Resident Evil: Enter the World of Survival Horror

An examination on how elements in a horror narrative are present in both the films and video games of the *Resident Evil* franchise. Can the video game genre of survival horror transfer over to film, and if so where does one medium succeed where the other doesn't.

By Kristian Chisholm

This dissertation has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the BA (Hons) Film degree at Dublin Business School.

I confirm that all work included in this thesis is my own unless indicated otherwise.

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1. Opening Doors (Introduction)

This is a thesis for the BA (Hons) Film course at Dublin Business School. The idea for this thesis came about due to my interest in video games and how they have progressed in today's culture. I have always enjoyed playing video games from an early age. I began playing video games in the 1990's, and to see the difference in today's video games is astonishing. Video games are now in the stage of their lifecycle that they have the means to replicate other media. The specific media video games are being compared to is film. They are being compared so much to film to the extent that reviewers are making statements such as *''The best action movie you've ever played.''*[1]. With not only my own experiences with video games, but also my experience as a student of film, I decided to undertake an investigation into what makes a video game to film adaptation so popular, and what are the differences and similarities in relation to the original source media.

After much deliberation on what to do my thesis on, the exploration of the multimedia franchise of *Resident Evil* seemed only natural as it is not only a franchise I have personally played the video games, but I have also watched the films. The video games have sold over 56 million units worldwide and the films have grossed $915,934,664.[2] While the video games were the starting point for the story, the story quickly branched out very successfully into other media such as graphic novels, sound dramas, novels, animated live action feature films, action figures, and most notably the film *Resident Evil (2002)* and its sequels, with Paul W. S. Anderson directing the first film and three of its sequels. The film franchise totals five films, with a sixth currently in production and due out in 2015. As Kryzwinska and King say *''The horror genre has made the transition to videogames for a number of reasons. Horror offers death as spectacle and actively promises transgression; it has the power to promote physical sensation, and the genre appeals to the youth market that is central to the games industry ''*[3].

I found this quote to be what solidified my interest in pursuing this topic as a thesis. The quote itself is from 2002, a year that has long since gone, meaning that the video games that Kryzwinska and King are talking about have been outdated significantly. Since then video games have gone through a drastic change not only in the way they look graphically, but also how they tell their story. Many reputable video game journalism companies such as IGN, hold the *Resident Evil* franchise in high regard to this day *'' Resident Evil defined the survival horror genre – perhaps the only game in history to name its genre and have it stick. In the mid-'90s, blood and gore had been co-opted for Itchy & Scratchy-like shock humor, but Capcom's 32-bit blockbuster brought horror back to its roots, and the industry hasn't been the same since. In the years that have followed, Resident Evil has continued to mutate and spread, and in 2009, it remains as infectious as ever.''*[4]
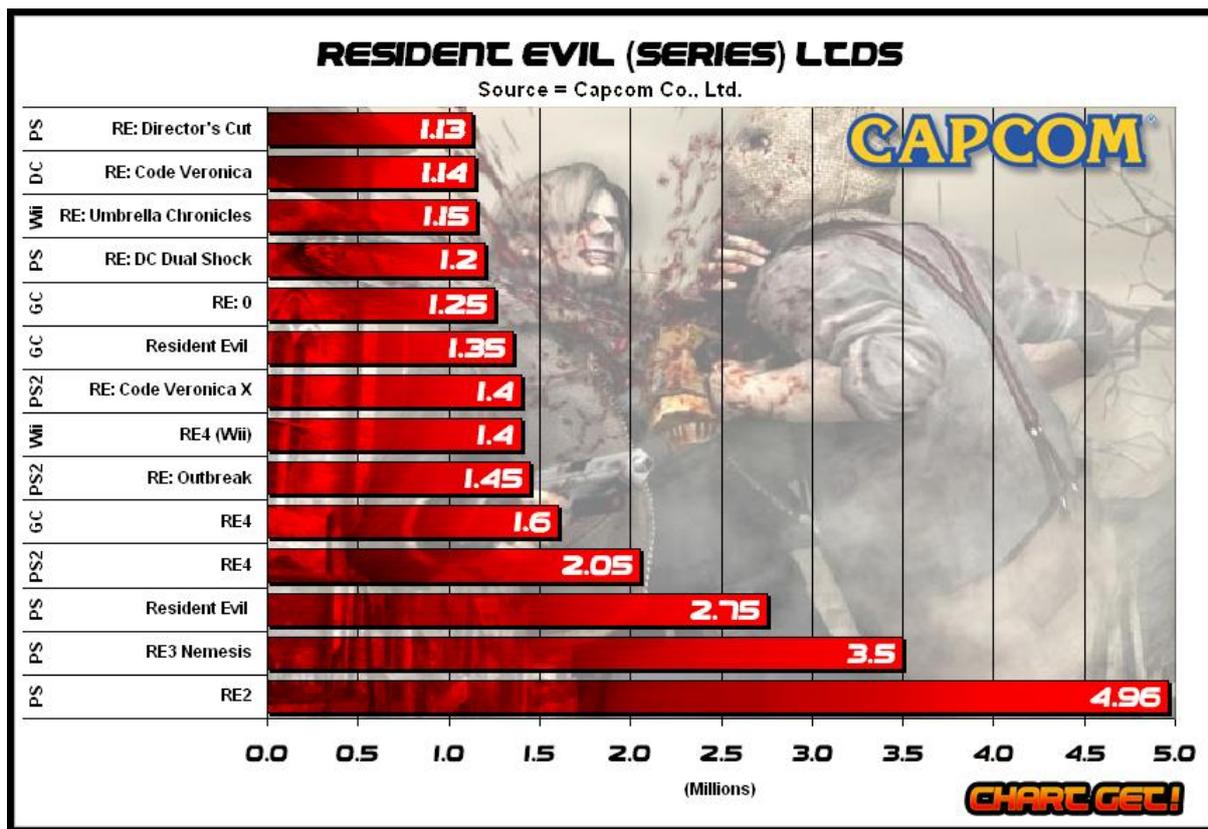
The quote shows how the video game had successfully transitioned to the new console generation of the time. It is apparent that the video game is still popular in today's culture, with the newest non-numbered release of *Resident Evil: Revelations 2 (2015)* and the high definition release of the original *Resident Evil* (2014) both receiving good reviews from critics and a favourable reception from fans alike[a5]. Video game critics are saying that the re-master of the 1996 original still stands on its own in today's culture *'' Resident Evil, even purely within a modern context, is an engrossing adventure that benefits from tense exploration and clever environmental puzzles''.*[6] With the video game proving to be as popular as ever, the question of will the game/film franchise remain as popular is raised, and what the future of the film franchise will look like?

