

SERENAY GÜNAL

AUTHORSHIP IN VIDEO GAME ADAPTATIONS

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AUTHORSHIP IN VIDEO GAME ADAPTATIONS

A Master's Thesis

by
SERENAY GÜNAL

Department of
Communication and Design
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
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AUTHORSHIP IN VIDEO GAME ADAPTATIONS

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By

SERENAY GÜNAL

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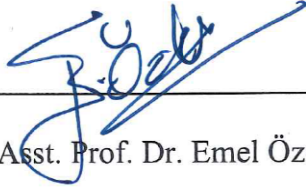
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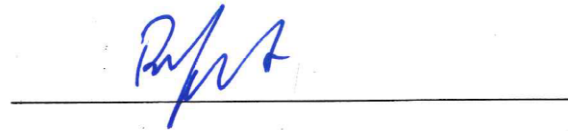
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Prof. Dr. Refet Soykan Gürkaynak

ABSTRACT

AUTHORSHIP IN VIDEO GAME ADAPTATIONS

Serenay Günal

MA in Media and Visual Studies

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The purpose of this thesis is to examine how authorship of video game adaptations is handled as a discursive concept. Auteur theory was created and analyzed as a critical method in the film medium. The thesis researches the adaptability and applicability of this theory into video games and video game adaptations. The findings from the literature review are then compared to a survey of players' perceptions and experiences of authorship in video gaming. The survey was conducted in four subtopics to examine player's opinions on their preferences in video games, transmedia and adaptation, game creators and creative roles, and lastly, impressions of authorship in video games and adaptations. Another angle on authorship in video game adaptations is the author-driven genre, with a case study of four different Lovecraftian video games; *Conarium* (2017) and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005) as direct and *Bloodborne* (2015) and *Darkest Dungeon* (2016) as heavily inspired video games inspired by the early 20th-century stories of H. P. Lovecraft. The chapter aims to analyze how literary authorship creates a genre and a brand of its own in video gaming. Lastly, the thesis analyzes transmedia storytelling with a case study of authorship in *The Witcher* franchise, in which the adapted video games have assumed a more prominent international position than their literary sources.

Keywords: Adaptation, authorship, video games, transmedia, survey

ÖZET

VIDEO OYUN ADAPTASYONLARINDA YAZARLIK

Serenay Günel

Yüksek Lisans, Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar

Tez Danışmanı: Asst. Prof. Dr. Colleen Bevin Kennedy-Karpat

Ağustos, 2021

Bu tezin amacı, video oyunu uyarlamalarında yazarlığın söylemsel bir kavram olarak nasıl ele alındığını incelemektir. Auteur teorisi, film ortamında eleştirel bir yöntem olarak yaratılmış ve analiz edilmiştir. Tez, bu teorinin video oyunlarına ve video oyunu adaptasyonlarına uyarlanabilirliğini ve uygulanabilirliğini araştırmaktadır. Ardından literatür incelemesi, bir grup oyuncunun video oyunlarındaki yazarlık üzerine sahip oldukları görüşlerine ve deneyimlerine ilişkin bir anketle karşılaştırılmıştır. Anket, oyuncuların video oyunları, transmedya ve adaptasyon konusundaki tercihleri, oyun yaratıcıları ve diğer yaratıcı rolleri ve son olarak video oyunları ve uyarlamalarındaki yazarlık üzerine olan görüşlerini incelemek için dört alt başlıkta gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu tezde incelenen video oyunu uyarlamalarındaki yazarlığa getirilmiş bir diğer bakış açısı da yazar odaklı türdür ve bu bölüm Lovecraft dünyasından esinlenen dört farklı video oyunu ile incelenmiştir. Bunlar: birebir adapte edilmiş örnekler olan Conarium (2017) ve Call of Cthulhu ile H. P. Lovecraft'ın 20. yüzyılın başlarındaki hikayelerinden ilham alan video oyunları olarak Dark Corners of the Earth (2005), Bloodborne (2015) ve Darkest Dungeon (2016). Bu bölümün nihai hedefi, edebi yazarlığın video oyunlarında nasıl bir tür ve başlı başına bir marka yarattığını analiz etmektir. Son olarak, bu tez, uyarlanmış video oyunlarının edebi eserlerinden daha önemli bir uluslararası konuma sahip olan The Witcher serisindeki yazarlığın durum çalışmasını baz alarak transmedya hikaye anlatımını analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uyarlama, yazarlık, video oyunları, transmedya, anket

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Video games draw increasing interest to the rapidly growing technological world of entertainment. As they are changing with this flow, they are also creating changes in related areas. It becomes very intriguing to study this medium that brings a lot of aspects similar and more to fields like film and literature. Scholars are becoming more and more interested in not just comparing what video games bring in with other media but also finding new perspectives to shine light in this ever changing medium.

Authorship studies has been one of the fields that looked for its conventions in this medium as video games are formed as a collaborative medium, and the curiosity to find the single creator and to find its importance is still an ongoing discovery. In addition, adaptation studies have also tried to turn towards the interactive forms. The debate on the application and importance of narrative versus interactivity has shaped the beginning thought. Adaptation study scholars wanted to interpret how this process should be done, and the importance with the popularity of gaming and now, the eminent, transmedia.

Video games have attracted an increasing market share of the global entertainment industry.¹ With the lockdown periods of COVID-19, more people were introduced to games as they had to stay in their homes during the quarantine. Apart from production and reception discourses, the way players think about games and how they play them shape the whole medium. The game worlds, genres and game plays became more and more diverse, and storyworlds that are created in or for other media are appropriated or optioned by video game companies to make games that then expand and gain popularity for all the associated works.

Video gaming is open to a variety of methodologies, and the area of video games now is taken more seriously since it has established many methods of analysis for academic and critical studies. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how authorship

¹ “The global video game market size was valued at USD 151.06 billion in 2019 and is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.9% from 2020 to 2027.”
<https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/video-game-market>

of video game adaptations is handled as a discursive concept and how contemporary video games are challenging traditional notions of authorship as originated in film studies where an auteur's artistic vision stands out despite the collective process of producing a film for the mainstream industry. This theory helped cast commercial and entertaining Hollywood productions in a new light. The question in this thesis is how applicable this vision might be for video games, which are another collective product but one that operates under different industrial and discursive structures.

Generally, video game analysis has traditionally split along two lines: narratology and ludology. Each of these fields has taken very different approaches in the application of auteur theory into the medium, and both have raised doubt about whether theories of non-interactive narrative media like film are applicable to video games. The literature review chapter of this thesis shows in detail the origins and elements of auteur theory, including how narratologists and ludologists impose their ideas in the application of this concept to video games.

I have been playing video games as long as I can remember and gathered a lot of experiences and memories through them. Jenkins (1992) in his book *Textual Poachers* identifies himself as an aca-fan, who is an academic that identify as a fan. As a gamer and a person who loves to play, read and write about games, in the process of writing this thesis, I also discovered that I too identify myself as a researcher-fan. The enthusiasm and the passion for the games that I enjoy playing has led me to research about them, how they are represent amongst the theorists and how games' affect other media. Each assignment topic I have chosen over the course of my master's program connected the area of studies this thesis brings, and I have stayed excited through the whole researching process. As a fan, I feel very content of the choices I made for the games presented in the thesis because I am mostly sure that they are worth entering the library of a gamer since they serve rich content and experience. As a researcher, I have carefully chosen the games while thinking about the connections with the main ideas and the structure of what each chapter conveys. Games especially like *Bloodborne* and *The Witcher* franchise are untimely and have a high rate of popularity with an established fandom that continue to grow and expand.

The research I have made over the program helped me to identify the existing

literature with its the missing pieces. Especially, adaptation and authorship's connection to video games did not have ample research and do not have a consensus regarding the questions I analyze in my thesis. What the literature has brought in this area did not result in a single conclusion and very less often was connected with the ideas of the players. My initial observation about the lack of existing studies about players' impressions of authorship gave me an idea to conduct a survey, has produced original research. Therefore, by conducting a unique survey I intended to analyze and compare how players' opinions could be brought into this debate of authorship in video game adaptations with the existing literature in authorship in video game adaptations.

Chapter 3 aims to compare discursive constructions and player perspectives on authorship in video games, with a particular focus on video game adaptations. Players' perspectives were gathered through a survey titled "Video Gaming Experience". In the chapter, various theories of authorship in video games are explored. While most theorists believe that *auteur* theory is viable when the author of a video game is considered to be the director of a game, other views center on the collaborative notion of authorship and imply that the studio/company as a whole should be considered as the author. Finally, taking the interactive nature of video games into consideration, some theorists argue that the player acts as a (co)author as experiences vary according to their agency and involvement. This chapter aimed to compare and show what the players actually thought of authorship in video game adaptations. The analysis of respondents' answers is shown in four subtopics; first, with general questions about the players and their preferences in video games; second, questions about transmedia and adaptation; third, game creators and creative roles; and finally, addressing impressions of authorship in video games and adaptations. The conclusion wraps up with a discussion of why all of it matters.

Chapter 4 presents a case study on games inspired by or adapted from the work of author H. P. Lovecraft, analyzing four Lovecraftian games and selected promotional paratexts. In this case study, the video games *Conarium* (2017) and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005) are selected as direct adaptations from Lovecraft's work, while *Bloodborne* (2015) and *Darkest Dungeon* (2016) are heavily inspired video games that are considered as "Lovecraftian." Despite his racism and

xenophobia, Lovecraft's work is widely known and is still being adapted across different media. While the author is no longer alive, affiliation with his name and/or his body of work remains a hallmark of both direct and loosely inspired adaptations. Game trailers and game pages were examined as a unit of analysis to reason out the marketing use of established author and the genre created of the author. These Lovecraftian games thus present an intriguing study to explore through the lens of authorship, and the chapter explores how the author created unique elements that have become a distinct sub-genre of texts in a medium he never saw in his lifetime.

Lastly, Chapter 5 explores video game authorship in relation to transmedia texts. Initially, to connect authorship in transmedia franchises, theories on transmedia storytelling and transmedial worlds is established. To frame the role of the author in transmedia adaptation, *The Witcher*'s interconnected universe is introduced as a case study tracing changing relationships between the source text creator, Andrezej Sapkowski, the video game developer company that optioned his work, CD Projekt Red, and the newest Netflix adaptations of his books. In this case study, analysis of Sapkowski's interviews served as a unit of analysis to determine his view on video game adaptations and his role in his works' adaptations. It was important to form the connection of author's relationship to transmedia work. This chapter also revisits the survey from Chapter 3 to analyze results solely for the participants who have chosen favorite games from *The Witcher* series, showing these players' opinions on the role of the author in video game transmedia and adaptations.

This research project aims to answer three key questions: (1) What do players think about authorship in video gaming? (2) How can an author brand be mobilized in gaming discourse, and how does this affect perceptions of authorship? (3) How might living authors position themselves within a transmedia franchise that is rooted in their work, but has now grown largely outside of their direct control? All of these questions are absent from current adaptation studies, and the thesis hopes to contribute to these conversations as well as broader issues related to authorship in video gaming.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & METHODOLOGY

2.1. Literature Review

For exploring the applicability of auteurism to video games by analyzing the notions and the role of the author in video game adaptations and transmedia, a research on literature was done in the areas of auteur theory; video game studies; authorship in video games and adaptation; and paratexts and transmedia. By reviewing the precursors and their theories in these areas, the literature review brings together different perspectives from various research areas. Chapter-specific literature will be introduced in the later chapters as needed.

2.1.1 *Auteur* Theory

Auteur theory first bloomed in mid-20th century film criticism, following the romantic focus on a sole creator as an artistic paradigm. While auteur theory in film had its detractors from the very beginning, it is a discourse that has spread to many other collectively produced, popular media as well. At its origins, the form of auteur theory is modeled on Renaissance notions that the creator, the artist, was accepted to be the creative origin. But mechanical reproduction of images complicates the relationship between the artistic process and the artist's hand. Photography has been one of the revolutionary inventions that changed the relationship between art and artist. With the rise of film, the debate of the *auteur* theory continued. In French critics' circles, Alexandre Astruc first introduced the expression *le caméra stylo*, which translates into "camera-pen", to emphasize the importance of a director's influence that was shown through their camera and compare it explicitly to the model of literary authorship: that is, the product of a sole creative mind. But in using literature as the model, auteur theory also sought to break free from the literary mold. Gerstner (2003) points out that "Astruc's emphasis on *le camér-stylo* functioned as a critical intervention to break the then current model of cinema's reliance on literature as its primary source of storytelling" and adds that *la camera stylo* is a metaphor for grasping the cinema as a

“means of expression, just as all the arts have been before it” (p.6).

