stark contrast in the way the same scene is tackled in both games clearly shows an improvement in representation. In the original, while the camera focuses on Ashely's chest, Luis says: "I see the president's equipped his daughter with ballistics too." In his first line of dialogue, Luis does not address Ashely; he begins by making sexual and degrading comments about her body. This presents Luis' initial perception of Ashely as not acknowledging her as a person but rather focusing on her physical body, objectifying her.

In comparison, his first line in the remake is: "Hey, I see you found your missing señorita." This is a much more appropriate response as he is referencing a previous scene in the game in which Leon told him his mission is to rescue a 'missing girl'. This introductory line helps forward the narrative, highlighting that Luis is aware of Ashely's rescue. The dialogue describes her as a person, not solely focusing on her body. This presents Luis as compassionate due to the fact he notices and cares that Ashely is safe- which is a much better, less stereotypically harmful representation.

Results and Evaluation:

Player's perception of representation within video games:

This contemporary shift to more positive representations of both race and gender in recent games is crucial because a study conducted by Burgess et al (2011) suggests that video game representations can affect gamers' real-life perceptions of ethnic groups, women, and minorities.

Burgess et al (2011) referenced a study by Dill, Brown, et al. (2008) in which they showed male participants either sexualised images of female video game characters or professional press photographs of real women. The participants then gave their reactions to a real account of sexual harassment from a female college student. Burgess et al (2011) state that, those who had seen the video games images were 'more tolerant of sexual harassment', taking the incident less seriously than the other participants. Burgess et al (2011) explain that this shows a link between exposure to stereotypical sexualised depictions of women from video games and real-life perceptions of women.

Another study Burgess et al (2011) discuss explores the effect of racial stereotypes in video games. In the study, white participants were shown either images of black video game characters who visually represented the 'aggressive criminal' stereotype or images of black political leaders such as Barack Obama. They were then asked in a purportedly unrelated study to pick between a white or black hypothetical political candidate. Those who had seen the black video game characters favoured the white candidate and rated the black candidate as 'less capable'. Whereas those who saw the images of Obama mainly favoured the black candidate.

Burgess et al (2011) continue by stating 'it is important to note that the stereotypical images of black video game characters are not even real people, but they can still provide fodder for negative social judgments and negative reactions to real black men.'

These studies show the serious impact negative representations within video games can have on real life minorities.
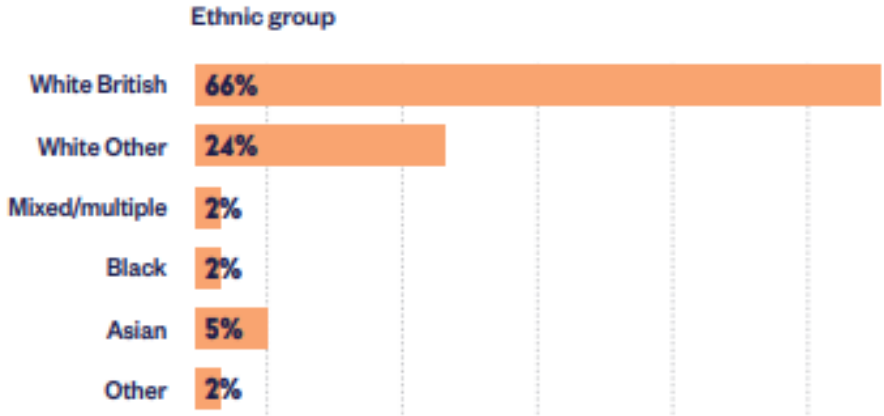
Diversity In the Gaming Industry:
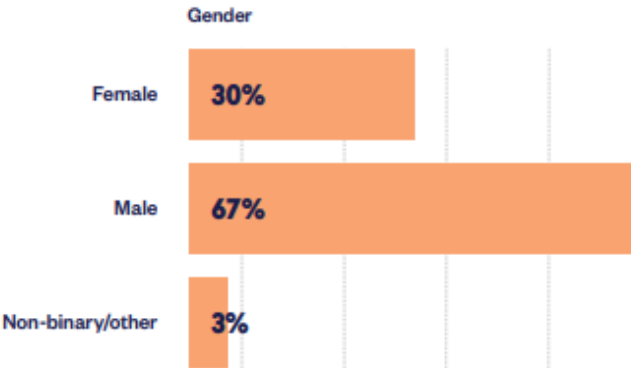
Historically the video games industry has been very male dominated, however, research suggests that, in the UK Games Industry, there are marginal improvements to diversity within the industry among employees every year (Ukie, 2022). In 2022, women made up 30% percent of the workforce which was a slight improvement from 2020 in which they made up 28%.