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[a] GameRankings.com
Revelations 2: 75.80%
Resident Evil HD Re-master: 83.19%

The first *Resident Evil (1996)* video game (originally released as Bio Hazard in Japan) developed and published by Capcom, was originally released on the PlayStation and later was ported to the Sega Saturn, it quickly became one of the PlayStation One's bestselling video games to date with over 11 million units in total as of 2013. It remained as the PlayStation One's bestselling game until 1997[7]. It was critically acclaimed and was the first ever video game to be dubbed a ''survival horror'' video game, a name for a genre that was not recognised up until *Resident Evil*[8]. To this day the video game still receives high praise, with many video gaming journalist companies such as IGN, GameSpot and N4G commenting on how the video game *'' launched one of the most successful series in gaming history and provided one of its most memorable scares.''*[9] The video game regularly ranks high on the top video games franchises of all time[10]. As of 2015 the video game series has sold over 61 million units worldwide. Since the first video game the series has grown to encompass other genres, incorporating action, adventure, and shooting genres into the series. The series is Capcom's biggest ever franchise to date in terms of sales. It was followed by two numbered sequels in the three subsequent years following the originals release where it continued to gain popularity at a tremendous rate. Capcom then began to produce spin off games due to its massive success, and to this day the series consists of six numbered sequels, sixteen spin off games, and three remakes of the original video game.

 It is not only viewed as the game that put survival horror on the list of genres, but also redefined what it originally defined as survival genre with *Resident Evil 4* (2005). The fourth numbered sequel in the franchise set about broadening the gameplay to incorporate elements from other genres such as the action genre, creating a smoother more accessible video game for most people while at the same time not losing its roots as a horror video game. Its popularity with not only fans of the franchise, but also those who simply wanted to play an interesting PlayStation video game, and its acceptance to make changes to itself, made it quickly into one of gaming's biggest franchises ever.

RESIDENT EVIL (SERIES) LTDS
Source = Capcom Co., Ltd.

Platform	Title	Sales (Millions)
PS	RE: Director's Cut	1.13
DC	RE: Code Veronica	1.14
Wii	RE: Umbrella Chronicles	1.15
PS	RE: DC Dual Shock	1.2
GC	RE: 0	1.25
GC	Resident Evil	1.35
PS2	RE: Code Veronica X	1.4
Wii	RE4 (Wii)	1.4
PS2	RE: Outbreak	1.45
GC	RE4	1.6
PS2	RE4	2.05
PS	Resident Evil	2.75
PS	RE3 Nemesis	3.5
PS	RE2	4.96

Sales from some of the most popular entries into the series as of, 2014, which shows that even though made over a decade ago, the first three video games remain very popular today[11]

The success of *Resident Evil* as a franchise can be attributed to the availability of modern technology which in turn has led to the development of stories being told across multiple media, with each media being able to focus on particular strengths of the story. While a story may be told across many types of media it is important that each different incarnation of the story be able to stand on its own. Each component of a franchise should be self-contained enough to enable autonomous consumption[12]. The story of *Resident Evil* is divided into two separate variations of the same story, the video game series plot that has since branched out into graphic novels and animations, and the film franchise which is a re-telling of the video game series with new characters, re-ordering of events, and addition of new plot-lines to characters.

Films that have been based on video games are expected to accurately recreate the audio-visual style of the game itself, and if it fails it can lead to an unsuccessful return on the investment put into the film, such as *Doom (2005)* which was seen as a failure*.* However the *Resident Evil* film proved to be a success, with many praising its interpretation of the video game, inclusion of details for fans of the franchise, the actor's portrayal of characters, new characters being introduced into the series for the first time, and many more attributes to the film proving popular. Consequently due to the film franchises success it holds the Guinness world record for being the most successful film series to be based off a video game, as well as being the only film based on a video game to increase the amount of money made by each sequel[13]. This kind of success is unheard of in video game to film adaptations, and makes *Resident Evil* a one of a kind item in the genre of video game to film adaptations. The genre is mostly viewed with distaste due to its over the top action sequences and dialogue that is not trying to take the source material and adapt it for film, but instead directly taking the source material and trying to apply it to film, such as the first person perspective in *Doom,* or the ridiculous dialogue from characters in the *Mortal Kombat* (1995).