The importance of Astruc’s remark further developed with the critics of French *Cahiers du Cinema*, where François Truffaut wrote the classic essay on *la politique des auteurs*, which became known (particularly in Anglophone scholarship and criticism) as the “Auteur Theory”. Besides Truffaut, Andre Bazin (1957) and Andrew Sarris (1981) also contributed to the cinematic auteur theory. In the medium of cinema, Bazin cared for its relationship to reality, centering his attention on directors who (in his view) could show best reality without modification. Bazin’s emphasis on the transparency of cinematic language was at odds with many Cahiers critics’ interest in the possibility of manipulating the language of cinema to express the director’s personal concerns. Bazin’s argument comes close to eliminating human intervention in the process of production altogether (Cook 1985, p.120). But Truffaut was Bazin’s protégé, and he took these ideas about authorship in a different, more industrially minded direction with his *politique des auteurs*. With a conflict of ideas between Bazin and the younger Cahiers critics, the subject of auteurship became an important matter because to Cahiers, the director’s opinions and creativity should be involved in the process of filmmaking.

Andrew Sarris, an American critic, shaped the auteur theory on his *Notes on the Auteur Theory* (1981). Noting the American cinema’s similarities to French cinema, he showed the importance of the director as a crucial criterion for film criticism. To him, the director was the only author of a film. Sarris sought to bring critical analysis to Hollywood cinema against the backdrop of critical condescension. To do this he identified the film’s director (following the Cahiers’s agenda of auteurist criticism) as the criterion of value. Sarris opposed film criticism that relied on a review of the star, screenwriter, and/or producer, a more expansive and collective view of cinematic authorship that was espoused by critics like Pauline Kael. To counter this, Sarris established a set of evaluative criteria upon which he determined the worth of the American director as auteur (Gerstner 2003, 8). Sarris (1981) also points the importance of “Interior Meaning” of a film, which creates unique visuals with various arrangements according to the theme and cinematography unique to the storyteller. The auteur theory, shaped by the language of cinema, represents a director’s own style to be recognized over and/or in spite of the collaborative production of a film.

The concept of authorship was also hotly debated outside of film critics' circles in the mid-20th century. Two important figures in the history of that brought post-structuralist strategies to authorship are Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Barthes declared in *The Death of the Author* (1977) that the meaning of the text becomes one with the reader and should be separated from the writer; therefore, a death to the author must occur in order to prevent any interpretations that might be caused in the state of knowing the author. However, Foucault (1969) rejected Barthes' view and characterized authorship as a function. The author function:

does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual. (Barthes, 1977, p.131)

The view on auteur theory has spread onto other medium and authorship discourse has been ongoing since. The debate of the applicability of this theory and whether viewing these mediums through the lens of authorship is important/necessary or not is still ongoing. Especially in video games which is a fairly new and evolving medium, it is appealing to apply the traditional single-author view, however, as the medium and industry changes dynamic so does the theorists. The theorists have a variety of ideas to why this theory should be or can applicable to video games and analyze the function and role of the author in this application along with the player that contributes to video games' unique function, interactivity.

2.1.2. Video Games

Salen and Zimmerman (2004) define a game as “a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules that results in a quantifiable outcome” and game design as “the process by which a game designer creates a game, to be encountered by a player, from which meaningful play emerges” (p. 80). Juul (2005) defines games as

a combination of rules and fiction, two aspects that compete and complement each other (p.163). There is considerable effort on the part of the player to engage with the text and understand it through this engagement, yet this reliance on interactivity to create meaning is also not strictly limited to gaming. For instance, Aarseth (1997) has coined the term “ergodic” in his book *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*.

In ergodic literature, nontrivial effort is required to allow the reader to traverse the text. If ergodic literature is to make sense as a concept, there must also be nonergodic literature, where the effort to traverse the text is trivial, with no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye movement and the periodic or arbitrary turning of pages. (Aarseth, 1997, p. 1-2)

Ergodic literature changes the conventional way of reading a literary text. It gets the reader to interact and constantly make decisions with the ergodic text. There are a lot of aspects that go into a video game, and how the narrative is portrayed to the player and made to be fit into the platform of a video game has showed evident alterations. Due to their nature, video games can be considered ergodic texts, as they require extranoematic actions that are required from the participants, meaning that there must be something happening outside of one’s thoughts and have an action other than the obvious one required (Aarseth, 1999/9). However, several elements need to be considered when looking at a game’s narrative as an ergodic piece. The explanation that Aarseth presents refers to making the reader change their habits of reading a text in a conventional way in order to interact with it. The text should present an effort rather different, for example, from having to turn the pages while reading the book and reading the lines from left to right to its finish; rather, an ergodic text should require the reader to make a non-trivial effort with an extranoematic action. The story should also invite the reader to act as a participant while creating a harmony between the story and its physical or formal structure.

Video games and cybertexts can include features from other media such as literature, television, and film. But the most crucial element specific to video games, its interactivity, has led to different views of the perception of authorship in video games. In order to progress through play, the players need to be able to interact with the

game. Thinking of the traditional forms from which video games developed, especially in terms of storytelling, the audience can be considered as an observer with very high control of the author for the story. The participatory nature of video games creates a strong connection between the player and the events in the video game, and lends them a higher level of ergodicity. As interactivity stirs up the question of authorship, for Aarseth (1997), the strong connection did not necessarily mean that the author equaled to the player: “As with most games, the rules are well beyond the player’s control, and to suggest the user is able to determine the shape of such as text is the same as to confuse the influence of a city’s tourist guide with that of a city planner” (Aarseth, 1997, pp. 138-139). With a similar view, Murray (1997) introduced Procedural Authorship, which “means writing the rules by which the texts appear as well as writing the texts themselves” (p. 152). Aarseth and Murray therefore denied that players’ interactivity had a connection to authorship, as video games have a rule-based nature.

Authorship is also part of the Narratology versus Ludology debate in video games studies. Video game storytelling includes characters, plot, conflict and environment just like any other storytelling media; however, video game elements like interactivity and gameplay allow the narratives to unfold in different way, which affects player perception. Narratologists believe that the story elements are the most crucial part of the video games for research and study, and take a more traditional approach that aligns with literary and cinema studies as they have long been practiced in the academy. In opposition to this observation of similarity, ludologists believe that the interactivity and the presence of the player is the most important factor. While narrative elements cannot be discounted, ludologists believe that video games should be studied on their own formal terms, meaning factors like player and gameplay make the study of video games largely incompatible with non-interactive forms.

In her book, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, narratologist Murray (1997) claims that new forms of media, like video games, offer new possibilities for a field founded on older forms. On the other hand, prominent ludologist Aarseth (2004) believes that games are "radically different to narratives as a cognitive and communicative structure" (p.1). Similarly, Eskelinen (2004) treats video games as necessarily more than its narrative and focuses on separating important features of video games and players’

experiences in gameplay apart from traditional narrative approaches. Ludologists all take different approaches to video game studies, but can make way for other interpretations and theorizations of games in combination with concepts like adaptation and authorship. Narratology creates a blurry vision to understand games from a narrative perspective because it shows a faulty model for the medium. As a ludologist, Gonzalo Frasca (2003) argues in line with this view and in his article “Ludologists love stories, too: notes from a debate that never took place” points that both approaches share many similar elements but should be studied apart from each other. However, ludologist Juul (2003) claims that the medium is not only bound to the narrative, so narratology alone is not sufficient for a thorough analysis of games. Game studies is very broad and author studies is still not a very concluded discourse, therefore combination of both leads innumerable ways of studying games.

2.1.3. Authorship in Video Games

Auteurism in film criticism already singled out an individual author for works that depend on collective creativity. Both films and video games involve a collaborative effort between different creative roles that contribute to the end product. For films, this collaboration was understood to center around a single creative force: the director. While recent criticism has expanded this notion to other possible roles (e.g., the screenwriter, the producer, even the lead actor), popular understanding still emphasizes the director as a (potential) auteur. However, video games never sought any consensus around the notion of authorship, branching it out so that it does not often resolve around a single person. Different modes of authorship in video gaming include corporate and studio authorship, video game directors or designers as authors, and players as (co)authors, which are all elaborated in the next chapter.

While conducting a discourse analysis on the connection between authorship and video games, it was important to distinguish that traditional notions of authorship are not enough to solve the issues of assigning authorship. Stephanie Jennings (2016) in her article “Co-Creation and Distributed Authorship in Video Games”, tries to initially respond to the questions of how video games necessitate transformations in concepts of authorship and explored the significance of finding significance in

authorship.

Nevertheless, even as we recognize authorship as a socially formulated concept— and even as we resist an all-controlling authorial intent in our interpretations and analyses—the considerations of who is creating a video game, how they are creating it, and *why* have major implications for how we play, receive, and understand games. Authorship remains a conflicted realm in which battles over meaning-making and the power to create are fought. (Jennings, 2016, p.124)

Pettersen (2016) in his article “Corporate and Player Authorship” builds a solid argument on role-playing (RPG) games and how they are built with multiple departments of people as they turn out to be very big productions with high budgets. From this perspective, he follows a theory of corporate authorship and mainly introduces the corporate studio as an author. Similarly, Hakimi (2017) associates company names to the authorship role. Ashcraft (2010) claims that a director can direct an artistic vision that the studio can cultivate, thus, he suggests a more collective creation: *The Studio Auteur Theory*. Another perspective on video game authorship is the game directors and/or designers as authors. Although Aarseth (2005) in *The Game and its Name: What is a Game Auteur?* looks for existing *auteurs* in the industry and ends on a very neutral conclusion, Frasca (2003) and Murray (1997) rigidly state that game designers are the true authors. In a different approach, Jenkins (2004) defines game design as narrative architecture seemingly attempting to bridge the gap between narratology and ludology.

Lopes, Tavares & Marques (2018) introduce director and studio co-authorship, but conclude on an even stronger claim to player authorship. Poremba (2003) also introduces a primary author and a secondary author: the player-author. She understands that there is a primary author that creates the game such as a game director or developer; however, the interactivity and experiences gained by the player is the most important to her in terms of determining the author, therefore she views players as (co)authors. Friedlander (2009) argued that the interactivity of digital media did not eliminate authorship, but multiplied it and Meyers (2014) has sought to develop a theory of participatory authorship. Friedlander (2009) suggested that “in a

digital story...the reader/user/player takes over some of the functions of the author. In these new forms, it is the user's playful engagement with the digital environment that creates the sense of mastery and commitment that makes for a coherent narrative" (p. 180). Meyers (2014) argued, players "by their very nature, are participatory authors and co-creators of the games they play, and a game cannot even exist without their input. Video games close the divide between the author and audience, creating a medium that is inherently collaborative" (p. 10).

Marie-Laure Ryan (2011) established five layers of interactivity she titled the "Interactive Onion". The outermost layers consist of a player's exploration of a predetermined text; in the middle layers, the player becomes personally involved in the story, but the plot is still predetermined. It is at the innermost layers that "the story is created dynamically through the interaction between the user and the system" (p. 37). This innermost layer, meta-interactivity, is the layer in which the player creates, develops, and implements new content for other players to utilize in-game. When a player is engaged in meta-interactivity, "the idea of the user as co-author becomes more than a hyperbolic cliché, but the two roles do not merge" (p. 59). With the interactive onion model, Ryan denied that the roles of player and author would overlap.

2.1.4. Paratexts & Transmedia

In *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon (2006) defines an adaptation as "an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art" (p. 170). Bolter & Grusin (2003) state that in contrast to a modernist view, which aims to define the essential properties of every medium, all media work by "remediating," i.e. translating, refashioning, and reforming other media, both on the levels of content and form (p.89). The fourth chapter deals mainly with paratexts and intertextuality in video games and the fifth chapter mainly forms connections to transmedia while looking closely at the notions of authorship. Julia Kristeva (1969) coined the term "intertextuality" to address the mosaic of quotes and quotations and the overall process in which a new text absorbs and transforms previous texts. According to Genette (1997), textual transcendence is defined as "all that sets the text in a

relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” and he introduces these five different types of textual transcendence as: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality (p.1).

