What is the role of female characters in a post feminist era within video games

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Abstract

The initial segment of this article delves into the historical trajectory of female characters in video games, discernible through three pivotal phases. The critical juncture emerges with the advent of the fourth wave of feminism. In 2012, this wave reverberated through social media channels, influencing the development of certain video games. The subsequent section elucidates the underpinnings for the creation of female characters, primarily examining three dimensions: cultural, economic, and technological. Culturally, the enduring repercussions of male supremacy have engendered a stereotype within the gaming community, perpetuating the notion that games are tailored exclusively for male gamers. From an economic standpoint, within the consumerist landscape, female characters become potentially more lucrative. Game developers can amass higher revenues by marketing alluring and audacious fashion choices. The rapid advancement of information technology has functioned as a double-edged sword in shaping the design of female characters. The third segment enumerates potential crises and issues stemming from the portrayal of female characters in general video games. Examples include the negative impacts on diverse groups, the influence of radical feminism

on gaming dynamics, and the apprehensions within the male gamer community. Ultimately, the article puts forth strategies for constructing representations of women in video games. In the aftermath of the post-feminist movement, stereotypes are dismantled, and the focus shifts towards highlighting women's independence , but attention must be paid to the negative impacts of extreme feminism.

Key Words

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Literature review

Teresa Lynch (2016) conducted an analysis of in-game content from titles released between 1983 and 2014 (sample n = 571), specifically focusing on playable female characters. The results indicate a decline in sexualization since its peak in the 1990s. Genres traditionally oriented toward a male audience, such as fighting games, exhibit a higher prevalence of sexualized characters compared to role-playing games. Notably, games rated Teen or Mature did not show significant differences in sexualization but featured more instances of sexualization than games rated Everyone.Despite a rise in games featuring playable female characters, the portrayal of these characters tends to place them more frequently in secondary roles, often subjecting them to greater sexualization than their primary counterparts. Notable research indicates that female characters' physical prowess and sexualization are positively correlated. Interestingly, the level of sexualization did not show a significant association with the critical success of games.

Le Deuxième Sexe (The Second Sex, 1949) argues that millennia of societal structures have molded women into the "second sex." A modern challenge for women, as opposed to men, is repeatedly confronting the decision to position themselves as the "first sex"

or the "second sex" throughout their upbringing. While gender remains immutable, the choice lies within one's responsibility.

According to Maclaran (2015), the internet and social media are driving the fourth wave of feminism, which is presently taking place. Examining how gender roles and feminist themes are portrayed in films and video games is crucial, since it provides a context for understanding the post-feminist age. Wu Xiaoyun quantified the level of clothing exposure of female characters at different stages by comparing a substantial sample.

According to Xiaofei Shi (2021), the socio-historical environment largely influences how women are portrayed in video games. In her analysis of the pervasive patriarchal culture's impact on women's self-perception, Shi argues against the idea that women should only be used as "vases." Data from heroes in first-person shooter games shows that gamers are more likely to buy outfits for female characters, which results in larger economic gains.

Matthews, Nicholas L., Teresa Lynch, and Nicole Martins (2016) highlight pertinent issues, noting that the ideal and super-ideal video game bodies are often conceptualized as male and female, exploring the reasons behind their formulation. Lindner, Danielle, Melissa Trible, Ilana Pilato, and Christopher J. Ferguson address the body satisfaction and aggressiveness of female players toward other women in video games, illustrating the notion of non-independence of girls as "seen" through the male gaze.

Frazer Heritage (2022) highlighted that in several video games, players have the ability to shape their own narratives through choices leading to diverse dialogues and representations. . For example, The Witcher videogame series (CD Projekt Red, 2007, CD Projekt Red, 2011, CD Projekt Red, 2015) as a case study to investigate gender representation using corpus methods. The results of keyword analysis reveal a higher occurrence of male characters compared to female characters, with males occupying a more diverse range of professions. Notably, the primary female characters tend to be sorceresses, prompting an exploration of how this term is utilized throughout the corpus. The analysis illustrates that sorceresses are portrayed as educated and intelligent; however, they face a glass ceiling effect, limiting them to advisory roles rather than leadership positions. He argue that irrespective of players' choices, they are statistically more likely to come across these unfavourable gender stereotypes, prompting inquiries into the feasibility of escaping sexist discourses within this medium.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years, as science and technology have advanced, video games have evolved beyond being solely for children and teenagers. Rich game content and realistic VR technology have increasingly appealed to adults. According to the MediaWise Video and Computer Games Report Card, 87% of 17-year-olds play video games, with 92% being males and 80% females (Melinda C. R. Burgess,2007, Pages 419-433).