While *Resident Evil* films may be based on the video games, they differ from other video game films by means of knowing where to include scenes that are similar to the video games, certain plot aspects to include, and not to compromise the viewpoint of the film to make it seem more like the video game. The franchise also accepts feedback from successful scenes in either the video game or film. The first film featured a laser room where the characters must evade the lasers to survive, this scene was very well received. The scene was later introduced into *Resident Evil 4* as a tribute to the fans who enjoy the films. The franchise is not only a video game to film franchise, but also exhibits itself as a film to video game franchise. By having similarities running throughout each medium with one influencing the other, the entire experience of *Resident Evil* feels familiar to not only a fan who has played the video games and then watching the films, but also to a fan of the film who is then going on to play the video games. This is something that is not seen in any other

video game film franchise and is completely specific to the *Resident Evil Franchise.*

Resident Evil as a video game employs similarities from films in its video game titles. There has always been similarities between films and video games. Video games are a relatively new form of narrative story-telling. Like film, video games tend to remediate its predecessors. Similarities between game and film can be seen in many elements, including, genre, structure, narrative, camera work and editing. The following are but a few examples that can relate the video games to films. The entire first, second and third video game uses strict camera angles that mimic that of a film, showing you only what the video games director wants you to see, the first video game has been re-mastered recently in 2015 for high definition much like how films can be re-mastered, the first game has a director's cut where the framework of the video game stays the same but it has been touched up with extra's added, the opening of the first video game has a live action video of which actors parody a B-movie of which is satirical in preparation for the horror nature of the title. These are mainly examples from the first video game to express some face value similarities between video game and film, but there are many more similarities seen throughout the entire franchise. Why this particular franchise succeeds at transitioning from video game to film is mainly due the way the genre of horror is used. In both video game and film, the genre of horror is very similar, with the main purpose to provide a thrill, while offering death as a spectacle.

My objective in this thesis are to examine how elements in a horror narrative present in both the films and video games of the *Resident Evil* franchise, does the video game genre of survival horror transfer over to film, determine the differences and similarities between the film and video game, and where how one media succeeds where the other doesn't.

2. ''*A capsule packed to the brim with gaming fun''* (History of Capcom)

Capcom is a Japanese developer and publisher of video games. The company has produced many bestselling franchises such as *Mega Man, Street Fighter, Devil May Cry,* and *Resident Evil.* The original companies that created Capcom were the I.R.M Corporation founded in 1979, and its subsidiary Japan Capsule Computers Co,[14] of which both were specifically involved in the manufacturing and distribution of electronic game machines.[15] In 1989 the company merged with Sambi Co. The name Capcom is a combination of capsule computers, a term that the company used to describe its arcade machines that it only manufactured during the early years of the company.[16] The reason being for focusing on arcade machines was to set the company apart from other computer companies as the rise of the personal computer was underway. The word capsule is a term that Capcom used to describe its products *''a capsule packed to the brim with gaming fun''*, alongside the companies ambition to protect its intellectual ideas with a hard outer shell, as to protect from illegal copies and imitations of software which were widespread in the early days of gaming.

Capcom's first ever product was the coin-operated *Little League (1983)* machine, but what is considered to be the companies first real video game is the arcade game *Vulgus (1984).*[17] With the rise of the home video game console, the company began to produce software for home consumption beginning with the port of *1942 (1985)* for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Since then the company has gone on to produce fifteen multi-million bestselling video game series, with *Resident Evil* sitting at the top of the list as Capcom's most successful series.[18]

The first franchise Capcom developed was *Street Fighter* in 1987. The series proved to be very popular, and today still remains one of the top video games in the fighting genre, with the video games selling over 30 million units. *Street Fighter* gave Capcom not only much needed capital to fund upcoming projects, but also a reputation that money cannot buy, meaning that they became a big player in the early days of home video games, a reputation that is still noticeable to this day.

3. A Fear You Can't Forget (Origins of Survival Horror)

The origins of survival horror can be traced from early horror fiction. The books of H. P. Lovecraft can be seen as an early example of the beginning of survival horror, with the books using investigative narratives. Comparisons can be made between Lovecraft's Old Ones, and boss battles seen in many survival horror video games. The theme of survival can also be traced to a subgenre of horror films known as slasher films. In slasher films the protagonist encounters the antagonist multiple times, while being no match for the antagonist, leading up to the last encounter where the protagonist has learnt the skills needed to defeat the antagonist.[19]

A major influence on the genre of survival horror is Japanese horror, and American horror. American audiences tend to favour action packed films that are very graphic not leaving much to the imagination, while Japanese audiences favour a more physiological approach, where as you do not see what is hunting the characters,[20] and the horror lies not in what the antagonist is, but when the antagonist will resurface. Japanese horror is more of an influence to survival horror video games style, as it is all about building tension, while at the same time having the antagonists of the story be seen as supernatural. Japanese horror has had a major influence on survival horror by focusing on suspense, while leaving the player with very little to defend themselves against the supernatural antagonists. Other examples of Japanese horror inspired video games include *Fatal Frame (2001), Parasite Eve (1998),* and *Dino Crisis (1999)*, all of which conform to typical Japanese horror by putting suspense over spectacle.

Prior to *Resident Evil* there were no games that could be called survival horror. But after the term was first used to describe *Resident Evil*, many video games prior to *Resident Evil* have since become classified as survival horror. Though *Resident Evil* is accredited to creating the genre of survival horror, many see the first survival horror video game to be *3D Monster Maze (1982)* for the Sinclair ZX81 by Malcom Evans. It is a first person video game where the character has no weapons, the character cannot fight the enemy (a tyrannosaurus rex), and they must escape while evading the enemy before it finds them. Edge video game magazine states it was about *"fear, panic, terror and facing an implacable, relentless foe who's going to get you in the end"* and considers it *"the original survival horror game"*[21]. Retro Gamer video game magazine states*, "Survival horror may have been a phrase first coined by Resident Evil, but it could've easily applied to Malcolm Evans' massive hit."* [22] Another example is the *Haunted House (1982)* video game for the Atari 2600, which gives clear insight into what the future of survival horror would become with emphasis on solving puzzles, and evading enemies such as bats and ghosts, with each having individual characteristics[23] separating them not only visually but physically from other enemies in the video game. The gameplay also included an item management system that would later become a staple of survival horror video games. Due to the video game having so many similarities with modern survival horror, it is up for debate whether *3D Monster Maze* or *Haunted House* is the true originator of the survival horror genre.