One of the defining aspects of the paratext is the need for authority behind its creation: “by definition, something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary.” (Genette 1997, p. 9) Paratextuality is based on practices and conventions of a given cultural area that evolves through time. Genette’s views on paratextuality, first developed in the field of literary studies, therefore can change according to the developments that are currently happening in the video game industry. John Fiske (1987) developed his own take on intertextuality in the context of television culture in the 1980s, introducing two types of intertextuality: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal intertextuality takes place between so-called primary texts; this connection is often explicit and established through “genre, character or content.” And vertical intertextuality imposes hierarchy on interconnected texts: that is – the primary text, is expanded by ancillary texts (p. 108). Gray (2010), taking inspiration from Genette, states that paratexts and intertexts are intertwined, and paratexts “frequently conjure up and summon intertexts” (p. 141). A reader, viewer, or player’s understanding of the storyworld can be supplemented by paratexts that can help orient them to the world or help them further explore the world for instance in video games this can be video game trailers, CD covers, covers, posters or even the main menu, and loading screens (Gray, 2010; Mittell, 2014). As Gray states (2010) “paratexts are not only forms of intertextuality, but they can control the menu of intertexts that audiences will consult or employ when watching or thinking about a text” (p. 141).

In Chapter 4, for the case study of Lovecraft, online trailers and Steam/PlayStation game pages were analyzed for the selected games. With the help of the survey conducted, and as a gamer myself, I decided to perform discourse analysis on these paratexts as such, because firstly, these trailers attract the most attention in finding a game to try. Moreover, the two general types of trailers, cinematic and gameplay, each give different insights on how the games introduce the story, characters, environment, theme and/or the game genre and type of gameplay that they should be expecting. An analysis and comparison of these trailers helps to build a case for my

research for Chapter 4.

The already highly broad scope of intermediality is further widened by Jenkins (2006) and his influential discussion of transmedia, which focuses on relationships between media that are formally distinct from one other yet show, Genettian connections between texts. Jenkins (2009) argues that transmedia differs from adaptation in that adaptation does not create a completely new narrative experience, as it replicates already existing stories in a different form; meanwhile, transmedia storytelling in its fullest potential adds new narrative content and offers a qualitatively different experience from one text to the next. The transmedial storytelling debate continued to proceed as Ryan and Thon (2014) introduced and defined storyworlds and Wolf (2012) introduced imaginary worlds that all “extend beyond the stories that occur in them, inviting speculation and exploration” (Wolf, 2012, p.17). These concepts are all interested in the expansion of the storyworld amongst various media. Transmedia allows the core story, which is multiplied and distributed to all other media, to promote both itself and each individual text that the story is presented in. Also, this allows the audience to feel the need to contribute to other media to learn more about the storyworld they follow. So, this forms a connection between transmedia and paratexts: the wider the world of transmedia is spread, the higher the number of paratexts needed to both hold the story together and attract a wider audience. These paratexts may include official and fan-created aides, such as maps, timelines, character guides, and fan wikis, that help to render the storyworld not only more comprehensible but also more immersive (Jenkins, 2006).

2.2 Methodology

This section details the methodologies utilized in the thesis, and the units of study. These methodologies show the correlation between authorship of the video game medium and its adaptations. A literature review was conducted to situate theorists on their view of authorship in various media. Initially, it was important to comprehend the meaning and concept of *auteur* to be able to locate it and analyze its effects in a very different medium. The thesis consolidates three important research areas: authorship studies, adaptation studies, and video game studies. Thus, conducting a literature review helped substantially to

assemble various perspectives on contextual meaning of *auteur* and authorship to view and analyze its larger discourse context applications within different media.

Chapters not only aim to pursue authorship in video game adaptations but also explore notions of authorship and the role and involvement of the author in intertexts and transmedia texts. A case study is a detailed in-depth study of a specific subject; therefore, it was highly suitable to form case studies to analyze a single phenomenon deeply with its interrelation to its contents. This thesis features two case studies. To look for notions of authorship, a case study on Lovecraft and Lovecraft's Mythos in video games was conducted. The case study compares the direct adaptations *Conarium* (2017) and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005) with the more broadly Lovecraftian *Darkest Dungeon* (2016) and *Bloodborne* (2015) through the lens of authorship discourse as shown in the games and in their of paratexts. As a unit of analysis, game trailers and online game pages were chosen as paratexts to better show how the author's name has become a genre of its own- called Lovecraftian horror, or more simply, Lovecraftian- and how these paratexts evoke the Lovecraftian genre by providing elements from the mythos for marketing use of the adapted games. These games were chosen not only because I had experienced them before, but also because, they are generally the first adaptations that initially come up in an online search for Lovecraftian games, as they are highly popular among gamers. It appears interesting to me that even though they were recognizable as Lovecraftian, there were not many research and papers on these games except for *Bloodborne*. To me, it would not have been fair to exclude *Bloodborne* from a study of Lovecraftian games, as it is a highly successful video game and draws the most interesting parallels with the Lovecraftian mythos even though it is a highly-inspired adaptation rather than a direct one.

The second case study analyzes the *The Witcher* video games and their role in transmedia storytelling and adaptation, and considers both the role of the book author and the games' developer CD Projekt Red as the central corporate author. Putting aside that it is my favorite game, I believe that it is a perfect

choice to show the role of author in transmedia, as the author is never directly involved and there are many disputes regarding his personal and professional approach towards new media and especially video games. The storyworld is ever-growing in a variety of media formats, with a growing fandom dedicated to the transmedia universe. *The Witcher* is a transnational example of transmedia production that also goes against the usual order of adaptation, which typically starts with a book, moves to screen(s) like film and television, then finally to game adaptations. *The Witcher* initially skipped over film and television, only to return to those screens after the remarkable success of the books-to-game adaptations. But *The Witcher* involves more than the books and the games; therefore, this study was to be framed more closely than a general meditation on the role of the author. The case study also focused on the source text creator, Andrzej Sapkowski and his varied levels of participation in his work's adaptations to date, an approach that allows for a more nuanced research on the role of the author in video game transmedia adaptations. Handling *The Witcher* as a case brings depth to the discussion by focusing on a contemporary, fast-expanding, transmedia fantasy universe. Sapkowski's approach to the video game medium and transmedia adaptation as a whole, and the level of involvement that he prefers are conveyed through his published interviews as a unit of analysis in the research.

Lastly, a survey was conducted to gather qualitative information on video game players. An online survey was designed and disseminated to a target audience of gamers aiming to determine players' concepts of authorship and whether or not authorship in general is important to their gaming experience. Moreover, the data gathered in the survey was fruitful in comparing players' opinions to that of other units of discourse on authorship in video game adaptations, such as video game throy, marketing partexts, and creator interviews. 215 people participated in the survey titled "Video Gaming Experience," and the survey's greater part was mostly focused on transmedia, adaptation and authorship. These results support the basic conclusions for the chapters of the thesis. The survey was created using Survey Monkey and was initially distributed via social media through friends' and acquaintances' reposts. This is the reason why most of the participants were from Turkey, and majority are young adults. The survey is an

original design, and the data gathered and compared with the authorship discourse in video game adaptations is highly relevant to the field of adaptation studies, where it is unusual to encounter the intersection of adaptation and gaming. A full presentation of the survey questions and response data can be found in the Appendix section.

The survey was intended to form questions on a wider scope than the specific needs of the present thesis and as such the questions appear under various sub-categories. Most questions are directly related to the research questions that I implement throughout the thesis. How players approach video games was the initial curiosity, but it was important to observe whether players actually played adapted games because they liked them as games, or because that game/these games form a part of a broader transmedia storyworld. The questions examine the role of specific directors, companies or creative roles, looking for players to explain why they have chosen these games, whether their reasons relate to authorship, and whether players' ideas about authorship match existing presumptions about authorship in other forms of discourse. The questions were also intended to analyze impressions regarding adaptation and the expected involvement of the author in future versions of their work.

The survey was initially intended for distribution across gaming platforms and community applications like Steam threads and Discord gaming servers in addition to social media like Facebook and Twitter. Unfortunately, community discussion panels found on Steam forums did not allow threads to include a survey link, and Discord servers viewed such links as threats and restricted them. It was thus made less convenient to reach out more directly to the gaming community. But a good sample size was recruited through general social media platforms, of which the two biggest contributions to the distribution of the survey was 1) circulation within Bilkent University departments, and 2) using Reddit survey and thesis posts, including threads such as r/SurveyExchange, r/takemysurvey.

The survey made its peak in the first couple of days after initial publication and stayed active for 22 days (April 22 – May 13, 2021). In just a few days, the

number of respondents reached 117, and after the second week the overall traffic decreased. The last question allowed the respondents to share their contact information, and 51 respondents agreed to share their emails for a possible follow-up interview about their experiences with adapted video games, though no such interviews were conducted within the scope of the current thesis. While the follow-up interview was not pursued, the number of respondents agreeing to sign up shows a great possibility for future research. After the completion of the survey, most of the data was collected by Survey Monkey and downloaded as Excel and PDF documents, while open-ended questions were analyzed and incorporated throughout the thesis chapters. The research gave ample information on how players thought about the games they play as well as their approaches to video game adaptations and the role of the author in creating them. The complete structure of the survey can be found in the Appendix section.

CHAPTER 3: PLAYER PERSPECTIVES VS. DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Authorship has a fluctuating position in the video gaming medium due to its structural interactivity. What I will be trying to determine in this chapter is to closely view how players construct this discursive notion of authorship when faced with video games adapted from existing literary and other creative works. Normally, such surveys do not prevail in adaptations studies. This survey is an original research, conducted with the contribution of 215 players in the survey called “Video Gaming Experience”. The results are analyzed in this thesis, and discourses on the subject from various theorists is also studied to determine their engagement with authorship discourse.

3.1. Theories of Authorship

Stephanie Jennings (2016) claim that “...authorship of video games involves the power to create, shape, and influence the content, structure, form and affordances of video game works. It involves the power to alter, to write, and to create” (p. 139). It is evident that interactivity makes video games different from film, though just like film, video games are a collaborative medium. Yet this collaboration has been obscured throughout film history: auteur theory suggests that singular creative forces can express their own ideas through film, creating unique elements to represent their own style. Sarris (1981) emphasized that “one of the ideas behind *auteurism* is that the greatness of a film director is expressed in the distinguished style that is reflected in an overarching oeuvre” (p. 63). As it is possible to recognize the works of directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Wes Anderson and Quentin Tarantino by their style and unique contributions, it is also possible to view video games as such by a game’s mechanics, characters, game play, or art style. As video games are an expressive medium, one might assume that game authors would also use this expressive medium and give its final shape accordingly. Nevertheless, singular authors in video games are difficult to determine, as no critical or theoretical school has developed around this in the same way as the *Cahiers du cinéma* critics sparked the theory of the film auteur.

In video games, theories of authorship mainly revolve around the director of a game, the studio/company, and/or the player; the framework for these conventional approaches to video game authorship is discussed in this chapter.

3.2. Corporate Authorship & Studio (Team) Authorship

A company of a video game involves creative roles such as developers, designers, video game artists, art directors, and writers that participate in the creation process. But the size and scope of both the game and its studio also make a difference in perception. Lopes, Tavares and Marques (2018) point out that some individual standouts can emerge despite the collaborative nature of games:

When we think of small games like *Undertale* (Toby Fox, 2015) we can immediately associate it with Toby Fox, since he was the sole creator of the game (except for some art assets), however when we think of bigger game titles, which often have bigger development teams, this becomes trickier to do. We often associate games like *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (Bethesda, 2011) to Todd Howard, the game's director, or games like *Overwatch* to Jeff Kaplan, also the game's director, but they were not the sole creators of these games. (p. 578)

It is important to point out that games are often projects involving teams and collaborative and creative effort and how this can change the perspective on authorship in video games. Pettersen (2016) claims that “video games challenge conceptions of authorship coming from cinema because their play frames the relationship between creators and users differently than the one that arguably takes place between *auteurs* and spectators” (p. 228). Yet his approach in his article *Corporate and Player Authorship* is mainly on role-playing (RPG) games as the production involves more people. Pettersen (2016) argues that “the *auteurist* notion of single authorship is not the optimal way to conceptualize how big budget RPGs are made” (p. 238). He follows the theory of corporate authorship by Jerome Christensen in his approach to authorship as “a studio's corporate mission and identity can be discerned by looking for “the pattern of studio productions that define its identity,

represent its objectives, and that endeavor to achieve those objectives” (Pettersen, 2016, p. 238).