When comparing these statistics to those in 2009, the drastic increase of women working within the industry becomes glaringly obvious. In 2009, only 4% of the employees within the UK games industry were women (Prescott et al, 2011).

Despite the increase in women entering the UK Gaming industry, ethnic minorities are still a very low percentage of employees (Ukie, 2022). Ukie (2022) found that 66% of employees in the UK Gaming Industry were White British and 24% were 'white other'. Comparing these percentages against other ethnicities we see only 2% of UK Games Industry employees are black, 5% are Asian and 2% are 'other'.

Ethnic group

| Ethnic group	Percentage
White British	66%
White Other	24%
Mixed/multiple	2%
Black	2%
Asian	5%
Other	2%

Comparing these statistics to Capcom is crucial for understanding the relevancy between minorities in the gaming industry and representation within video games in relation to Resident Evil (2005) and Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023).

Diversity Among Capcom Employees:

Capcom is a Japanese company who create video games, one of their most notable franchises being Resident Evil. They developed both Resident Evil 4 (2005) and Resident Evil 4 Remake (2023).

While there is no public statistics available surrounding the diversity within Capcom during 2005, a recent study shows that, as of 2022, Capcom had a percentage of 35.1% women make up their workforce (Zippia, 2022) which is higher than the average UK based games company (Ukie, 2022).

This shows that the modern games and remakes Capcom have developed recently have had a progressively high number of women working on them. According to Stone (2020) this will reflected in the representation of women within the games, which is clearly seen in the comparison between the representation in both versions of Resident Evil 4.
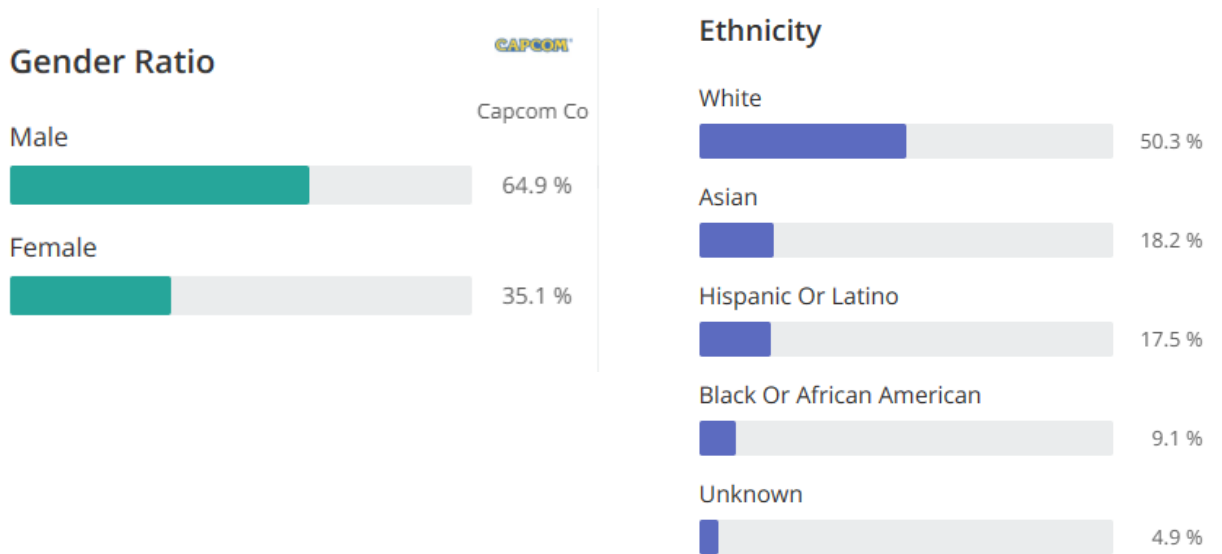
The ethnic diversity among Capcom employees as also proportionally higher than the average 2% of UK Games Industry. Ukie's (2022) study that are referenced earlier included specific statistics for two ethnic minorities, black and Asian employees, however all other races were lumped together in a category labelled 'other'. Although white employees are the majority at Capcom, their racial diversity among employees is proportionally high. Hispanic or Latino employees make up 17% of their workforce. For comparison, Ukie (2022) had to include these both in the 'other' category which, even while including very ethnicity asides from white, black, and Asian, only made up 2% of the employees.