After all that led up to *Resident Evil,* it became clear what is needed in a video game to classify it as Survival Horror. What survival horror refers to today is a sub-genre of action-adventure video games, with survival horror focusing mainly upon the conventions of horror fiction.[24] The term of ''survival horror'' was first used to define *Resident Evil*, of which it was influenced by earlier horror themed video games such as *Sweet Home (1989)*. The term has been used since *Resident Evil* was released to define any video game that incorporates similar gameplay to that of *Resident Evil*, and has even been retroactively applied to titles that appear before *Resident Evil*, such as *Haunted House (1982)*.

The player's character is extremely vulnerable and does not possess many weapons to defend themselves,[25] with emphasis put on solving puzzles, and evading enemies rather than facing them head on.[26] The genre employs issues onto the player that would not be thought of in other genres. Survival horror commonly makes the player manage their inventory,[27] showing that the player's character can only carry a set amount of items, ammunition, weapons, and other important things they may need, which creates the situation where they must decide to choose an item that will make getting past enemies faster, such as a weapon, or an item that can be used to open a door to which means they evade the enemy and find new items to defend themselves. The genre makes the player evaluate risk/reward to nearly every situation, which causes the player to feel stressed even when not facing an enemy, thus creating an entirely hostile environment.

A major theme in survival horror is that of isolation. Knowing that there is nobody to help you means that everything you encounter is potentially hostile, heightening the tension induced to the player. The theme of isolation is also seen not only in how the gameplay works in the video game, but also how the plot is told. In survival horror video games there is two ways the player can choose to interact with the plot, on a basic of what they see is the main story, or uncovering the backstory slowly and in pieces through items that are easily missed. Many survival horror games contain a lot of backstory to the plot which can not only give the player something to find to uncover secrets, the way the player finds the backstory is usually through audio logs, video logs, or diaries. [28]The theme of found footage highlights how the player is truly alone, showing that the place they were in was once inhabitable but is hostile now.

In 2005 *Resident Evil 4* attempted to redefine the genre by broadening gameplay elements to encompass aspects form the action genre, with more focus put on reflex's and shooting.[29] Following the success of the video game, which earned several game of the year awards[30], other survival horror franchises began to follow the lead *Resident Evil 4* had taken to modernise the genre. *Silent Hill* [31] and the *Alone in the Dark* franchises adopted their own combat system in response to the changes *Resident Evil 4* introduced. The changes to the genre were well received, though they were also criticised for changing genre conventions. Video game journalist Jim Sterling suggest that the genre lost its core gameplay when it improved the combat interface, thus shifting gameplay away from hiding and running towards direct combat.[32] With more of an emphasis on action and gore, this can be seen as a shift towards the American horror that western audiences are accustomed to, as opposed to the psychological horror that is commonly seen in Japan.[33]

For the years following 2005 the face of survival horror changed to adapt to the more visual and instant gratification of blockbuster game franchises that offer action, and cinematics over plot and patience. However today horror video games are beginning to show a shift back towards their survival horror roots, with video games such as *Alien Isolation (2014), The Evil Within (2014), Five Nights at Freddy's (2014),* and *Slender: The Eight Pages (2012)* are proving to be more popular with audiences, showing that a focus on story, patience, and evasion can still hold up against video games that offer spectacle as the main goal, such as the *Call of Duty* franchise.

With the rise of multiplayer video games, survival horror has too had to adapt to this. Today nearly ever video game developed includes some kind of multiplayer aspect. Survival horror is a very difficult genre to adapt to a multiplayer experience, but it has adapted in a way that has fulfilled many audience members to live out a post-apocalyptic survival fantasy. One such video game is *Day Z (2013)*. It features an open world that us 225 km2, where players are tasked at surviving not only zombies, but other players with whom they can be attack or

kill, while at the same time players must manage their supplies, build a stronghold, and keep their character healthy by making sure they have taken in enough calories for the energy they have used up by doing activities, or using medicine to heal themselves. If their character dies the character is dead forever, making the player create a new character and start all over if they want to play the video game. A survival horror video game today can play out two ways, linear like *Resident Evil* with good production value, and adjustable skill level so all players stand a fair chance, or an open world online video game like *Day Z* that is much more unforgiving, yet more realistic, but lacks the same production values of linear video games.