Video game companies such as Blizzard, CD Projekt Red and Riot Games have produced some of the most popular games on the market, and they are widely known among players for their game experience and quality. They have managed to create unique games or game series that are loved by their followers, and such past successes indicate a higher chance of playability in the games that they will produce in the future as well. One approach to authorship is thus a *corporate authorship* that consistently associates the company’s name with author status. The games produced from a particular company would be expected to have a recognizable, unique style, be it in gameplay, player controls, or narrative elements like setting or characters.

Hakimi (2017) also indicates that “companies like Valve, Bethesda, Naughty Dog, Bungie are often treated like individual personalities because fans will critically link their output and decipher their works relationally, as well as purchase and evaluate games based on their understanding of that studio” (p. 7). After a company has made its name recognizable among players as the games’ author, the studio’s potential and the players’ expectations become tied to all the creative roles that has made those games come to life.

Brian Ashcraft (2010) gathered several different opinions from the creators and developers of games to outline “The Studio Auteur Theory,” which acknowledges collective creation in a different way than corporate authorship. His view differs from corporate authorship because he claims that while a studio can harbor a collective vision, it is creative roles such as the studio heads or lead designers who are able to put their vision into the game as a company/team; furthermore, without these determining visionaries, there would not be a studio culture in the first place. Since every studio varies these roles from game to game, the authorship dynamic can also shift from game to game within the same studio’s output. “Look at Shigeru Miyamoto and Nintendo,” Ashcraft (2010) argues, “They are inseparable. It's inconceivable for Nintendo to make non-Shigeru Miyamoto games and equally inconceivable for Miyamoto to make non-Nintendo titles”. The collaborative nature of video games therefore, bring together a view for the artistic vision that a company as a whole creates. However, there are also names in the gaming industry that were able to

achieve a single-author title more under the model of cinematic *auteur* theory.

3.3. Video Game Directors/ Designers as Authors

Video game directors or designers can also contend for the role of *auteur*, as they correspond roughly to the role of a film director. In *auteur* theory, film directors stand out with their unique vision that is created through their use of visual style, creation of characters, narrative and editing and more. Game designers are in charge of mediating experiences in the design of a game in its interface and controls. Players often have to stay true to the rules and affordances laid out by game designers. As Aarseth (2005) argues, David Jaffe and Tim Schaffer are well-known video game directors/designers who have successfully implemented their visions, and even commercial studio auteurs like Sid Meier and Hideo Kojima have managed to work on AAA²-games for large studios while still cultivating an *auteur* status (p.263). These major names balance creative control with commercial success and are recognized as a strong enough personal brand that at some point, their *auteur* status becomes a marketing tool. Similar to film, seeing video game designers/directors as authors accepts the collaborative nature of the medium, but it presumes general agreement that the creative process and end-product decisions fall largely on them. Gonzalo Frasca (2003) introduces two concepts: simulation author (*simauthor*), and narrative author (*narrauthor*). The *simauthor* represents the designer and “always has the final word and remains in charge because total player freedom is impossible since it would imply that no rules are unchangeable and therefore the game could literally become anything” (p.233). With these two concepts Frasca (2003) for distinctly different categories, and firmly believes that for *simauthor*, all the authorial credit remains at the designer of the game, whether they are simulations or narratives. Frasca add that “while I am a big supporter of the concept of the video game designer as an *auteur*, and it is true that many of them do use the medium to express their thoughts, their main goal remains to entertain” (p. 225). While Jenkins (2004) defines game design as narrative architecture and the game author as narrative architect, concluding that “it

² AAA (Triple-A) games have large budgets and huge production teams and are developed by well-established companies. It is a categorization for distinguishing the quality of the games based on their budget value therefore the games produced by large studios and publishers with a high-budget are considered AAA. Even though not used frequently, there are two other terms as well: AA (Double-A) and III (Triple-I)

makes sense to think of game designers less as storytellers than as narrative architects” (p.129). Jenkins divides the spatial narratives in games into categories designed to serve the narrative and also enable players to discover the potential of those narratives. Yet Jenkins does not comment on any specific game creators in his analysis.

With a view similar to Jenkins’s in recognizing a game developer as a narrative architect, Espen Aarseth (2005) does not accept or reject *a priori* the hypothetical category of game auteurs, but aims to observe the results when applying it as a critical perspective on games (p. 261). He presents three criteria for a person to become an *auteur* of game creation. Firstly, “they must have made such an impression that the game is associated with their name, rather than that of the Development Company or publisher”. Secondly, “they must have made more than one game” and finally, “the games must stand out and be different from standard genre games” (Aarseth 2005, pp. 262-263). By selecting criteria very similar to those used in film authorship criticism, he tries to implement them using known video game directors, yet still does not reach a sturdy conclusion in the end. His struggle in applying these criteria leaves many questions and underscores the discursive notion of authorship in video games. Aarseth (1997) also suggests that “to be an ‘author’ (as opposed to a mere ‘writer’) means to have configurative power over not merely content but also over a work’s genre and form,” solidifying his view on authorship for a single director/designer (p. 164).

Janet Murray (1997) in *Hamlet on the Holodeck* highlights the agency of different kinds of authorship in video gaming by forwarding the concept of “procedural authorship.” Although she claims that “satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices,” she argues that authorship cannot be equal to a player experiencing the video game as they play because they do not write the rules, create its objects, or give them properties, to her, players are the authors of their particular performances in their game, she points out that “we must distinguish this derivative authorship from the originating authorship of the system itself” (p. 126). Murray believes that the true author of the game is the game designer, who designs the procedural code of the game. Her view on agency in relation to authorship created novel approaches by putting players at the center of the discourse in partnership with designers, and the next section will further discuss how players can

be understood as co-authors of a game.

3.4. Players as (Co-)Authors

The fine line between agency and interaction is emphasized by Murray's (1996) claim that "the interactor is not the author of the digital narrative, although the interactor can experience one of the most exciting aspects of artistic creation: the thrill of exerting power of enticing and plastic materials. This is not authorship but agency" (p. 153). However, some theorists have identified the player as the primary author in this interactive medium. They agree that the relationship between the game and how the game feels to the player cannot be refused; therefore, the player can also be considered a crucial author of the experience.

Poremba (2003) divides game authors into two parts: the primary author and the secondary author. She also introduces a new figure: the player-author. Poremba does not deny the existence of the primary author and accepts it as a single person or a whole team that envisions the game. Nevertheless, she says that the secondary author, the player-author, "demonstrate their agency not through the following of another creator's script, but through their authorship of artifacts" (Poremba, 2003, p. 27). According to her view, the players have various ways of interacting with the game, even going beyond what has been envisioned by the primary author(s), Jennings (2016) also believes that "unexpected forms of play may run up against author-intended functions as players carve out their own play space" (p. 136). Players are co-authors of game's interactive experiences, even though the emphasis is not about ownership but contributions like how they play and contribute to their story, their different experiences in a playthrough are just as important as the structure that sets up those experiences. Games cannot progress without the player; the narrative can only find its meaning through players' experiences and performances. Furthermore, the players have the ability to alter the development and progression of the narrative by including moddings³ to the game. As Jennings (2016) states, "game mods enable players to design their own creative tools, implement their own content changes and rule systems into extant game works, and even originate their own game works"

³ Game mods are developer-provided or player-generated toolkits that facilitate the modification of video game content.

(p.133). Game mods allow the players to put more into their favorite game as well as contributing to the company that has created the game while creating a network among other players. The player has control over interpreting the experience of the game and the meaning of its story, elements that can also alter the experience of other players and the game developers for how the company handles their games in the light of their modding community.

The studio can be known for specific genres or games with specific visual styles; the director of the game could have a distinct line of thought that should be followed, or a particular way of storytelling; finally, the interactivity of games can further expand concepts of authorship by including the player as the co-author. Poremba's view seems to accept that the creators of the games – their codes, gameplay, and more – are evident, and that within their creations, players are often given the freedom to become the authors of their own unique gaming experience. The challenge with analyzing game auteurs is that not all games have a distinct vision attributed to a singular figure, and as Pettersen (2016) suggests; "authorship should be thought of as a diffuse and distributed relationship that evolves in time" (p. 244).

3.5. Authorship in Video Game Adaptations

Video games have always been subject to the textual concerns of adaptation studies. Flanagan (2017) states that "videogames are constantly adapting from other sources and negotiating territory claims with other media. (...), videogames engage the adaptation process at all levels of their invention, programming, playtesting, marketing, and reception" (p. 5). Bringing in the theory of authorship to this always already adaptive environment creates an intriguing case. Authorship is a concern in any given video game considering the inherently collaborative medium, but new wrinkles in the discourse emerge when focusing on games that have been adapted from books, movies or other types of media.

To Elkington (2008) "videogames adapt stories and characters from sources like books, films, television shows, and comic books. In an age of conglomerated media empires and the synergistic 'convergence' of cultural properties, videogames are a

crucial medium for the active production of new experiences” (p. 7). In his article, he reviews why both films based on video games and video games based on films usually do not fare well among critics and audiences and receive hostile reception from reviewers and players (Elkington, 2008, p.214). He points to two film-to-game adaptations: one as direct adaptation, which he comments are the ones most criticized and “a second type of film/game convergence can be found in what Jenkins has called ‘transmedia storytelling,’ in which each media product contributes to an overall narrative world, suggesting that single storylines are less important than the unfolding of an entire narrative world” (Elkington, 2008, p. 220). One of Elkington’s (2008) conclusions in the relative success and failure of these adaptations is that what video game players look for in these adaptations are not the events that follow the narrative directly, but the chance to enjoy an expanded version of the narrative world via an engaged relationship with an interactive medium. While Elkington made these connections through film-to-game adaptations, these observations may also extend to other media in terms of storyworld adaptation.

In *Convergence Culture*, Jenkins (2006) argues that story worlds are increasingly more important to industry and consumers than individual, as consumers become fans of fictional characters and settings and look to the individual texts, be they films, video games, or novels, to offer further details and stories within those worlds (p. 222). So, storyworlds and how they are adapted are important, but who assumes credit for the video game adaptation? Looking at novel-to-film adaptations, Leitch (2007) considers the adapter as the auteur in cases where the adapter becomes the brand for the adaptation. Yet this assumption may not be generalizable for all adaptations, especially outside the novel-to-film paradigm. Flanagan (2017) points forward the problem videogame adaptation presents a unique set of design and discursive challenges, since when a novel or film is adapted into a videogame, adapters such as programmers, creative producers, and game designers must translate linear narratives or stable fictitious properties into quasi-ludic, player-controlled experiences (p. 443). There are no concluded discourses on who must be the author in an adapted video game still. Flanagan (2017) adds that:

As with other intermedial exchanges, the videogame adaptation process must pay particular attention to the affordances and constraints of different media.

What is gained or lost in the movement of the rules, characters, and story from the outward realm of physical game world to the relative mystery of a digital space? Can a game faithfully recreate the physical experience or canonical text it is based upon? Should it try to? (p. 444)

If a game were to be faithfully adapted, then what is the role of the source text creator? Should the creator be involved in the process at all, and if so, then to what extent? If video game adaptation is to be inspired from the narrative of the source text creator and wanted to contribute to the transmedia universe, then how might the shift in authorship be understood? This thesis intends to explore these questions in the further chapters as well.

3.6. About the Survey

To explore gamers' thoughts about these questions, a survey titled "Video Game Experiences"⁴ was conducted from April 22 – May 13, 2021. The survey consisted of 29 questions, including an invitation to participate in a further detailed interview. The survey responses peaked in its first week, and continued its momentum to reach around 200 respondents by the end of the second week, and from there only a few more were added in the last week. The questions began on a wider note, gathering general information about the participants and their gaming preferences before continuing on to a narrower set of questions. The questions did not focus entirely on adapted video games. The aim for the survey was to gather broader impressions of creative origins of video games and how players understand and assign responsibility for their creations. The set of questions were divided into four subtopics; first, general questions about the players and their preferences in video games; the second part includes questions about transmedia and adaptation; the third part relates to game creators and creative roles; lastly, the final part addresses impressions of authorship in video games and adaptations.

3.6.1. Demographics

⁴ For Video Gaming Experience Survey: Questions and Full Results see Appendix.