This high number of Hispanic employees at Capcom could explain why Luis' representation was much more positive and less stereotypical in the Resident Evil 4 Remake.

Conclusion:

It is clear from this research that a lack of women and minorities involved in game development and in the gaming, industry results in negative representations of their demographics. Due to an increase of women and minorities interested in gaming and an increase of female employees within the industry, things have begun to improve. Representations of women are no longer as objectifying and overly sexual, there are now more strong and capable female characters in modern games. Representations of race are also improving, moving away from harmful, stereotypical racist portrayals. Increasing the number of minorities in the gaming industry is crucial for continuing to improve upon representations of these demographics.

The United Nations Sustainability Goal 4 is to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (United Nations, 2023). Aligning with this goal, encouraging more minorities to enter the gaming industry would provide more 'inclusive' opportunities and education Providing 'lifelong learning opportunities to all' would also be accomplished by this proposal since, through entering the industry, more minorities would have opportunities to learn software for games design and development. Seeing as white men already dominate the industry, increasing the number of minorities would help even out these statistics, providing opportunities 'to all' demographics that have not typically or historically challenged the established dynamic within the gaming industry.

To continue this project, I will be using this case study to inform my second semester Major Research Project. I will be taking an older game with problematic representations of elements such as race and gender and I will create concept art and a reimagined pitch for a remake. I plan to conduct primary research in the form of a survey, asking participants if they would play the hypothetical remake with the altered representations.

Further research on this topic could explore other demographics such as sexuality, religion, age, and their representation within videogames- exploring whether these representations have changed when comparing classic games to modern games.

Reference List:

Argüello, D.N. (2023). *17 Differences between Resident Evil 4 Remake and the Original*. [online] Polygon. Available at: https://www.polygon.com/resident-evil-4-remake-guides/23649050/differences-changes-original [Accessed 16 Oct. 2023].

Bhardwaj, A. (2022). *Video Game Remaster Vs Remake: What's The Difference?* [online] Fossbytes. Available at: https://fossbytes.com/video-game-remaster-vs-remake-whats-the-difference/ [Accessed 23 Oct. 2023].

Billcliffe , J. (2019). *Why Are We Seeing More and More Video Game remakes?* [online] VG247. Available at: https://www.vg247.com/video-game-remakes#:~:text=Why%20are%20we%20seeing%20more%20and%20more%20video [Accessed 25 Oct. 2023].

Bloomberg (2022). *Denigrating Portrayals of Women Are Common in Video Game Industry; Will Sexist Stance End?* [online] HT Tech. Available at: https://tech.hindustantimes.com/gaming/news/horizon-zero-dawn-denigrating-portrayals-of-women-are-common-in-video-game-industry-will-sexist-stance-end-71664274904455.html [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Burgess, M.C.R., Dill, K.E., Stermer, S.P., Burgess, S.R. and Brown, B.P. (2011). Playing with Prejudice: the Prevalence and Consequences of Racial Stereotypes in Video Games. *Media Psychology*, [online] 14(3), pp.289–311. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2011.596467.

Chan, H. (2023). *Resident Evil's Ada Wong Goes head-to-head with Sexpionage Stereotypes*. [online] Polygon. Available at: https://www.polygon.com/23679586/resident-evil-4-re4-remake-ada-wong-stereotypes [Accessed 27 Oct. 2023].