Within these games, players have the freedom to shape appropriate behaviors and roles through characters, akin to how individuals use other media to learn societal roles and behaviors (Muhannad Quwaider,2019, Pages 575-582). However, the portrayal of game characters in stereotypical or sexist manners might lead to the emulation of these behaviors with real-world female characters. Hence, it's crucial to comprehend the depiction of female characters in video games and how this portrayal might have changed over time. Despite the potential influence of gender-typed video game characters in virtual worlds on perceptions of men and women in reality, there's limited research on this topic.

The representation of female characters in video games is often influenced by the status of women in reality. In the previous century, when two-thirds of the world's illiterate population were women, feminist academic discourse shifted towards postfeminist rhetoric (Sarah Gamble ,2004, Pages 65). With the progression of the feminist movement and the extensive reach of social media, both game players and developers have started paying attention to the portrayal of female characters, gradually shattering stereotypes of "supporting roles" and "tools." For instance, characters like Lara Croft ("Tomb Raider") have transitioned into protagonists and heroes, reflecting this evolving viewpoint. (Jeroen Jansz,2007, Pages 141-148) However, the rise of female heroes and characters represents progress towards equality but sometimes at a cost, as characters like Lara Croft are often depicted in revealing, tight clothing. Studies have shown that participants in online video games reported higher levels of sexual harassment toward

their female partners when playing games with sexualized female characters compared to those featuring non-sexualized female characters (Melinda C. R. Burgess,2007, Pages 419-433). Nonetheless, compared to the early days of video games, the stereotype of female characters solely as "tools" has gradually eroded. Initially geared towards male audiences, there's now an increasing proportion of games featuring female protagonists or targeting female players. The status of women in the real world tends to validate the positioning of female characters in games. Similarly, game characters themselves reflect real-world dynamics. This article primarily delves into the evolution and rationales behind female characters in games in the context of the current post-feminist era and suggests strategies for crafting the portrayal of female characters in games.

Historical changes in the image of female character in video games

This article believes that the image of women in video games can be divided into three stages:

1.1996-1999 Simple and traditional female image

To more precisely trace the evolution of female characters, the article temporarily abandons the tracking of the early pixel era and 2D games. Instead, it opts to commence the comparison from the pre-rendering era, specifically the 2.5D era. The emergence of the online game "Meridian 59," developed by Archetype in 1996, is considered a hallmark of this period. During the span from 1996 to 1999, owing to limitations in

computer technology, there existed minimal distinction between female and male characters. Gender differentiation primarily relied on clothing and other contextual factors. For instance, the female warrior character in Meridian 59 donned the same armor as her male counterparts, with optional clothing including trousers, long skirts, and plain tops. The visual design of female characters during this era was characterized by its monotony and simplicity, lacking explicit gender-based distinctions.

As depicted in Figure 1, the game of this era retained a classical style, wherein Western female characters typically sported long-sleeved shirts with less exposed limbs. Female characters exhibited similar numerical and class characteristics as their male counterparts, the sole divergence being in their attire. The article contends that games during this stage did not heavily rely on gender differentiation to capture attention. Female characters in these games retained a traditional semblance of women's clothing of that time, without conveying any specific significance, serving merely to delineate roles.

Fig.1. Meridian 59,1996. (Leyou Net. 2010 http://www.962.net/html/4371.html)

2.2000-2012 The female characters in the vase image and the feminist consciousness gradually began to awaken.

The dawn of the 3D era, spearheaded by the advancements in computer technology championed by John Carmack in 2000, marked a period of increased diversity and innovation in female roles within the gaming industry. The market witnessed the influx of numerous games, and to enhance competitiveness, female characters underwent a transformation. Games like "World of Warcraft," released in 2004, featured female characters characterized by seductive figures and revealing attire, emphasizing exaggerated body curves and accentuating breasts. Typically, these characters were endowed with singular traits such as gentleness or sexiness, lacking a nuanced three-dimensional portrayal. Female characters during this era often served the role of "ideal lovers" for male players. Game designers harnessed mature technologies to craft

characters aligning more closely with male aesthetics, frequently positioning them as companions to the main protagonist, their primary purpose being to attract a male player demographic.