In the earlier parts of the survey, participants were given general questions about themselves and their preferences in video games. The recorded number of participants that took the survey is 215, but 27 of them did not complete the survey until the end. The first six questions form the demographics of the participants. The ages of the participants oscillate between the ranges 19-59 and most of the answers were accumulated in the ranges 19-31. The survey data indicated that 62.79% of the participants were male, 33.95% female, 2.79% non-binary and one respondent preferred not to answer. The participants were located all over the world: the majority, 122 participants, were from Turkey, following by the United States of America with 37 participants. Nearly all (212) participants marked their English language proficiency as higher than the average. For their preferred platforms, PC gaming dominated with 85.12%. Other preferred platforms were PlayStation home consoles, Nintendo devices, and Xbox home consoles. The very few participants that added in an 'other' selection indicated a preference for mobile (smartphone-based) gaming.

Before further analyzing participants' approach in selecting video games, the survey asks them to name two of their all-time favorite games. The results ranged from older games to recent releases, and from a variety of game genres. The most notable points to take out from these games were that most of the participants were interested in AAA games like *The Witcher*, *World of Warcraft*, *League of Legends*, and more. Some indie games like *Stardew Valley*, *Don't Starve* and *Journey* appeared frequently, however, these titles did not capture as much attention as AAA games that offer a wide range of platforms for release. Since the question reply was a short comment box, some of the participants indicated that they liked a "series" of games related to the title they wrote. Some participants preferred to also include the games' company name and even some included their preferred platform in parentheses.

What is relevant for the thesis in this question of game preference was to observe some sort of pattern or connection with the games that had been adapted from other sources. However, it seems that there isn't a clear pattern for their choices according to adaptation. The gameplay genres varied from online multiplayer like *Overwatch*, *CS: GO*, *Valorant*, to narrative games like *The Last of Us*, *God of War*. It was striking to observe so many games from franchises, and/or games that were released as series with a sequel or some sort of continuation. Some of these series were from well-

known transmedia universes, like *Star Wars* and *Lego Hobbit*; others were part of Japanese animes or mangas like *Attack of Titan*. The list also included games that were IPs⁵ and some were exclusive to specific platforms like *Bloodborne*, *Zelda* and *Animal Crossing* series.

Two further questions evaluated participants' approach to choosing a new game to try. In the first of these, the option to rank was available for several factors, but the second only allowed them to choose the *most* effective factor that they had ranked. In their selection, all of the participants ranked for the factor game genre, while slightly fewer ranked the game's narrative. Game genre and setting/environment design factors had really close weighted averages, while a game's type of gameplay placed as the first indicator for choosing a new game to try. In total, of 214 responses, 123 of the participants indicated that the type of gameplay initially strikes their attention a great deal. The responses also indicate that players generally do not look for game writers, advertisings and recent releases when initially choosing a game to play. Few respondents added new items to the ranked list, but those who did were generally concerned about game pricing and the general economical factor for the players. The players are looking for affordable games that allow for a valuable play and money balance.

⁵ IP stands for 'intellectual property'. IP is a new game that is an original game and not a spin-off or sequel of an existing game of a developer or publisher.

Q7 To what extent do these factors initially strike your attention when first choosing a new game to try?

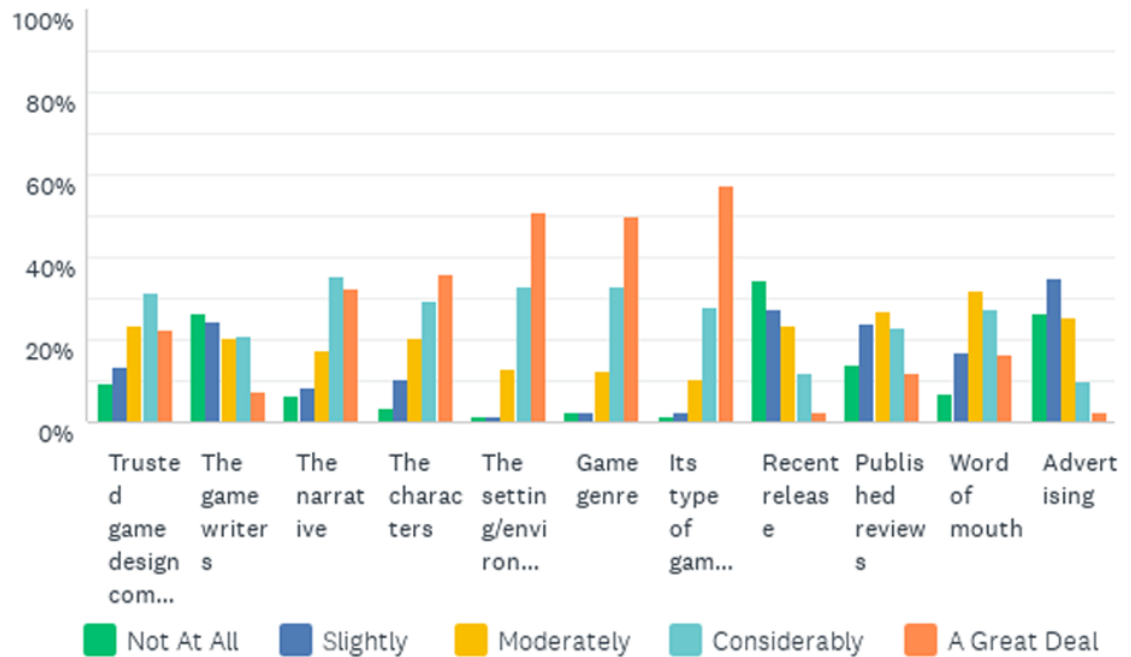


Figure 3. 1. Type of gameplay, game genre and the setting/environment design were respondents' top three factors when choosing a new game to try. - (Graph by SurveyMonkey)

The follow-up question stayed consistent with the first, as a majority of the participants chose type of gameplay as their initial preference. As it was mandatory to choose only one of the factors, the preferences changed, as game genre came in second and the narrative went up to third place. The trusted game company also scaled up one step when selecting for the most influential factor in game choice.

Q8 Of the above-listed factors, which is generally the MOST important consideration for your choices?

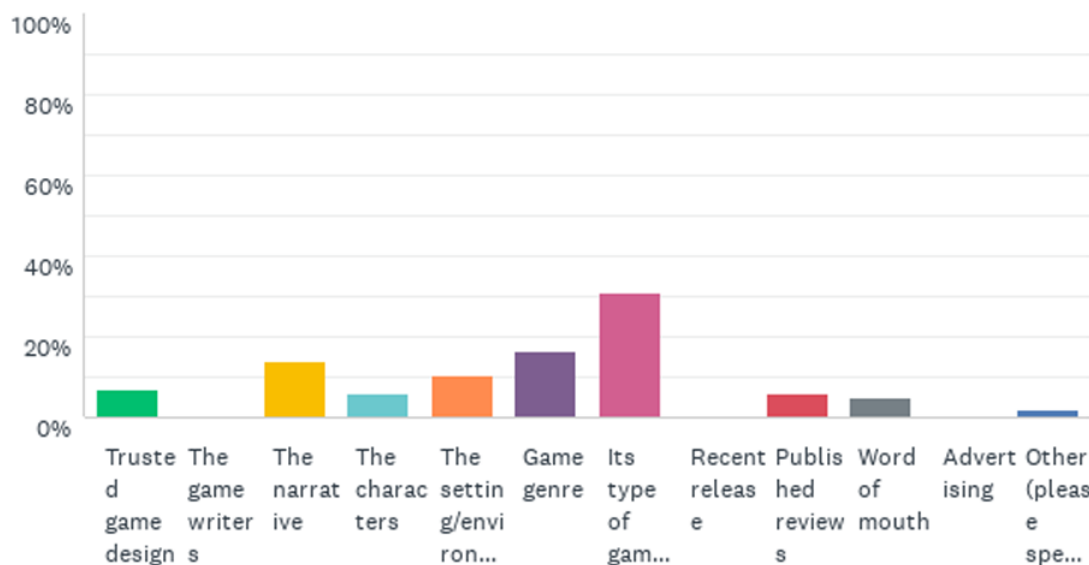


Figure 3. 2. Respondents focused even more firmly on type of gameplay as their most important consideration when choosing a new game. - (Graph by SurveyMonkey)

3.6.2. Adaptation and Transmedia

After gathering information about the participants and their approach in selecting new video games to try, the next questions concentrated upon their knowledge about the adaptive and/or transmedia status of the games they have played and are playing. A majority of the participants knew that they have played games that were adapted from other media. More participants indicated that they “Don’t Know” whether their played games were adaptations than participants who chose “No” in this category. This selection suggests that players do not really care whether the games they have played are adaptations, or that their main purpose for playing does not coincide with prior or parallel engagement with other media.

Most (160) participants who answered “Yes” for the former question went on to answer a follow-up question, the 24 respondents who answered “No” was not posed to the following question. This follow-up question aimed to determine their motivations for playing adapted video games. The majority of these participants strongly agreed that the adapted games they have played matched their preferred

genre or type of gameplay. The second highest motivation was their familiarity with the source text, or the source author and creator. The open comments indicated that such preferred games were a part of certain series, or that they liked “the television show”. A final category of responses revolved around friend recommendations or reviews. “My favorite company created the game” came as the last choice, with the most “Strongly Disagree” hits from the participants. So, players initially are not motivated by the factor of their favorite company that have created the adaptation but mostly that it was their preferred genre and gameplay or they had familiarity of the source text(s) or the source creator.

The 24 participants who claimed that they had never played a game that was adapted from other media also answered a targeted question that was different from respondents who had that experience. In this case, the question sought to understand why they have avoided adapted games. The main reason indicated that there was nothing particularly appealing about the adaptations they have seen; below this was a tie between unfamiliarity with the source text(s) and the belief that adapted games offer less enjoyment than standalone games. Some of the comments were centered around the notion of their lack of quality compared to game-based IPs, even viewing adapted games specifically as “trash”.

The next question was available for all participants. A brief introduction was added to inform that in adaptations, some aspects of the source text may or may not be crossed over to the adapted medium. Respondents could select all that applied in a list of aspect(s) they would expect to see reflected in an adapted video game: narrative/plot, characters, theme, visual aesthetics, setting and any other points that they could specify. The most chosen response was the characters and secondly, the theme of the story. The answers also showed importance on the narrative/plot; however, the least selected responses were visual aesthetics and setting, which were close to each other.

One response specified in the “other” category also calls attention to another detail that I will be touching upon in my further chapters. The participant commented that “it depends on what’s being adapted – adapting a novel directly (making a novel a game) is different from making a new game set in the word of a novel, so only some of this might apply.” The participant is conveying that for what is being adapted from

another medium, if the adaptation is a direct one, then the elements and factors to what goes in being adapted should differ from the ones that are adapted transmedially in the narrative world. Individually, the participant selected all the aspects that they expect to see. The heavily inspired adaptations or adaptations that are part of transmedia storytelling should include different aspect(s) or have a rather much flexible range for the aspects to be reflected for in an adapted video game.

A brief definition for transmedia storytelling was included in the subsequent question for which it was expected that participants comprehend its meaning and determine whether they have started playing a video game solely because it was a part of a transmedia narrative universe. Of 201 responses, the “Yes” responses were more than fifty percent of the people who have answered “No” and “Don’t Know”. Those who answered “Yes” were directed to a follow-up question to clarify which aspect of the video game most excited them. In the last chapter of this thesis, transmedia storytelling is further analyzed. In building up a narrative universe, stories from different platforms try to expand the world of the story and characters in different media platform. The initial purpose of transmedia therefore is to include the participant in the source text’s narrative universe and make them interact more within the world while expanding the story. More than a half of the answers proposed the views for the respondent’s excitement for interacting with the source text’s narrative universe by exploring to what more there is to it. Second appealing element has been chosen as the ability to engage in gameplay as a known character from the transmedia universe and the least appealing was the curiosity about the adaptation itself. It seems that the main purpose of transmedia reaches its gaming audience efficiently and that people who are part of a narrative universe in other media want to explore the depths and details of what there is and what is more to that world and the story in the games that they want to play while also having an interest for a character’s background, story or the events that they will go through.

3.6.3. Game Creator & Creative Roles

Questions subsequently focused on adaptation and transmedia in video games, to get an understanding of players’ approaches to authorship, and the next set of questions

aimed to capture their views on game creators and creative roles.