Dill, K.E., Gentile, D.A., Richter, W.A. and Dill, J.C. (2005). *Violence, Sex, Race, and Age in Popular Video Games: A Content Analysis.* [online] Psycnet. Available at: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2005-07532-008 [Accessed 23 Nov. 2023].

Guintcheva, G. (2022). *Gender Stereotypes in Video Game Narratives*. [online] EDHEC BUSINESS SCHOOL. Available at: https://www.edhec.edu/en/research-and-faculty/edhec-vox/gender-stereotypes-in-video-game-narratives [Accessed 20 Nov. 2023].

Hackney, E. (2018). Eliminating Racism and the Diversity Gap in the Video Game Industry. *HeinOnline*, [online] 51(4). Available at: https://repository.law.uic.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2771&context=lawreview [Accessed 28 Nov. 2023].

Hayton, P. (2020). *Game Remakes Vs remasters: what's the difference?* [online] TechRadar. Available at: https://www.techradar.com/news/game-remakes-vs-remasters-whats-the-difference [Accessed 23 Oct. 2023].

Henley, S. (2023). *Ashley's Underwear in Resident Evil Is Not Censorship*. [online] TheGamer. Available at: https://www.thegamer.com/ashley-underwear-resident-evil-4-censorship-examples/ [Accessed 7 Dec. 2023].

Ivory, J.D. (2009). Still a Man's Game: Gender Representation in Online Reviews of Video Games. *Mass Communication and Society*, [online] 9(1), pp.103–114. doi:https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327825mcs0901_6.

King, J. (2023a). *Resident Evil 4 No Longer Sexualising Its Women Is a Good Thing*. [online] TheGamer. Available at: https://www.thegamer.com/resident-evil-4-female-characters-ashley-ada-skirt-fan-service/ [Accessed 5 Dec. 2023].

King, J. (2023b). *Resident Evil 4 Remake Makes Separate Ways More than Just PS2 Port Filler*. [online] TheGamer. Available at: https://www.thegamer.com/resident-evil-4-separate-ways-assignment-ada-ps2-port/#:~:text=The%20remake%20goes%20way%20harder [Accessed 5 Dec. 2023].

Le Ngoc, M.T. (2023). *Diversity and representation are becoming more important for video game audiences* . [online] NewZoo. Available at: https://newzoo.com/resources/blog/diversity-and-representation-video-games-2023 [Accessed 20 Nov. 2023].

Lynch, T., Tompkins, J.E., van Driel, I.I. and Fritz, N. (2016). Sexy, Strong, and Secondary: A Content Analysis of Female Characters in Video Games across 31 Years. *Journal of Communication*, [online] 66(4), pp.564–584. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12237.

Main Leaf. (2023). *After all, What Is a Game remaster?* [online] Available at: https://mainleaf.com/after-all-what-is-a-game-remaster/ [Accessed 23 Oct. 2023].

Mrkonjić, E. (2022). *Video Gaming Industry Statistics 2022: Demographics and Revenue | WBL.* [online] Writer's Block Live. Available at: https://writersblocklive.com/blog/video-gaming-industry-statistics/ [Accessed 25 Oct. 2023].

Mullane, R. (2022). *Video Game Representation Why It Matters*. [online] Overclockers UK. Available at: https://www.overclockers.co.uk/blog/video-game-representation-why-it-matters/ [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Norwood, R. (2021). *Coding Blackness: a History of Black Video Game Characters*. [online] Wired. Available at: https://www.wired.com/story/black-character-history-video-games/.

Pham, E. (2021). Here's How Pop Culture Has Perpetuated Harmful Stereotypes of Asian Women. *Today*. [online] 1 Apr. Available at: https://www.today.com/popculture/here-s-how-pop-culture-has-perpetuated-harmful-stereotypes-asian-t213676 [Accessed 5 Dec. 2023].

