LESSON: **STRATEGIC BUTT COVERINGS** (60 MINUTES)

In this lesson or series of lessons, students will watch the "Strategic Butt Covering" video from the Feminist Frequency series *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games*, and will consider how a large portion of video games exploit women through emphasizing the rear ends of female characters by employing various methods such as forced camera angles and perspectives, and by designing clothes that highlight women's bodies. This practice is compared to the treatment of male characters, where butts are heavily de-emphasized in a variety of ways. The implications of this fact are explored within the video and will be considered further during the lesson.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this lesson/series of lessons, students/viewers will:

1. Learn about the pattern of the strategic butt covering in relation to both male and female characters, and extend this learning to other forms of media;

2. Reflect on the implications of objectification in video games and other media, and will critically engage with media and advertising that employs the objectification of women and female characters;

3. Consider how issues proposed in this video might be fixed in future games.

MATERIALS

• Computer

• Projector

• Printed copies of "Strategic Butt Coverings" note companions

Before: Minds On

If this is the first lesson being used in the *Tropes vs. Women in Video Games* series, a preliminary discussion regarding 'critical analysis' as a process of questioning and 'tropes' as identified patterns will help students understand the goal of the videos (helping viewers question the media they use/consume and the broader implications of media); An introduction to season 1 of the series might also be needed. **[5 MINUTES]**

Show students the following image, first only showing them the left part of the image (cover the rest): http://moillusions.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Media-Manipulation-Optical-Illusion1.jpg

Ask students to discuss what they see. Next, show students the right part of the image (cover the rest), and ask them what they see now. Finally, show students the large image and ask students to discuss the image and what they see in the full picture. Ask the following questions:

• What caught your attention in the first image? In the second?
• How might visual decisions by the image creator impact your experience of the image?
• How does manipulating what you see and how you see it impact your interpretation of the image as a whole?

This initial activity will help students understand how visual elements of game design impact how they interact with characters of both genders when they watch the "Strategic Butt Covering" video. **[15 MINUTES]**

LESSON: **STRATEGIC BUTT COVERINGS**

During Action!

Watch the "Strategic Butt Covering" video (places to pause due to time constraints or opportunities for embedded discussion and/or activities below):t

00:45   Camera Angles and Forced Perspective
02:00   The Strategic Butt Covering
03:30   Comparing the treatment of Male and Female Characters & Consequences for Character Development
04:50   Advertising and Women's Bodies
05:15   Suggestions **[15 MINUTES]**

Differentiated Instruction:

- Note companions to help students work through definitions and content, including collaboration following viewing;

- 'Pause and Reflect' opportunities throughout viewing

After: Consolidation & Connection

Following viewing, discuss the phenomenon described in the video:

- Have they noticed this in video games they play?

- Has this video made them reflect on video games they've played before?

- What kinds of games have they seen this done in?

These questions are asked in regards to both the objectification of female characters and the strategic butt covering of male characters. **[10 MINUTES]**

List Games/Characters as a class where students have noticed either the emphasis on female bodies in the way described in the video, or the de-emphasis of the male body and consider the suggestions posed at the end of the video based on these games and characters. For example, ask: What could advertisements focus on instead of female characters' bodies to promote their games? **[15 MINUTES]**

POST-VIDEO ACTIVITY OPTIONS

Selective Advertising

Have students select an advertisement (for a game, movie, etc.) – either a commercial, video game/ movie cover, or promotional poster – and ask students to critique it based on the issues discussed in the "strategic butt covering" video. Encourage students to pay attention to whose bodies are visible, and how gendered bodies are used to promote the 'item' being sold. Questions to ask:

- Is someone's body being exploited in this advertisement?

- How could the advertisement be altered to reduce instances of objectification?

- Is there a noticeable difference between how the male and female body is being portrayed in this advertisement?

This response could take the form of a written piece, a video response, or an oral response as part of a larger group discussion.

Name: _____   Date: _____

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES:
"Strategic Butt Coverings"

Objectification and the Strategic Butt Covering Women's bodies are often made into sexual objects through the use of forced perspectives and camera angles in video games, and female characters' clothes are often designed to emphasize their butts. In contrast, male characters' outfits are often designed to cover their butts, and camera angles do not allow for their butts to be seen. This is the strategic butt covering.	**Key Terms:** • Camera Angles and Forced Perspective • Depiction of bodies (emphasis) • Sexual Objectification • Sex and Advertising

Camera Angles and Forced Perspective	
The Strategic Butt Covering	
Comparing Male and Female Characters (consequences)	

TROPES VS. WOMEN IN VIDEO GAMES: "STRATEGIC BUTT COVERINGS"

Advertising and Women's Bodies	
Suggestions	