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Programme of Study: Game Design

Word count: 1563

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Introduction

I have decided to make my gallery space to express the greed of current day game developers as I feel there has been an alarming trend among game developers in recent years where games are continuously losing polish and content, with content or features that have been a staple of the series getting removed at times, while the prices of games only continue to rise as gaming generations pass by. As the issue is only becoming larger with time, and can only serve to harm the game industry more than help it the longer it persists, I feel that this is a very important topic so, for my exhibition, I have decided to focus on the Pokémon franchise rather than all the examples that are out there. I will mainly be focusing on the latest games in the series “Pokémon Sword” and “Pokémon Shield” along with the mobile app, Pokémon Go. I will also be discussing two artist that have played a big role in the Pokémon franchise with one being Ken Sugimori, an individual who has been very prominent throughout Pokémon history since the beginning (Emahll2, 2013). The other artist I will be discussing is Dennis Hwang, a graphic designer that has worked on Pokémon Go (NianticLabs, 2016). I will also be touching upon how some game developers appear to be going for a quantity over quality approach with their games and appear to care more about making a profit rather than caring about giving a complete and fulfilling game experience to the customer.

The exhibition and context



1) Image featuring the logo of Pokémon Go (PokemonGo.com, n.d.).

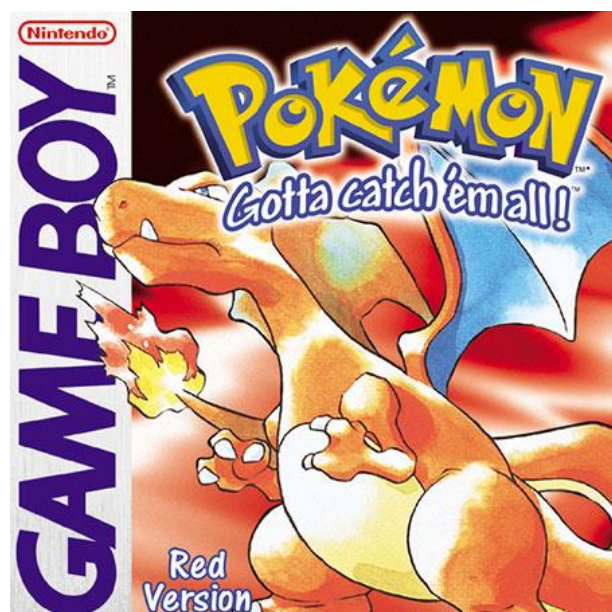
2) Image featuring the cover art for Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield (Humphries, 2019).

For the exhibition, I have laid it out in such a way that the cover artwork of “Pokémon Sword” and “Pokémon Shield” (Nintendo.com, 2019) is on the floor with the artwork of Pokémon Go (PokemonGo.com, n.d.) being on the wall. I have chosen to present the exhibition in such a way as I believe that the main series of Pokémon games is being cast away like rubbish by GameFreak in favour of Pokémon Go and the money that it brings in for the company, with Pokémon Go generating \$894 million in 2019 alone (Mamiit, 2020).

The reason I have decided to focus on Pokémon, despite multiple of the larger video game developers in the market in recent years also appearing to go for a quantity over quality

approach, is because Pokémon is a very big figure in pop culture so I feel that it would be the best example. I am also very knowledgeable when it comes to Pokémon, and I have first-hand experience in the controversy surrounding it, so I am able to give it a more in-depth look than what I would be able to do with other franchises.