Playkey Team (2019). *How the Resident Evil 2 Remake Is Different from the Original*. [online] Medium. Available at: https://playkey.medium.com/how-the-resident-evil-2-remake-is-different-from-the-original-e4b963aa5b1c [Accessed 15 Nov. 2023].

Prescott, J. and Bogg, J. (2011). Career Attitudes of Men and Women Working in the Computer Games Industry. *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture*, [online] 5(1), pp.7–28. Available at: https://eludamos.org/index.php/eludamos/article/view/vol5no1-2/html2 [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Stone, H. (2020). *The Role of Women in the Gaming Industry*. [online] Heather Stone. Available at: https://heatherrstone.com/the-role-of-women-in-the-gaming-industry/#:~:text=By%20representing%20female%20characters%20in%20central%2C%20heroic%20roles [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Ukie (2022). *The UK Games Industry Census 2022*. [online] Ukie. Available at: https://ukie.org.uk/census2022 [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

United Nations (2023). *Goal 4 | Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All*. [online] United Nations. Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4 [Accessed 18 Dec. 2023].

Vintage Is The New World (2023). *What Race Plays the Most Video games?* [online] VintageIsTheNewWorld. Available at: https://www.vintageisthenewold.com/game-pedia/what-race-plays-the-most-video-games#:~:text=Among%20adults%2C%20another%202015%20study [Accessed 4 Dec. 2023].

Webb, J., Davies, R. and Jessop, V. (2023). *Diversity in games: the Best (and worst) Examples of Representation*. [online] Evening Standard. Available at: https://www.standard.co.uk/culture/gaming/video-game-diversity-representation-a4461266.html [Accessed 20 Nov. 2023].

Williams, D., Consalvo, M., Caplan, S. and Yee, N. (2009a). Looking for Gender: Gender Roles and Behaviors Among Online Gamers. *Journal of Communication*, [online] 59(4), pp.700–725. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2009.01453.x.

Williams, D., Martins, N., Consalvo, M. and Ivory, J.D. (2009b). The Virtual census: Representations of gender, Race and Age in Video Games. *Sage Journals*, [online] 11(5), pp.815–834. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809105354.

Williams, I. (2023a). *5 Reasons Why Resident Evil 4 Remake Is Better Than the Original*. [online] Game Rant. Available at: https://gamerant.com/reasons-resident-evil-4-remake-better-original/#greater-replay-value [Accessed 16 Oct. 2023].

Williams, I. (2023b). *Resident Evil 4 Remake: 5 Biggest Changes Compared To The Original*. [online] Game Rant. Available at: https://gamerant.com/resident-evil-4-remake-re4-biggest-changes-compared-original/ [Accessed 16 Oct. 2023].

Zippia. (2022). *Capcom Co Number of Employees, Statistics, Diversity, Demographics, and Facts - Zippia*. [online] Available at: https://www.zippia.com/capcom-careers-693919/demographics/ [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Bibliography:

Archer, J. (2021). *Alan Wake Remastered: how it compares to the original*. [online] Rock, Paper, Shotgun. Available at: https://www.rockpapershotgun.com/alan-wake-remastered-comparison [Accessed 23 Oct. 2023].

Bonthuys, D. (2019). *7 Games that got woke and went broke*. [online] Critical Hit. Available at: https://www.criticalhit.net/gaming/7-games-that-got-woke-and-went-broke/ [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Burke, T. (2023). *Get to Know Us | History & Inception*. [online] Me Too Movement. Available at: https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/ [Accessed 27 Oct. 2023].

González, P.A. (2014). *Race and Ethnicity in Video Games: a Reflection of Social Reality. Racism, Hate Speech and prejudice: a...* [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261993738_Race_and_Ethnicity_in_Video_Games_A _Reflection_of_Social_Reality_Racism_hate_speech_and_prejudice_a_manifestation_of_social_ stereotypes_Final_Paper [Accessed 29 Nov. 2023].

Hamilton, J. (2019). *Female Representation in Video Games: How Are We Doing?* [online] Game Developer. Available at: https://www.gamedeveloper.com/audio/female-representation-in-video-games-how-are-we-doing-#close-modal [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Hartmann, T. and Klimmt, C. (2006). Gender and Computer Games: Exploring Females' Dislikes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, [online] 11(4), pp.910–931. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2006.00301.x.