4. ''Stop! Don't, Open, That, Door!'' (Resident Evil Video Games)

''An elite police unit, a creepy old house, and zombies coming from every direction. If you name a horror cliché, Resident Evil has probably done it at least twice. From the campy title that would embarrass Ed Wood to the ham-fisted voice acting, it was the closest thing videogaming ever got to a midnight screening at the drive-in. But when the lights were out, and everyone else was asleep, you still clutched the controller like a teenage girl grabbing the arm of her beau, and at least once, you let out a yelp. The old formula still works''.[34]

As video game technology began to make dramatic leaps forward in terms of performance, it became clear that video gaming had changed forever with the advent of three dimensional graphics. In early 1994 Shinji Mikami, a video game designer who had spent his career developing Disney games for the Super Nintendo decided to take on a new project that was unlike anything he had done before, a video game built from the ground up to be 3D. Mikami wanted to make a really scary game, but unlike any other that had come before, as he states in a 1996 interview *"not ghosts or crap like that, but real monsters that you could see that would come and attack.*"[35] That video game would eventually become *Resident Evil.* Horror films were a big influence on the video game, such as the *Living Dead* and *Alien* series*,* as well as other video games such as Capcom's *Sweet Home*, and *Alone in the Dark. Alone in the Dark* showed just what could be achieved for *Resident Evil* in terms of technology, such as showing a blend of real-time 3D characters, and a good balance of action and adventure that would fit right in to the zombie video game Mikami was planning. By the time of the video game nearing completing, the team behind *Resident Evil* had grown to over forty members, with Capcom wanting to make the video game their flagship product on the PlayStation.

The video game was delayed for a few months until it finally released in March 1996. At the time of release the PlayStation was still only in its first year following its release, and was still awaiting a title that would help gravitate players over to Sony's console. While the video game would not stay a Sony exclusive forever, it was so popular that people were buying PlayStations just to be able to play *Resident Evil*. In its first year on the market *Resident Evil* managed to sell over a million copies, putting it immediately up to the level of sales that only blockbuster video games had achieved, such as Capcom's other franchise *Street Fighter*. Critics gave the video game high praise. It was frequently compared to other similar video games like *Alone in the Dark*, but the fact still stood that *Resident Evil* was its own property, while employing inspiration from other titles, it was able to enhance good ideas and make them its own. Mikami designed the title to be different from other video games in a specific way, most other video games gave the player complete control, super strong, and always had the upper hand in every situation. Mikami changed that by showing audiences how more engaging a story can be if your character was weak and helpless in most situations.

Following the widespread success of *Resident Evil*, Capcom knew it had something big in their hands. By the time the video game arrived in America, the company had a sequel already in the works. Mikami had already proven himself with the first video game, and was given a clean slate to do whatever he felt was right for the sequel, and he had his own ideas as for what to do. Video games sequels were known to be essentially the same thing as the original, except with better controls, and improved graphics. Mikami wanted to change a few things in the sequel to make the series stand out and show that it is not going to be the same thing over and over again. Mikami chose to remove the original two characters from the sequel completely, a risky move due to their popularity with fans. However, Mikami felt that having the same two characters again would feel too similar, and also wouldn't invoke fear in the player, as the characters in the original have already experienced the zombies. New characters who have not experienced the horror of the video game would be much more believable, and make more sense in terms of the genre.

Mikami also wanted a clean slate for the new characters to operate in, not only for the sake of a different environment, but the fact that a player who has played the previous title already knows the layout of the mansion featured in the first video game. Having the same location defeated a key aspect of the survival horror genre, fear of the unknown. The new location would become an abandoned police station following the zombie outbreak, but after spending time learning the station, the player would then be forced to explore the hostile outside location, keeping in tune with the fear of the unknown, and not letting the player get too comfortable. The fact that the location also had relatability to reality, meant that the game featured a new level of eeriness that was not achieved in the original due to the haunted mansion aesthetics.

The gameplay underwent a few changes to make it easy to control the character, thus lessening the gap that exists from separating the player from the game. The less the player notices they are using a controller, the more of a connection the player will feel to the video game, thus heightening the horror that is portrayed in the video game. To make things more interesting and not just a rehash of the original, Mikami wanted to add more of an action element to the sequel to keep audiences interested, as well as added more creatures to also keep players interested in seeing what they will encounter next.

As the release date grew nearer for the sequel, fans of the original, and gamers alike were excited to see the finished product. The team at Capcom however did not feel the same way. Overall the video game played well, but there was something off about it that made the team not feel comfortable. Mikami was worried that the sequel would be too realistic, which he thought would make for dull and repetitive gameplay[36]. A story consultant was hired to assess the video game, and they broke the news to the team that the scenario they produced was just not up to scratch with the original. Just two months away from release Mikami was not prepared to launch a product he did not feel proud of. The sequel nearly 80% finished was scrapped to start anew[37].

Capcom had complete faith in Mikami, and gave him the extra time needed to produce a new sequel. Characters names were changed,[38] their personalities altered, all the dialogue was re-written, and while the setting was kept the same, the team decided to change the locations style to fit into small town America, rather than having a modern look. To research a new location style a cameraman was set the task of sneaking into an old western building in Osaka to take pictures, while he was caught the pictures still made it to Capcom, and they formed the new style of the video game.

Finally the sequel was released, just making shelved in time for the holidays in 1998. Capcom reputation was saved. Critics loved the sequel, praising the storytelling, and graphics. The sequel vastly outsold the original, selling nearly 5 million units on the original PlayStation alone. The success of the sequel secured *Resident Evil* as a blockbuster franchise. The success showed Capcom how they were right to trust Mikami to make changes, and even though the money and time that had been wasted on the sequel, its success made up for it all. *Resident Evil 2* very well could have ruined not only *Resident Evil* as a franchise, but also the company who developed it. However it did not do this, instead it did the opposite and made the franchise of *Resident Evil* into a staple of gaming, and showed how developers can produce a masterpiece given they are trusted. The video game is the franchise's bestselling video game on a single platform.[39]

Even though the video game franchise was only in the beginning of its life, after not only one massive success, but two, Capcom knew that this franchise was going to become bigger and bigger with each instalment. Following up to the second game, the second sequel went into production.[40] With an already large player-base already existing, the question of how to reach those who do not play video games emerged. In an attempt to continue to boost video game sales Capcom decided that the best way to reach non gamers would be through the medium of film.

