Games are more immersive when the player can empathize and relate with the characters. In earlier times, most stories revolved around white men. Thus, as the marginalized were exposed to the white males' experiences and empathized with them, they began thinking that those experiences were standard. Even now, the games industry unconsciously follows the "normal" that society has defined. When there is a deviation from the "normal," it is changed to adhere to the standard rather than embracing it.

At the GDC talk, "Now you see me: Representation as Innovation," Kim Belair speaks about how she advocates representing marginalized communities in games. Most games include very few characters that represent the marginalized, to claim that they have diversity. According to Kim, representation shouldn't be done to mitigate pain but to create joy. The game designers must create experiences that the minority communities enjoy and create a new avenue of storytelling, rather than just portraying minority communities stereotypically.

She also mentions that representation in games is less since the industry is not as diverse as it should be. The game industry treats the core demographic as fixed values, i.e., white hetero males, and the game content is tailored to their liking that even slight deviations are distasteful. According to Kim, players must experience new stories from different communities. This can be done in the industry by telling stories that present rare and representative experiences and by de-tokenizing the minority characters.

A category of the marginalized community includes disabled people. In his GDC talk "Includification: how to make your games more inclusive to millions," Mark Barlet speaks about creating games for disabled people. According to him, the market to serve disabled people is enormous. In the US, around 19.3% are disabled, and 32.8% of people have disabled people in their lives.

He also speaks about the charity AbleGamers that cater to disabled people by helping game developers add features to accommodate the disabled better. They do this by defining three levels of guidelines. For example, for mobility impairments like multiple sclerosis, paralysis, muscular atrophy, etc., a few guidelines to be followed are having remappable keys, alternative configurations, camera controls, etc. For visual impairments, changeable texts, sizes, and colors are a few examples. For hearing impairments, closed captioning, changeable fonts, and colors, adding ambient noise as text and additional reactionary input are few examples. And finally, for learning impairments, tutorials, sandboxes, speed settings are examples.

While catering to the marginalized is not a huge market to tap, it is essential to design games that tell their stories and include characters relatable to them. This allows the group to feel included and better about themselves and will enable people to empathize and relate better to them through these games. This reminds me of the 2018 GDC talk where Leighton Gray shares how she wrote the narrative for the game Dream daddy: a dating simulator. Dream daddy allowed the players to customize their characters and backstories to relate to themselves or the people around them. This game also included a very marginalized group of the community, i.e., gay single fathers, and told their story. While most RPGs now allow character customization, it is essential to note that most NPCs or main characters are white males, meaning the industry still unknowingly caters to the notion of "white supremacy." This is slowly changing as major titles like Watch Dogs 2 have included a person of color as the protagonist. But we also see notable titles like Assassin's creed include a female protagonist and then dropping them for males. Media is a way of changing people's perspective about things. The more games include diverse

groups, the more likely the masses will accept the marginalized, and slowly, diversity becomes the new "normal."

1. I was reading a lot about the underrepresentation of colored communities in games, and the most common defense was that it makes the lighting work more tedious and expensive. Similarly, Ubisoft claims that animating woman assassins require more time. Why would major titles bear all these overheads to include diversity?
2. In terms of feasibility, indie games are more likely to add features that aid people with disabilities. Can indie games alone change the industry's behavior towards this demographic?