IGDA. (2014). *IGDA – International Game Developers Association*. [online] Available at: https://igda.org/ [Accessed 12 Oct. 2023].

Jansz, J. and Martis, R.G. (2007). The Lara Phenomenon: Powerful Female Characters in Video Games. *Sex Roles*, [online] 56(3-4), pp.141–148. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9158-0.

Johnson, J. (2022). *When Did Video Games Become Popular?* [online] ed64p.com. Available at: https://ed64p.com/when-did-video-games-become-popular/?utm_content=cmp-true [Accessed 25 Oct. 2023].

L. Smith, S., Choueiti, M. and Pieper, K. (2014). *Gender Bias without Borders : an Investigation of Female Characters in Popular Films across 11 Countries*. [online] Los Angeles: University Of Southern California. Media, Diversity & Social Change Initiative. Available at: https://annenberg.usc.edu/sites/default/files/MDSCI_Gender_Bias_Without_Borders_Executive_Summary.pdf [Accessed 12 Oct. 2023].

Lin, B. (2021). *Diversity in Gaming: an Analysis of Video Game Characters*. [online] diamondlobby.com. Available at: https://diamondlobby.com/geeky-stuff/diversity-in-gaming/ [Accessed 6 Nov. 2023].

Malkowski, J. and Russworm, T.M. (2017). *Gaming Representation : Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Video Games*. [online] Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=6hcxDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=video+games+representation&ots=QNCAXJVXm0&sig=oXx3yMRQM4gNi_WvxnZhLm3Tap0#v=onepage&q&f=false [Accessed 12 Oct. 2023].

Pearson, R. (2023). *TheGamer Praises Censorship of Ashley's Outfit in 'Resident Evil 4' Remake, Claims Original Game's Panty Shots Encourage 'Misogynistic Behaviour in Real Life'*. [online] Bounding into Comics. Available at: https://boundingintocomics.com/2023/03/23/the-gamer-praises-censorship-of-ashleys-outfit-in-resident-evil-4-remake-claims-original-games-panty-shots-encourage-misogynistic-behaviour-in-real-life/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CYes%2C%20they%E2%80%99re%20just%20characters%2C%20but%20it%20adds%20nothing [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Potter, A. (2021). *What's the Difference between a Video Game remake, Reboot and reimagining?* [online] GamingDeals. Available at: https://www.gamingdeals.com/articles/what-s-the-difference-between-a-video-game-remake-reboot-and-reimagining/ [Accessed 23 Oct. 2023].

Rahil Sheikh (2017). Video games: How Big Is industry's Racial Diversity problem? *BBC News*. [online] 20 Dec. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-42357678 [Accessed 29 Nov. 2023].

Resident Evil 4. (2023). *Resident Evil 4 | CAPCOM*. [online] Available at: https://www.residentevil.com/re4/en-us/ [Accessed 27 Oct. 2023].

Schreier, J. (2020). *Is This the Video Game Industry's #MeToo reckoning?* [online] Aljazeera. Available at: https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/6/24/dozens-of-women-accuse-video-gaming-titans-of-sexual-misconduct [Accessed 27 Oct. 2023].

Wright, A. (2023). *Navigating the Rise of Woke Politics in Modern Gaming: Exploring its Origins and Impact*. [online] JoyFreak. Available at: https://www.joyfreak.com/threads/navigating-the-rise-of-woke-politics-in-modern-gaming-exploring-its-origins-and-impact.14410/#:~:text=Woke%20politics%20in%20modern%20gaming%20represents%20an%20evolution [Accessed 17 Nov. 2023].