5. *''All the people that were working here are dead''* (Resident Evil Films)

In 1999 Sony and Capcom set the first Resident Evil film into pre-production. George A. Romero was attached to the film to direct and write it. Romero previously had been involved with Capcom in 1998 when Romero directed an ad campaign for Resident Evil 2 (1998) in Japan. Romero had his secretary play through the entire first game and record gameplay so he could study it and use it as a resource to write the script. Romero's script was based on the first video game and included many of the video games characters, with his scripts ending being similar to what is known as the 'good' ending from the multiple endings the video game offers. Even though such a high profile director who is known for his work in the horror field, he was fired from the film, with Capcom Producer Yoshiki Okamoto stating that *"Romero's script wasn't good, so Romero was fired''.*

After this the film exited pre-production to return to the drawing board. Sony then hired Paul W. S. Anderson to write a screenplay for the film after Romero was fired from the project. In 2000 Anderson was announced as the new director and writer for the film, and the film had officially re-entered pre-production. Anderson stated that while the film would be based off of the first *Resident Evil* video game, but it would be separate from the video games, instead a re-telling of the same story, but specifically made for film *''under-performing movie tie-ins are too common and Resident Evil, of all games, deserved a good celluloid representation''*

Anderson was no stranger to video game to film adaptations, he directed the Mortal Kombat film, of which though not well received, stands as the fourth highest grossing video game adaptation ever released . With the experience he previously attained on this other project, there was high hopes for Anderson's version of Resident Evil, as he should be able to see where a video game film can fail, and succeed.

Instead of making what Romero attempted to do, Anderson decided to stray from the plot of the video games, while at the same time keeping key elements and characters. The film, like the video game, is set in an alternate version of our own reality, where science has made great strides forward. To convey to the audience that what they are seeing is fiction Anderson included various references to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1965)*. The most obvious reference being the main character is named Alice, but also more subtle references were made such as the white rabbit used to test the virus that would eventually cause the zombie outbreak, a mirrored wall that opens up at the train station (*Through the Looking Glass (1971)*)*,* the first death in the film comes in the form of beheading, and the main antagonist is named the Red Queen[41]. As well as a reference to *2001: A Space Odyssey* of which the main antagonist closely resembles which shows the film itself pays homage to fiction as a whole, similar in a way to the video games playing homage to other works of fiction.

Given that the *Resident Evil* universe already existed before Anderson was brought into create a script, therefore fans of the series already had seen the film unintentionally before it was even made due to the fact that it was so greatly imagined and the plot was completely available to all with access to the video game. To not only create a new experience for fans of the franchise, but also make something fresh for non-gamers, Anderson decided to deviate from the video games story arch, but keep important key aspects to satisfy fans. As Anderson say's *'' it totally feeds into the game in that those characters are moving through locations and situations that are very familiar to the game's players. And the movie kind of eventually segues straight into ... [and] actually meets the world of the video games at the end of the movie''*[42]

The film opened in March 2002, it became instantly popular grossing $17,707,106 on its opening weekend, and went on to gross $102,441,078 worldwide.[43] Though the film was financially very successful, critics gave the film very mixed reviews. Some critics such as Robert Elder of the Chicago Tribune stated that the film *'' updates the zombie genre with an anti-corporate message while still scaring its audience and providing heart-pounding action''*[44], while others such as Roger Ebert describe the film as a zombie set with *'' large metallic objects make crashing noises just by being looked at''*, and highly criticised the dialogue for being all explanations with no small talk.[45] The success of the film sparked four sequels with each subsequent sequel surpassing the last in box office sales. *Resident Evil* had done something that no other film based on a video game had done, but all had hoped to, be successful enough to stand on its own, and reach people who have never even played the video games.

6. ''*Why does it always feel like I'm trapped inside a horror movie?*'' (Film/Video Game Comparison)

The films of the *Resident Evil* film franchise, while based upon the video game, are by no means choosing to follow the video game's storyline and other aspects on a one to one scale, they still do remain quite similar. The idea of survival horror in the film is something that is lost as it is not able to accurately convey what survival horror is to an audience member who is a passive viewer, rather than an active participant. Instead the films employ the typical film horror genre.

Like any film the audience member is mainly there to enjoy the film for what it is. What is on screen is reality in film, and audience members are expected to not question what they see on screen, if they do this can lead to the overall enjoyment of watching the film diminishing into a non-memorable experience to which the audience feels like they have not gained anything from the film. This can be a major flaw in the *Resident Evil* films, as if you look closely into them, an audience member may begin to question a characters true motives in a way that they are not supposed to and the likelihood of some characters surviving some situations are seen as unrealistic.

However if applied to the video games we are faced with a story that not only embraces the audience questioning story elements, but also actively encourages them to do so. [46] The temporal and spatial relations in films and video games are very different. As the player sits and participates in the video game, the entire experience is geared around exploration[47], even in the most linear video games available, the act of exploring a story is fundamental to the video game experience. Thus a player who chooses to question actions that take place in a video game are met with answers to those question in the form of audio logs, journal entries, or texts that appear over loading screens to give more background information to the

player and answer their questions. Having space and time organised around the player is where the video game succeeds greatly over the film, as the films space and time are organised around the narrative, which can lead to the narrative moving on before an audience member has finished processing what has just happened.

While the video game succeeds in developing a large plot for the player to unravel and have all their question answered, the act of uncovering the plot is completely reliant on the player's complicity to play the video game. The film succeeds in giving the audience a set amount of time to follow the story, gain the information necessary to comprehend what has happened in the plot, and once finished the film, be able to walk away knowing the ending of the plot. The film does not reject the audience in anyway, before even watching the film an audience member will have set aside the correct amount of time needed to complete a showing, while if the same audience member chooses to undertake the video game they will be met with a much different experience that is reliant on them returning for multiple gameplay sessions that require varying time depending on the players skill level.