However, influenced by the third-wave feminist movement that emerged in the 1990s, feminist ideas gradually permeated the gaming landscape, giving rise to new female characters. In 2001's "Final FantasyX," Yuna emerged as a notable example. Initially portrayed as fatigued and supported by Kimari after completing a trial, Yuna's character evolved, revealing a strong will beneath her soft and protective exterior. At just 17 years old, Yuna bore the weighty responsibility of saving the world, suppressing her emotions to carry a burden incongruent with her age. In contrast, the male protagonist, a member of the Summoner Guard, lacked control over the entire world's fate. The narrative departed from the conventional trope of heroic teenage males saving the world, entrusting this monumental task to a young girl. The article asserts that this marks a departure from traditional Asian family concepts. Yuna, as a protagonist determining her own destiny, makes a groundbreaking choice to disrupt the cycle of history, sacrificing her companions. This represents a genuine breakthrough for both Yuna and the trajectory of female characters in gaming. In comparison to earlier works and contemporaneous creations, female characters were assigned more significant roles, extending beyond simple distinctions. This is also the projection of the awakening of female will in the game world in reality.

Fig.2.Yuna,2001(Baike,2001,

https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%9C%80%E7%BB%88%E5%B9%BB%E6%83%B3%

E2%85%A9/7038901?fromModule=lemma_inlink)

3. 2012-present A wide variety of female characters with distinctive personalities.

The fourth wave of the feminist movement has unfolded in the 21st century, with women channeling their concerns towards spiritual aspects, embracing a commitment to the environment, the disadvantaged, and the overall well-being of the world (Aastha, 2003). Over time, the four waves of feminist movements have embodied diverse aims, goals, and strategies, reflecting the broad spectrum of feminism. (Jonathan Dean,2015,Pages 375). In essence, the four feminist movements have evolved from addressing political, economic, and sexual dimensions to fostering the development of spiritual civilization.

In 2012, the rapid proliferation of modern social media significantly impacted various facets of society during the fourth wave of the feminist movement. Throughout this period, female roles underwent a diversification. In comparison to preceding eras,

female game characters ceased to be one-dimensional. For instance, when portraying Asian women, depictions no longer relied on exaggerated features such as ample breasts and prominent buttocks. The prevailing trend shifted towards fair-skinned, slender figures with distinctive Oriental features. While there are still games emphasizing "breasts," "big butts," and "bikinis" as selling points, their prevalence has substantially diminished. Female characters in this era are not merely subservient; they possess richer background stories, and their in-game choices are intricately tied to their personalities.

In the 2012 release of Diablo 3, the female barbarian donned heavy armor and robust muscles akin to male counterparts but retained distinct feminine muscular features, deviating from the original character image. Fast forward to 2023's Horizon: Extinction West, where Eloy fearlessly embarks on an adventure as a female hunter character, unraveling the mystery of her origins. This narrative further underscores the perspective articulated in this article: the portrayal of women in game characters and the real-world status and power of women are mutually reinforcing.

Moreover, it's more common for games targeting a female audience to showcase strong female protagonists. "Echizaru wa Red Ichibana," released in 2012 and set in Qatar, challenges real-world norms where Qatari women often face lower social status and restrictions in public spaces. The game strives to break down the colonial mentality that limits women's freedom. The courageous and tenacious heroine, Nara, resists unequal rights, working tirelessly to protect those who matter. Even in elite games with multiple

male protagonists, the heroine is no longer a weak, passive tool dependent on the male lead. Instead, her character is defined by her sense of self, independence, and determination. In the 2017 b-girl handheld game "Love and the Producer," the heroine runs an entertainment company alone to fulfill her father's wish, engaging in a powerful romance while also pursuing her career. This shift toward portraying professional women in games immerses female players in workplace scenarios.

Not only do women constitute half of the gaming community, but many games also feature diverse female characters. In "Anecdote of the Goddess," a male villain at the top of the hierarchy represents an insatiable desire for power and money, turning his mind into a "temple." The protagonist, armed with mysterious powers, infiltrates the villain's palace to commit theft, aiming to secure a secret treasure symbolizing their quest to save the world. Alongside male villains, the narrative introduces two female characters who own the lobby. Saeki Niijima, a workaholic in the game, is inspired by Niijima Yae, the first woman outside the Japanese imperial family to receive the Medal of Honor. She protected the vulnerable during wartime and later contributed to education and nursing, challenging the era's prejudices about women's capabilities.