Appendix:

9 **Capcom is anti Skirts now?**

General

RE4R has been rad but has anyone noticed Ashley's skirt got the same treatment as Jill's did in RE3R. I'm sorry but who the fuck wears a skort . :o

💬 11 Comments   ↗ Share   🔖 Save   ⋯

📥 **This thread is archived**
   New comments cannot be posted and votes cannot be cast

Sort By: Best ▾ | 🔍 Search comments

dr_butz · 9 mo. ago · edited 9 mo. ago
🎮 SteamID: (dr_butz)

My best guess is that they know there are weirdos out there that wanted to look under Ashley's skirt, but at least in OG 4 they had fun with it and she would call the player a pervert.

Edit: weirdos was probably not the best choice of words, it comes off as very judgmental lol

⋀ 6 ⋁   Share   ⋯

Appendix A- A Reddit Forum discussing the change of Ashely's skirt to shorts.

razzlerain · 9 mo. ago

I wouldn't doubt a lot of them like that she's mad. They like the fact that it's violating. Her anger is funny to them.

⇧ 11 ⇩ 💬 Reply Share ⋯

snyper-101 · 9 mo. ago

That was always such a weird thing to include in that game. I want to think it's more that they wanted to turn the campiness dial to 11 and not that the devs are just perverts themselves.

⇧ 10 ⇩ 💬 Reply Share ⋯

Appendix B- A Reddit Forum discussing upskirting Ashely in the original Resident Evil 4.

[deleted] · 9 mo. ago

Why are you calling them losers? We were teenagers back when we were playing RE4, we did that to mess with Ashley cause it was funny how she reacted, and we had the nostalgia calling us to do it again to see if in the remake that little easter egg was still there and it's not, which is a total bummer.
You guys are the weirdos who are thinking about everything we're complaining about from a purely sexual point of it, it's not. You're literally the only ones who get offended and who think in terms of sex, you're disgusting and demented, and constantly sexualising minors. The rest of us over here are just talking from a nostalgia point of view and wanting to mess around with Ashley and you on the other hand, the only thought that can cross your mind is "being thirsty"...that's fking weird and you should probably get that checked out. Jesus Christ(I know, that name triggers you, sry for being an advocate of normalcy), I wonder if you're all on the Left.

⇧ 0 ⇩ 💬 Reply Share ⋯

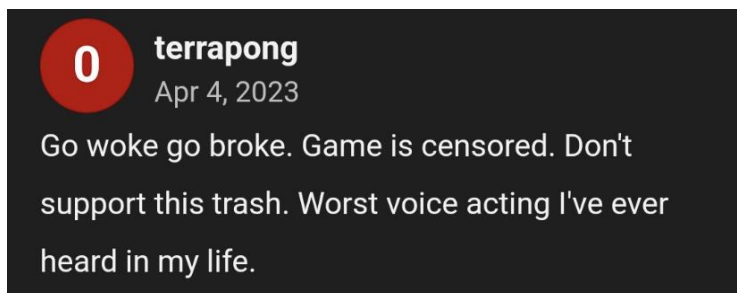*Appendix C- A Reddit commentor defending the ability to upskirt Ashely in the original Resident Evil 4.*

Appendix D- A X (Twitter) post upset about the fact you can no longer upskirt Ashely in the Resident Evil 4 Remake.
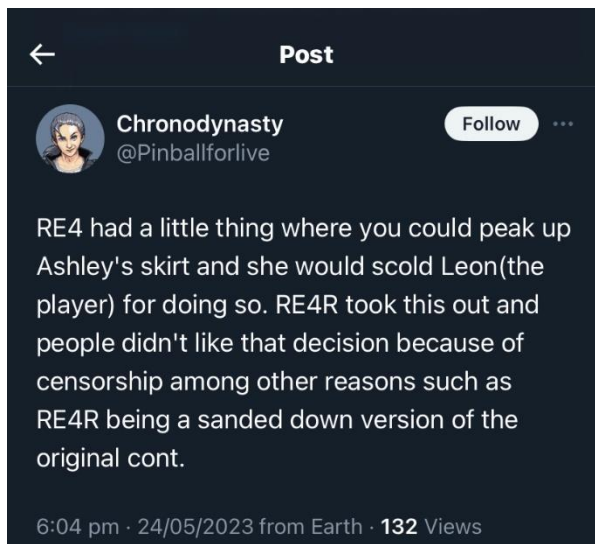
Appendix E- A X (Twitter) post calling removing the ability to upskirt Ashely 'censorship'.