The video game has the ability to reject the player as it is possible to fail the video game and never make it to the ending, while the only way an audience member would not make it to the ending of the film is completely the choice of the audience member.[48] As Rouse *says ''films present a consistent media experience for the audience. Games, on the other hand, still mix media in seemingly unnatural ways, forcing users who may just want to play a game to have to read a bit of a book, watch a movie, and then only actually get to play''*[49]

One of the core gameplay aspects of the *Resident Evil* video game franchise is exploring the maze of locations, and investigating locations to uncover the plot. The film attempts to emulate the exploration aspects of the video game by using an extremely large location that is intentionally difficult to know where the characters in the film are at any given time. When the player plays the video game, they do not know what is going to be around any given corner, and where that corner is going to lead them. [50] The film successfully remediates the feel of exploration as the characters in the film do not have any true notion of what is going to be around a corner or what they will find. By having large locations for characters in the film to explore, this not only shows how the film is similar to the video game, but allows for the inclusion of investigation to take part on the audiences part. Each location the audience is shown in the film has a specific clue for the audience to search for. Every new location brings a new clue to uncover the plot of the film, which is very much like the video game, except instead of searching a mansion for hours on end trying to find a specific clue, the audience has a set time limit to find each hidden plot aspect in each seen.

The act of being actively involved in the video games, heightens the overall emotional response of the audience member as opposed to the films. While the player does not interpret the avatar in the video games as themselves, the player accepts that they are in full control of the avatars body and movements. Thus the psychological and emotional attachments to the avatar are felt by the video game player in a way that transcends what is felt by a film audience member. As Rehak says *''The video game avatar, presented as a human player's double, merges spectatorship and participation in ways that fundamentally transform both activities''.*[51] The player knows that the character on screen is not themselves, but by accepting it as an extension of themselves that makes it possible to interact with the world they are viewing, a barrier separating emotion from screen is broken down to allow the player to experience emotion felt on a far greater level than an audience member watching a film.

The player who is the audience member to the video game they are playing, no longer thinks 'yes, that is I see happening' when seeing what is happening on screen whilst the video game is being played, but instead starts to think 'yes, that is what I am doing'[52]. Therefore the video game is connecting with its audience on a much greater level than any film, as a film does not leave any room for additional characters, but a video game leaves enough room for one extra character, that character bring the player who is controlling the video game. *''It is not only the gaze of the actor or the camera, or the patterns of anxiety in the filmic plane that create the positions in reception, but also the goals and interactive regime of the game, even the joystick's tactile feedback, the direct address and call-to-action of the game''[53]*. Thus while the *Resident Evil* films may evoke certain emotions such as fear or terror, the fact remains that the emotions felt in the *Resident Evil* video games, whilst still using the same words to describe what is felt, are on a completely different level emotionally due to the fact that the player is not only an audience member, but also a participant.

The major similarity between both the video games and films is their genre. The features involved in the horror genre are very easy to apply from one media to another, as the main feature in horror is for the audience experience horror itself. The genre provides a long established list of ways proven to make the audience feel afraid and jump from their seats. The fact that the genre of horror invokes readymade expectations from audience member, means that there is a readymade audience for the *Resident Evil* films aside from the fans of the franchise. For the most part horror video games and films provide a similar experience from one media to another, as Perron says *'' What horror video games — labelled survival or not — actually offer is similar to what the mainstream contemporary horror cinema proffers. To refer to the well-known expression of Isabel Pinedo, it's a 'bounded experience of fear' ''*[54].

Structurally the films and video games are very similar as they have a three part structure like many films and video games, beginning, middle, and end. However in the video games the main area of exposition involved in telling the story comes in the beginning, so the player can be more in control of events that take place later on, without having the plot compromised by missing an important aspect due to the fact that the player is much more involved by this point in the characters actions. The middle and end are much more extended compared to the beginning in video games, as this is where most of the gameplay happens, and most of the action takes place.[55] The *Resident Evil* films follow a very similar pattern, trying to get as much of the plot out of the way at the beginning of the film, so there is much more spectacle to be shown on screen later, thus the audience will not lose interest due to the fact that there is so much action happening.

Interactivity with the video game alone is not the crucial point in that makes the video game more successful over film, it is the interactivity of the player through the avatar on screen, which in turn becomes the player, therefore the player is actually not only a part of the story that is unfolding, they are staring in their own personal horror film where they are the director making all important decisions. Thus this is where films fail to truly connect on an interactive level with the audience, and in contemporary film it is not possible to include any audience member to the same degree that a video game can. *''…everything may come to be projected, there is one thing and one thing only that is never reflected in it: the spectator's own body''*[56]

The films of *Resident Evil* are open to all to view, granted they have a copy of the films to watch. This is the only limitation to viewing any film, and in today's internet culture, this is an obstacle that can be overcome very quickly. However when we look at the video games of *Resident Evil* we are met with a much larger set of requirements that must be met to play the video game.[57] The player must physically own a console of which to play the video game, and not just any console, to play certain *Resident Evil* video games, the player must own

specific consoles or else they will not be able to play the video games. Have a copy of the video game to use on their chosen console. The player must also be fully literate to gain not only a grasp of the video game through the prompts that appear on screen to assist the player, but if the player is illiterate, while it is still a possibility they will be able to complete the video game, they will not have any idea of the plot. The player must also be proficient at using a video game controller to be able to control their avatar, without proper knowledge of the use of a video game controller, the player would simply not be able to play the video game, or at the very least would struggle immensely. The player must have free time in order to complete the video game, on average they must have at least eleven hours to complete a video game, of which they player will also want to have multiple sittings of the video game to so not to fatigue themselves. Rouse addresses this, *''films present a consistent media experience for the audience. Games, on the other hand, still mix media in seemingly unnatural ways, forcing users who may just want to play a game to have to read a bit of a book, watch a movie, and then only actually get to play''*[58]