As times change, game companies have become more aware of shaping female characters, exemplified by Japan's Nintendo. The Zelda series, launched in 1986, featured Link as the main character but was named after Princess Zelda, who initially embodied the "rescue" archetype. However, Princess Brigitte in the "Super Mario Bros.

Movie," released in April 2023, breaks away from the traditional damsel-in-distress role. Faced with the threat of Ku Ba, she uses her wisdom to overcome marital difficulties, shifting Mario from a savior to a "nobody."

This article posits that since 1996, female game characters have undergone three stages. In the earliest traditional period, roles were primarily gender-based, with limited content on female characters. Technological advancements led to the portrayal of submissive, passive, and "objectified" female characters, reflecting real-world male dominance. Despite the increasing presence of female characters, their in-game depictions often involve sexualization, featuring exaggerated body parts and sexual innuendos catering to the target group of white heterosexual men. With the growing influence of the feminist movement and heightened female consciousness among game producers and players, the article anticipates the creation of more modern female characters with independent consciousness and distinctive personalities in the future.

Reasons for the formation of female character image in video games

1. Cultural factors left over from history

In a society traditionally dominated by men, women have often been portrayed as objects or "the other" in various forms of media, from classical literature to contemporary video games(Jeroen Jansz,2007,Pages 141-148). By employing structuralist narrative analysis, women can be categorized into four archetypes: the

Mother Earth image, symbolizing motherhood, order, and protection; the seductive "slut" image, representing female charm and promiscuity; the wise and sometimes destructive "witch" image, symbolizing wisdom and irrationality; and the sacrificial image, representing innocence, purity, and tragedy. Female characters in early video games tended to align with these archetypes, perpetuating these stereotypes.

The lasting influence of male dominance has perpetuated the stereotype that games are primarily created for male gamers. As depicted in the documentary "The Second Sex," women are not inherently "born" women but gradually become women through societal and cultural influences(Le Deuxième Sexe ,The Second Sex, 1949). The entrenched patriarchal society has imposed obstacles on women's freedom, stemming not from their biological sex but from social, political, and other factors. Some women have willingly embraced the "vase" archetype, seeking to fulfill the desire to be admired and watched, perpetuating a false sense of femininity. However, with the increasing prominence of the feminist movement, more women aspire to challenge male hegemony and attain the equal rights they deserve. Consequently, some works have begun to subvert traditional femininity, even incorporating elements of violence, such as the previously mentioned "Donkey Kong Barbie" in "Diablo 3." These shifts may reflect a spirit of rebellion. In today's era of widespread information dissemination through social media, the cost of sharing information has significantly decreased. This has led to a growing influence of feminism on game producers and the inclusion of new-age women on game development teams, infusing their creations with the essence

of the modern era.

2. Increased strength of female consumer groups

Economic factors play a crucial role in decision-making. Initially, male players constituted the primary consumer base, and designing female characters to cater to male aesthetics significantly boosted game sales(LJ Thompson, 2007, Pages 87). Game manufacturers profited from selling provocative and bold outfits, aligning with economic principles.

As time has progressed, women's income has experienced substantial growth. Women's earnings have expanded exponentially compared to the previous century. This has greatly augmented women's purchasing power. Moreover, as gaming has evolved, female attributes have sometimes become advantageous. For instance, in first-person shooter (FPS) games, men are more easily targeted due to their larger size, while the reverse holds true for women. Consequently, many players, including males, prefer using female characters, although they might be stereotyped as female players. The proliferation of female characters has led to a surge in demand for decorative clothing among female gamers, leading them to spend significant amounts on in-game cosmetics. Being both visually appealing and competent has gradually become a defining characteristic of female players.

However, the substantial consumption by female players has given rise to some

undesirable issues. Some game producers have prioritized profit over the game's core experience, creating female characters with gimmicky costumes to attract players and generate more revenue. Such games focus on short-term gains but often struggle in the long run. In contrast, Overwatch stands out as one of the most gender-inclusive FPS games globally, boasting more than double the number of female players compared to other FPS titles, according to 2017 statistics from QuanticFoundry.(Ratera Gracià, Clara,2022) Overwatch's world offers a comprehensive and respectful representation of female characters. These female combatants are portrayed as equals to their male counterparts, devoid of forced sexualization and stereotypical poses. Female characters play diverse roles, including tanks and DPS, breaking free from the traditional support and healing roles. For instance, Anna, a key sniper in the game's lore, is not only a mother but also a battle-hardened veteran. This shift illustrates how, with the rise of female gamers and their significant financial influence, game developers no longer need to cater solely to male preferences for quick profits.