Appendix F- A review referencing the 'censorship' in the remake and complaining about the voice acting.
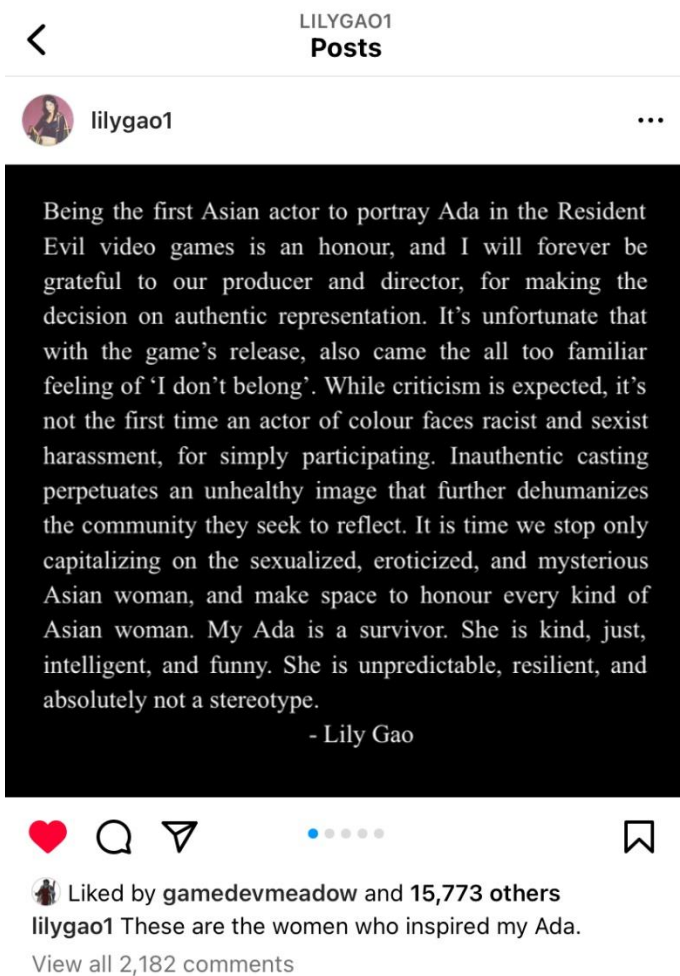
Appendix G- A review that complains about Lily Gao's portrayal of Ada in Resident Evil 4 Remake.

Appendix H- A Twitter post complaining about Lily Gao's portrayal of Ada in Resident Evil 4 Remake.

Post

Josh the COMMISSIONS C... Follow ...
@JoshAnimator

The voice acting for Ada in RE4 Remake is genuinely some of the absolute worst voice acting in a game I've ever heard. Trying to use race and sex as a shield for universally warranted criticism is pathetic. You did a bad job. Get over it.

Appendix I- A Twitter post complaining about Lily Gao's portrayal of Ada in Resident Evil 4 Remake.

LILYGAO1
Posts

lilygao1 ...

Being the first Asian actor to portray Ada in the Resident Evil video games is an honour, and I will forever be grateful to our producer and director, for making the decision on authentic representation. It's unfortunate that with the game's release, also came the all too familiar feeling of 'I don't belong'. While criticism is expected, it's not the first time an actor of colour faces racist and sexist harassment, for simply participating. Inauthentic casting perpetuates an unhealthy image that further dehumanizes the community they seek to reflect. It is time we stop only capitalizing on the sexualized, eroticized, and mysterious Asian woman, and make space to honour every kind of Asian woman. My Ada is a survivor. She is kind, just, intelligent, and funny. She is unpredictable, resilient, and absolutely not a stereotype.

- Lily Gao

Liked by **gamedevmeadow** and **15,773 others**
lilygao1 These are the women who inspired my Ada.
View all 2,182 comments

Appendix J- Lily Gao's response to the internet backlash and harassment.