As both scholarship and popular discourse present game creators in an important role for authorship, the survey inquired whether the participants ever sought out information about the creator(s) of the games that they have enjoyed. More than half responded “Yes,” and these participants were directed to two more questions to follow up. Those who “sometimes” seek out information about the creator(s) of games that they enjoyed tend to do so using general online research. Developer or company websites are the second choice. A few respondents pointed out that the online research can consist of social media platforms as well. In relation to the first and second selection, in combination, respondents look out for information both in social media platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Steam, blogs, etc.) and/or social media platforms of the developer/company that they prefer. These two answers suggest that players look for creator information online, especially on social media platforms, and they look for game creators’ social media accounts, websites or blogs. It is interesting to see that industry recognition such as award listings were positioned at the bottom of the list. Compellingly, there is almost even split between participants who claim to have played a game solely because of who or which company created it, and those who haven’t.

The participants were asked if they have a favorite video game company or director in which resulted almost in a tie. 47.18% answered “Yes” whereas 52.82% answered “No”. The participants who answered yes were asked to select the qualities that led to their prior answer. As indicated before, the participants that have entered their favorite video game company/director out of 36 different companies the most written ones were the creators of AAA games and IPs that lined up with their favorite games named in the beginning of the survey. Game studio Blizzard took the lead, followed by Nintendo, Riot Games, Electronic Arts and Bethesda. Looking at individual creators, Hideo Kojima’s name was the most entered, with Hidetaka Miyazaki and Shigeru Miyamoto following.

The participants were asked which game(s) they have selected based on its creative team, and the creative role(s) that motivated their choice. The survey clarifies that “creative roles” is an umbrella term for, video game developers, video game

designers, video game artists, video game directors, video game writers, and other creative professionals who participate in the creation of a video game. While some respondents commented that they have never chosen games based on creative teams, others indicated that companies did have an effect on their decision. Some responses focused on caring about the gameplay, yet a majority of the respondents still noted their favorite companies and creative roles—these responses were not left blank. While some answers only noted the games or game series, others were very detailed about assigning the creative roles. Hideo Kojima has been once again the most mentioned video game director along with Shigeru Miyamoto, Josh Sawyer, Cory Barlog, and a few others. Video game writers, artists and designers were also among the selections that motivated respondents' choices in selecting the games. Yet, once again, video game companies and developers were the most popular pick. Most participants claimed that after they have played a game that they have enjoyed, they searched and played more games from the same developers while some also noted that if there is a company they know and like, they play the part of the series or other games from the same company. Participants who follow certain writers, visual artists, and level designers claim that they at least give their games a try. Most of the comments indicate that they appreciate reliability and quality of the games developed by known companies, and they are more likely to try more of their series or other games. The mentioned games and companies were in line to participants' responses of their favorite video games and companies.

The respondents were asked to select the qualities of their preferred video game company/director that have led them to their selection. Gameplay style came in first as the preferred quality with game genre that followed with less than a few votes. In sequence with character/environment design, aesthetic design and narrative design. From the earlier questions, it can be concluded that for players, gameplay and game genres hold a profound importance; in contrast, advertising plays a very small role in their game selection. Even though the continuity of the games such as sequels, prequels and DLC's appear at the bottom, it received a noticeable number of votes, which is also seen from their favorite game choices which many were consisted of franchises or appeared in a set of series. Some of the specifications also indicated their selection for curation, quality of games they produce, price and music. Marketing was seen as the least attractive option.

3.6.4. Authorship in Video Games & Adaptations

The end of the survey serves the most importance in relation to this thesis. The questions are centered around how the players perceive authorship in video games and video game adaptations.

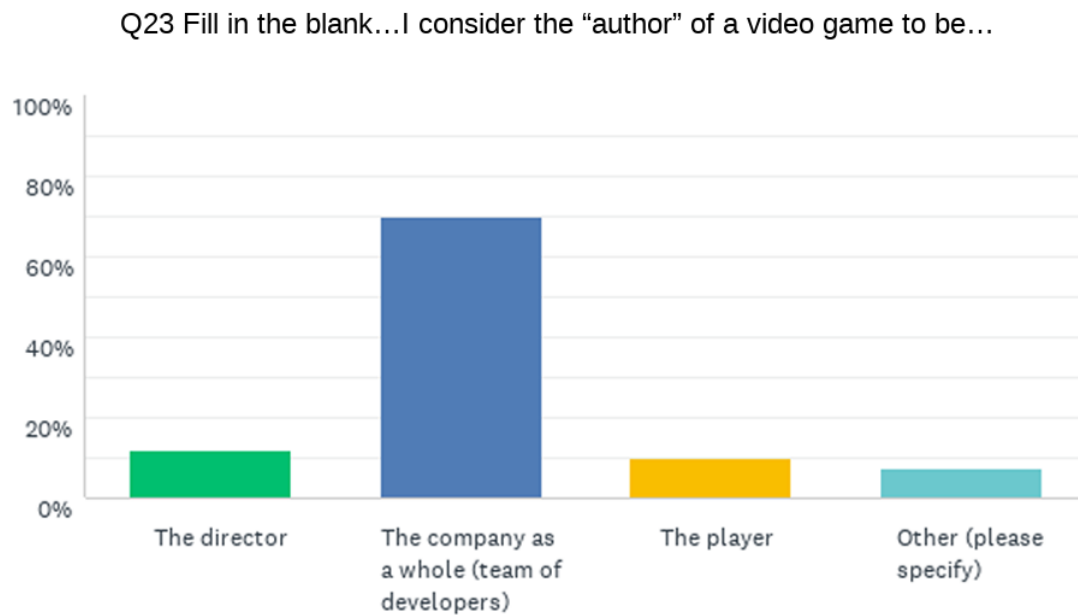


Figure 3.3. A wide majority of respondents consider the "author" of a video game to be the company as a whole. - (Graph by SurveyMonkey)

An overwhelming majority of the participants filled in the blank for the sentence "I consider the "author" of a video game to be..." as "the company as a whole (team of developers)". The two answers, the director and the player, had a very similar response rate. A variety of responses were specified in the "other" category; suggestions here include that the credit should go to the person or creative writers who wrote the story for the games; another responded that the situation depends on the games or the studio, but that most often the team should take the credit even if the game director often play a pivotal role. One indicated that there should be a symbiotic relationship between developers and audience, whereas another pointed out that leaving most of the decisions in a narrative game to the player to act as the author is often overwhelming and tiresome. They think that in order to enjoy the game, directors and the developer team should take the wheels to let the player focus on the

gameplay instead of making the player write the story. One comment stated that there is a distributed/collaborative authorship that includes all stakeholders described above.

For the search for the “author” in adapted video games, most of the respondents claimed that both the source text creator (from another medium) and the video game company deserve to share the primary credit as the “author” of the video game. The second most common response credits only the video game team (writers, coders, developers, etc.), and after that comes solely the source text creator. The lowest number of responses went to the video game company, “depends on the game,” and last of all was the video game director. For the people who have explained why it depends on the game the main reason depends on how much comes from the source text: if the game directly adapts its source elements, then the source author should be granted authorship status; if the source elements have inspired a new scenario, then both of them should be accepted as the author; finally, if the adaptation is only based on the source text’s universe, but does not take more specific narrative or other elements from its source, then the creative team becomes the author.

Q24 If a story is adapted from one medium to another (ex. a novel to a video game) who deserves primary credit as the “author” of the video game?

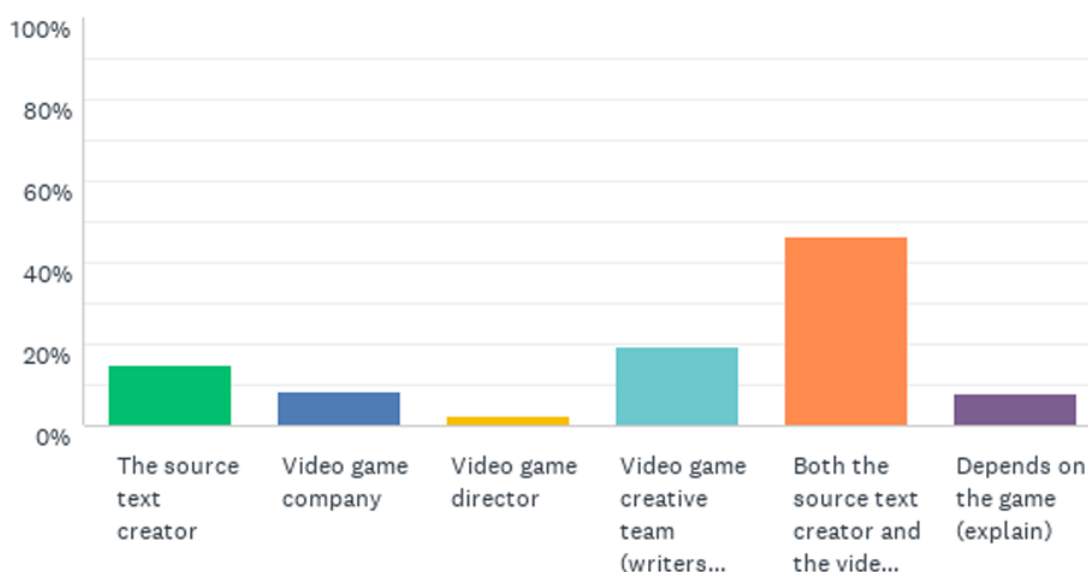


Figure 3. 4. Nearly half of respondents' split the primary credit as the “author” of the video game adaptation between the source text creator and the video game company. - (Graph by SurveyMonkey)

In addition to two questions mentioned above which give a crucial idea about what players think in terms of authorship in video games and video game adaptations, the next set of questions also aims to uncover their thoughts about the process of making these video game adaptations. Majority of the respondents replied that in video game adaptations, they would generally expect that the source text creator(s), if they are alive and still active, to be involved. The number of people who have answered “No” and “Don’t Know” is a tie. Subsequently, an extensive group of respondents think that the author of the source text *must* be involved in the process of the video game adaptation. In the last chapter of this thesis, a case study is used to analyze how the author should be optimally positioned in adaptations and transmedia adaptations. To add, many of the participants were “undecided” whether it would be concerning if a video game adaptation does not have fidelity to the source text or not, and the weighted average falls between “Not at all concerning” and “Slightly concerning”.

Q25 In video game adaptations, (ex. a novel to a video game), would you generally expect that the source text creator(s), if they are alive and still active, also be involved in making the video game adaptation?

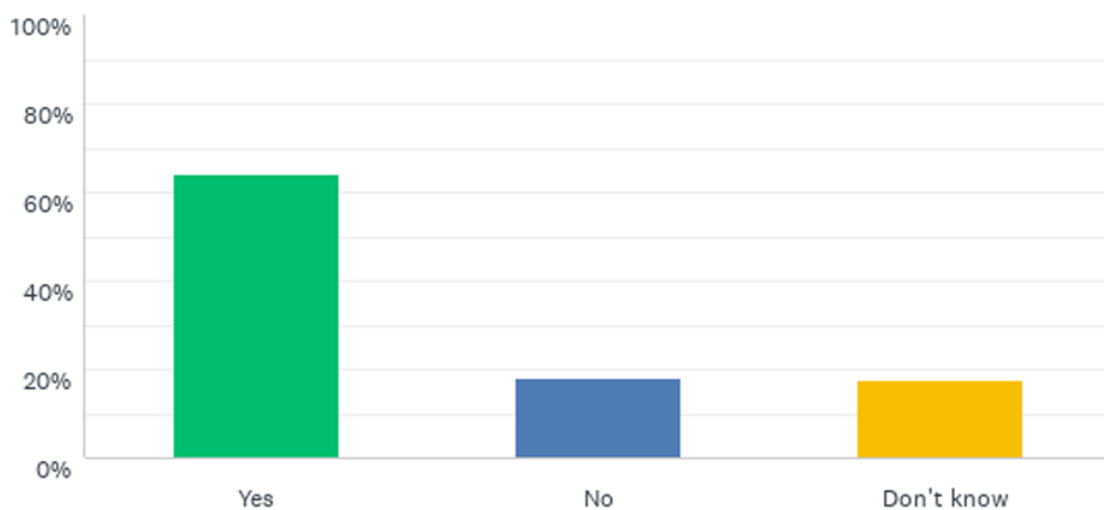


Figure 3. 5. A significant majority of respondents generally expect the source text creator(s) to be involved in the making of the video game adaptation. - (Graph by SurveyMonkey)

108 people have commented on the open-ended question which brings in a set of different opinions about whether authorship depends on the kind of text being adapted in order for the author of the source text to be involved in the game-making

process or not. Just a handful of people did not know the answer and the participants' who answered "No" outnumbering the ones who selected "Yes" as their answer. The participants that answered "No" made some additional comments justifying their view, most of the answers pointed out that the author should be involved regardless and that the story/idea belongs to the author. Even if the author is not involved one hundred percent, they should always at least be consulted to keep the coherency and consistency of the existing universe/characters or that they should be credited moreover, the author of the source text always has the right to have a say in all adaptations because the adaptations should be true to the author's vision. Some people who did not answer "Yes" also commented that it was dependent on the project. The first concern was that in the comments it has been stated that the authorship depends primarily on the deal made between the game company and the author and it depends on how much the author wishes to be involved and if the story is canon. Another concern was the fidelity. The participants commented that it depended on how faithful the adaptation is, and that the 'amount' of credit they should get depends on the amount of creative license that is granted/assumed by the game developer team to expand the world/narrative/characters. If the game is expected to have a higher fidelity, than the author is expected to have a high rate of involvement. The survey did not address cases where the author has died or is no longer actively writing/publishing. The case of the absent author is examined through the Lovecraft case study in Chapter 4.