The video games have so many requirements that the payer must fully meet in order to play the video game, and get the full video game experience. The films however do not require anything other than two hours of the audience's time. The films succeed over the video games in their accessibility to all audience members, and not having any restrictions put on them that could limit the audience to specific people.[59]

7. ''*You're right, this is just the beginning*'' (Conclusion)

The *Resident Evil* franchise has made leaps and bounds in the development of video game to film adaptations. Prior to *Resident Evil* video game films were extremely unsuccessful, and seen to be unprofessional. However with the success of *Resident Evil* many other video game films have been produced since its arrival. *Resident Evil* showed that there is an interest out there for video games to be seen on the big screen. Following the film's release there was a surge in video game adaptations released, with adaptations such as *House of the Dead (2003), Silent Hill (2006, Hitman (2007), Max Payne (2008), Prince of Persia (2010)* and *Need for Speed (2014)* to name some of the more popular adaptations produced. There are also many other video game to film adaptations set to release in the coming years such as *Ratchet and Clank (2016), Warcraft (2016), Uncharted (2016), Assassin's Creed (2016)* and *The Last of Us (2016)*.

Audiences have become more sophisticated is the way they view stories, they are completely willing to learn an entire set of skills necessary to play video games in order to know the video games story. But there is still a large amount of audience members who simply do not have the time to learn the necessary skills to play video games, but still have an interest in knowing the video games story. That is where film successfully can show the story of a video game to all audiences without putting restrictions on the audience. The relationship between films and video games has progressed to the point where the video game gives a deep experience for anyone willing to put in the time necessary, while films offer an abridged version of the video game. Though the two media's have both their strong and weak points, when taken together they can combine two different audiences into one much like novels, plays, and films can bring audiences together through the same story, video games are this centuries cross media platform of choice.

The future of the *Resident Evil* video games have been addressed recently by Capcom. The company has decided that following the re-mastered version of the original *Resident Evil* which proved to be extremely popular, that they now will focus on re-mastering their old video games for contemporary video game audiences[60], starting with *Resident Evil Zero*, which is set to launch in 2016[61]. The video game players of today may not have ever played a *Resident Evil* video game from the early days of the franchise, but all the while many players will almost definitely know the name of *Resident Evil* and its reputation for quality. By re-mastering what is seen as their classic video games, Capcom is successfully giving *Resident Evil* to a whole new generation of players.

The sixth film set to be released in 2016 will be the final *Resident Evil* film to be made by Paul W. S. Anderson, and the final in the current film franchises story arch. Though this may be the end of the films, it is completely possible that a remake of the films will happen within the next decade. With many films in contemporary cinema being remakes of old classic films, it is entirely possible that the films will continue on with a fresh start. The fact that *Resident Evil* has continually proved itself as a popular video game to remake, shows that the fan base for the franchise is still alive, and the interest in *Resident Evil* is still there, meaning that the films themselves could benefit from being remade similarly to how the video games have done. It is also possible that Capcom may be intentionally taking a break from the films so they can repeat their plan of using the films to promote the video games. By waiting a few years and then announcing they intend to remake the films, the interest in the video games would surely spike, and *Resident Evil* will once again be even more prominent in the public eye than it already is.

The very fact that *Resident Evil* has endured this many years without losing its fan base is not simply luck, the franchise is an example of direct response to fans wants, and Capcom's use of excellent marketing. To this day the franchise still draws in its hard-core fans who remember playing the first instalment on the original PlayStation, alongside new fans who have a curiosity to see what the series is all about.

Film has always remediated other media's stories, most of cinemas greatest films can be sourced back to a plot seen in a play or a novel. Film is now adapting to video games in a similar way, however the fact that video games have drawn on film in the past as a source for how they should look, we are now looking at a medium that is effectively examining itself and analysing not only video games way of telling stories and interacting with its audience, but analysing itself through the medium of video games.

8. Gameography

Resident Evil (1996)

Resident Evil: Director's Cut (1997)

Resident Evil 2 (1998)

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis (1999)

Resident Evil: Survivor (2000)

Resident Evil Code: Veronica (2000)

Resident Evil Code: Veronica X (2001)

Resident Evil Gaiden (2001)

Resident Evil Survivor 2 Code: Veronica (2001)

Resident Evil (2002)

Resident Evil Zero (2002)

Resident Evil: Dead Aim (2003)

Resident Evil Outbreak (2003)

Resident Evil Outbreak File #2 (2004)

Resident Evil 4 (2005)

Resident Evil: Deadly Silence (2006)

Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles (2007)

Resident Evil 5 (2009)

Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles (2009)

Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition (2010)

Resident Evil: The Mercenaries 3D (2011)

Resident Evil: Revelations (2012)

Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City (2012)

Resident Evil 6 (2012)

Resident Evil (2015)

Resident Evil: Revelations 2 (2015)

Resident Evil Zero (2016)

9. Filmography

Resident Evil (2002)

Resident Evil: Apocalypse (2004)

Resident Evil: Extinction (2007)

Resident Evil: Afterlife (2010)

Resident Evil: Retribution (2012)

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter (2016)

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