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Curric 277

Discussion Week 2

This week’s readings invite a deeper understanding of video games as cultural artifacts that reflect and perpetuate social inequalities, particularly around gender, race, and identity. Far from being a neutral medium, video games often reinforce systemic biases through their narratives, character design, and online player interactions. For instance, marginalized groups frequently face harassment in online gaming spaces, while in-game representations of women and minorities are often reductive or stereotypical. The reading challenges the perception of gaming as a meritocratic space, emphasizing how societal norms shape both game design and player experiences.

One notable theme was the "double bind" faced by women and other marginalized players. They must not only perform at a high skill level to gain respect but also navigate hostile environments that undermine their participation. Similarly, the industry’s lack of diversity in development teams results in games that fail to address or even reinforce these inequities.

This reading raised several questions: How can developers strike a balance between creative freedom and ethical responsibility in game design? What role do players themselves have in addressing toxicity within their communities? Can meaningful change occur without disrupting the commercial priorities of game studios?

To combat these injustices, the reading suggests fostering diversity in game design teams, enforcing stricter moderation policies in gaming spaces, and incorporating inclusivity into educational curriculums for future developers. However, these solutions are not without limitations. Resistance from both the industry and players, the burden placed on marginalized individuals to navigate or fix these systems, and the profit-driven nature of the gaming industry pose significant challenges.

This theme connects to my interest in the intersection of technology, ethics, and inclusion. I’m particularly curious about how algorithms or AI tools could be developed to detect and address toxic behaviors in gaming spaces while promoting a more equitable environment for all players.