3.7. Implications of the Results

While a controversial way of critiquing texts and determining their social value, *auteurism* is still being discussed today in film, where the approach took shape, and has expanded its reach into other categories of cultural production, including video games. Although it seems that film and video games are similarly collective in their creation, games' interactivity introduces different approaches to *auteurism* and theories of authorship. Therefore, the lens of authorship discourse in video game adaptations should be extended to the views of gamers themselves. Scholarly and popular discourse offer divergent views on the application of the auteur theory in video games.

Theoretical discourse on video game authorship branches into three main points: corporate/studio as the author, video game director as the author, and the player as the author. The corporate/studio author theory emphasizes the structure of games as collaborative products, crediting all of the people who have contributed to the production of a video game under the corporate name as the designated “author” of the work. However, like the Cahiers critics’ model of *auteurism*, other game theorists emphasize that a certain creative role can enforce a singular vision despite the industry’s generally collaborative structure. While many contributors are involved in the making of the game, but the end-decision is passed through a certain person, who is generally the video game director or designer, and this person has the last say. Lastly, some theorists accept the player as the author of the game, as their role in creating their own experiences makes every game and each successive gameplay unique. Some theorists consider players as co-authors, as they also accept the idea that a certain creative role envisions and builds the game accordingly. More so, players contribute to their game experiences and experiences of others as well as contributing to the game creator with certain tools and additions and alterations to the game like mods which make them more than co-authors.

These different examinations of authorship in gaming are compounded by the presence of adaptations. There is an opposition to which the source text creator is the author in both parts or the author becomes the adapter in the way or the amount that they adapt from the source text into a different medium. Fidelity is also another important element that is related to this concern. Whether the adaptation stays wholly true to the source text or is a transmedia adaptation, the authorship changes direction. Either way, the source text creator should also be given credit.

With the aid of the original survey that I have created for video game players, some conclusions can be made about players’ own views and experiences. The respondents’ list of favorite games are mostly AAA games, and smaller, indie games are less frequently cited as favorites. The gameplay type is the most attractive element for the players when choosing a new game. Most have played games that were adapted from other media, motivated less by the source text than by the adapted game’s genre and/or type of gameplay. But respondents who have played adapted games indicated

at least basic familiarity with adapted games' source text(s) and/or the source author/creator. The last choice for their motivation consisted the game company that created the game. The participants that did not play adapted video games have responded that there was nothing particularly appealing about the adaptations that they have seen, some also stated that they were unfamiliar with the source text(s) – familiarity is a factor (but not the top factor) in selecting an adapted game, and unfamiliarity acts as a deterrent. Respondents have selected characters as their primary aspect expected to be reflected in an adapted video game following up with the theme and narrative. Most respondents claimed that they have played a certain video game because it was a part of a transmedia narrative universe because they were interested in the aspect of the ability to interact with the source text's narrative universe, echoing Elkington's (2008) view of what players expect from adapted video games.

Very few people answered that they did not know or did not start playing any video games because it was a part of a transmedia universe; this is highly important because people are recognizing what transmedia brings in gradually over time. Especially for the gaming industry it is evident that players are aware of the growing storyworlds and want to be a part of it. Players that are familiar with the source text(s) and/or the source creator want to take part because they want to figure out more but they mostly lean towards transmedia adaptations in games because of the appeal of playing in a world that they are already familiar with. So, transmedia adaptations that want to expand to the video game field should be confident in finding players that recognize the narratives. Then it is the job of the gaming companies to take this into consider, players' care for their experience in the gameplay. As this is not surprising since it is the unique elements of video games, the games that become part of the transmedia should initially put effort into adapting the story into the gameplay and keeping the world's genre aligned with the game genre.

Even though the discourse of authorship in video games puts the game creators in a important role, many of the participants who have agreed to seek out information about the creator(s) of the games had a low frequency in doing so. Since the most research is done online, social media should play an important role in showing the

game creators' presence and should show their effort in creating something worth for their players.

Interestingly, participants split even in their claim to have played a game solely because of who or which company created it, and those who haven't. To connect this with the initial results in the discourse, it is surprising to see how players' initial choice is not shaped by the name of the company. In a follow up, respondents who were asked whether they had a favorite video game company or director was also split between the choices yes and no. While authorship discourse has existed for so many years and has been a regular subject of academic critique of video games and gaming as Ludologists propose, player survey presented here indicates that the experience of the gameplay is rather more important than the name of a developer that is associated with a game. The players as stated previously are more interested in the quality or uniqueness of the gameplay (and secondly the game genre) and do not often choose their games according to the game creator. The creators they do select are strongly associated with specific gameplay styles and game genres, which are the most important qualities for them regardless of the video game company/director behind those styles and genres.

The question that allowed the players to select the "author" of a video game clearly indicates that players generally consider this status to belong collectively to the team of developers and the company as a whole. However, some respondents indicated also that this assignment could change according to the company/case under. This is not to say that the theoretical discourse about video gaming that would grant "author" status to players or directors is wrong, but the survey results make it evident that players overwhelmingly accept the company as a whole as the author. This may seem contradictory to the participants' indication that they did not have a favorite video game company nor they have played a certain video game because of a company's name. This can indicate that corporate authorship is not effective in the minds of players as an incentive for play, yet still, Ashcraft's (2010) Studio Auteur seems the closest reflection of the players' choices. Players also overwhelmingly do not want to claim any authorship for themselves, even suggesting that too much control would ruin the gameplay. This result also seems to be in line with Murray's (1997) view that agency does not always equal authorship and that game mechanics and rules are

created by the game designers which players can readily recognize as authorship.

According to the players, authorship in the case of adapted video games does not depend on the kind of text being adapted. But a majority of the participants expect the source text creator(s), if they are alive and still active, to be involved in the making of the video game adaptation and most agreed that the author of the source text must be involved in the process of the video game adaptation. This is the case even though many respondents do not have a high concern about the fidelity of a video game adaptation. These combined results suggest indicated that all authorship demands both recognition and involvement (of some kind) and game companies should take care to at least consult the source author to keep the consistency of their created world.

Players want to see the source text creator to be involved in the adaptation process- meaning that source text authors and authorship is an expected part of authorship discourse for adapted video games -therefore it would be wise for game companies to use this finding to their advantage. Also, players care to see familiar characters reflected in the adapted video game. The players want to be a part of a familiar world through the characters that were there or they want to play as them to feel more interconnected.

Through the use of data gathered from the survey, two very distinctive approaches to how theorists and players view this issue becomes clearer. Even though it seems that players do not think about authorship as much game theorists, and they understand that games come from a collaborative human effort that brings specific people together to form creative teams that work on behalf of a known company. However, when adaptation comes into the equation, players have different opinions about how authorship can be assigned and respected in the process of adaptation. This survey serves an important case in showing the different values of an adaptation-centered approach to games and the question of authorship in gaming from the discourse and the players.

CHAPTER 4: NOTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP: LOVECRAFT

Howard Phillips Lovecraft's work has managed to spread his work across different media despite his controversial reputation involving his xenophobia and racism. His work has taken inspiration from Gothic horror to present itself as something unique and memorable. In this chapter, my aim is to show how H. P. Lovecraft's work has been adapted in video games and how it managed to create a horror genre of its own through linking games with direct adaptations and highly inspired works which are considered to be a part of the Lovecraftian genre. Focusing on *Conarium* (2017), *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005), *Darkest Dungeon* (2015) and *Bloodborne* (2015), the chapter aims to draw a connection between Lovecraft's authorship in video games in regard to adaptation and the marketing use of the author.

Lovecraftian narrative has been carried into many other media his characters and ideas have become deeply embedded in popular culture. Over fifteen films have been based on H. P. Lovecraft's writings. The latest one *Color Out of Space* (2020) directed by Richard Stanley has opened possibilities in crafting the beginning of the Lovecraft cinematic universe⁶. Lovecraftian themes have also been used in board games, roleplaying games and card games with precursors such as *Arkham Horror* (1987) and *Call of Cthulhu: Card Game* (2004). His works have also inspired comics, arts, music, and television series which share important contributions of his work into the different media.

4.1. Video Games, Transmedia Adaptation, & Authorship Discourse

The theory that the authorship discourse allows in Lovecraft's case, especially for video games, is how his initial authorship, which dates to his writings from the early 20th century, has produced a unique genre that bears his name. If there is a space to apply this auteur theory to Lovecraft's authorship, it can be said that the Lovecraftian

⁶ Richard Stanley is building his own Lovecraft cinematic universe starting with *Color Out of Space*, and confirms that it will continue with SpectreVision with the film *The Dunwich Horror*. <https://collider.com/lovecraft-movie-universe-richard-stanley/>

genre has led Lovecraft to become an auteur in his own genre, even in media that he himself would not have been able to create.

Lovecraft's case exemplifies how a genre can be defined by its central source author. Leitch (2007) in his article "Adapter as Auteur", refers to Disney's journey on becoming an auteur from being an adapter as a studio. "As [Walt] Disney's direct involvement in his properties had diminished, the imperialistic power of his status as auteur had steadily increased, (...)" (p. 255) and looks at other cases in film, like Alfred Hitchcock, where the filmmakers' cultural clout readily eclipses and/or appropriates the source material under an auteur-adapter brand. Leitch's approach to Disney's transformation, can be almost reserved to account for Lovecraft's story world becoming a genre labeled "Lovecraftian": in this case, the connection to the literary and cultural source overpowers the claim to authorship that the adapter(s) might otherwise make. Lovecraftian genre has become widely known not because Lovecraft started as an adapter, but rather because his work has been so readily adaptable in various media forms. The concern is how adapting an already established author into the video gaming medium might go against the generally anti-auteurist trend of the games industry to form an auteurist (or at least an author-identified) genre that brings in their features and unique aesthetics. Leitch (2007) states that "auteurs of this sort are made, not born; they emerge victorious in battle with competing auteurs, whether writers, producers, or stars; and their authorial stamp is less closely connected with original creation than with brand name consistency and reliability, (...)" (p. 255). In Lovecraftian adaptation, as with other author-identified genre categories, the "brand name" almost never belongs to the adapters, but rather to the author whose name categorizes their adaptation.

The "Lovecraftian" case is not only interesting for adaptation studies, but it is also a useful case for authorship studies as there aren't many authors that have become a genre of their own – though a recognizable adjective is a good sign that this has happened: Shakespeare/Shakespearean, Kafka/Kafkaesque. I want to analyze this particular authorial relationship in the context of video games looking at examples from the genre to discover what "Lovecraftian" means, and how it has been adapted to video games. The video game types can be categorized as either direct adaptations of Lovecraft's short stories or adaptations that are heavily inspired by his work, -and

these different inter- and paratextual connections are interpellated differently by companies making and marketing Lovecraftian games.