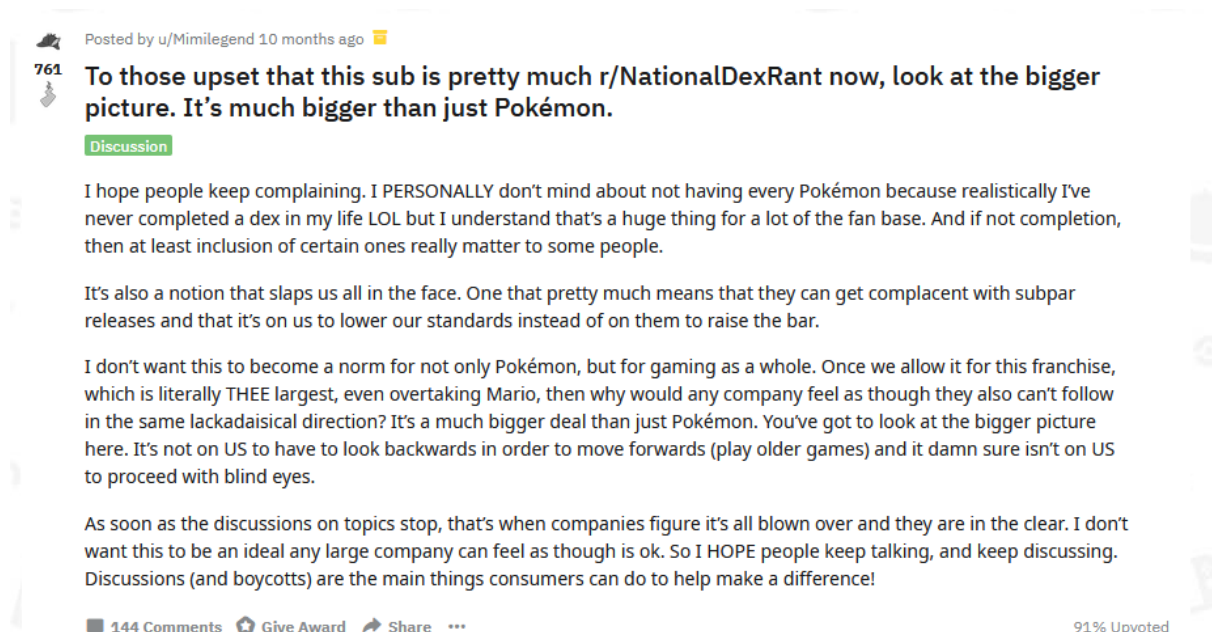
The prices of games are only increasing as the years go by, and Pokémon is no exception to this, with 2016s Pokémon Sun and Pokémon Moon only costing £30(Amazon.co.uk, 2016) when compared to 2019s Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield that had a price mark of £50 at launch(Amazon.co.uk, 2019), despite the quality of the games arguably not reflecting or even justifying this price increase. Initially when the game was announced in February 2019, the game was met with much praise from fans of the series, however, this was quick to change when it was confirmed at the Nintendo Treehouse section of E3 2019 that not all Pokémon would appear in the game(Marshall, 2019) which angered fans of the series due to them being unable to use their favourite Pokémon in the game along with this going against the very spirit of Pokémon, which is also the series slogan, of “Gotta catch ‘em all” (Nintendo.com, 2016).



"Gotta catch 'em all!" slogan as seen on the cover of Pokémon Red (Nintendo.com, 2016).

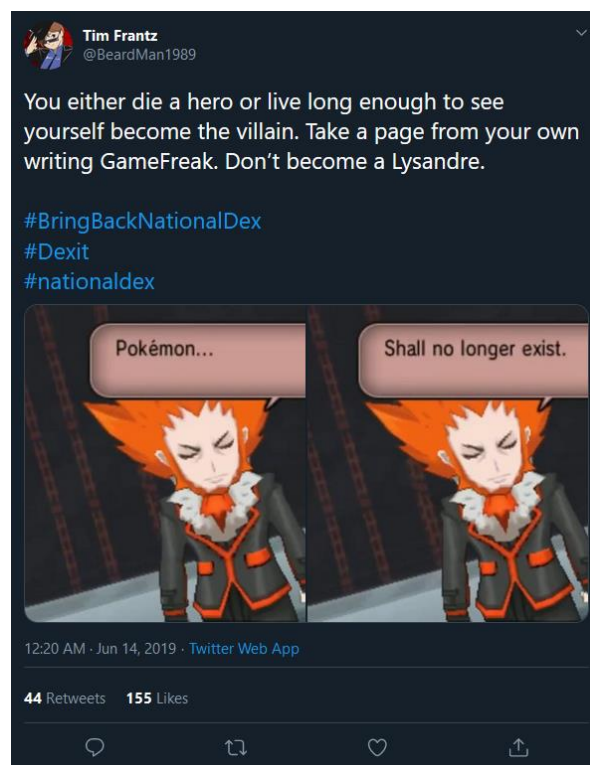
What further angered fans was that, apart from the throwaway comment at E3, there was no official statement that certain Pokémon were going to be exempt from the game, meaning that casual players would have no way of knowing unless they were watching the Nintendo Treehouse, which is unlikely if they were only a casual fan, or heard about it from a friend.