Furthermore, with the growing influence of feminism, there is a burgeoning market for games targeting female audiences. Women often have a penchant for fashionable attire, and investing in such games not only satisfies their consumer desires but also reinforces their sense of female identity. By indulging in these games, they meet their own needs while simultaneously cultivating a sense of social identity.

3.Development of Information Technology

Over the past two decades, electronic computer technology has undergone rapid advancements, significantly influencing the evolution of female characters in video games(Minkai Chen,2019). The progression of technology plays a pivotal role in the ability to design more nuanced and diverse female characters. Initially, due to technical limitations, distinguishing between male and female characters relied on simple clothing variations, restricting the portrayal of different types of female characters. The advent of the fourth industrial revolution, marked by the swift progress of AI technology, has notably impacted the depiction of female game characters. AI allows for the creation of a more diverse range of female characters, breaking away from earlier constraints.

Fig.3. First Generation Laura ,1996（Hxnews,2008，

http://www.hxnews.com/news/dmyx/dmzx/dhxw/201805/17/1521692.shtml）

Moreover, the continuous upgrade of information technology has facilitated the seamless dissemination of knowledge, contributing significantly to the accelerated pursuit of women's rights. This article posits that as information technology continues to advance, its positive impact on the design of female game characters will become even more pronounced.

The Crisis and Problems Facing the Image of female character in Video Games

1. The negative impact of hyper-ideal female characters on different age and gender groups

According to the objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 173), women who are repeatedly exposed to sexually objectifying media messages internalise this sexualization and become objectifiers of themselves. Self-objectification involves viewing one's body as a representation of oneself, prioritizing appearance over

capabilities, and considering one's looks mainly from an external perspective (Calogero, 2011; Fredrickson and Roberts, 1997; Lindner and Tantleff-Dunn, 2017). This can adversely affect the younger population. Furthermore, hyper-idealized body images impact both male and female players. Research by Nicholas L. Matthews, Teresa Lynch, and Nicole Martins suggests that hyper-ideal character bodies affect female gamers' self-esteem(Nicholas L. Matthews, 2016, Pages155). These gamers may perceive scantily clad female characters as possessing qualities that undermine their dignity. This negative impact is particularly notable among younger audiences. Some games, due to their immersive nature, curiosity, and pressure-free competition, inadvertently serve as sexual initiation tools for children and teenagers, using scantily clad female characters as objects of gaze. A case in point is NetEase's handheld game "Ni Shui Han," where the revelation of teenagers' behaviors led to the game being pushed to the forefront and compelled to remove provocative clothing. This article advocates for governmental and legislative intervention to regulate the design of female characters and game distribution, potentially implementing a more stringent classification system if necessary.

2. Radical feminism will make very reasonable demands on the game

The influence of radical feminism, particularly through social media, has significantly impacted the portrayal of female characters in video games. The controversy surrounding Battlefield 5 exemplifies a key challenge in the gaming industry—balancing historical accuracy with modern gender representation values(Xiaofei

Shi,2021). Originally anticipated as a gaming masterpiece based on original IP, the release of the trailer resulted in nearly half a million negative reviews on YouTube. This backlash was triggered by a feminist complaint to the producer before the launch, questioning the absence of female characters in games and challenging the perception that war is exclusively a male domain. The producer, succumbing to the pressure, added a substantial number of female soldier characters, achieving near gender parity, and even altered the cover to feature a female character. However, this move backfired as the game faced boycotts upon launch, and even discounted sales failed to recover losses.

Fig.5. Battlefield V Female Character Posters（FACEBOOK，2018，

https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/cartagena/battlefield-video-games

This scenario underscores the intricate challenges developers encounter in reconciling historical accuracy with contemporary social values. The growing demand for diversity and inclusion in media, including video games, clashes with expectations of accuracy and context when dealing with historical subjects. The Battlefield 5 controversy serves

as a cautionary tale, revealing the delicate balance developers must strike and how social media can wield significant influence in shaping public opinion, ultimately impacting the success of a game.

3. Anxiety in the male gamer community

Throughout history, patriarchal societies have solidified men's positions of authority, while women often find themselves confined to stereotypical and relatively subservient roles. In the early days of game design, female characters were predominantly portrayed as mere "ornaments," catering primarily to the desires of male players, resulting in the objectification of women (Xiaoyun Wu,2019).

However, with the passage of time and the increasing significance of women in society, their roles in the gaming realm have grown more varied and intricate. This transition sparked controversy. On one side, certain radical feminist assertions and actions challenging traditional patriarchal norms unsettled some male gamers, impacting their gaming experiences. On the other hand, for male players accustomed to alluring and glamorous female characters in games, altering or toning down these portrayals appears to deprive them of the right to appreciate beauty. Some even interpret this as not just a dismissal of male aesthetics but also as an extreme form of suppressing male instincts, as echoed in certain social media discussions.

This perspective overlooks a crucial reality: games are cultural artifacts, and their

evolution mirrors shifts in societal values. The proliferation of diverse female characters does not reject male aesthetics; rather, it reflects the diversity inherent in gaming culture.

This article contends that anxiety arises from apprehension toward change and the unknown. As female characters assume more significant and varied roles in games, male gamers must adapt to this evolution and navigate their place in this burgeoning gaming culture. This is not solely a challenge for male gamers but an opportunity for the entire gaming industry and culture to progress toward greater inclusivity and diversity. Therefore, this article advocates not for unattractive character portrayals to appease the female demographic or to entirely curtail men's aesthetic appreciation. Instead, it urges a move away from female characters solely created to cater to male needs and gaze.

Strategies for Constructing the Image of female characters in Video Games

The portrayal of female characters in games is influenced by various factors, with a critical consideration being the perspective of women, particularly female gamers. A fundamental question arises in the current social context: "Is the female character defined by herself, by some of the men around her, or by the relationship between the male audience and her?" (Zhu Siqi, 2022). Addressing these concerns, this article presents constructive strategies for shaping positive female images in online games.

First and foremost, game developers should establish a gender-equitable online gaming environment. The virtual world within the network isn't isolated from reality but rather a virtual representation of the real world. Numerous studies indicate that in-game characters can exert a significant positive or negative impact on individuals in the real world. Conversely, the real world profoundly influences the virtual realm within games. Technically, the ongoing evolution of games has led to substantial changes in the visual representation of female characters, yet the ideas, culture, and values embodied by these characters sometimes lack a connection to the real world. Encouragingly, contemporary game developers are striving to engage players from diverse regions, ethnicities, genders, and age groups. Thus, online games should align with current social and cultural trends, adhering to the momentum of social affirmative action. The construction of female roles should be grounded in the principles of equal rights for men and women, aiming to parallelize the economy and culture while minimizing gender stereotypes.

Additionally, recognizing three fundamental elements for both female and male game characters is crucial (Timmer A, Böök B, Burri S D, et ,2021, Page 26):

1.Equality of personality and dignity

2.Equality of intelligence and ability

3.Equal contribution and value

The article further proposes guidelines for designing new female characters in video games. Developers should ensure female characters are not subordinate to male

characters, positioning them as influential decision-makers receiving equal attention. Sexualized designs should be discarded, as past emphasis on revealing attire for economic gain loses appeal with advancing gender equality. Realism is essential; for instance, it's illogical to depict women in bikinis engaged in combat. In Assassin's Creed Odyssey, despite historical constraints on women's participation in the ancient Greek Olympic Games, Kassandra pursues her adventure as an optional heroine, contributing to a sense of reality and immersion. Finally, the design of female characters should transcend limited stereotypes like "royal sister" or "lolita." Infusing diverse thoughts and emotions into characters is crucial for players to resonate with them authentically.

Conclusion

This article argues that female characters in video games have undeniably influenced gender roles and are a response to the feminist movement. It suggests that the changes in female roles in video games mirror the shifts in the real-life feminist movement. Additionally, it posits that the modern women's movement has prompted changes in female roles in games. Female characters are no longer restricted to adhering to a male-centric aesthetic or narrative. Instead, modern female characters are expected to embody realism, prioritizing aspects rooted in traditional gender norms over attractiveness, such as beautiful appearance. The article also delves into three key reasons for the evolving role of women from cultural, economic, and technological perspectives.

However, this shift is not yet fully realized, and female characters continue to face dilemmas in some games. Therefore, the article also provides suggestions for game producers. It recommends that they move away from traditional patriarchal influences and short-term interests, respond to the needs of the post-feminist era, and cultivate a gaming environment that promotes equal rights for men and women.

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