The fan outrage from this later sparked a movement coined by the community as "Dexit" (GrantWhiteTZ, 2019), a play on "PokeDex" and "Brexit" due to the region that the games were set in being based on the UK, where numerous fans took to the internet to complain about the lack of Pokémon, with some fans making posts about what they thought about the situation, such as Reddit.com user u/Mimilegend, where they talked about how Dexit would set a precedent for the game industry as a whole if GameFreak was able to get away with it as seen in the image below (Mimilegend, 2019).



Mimilegend's Reddit post (Mimilegend, 2019).

Posts about their thoughts on the situation weren't the only things that fans were making to express their frustration however, with some fans of the series making memes about the situation, such as Twitter.com user @BeardMan1989, who made a meme on the situation that compared GameFreak with a character from a previous game as can be seen below (BeardMan1989, 2019).



BreadMan1989's tweet (BeardMan1989, 2019).

Dexit was not the only controversy that Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield were surrounded in. With fans becoming more critical of the games after the start of Dexit, with

nintendosoup.com reporting that fans had started comparing the trees in the games to the trees that were in Ocarina Of Time on the N64(NintendoSoup, 2019).

**Quick comparison between BOTW and SwSh graphics
my Unfezant died to, you will never be forgotten...**



Comparison of the trees from Zelda: Breath of the Wild and the trees in pokemon
(NintendoSoup, 2019).

Analysis of the Artworks and Artists



Artwork of Zacian and Zamazenta (Humphries, 2019).

One of the artworks that I have chosen for the exhibition is the cover art for Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield (Humphries, 2019). This artwork was made with the purpose of being used in promotion material for the games and can be seen in a variety of promotional material, and to also be used as the cover art for the 8th generation of Pokémon games. The artwork depicts the logos and Pokémon of their respective games with the mascot of Pokémon Sword, “Zacian” (Zacian | Pokédex | More at Pokemon.com, 2019), and the mascot of Pokémon Shield, “Zamazenta” (Zamazenta | Pokédex | More at Pokemon.com, 2019), the designs of whom were created by freelance character designer Yusuke Omura (Iggy, 2019).

While the specific artist that created this artwork was not credited, it was likely done by Ken Sugimori, as the artwork matches his current style which can be seen in the image below.



25 Years of Art Works by Ken Sugimori (AnimeBooks.com, n.d.).

In an interview, Ken Sugimori gave some insight to the design process of Pokémon when he stated that “We first came up with the Pokémon designs, and then we created a story that fit around them. It was made simultaneously with the Pokémon designs, in other words. And of course there also were several Pokémon who were made specifically to fit with some aspect of the story, too.” (shmuplations.com, n.d.) with Zacian and Zamazenta appearing to fall under the latter as, due to the region in the 8th generation of Pokémon games taking heavy inspirations from Britain, the region was most likely designed first with Zacian and Zamazenta being designed later on to fill their specific roles.

The British inspirations are also noticeable in their designs as these two Pokémon can instantly be recognised as some kind of knights, with Zacian wielding a sword and Zamazenta donning a shield. Both Pokémon are also wearing what appears to be gold-plated armour which gives them a very regal feel. The connections can be seen further when you consider that both Zacian and Zamazenta have blue, red, and white present in their designs which are also the colours featured on the Union Jack as seen below.



Union Jack (Union Jack, 2019).

The cover artwork was made sometime in the late 2010s, most likely 2018 due to the game being announced in early 2019, for the 8th generation of Pokémon (The Official Pokémon YouTube channel, 2019).



Pokémon Go logo (Pokemongo.com, n.d.).

The next artwork that I have chosen for this exhibition is the logo for Pokémon Go. This artwork was created to be used in Pokémon Go and perfectly captures the game's objective of traveling in the real world to catch Pokémon, with the "Go" in the logo showing the earth and space. The logo was presumably created by the game's graphic designer, Dennis Hwang, and was most likely created in 2016, the year the game released (Gibbs, 2016).

I have chosen this artwork and placed it above the artwork of Pokémon Sword and Pokémon Shield in the exhibition as I believe that Gamefreak values this mobile app over the consoles games and was one of the contributions as to why they were so lacking in content. This would not be the first time that a Pokémon game was lacking content due to a mobile app either as, in an interview with Masuda, it was confirmed that the in-game battle facility, the Battle Frontier, was not in the games due to young people having various means of entertainment, such as smartphones and other devices, that they can use to play games (Reddit.com, 2015).

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