Video games emphasize narrative, play and visual experience, helping the player play with their instincts and have a wide range of interactivity not only just in a physical way. The player uses both cognitive and emotional senses to enhance their experience and deepen their immersion. These many experiences create and engage with many emotions and cognitive abilities. Games can also be used as a marketing tool, or are used to be a part of a transmedia. Flanagan (2016) indicates that "videogames are their own unique object of study, but they inevitably are other things to other people in other fields, and they invariably interact with other media and rise to the challenges presented by different forms and designations " (p. 2). In video game adaptations, this immersion and interactivity must be applied in a careful manner to create the most positive feedback from the audience. This makes video games ripe for analysis as adaptive texts; Whelehan and Cartmell (1999) propose that studying "cross-fertilization and exchange, in different media, different contexts, and different takes on the same material should be central to the practice of adaptation studies" (p.19).

The "always already adaptive" nature of video games as a medium makes them a staple of transmedia world-building and marketing, and adapted videogames "provide something of a site for textual gymnastics, where adaptation becomes a widely generative way of approaching the multi-tiered, elusive, and pleasingly mercurial process of playing" (Flanagan, 2017). It has now become more and more difficult but also more tempting to look for the author in digital media where convergence aligns with mediums such as video games. There seems to be an unconcluded discourse on the subject in video games, not only about who should be seen as the author but also if there should be any value at all in determining authorship. Lovecraft, as the author, did not intend to create nor could he ever have known that such adaptations would be created from his work. The Lovecraftian genre and the unique properties that belong to authorial tradition while exploring a medium where understandings of authorship lack a dominant consensus position.

Video games' collaborative creation not only complicates the search for an author, but the need to include a player in this equation also confounds the medium's relationship to the model of authorship discourse grounded in film studies (Pettersen 2016, p. 228). Even though video games are visual like cinema, they also require a high level of interactivity which compels these challenges. In such collaborative medium, the application of how they will use the Lovecraftian genre elements in the game is up to the developers themselves. However, as a selling point in using the genre name as Lovecraftian, the name of the author is one of the reasons why the players are interested. For directly adapted games, the search for fidelity may surface: however, when considering loose or "inspired-by" adaptations, it is wholly up to the developers and designers to best give the feel of the Lovecraftian elements to fulfill the players' expectations. Krzywinska (2009) adds that "while identification of divergence across media is certainly enlightening, and indeed might well aid in the process of identifying what is new and exciting about video game media, it is nonetheless important not to ignore characteristics that might be shared or similar across a given franchise" (p. 267). Lovecraft's storyworld was not initially built on franchise logic, therefore it is even more fascinating to observe how recognizable Lovecraftian elements have become as a genre.

4.1.1.1. H. P. Lovecraft & Lovecraftian Genre

"The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown."
- H. P. Lovecraft

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, an American writer who lived between 1890 and 1937, has influenced the horror genre with the stories and novellas that he has written. After his death, his work collectively has become known as the Cthulhu Mythos. As notably reflected in his stories, Lovecraft had a very unfortunate life. Oftentimes, his stories were inspired by the unfortunate events that occurred throughout his life, or they reflect his mental state, which never seemed to have been stable. Lovecraft had terrific endless nightmares after the deaths of close members of his family and coped with severe depression. Lovecraft adored classic literature and English poetry, the American Edgar Allen Poe, another great gothic writer, was an influence for many of

his works as well.

Reflecting gothic aesthetics on his work, Lovecraft was also highly interested in astronomy, biology and geometry. His interest in these areas is also reflected in his storyworld. As a result of exploring and being immersed in the scientific areas, Lovecraft understood humanity as just a small spectrum in a much bigger universe. Expanding on his view of being a smaller portion of a constructed scheme, his philosophical views shifted to cosmicism. Cosmicism is the weird fiction element abundantly used in H. P. Lovecraft's stories which centers on the insignificance of humankind. Lovecraft's cosmic indifferentism is his signature approach, and what separates him from various gothic horror authors. Combining these elements and the influences in his life resulted in pessimistic and rather dark views. His new approach to the already existing horror genre laid the foundations of modern horror, whose most direct successors to form a subgenre that bears his name, "Lovecraftian".

Despite a clearly difficult life, Lovecraft is not entirely sympathetic figure; he is aspp notorious for his racism and xenophobia. His views have been difficult on horror and fantasy creators and fans as they cannot be ignored in the stories that he has created. The creatures or cults that emerge in Lovecraft's stories are ultimately xenophobic creations. Even though in his last years he admitted having been such a horrible person due to his racist perceptions, he has not been forgiven for his bigoted ideas that also have immensely reflected on his work. As House (2017) claims, he sympathized with rising fascism, and held contempt for Black and Jewish people. As most of his world-building reflects on his depression and harsh life that brings the anxieties and fear that come with being an outsider, his character and creature preferences, other than the privileged protagonist, would condescend to people of color and call forth on white supremacist views. His own personal prejudices had affected the stories he told. It is unavoidable to recognize them in his work.

Yet, particularly since Lovecraft's death, thanks to the contributions of different authors that had expanded his stories, the rich world he created outlived and outgrew many of his personal prejudices. "[Lovecraft's] relatively small body of work has influenced countless imitators and formed the basis of a world-wide industry of books, games and movies based on his concepts and imagination" (Jones, 2011, p.

494). Lovecraft's bigoted views should not be ignored, but his important contributions that have affected the literary and visual media cannot be overlooked. Leavenworth (2014) comments that "the Lovecraft storyworld's allure, transmedial adaptability, and cultural impact assert the value of organic and thematic storyworld growth for contemporary audiences and producers" (p. 347).

Across all media platforms, the genre of Lovecraftian horror shares several key characteristics. Cosmic Horror encapsulates the eerie pull of the unknown and the incomprehensible, its horror primarily evoked not through gory details of physical violence, but rather in the psychic effects of confronting the supernatural. Through numerous references to the 'Great Old Ones' -- deities that are incomprehensible for mankind in part due to their sheer enormity -- Lovecraft insists on the insignificance and powerlessness of humanity. When an ordinary protagonist encounters a cosmic deity, the result is fainting, death, or madness, as Lovecraft considers sanity to be fragile and dependent on sustained ignorance. Gentry (2011) implies that "The Awful Truth is not how gross and slimy the monster is, but what the very existence of that monster implies. There runs through much of Lovecraft's work a theme of cosmic nihilism—the sense that the universe is so vast and impersonal, and humankind's place in it so insignificant, that to confront living, breathing proof of it is to go mad" (pg. 134). The sense he created that is provoked by the 'unknown'. The stories that surface the recognized horror do not depend on the gore but rather remark what is unknown and the interpretations beyond the created story elements. Involvement of the supernatural, pre-human and the extraterrestrial elements are distinguishable. When an ordinary protagonist happens to encounter one of these deities, then this mainly result in fainting, death or madness. Madness is also another key element that makes up a part of the Lovecraftian genre as sanity for the ordinary is something to be vulnerable and fragile. At the beginning of *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), Lovecraft summarizes the combination of both of these elements that share a big part of his narrative universe:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of blackseas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have

hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (p. 9).

The Call of Cthulhu (1926) established the Cthulhu Mythos. The Cthulhu Mythos which has been formed from Lovecraft's stories by his successors and contemporaries was not created with a purpose to have become such a huge contribution to popular culture. August Derleth, who was Lovecraft's close friend and assisted him in publishing his literary works, was the first person to continue expanding Lovecraft's storyworld. Joshi (2007) centralized four core elements that are traceable in The Cthulhu Mythos:

- (1) a vitally realized but largely imaginary New England topography;
- (2) an ever-growing library of occult books, both ancient and modern [...];
- (3) the "gods," their human followers, and their monstrous "minions" or acolytes; and (4) a sense of the cosmic, both spatial and temporal, that often links the Mythos more firmly with science fiction than with the supernatural. (p. 99)

An adapted Lovecraftian work may or may not include all of Joshi's identified elements of the Cthulhu Mythos, but it is useful to search for at least one that would be included in a video games' narrative, gameplay and/or aesthetics. Leavenworth (2014) indicates that "in the Lovecraft storyworld, recurring scenarios feature human characters in realistic settings who discover coexisting cosmic realities and the unspeakably scary beings that inhabit them" (p. 333). This indication is the most prominent in Lovecraft's cosmic natural scientific framework. The unnatural and uncanny events or entities in the stories are a part of the cosmic indifferentism, and the never-ending search for these entities evokes the feeling of curiosity. The stories are mostly written in a first-person narration, which strengthens the literary immersion while also lending adaptability to the video game genre, where the player occupies the role of the first-person in control of the narration/gameplay. The characters are always

conflicted between curiosity and fear, afraid of yet fascinated by such natural phenomena yet to be discovered. The fear of the unknown and the result in finding such unimaginable entities often result in the characters' madness. "These realities appear to rupture natural laws and cannot be conceived of by human minds, and so the encounters produce terror, eternal unease, and/or mental instability in the protagonists. The characters are left with a sense of the insignificance of humanity in the cosmos. These unifying elements provide the thematic foundation of the Lovecraft storyworld's worldness— namely, its logical consistency" (Leavenworth, p. 333).

Lovecraft's logical consistency across many different stories has allowed his cosmic world to become bigger, even without him around to personally direct or shape its growth. The stories were not intended to have characters that were persistent and rememberable, but his intention to look at humankind as insignificant beings has made The Cthulhu Mythos adaptable and expandable for his successors. Even though a lot of challenges occur in remediating the Lovecraftian genre, the genre has managed to expand for many other media due to its high transmedial adaptability.

The genre and the descriptor Lovecraftian can refer to more than "how" a medium presents itself; it also may be considered as a "why"? The cosmic horror associated with the author's name can also be used as a "tacit contract" as Oates (2000) mentions as a marketing strategy to attract people familiar with his universe whether or not they are familiar with his literary *oeuvre*. Video games need to be marketed in a correct way to attract people who identify as gamers and/or as fans of Lovecraft and his universe. In gaming, horror has become a staple genre of production, promotion, and play, and the Lovecraftian subgenre focuses on showing through interactive gameplay the psychological horrors of hopelessness, self-delusion, cognitive dissonance, or madness. While visual gore and jump scares are part of the broader horror genre and therefore not out of place in Lovecraftian games, the source of their fear is different from what a slasher horror game might deliver. "From this perspective, Lovecraftian horror can be ideally suited to the genre of interactive fiction, because the player of the game and the protagonist in the game mirror each other in their goals" (Gentry, 2011, p. 130). What has now shown of a "Lovecraftian" genre, grabs the attention of other individuals that are from other media. The people now who have read the source material and know the elements to Lovecraftian storytelling, would migrate into the

new media expecting some core materials by the author. With this, it is a very simple way of video games to advertise their games by categorizing it under what is already familiar and expected. In this way, the Lovecraftian genre borrows from auteurism as a way of defining, recognizing and contributing to this unique genre, even in a medium that is not usually organized usefully through individual authorship.

The Lovecraft name, as Joshi's analysis suggests, comes with a specified aesthetic rubric that helps identify the Lovecraftian in non-literary media. Stobart (2019) emphasizes that "H. P. Lovecraft's influence on horror cannot be overstated. The themes he created for his horror fiction have found their way into many media, both explicitly, through adaptation, but also more subtly, where a Lovecraftian element may be alluded to, or even as an aesthetic layer to a video game" (p. 32). The aesthetic layer of cosmic horror in horror games is intertwined with the atmosphere and theme of the game. Most often, the dark representation of the Victorian era, the cold and desolated town imagery and weird-looking entities are considered to be included in this aesthetic layer when combined with the cosmic atmosphere of the game. The cosmic aesthetic is more composed of abstract scenarios and entities that are beyond comprehension. The visuals mostly want to entice the player into exploring an unknown place with unfamiliar settings that creates a sensation of visible or non-visible entities surrounding them.

Leavenworth (2014) points out Klasturp and Tosca's three core features that define a transmedial world's worldness; *topos*, *ethos* and *mythos*. To him, works that contribute to the Lovecraft storyworld may or may not employ commonly used settings (*topos*) and follow the few rules of character conduct that exist (*ethos*), but they always engage with the theme of humanity's troubling contact with a cosmic reality (*mythos*)" (p. 333). Lovecraftian horror mythos is composed of a cosmology he created with centralized themes of cosmic horror, including ancient, unknowable, and malevolent gods. The overwhelming sense of sheer hopeless terror of the unknown combines with visceral descriptions of omnipresent rot and decay. This is still relatable and contemporary as the 'unknown' changes with social and scientific developments that can be narrated through today's events and developments as well as in historical settings. Lovecraft's stories were often from a first-person point of view which creates an easier translation for first-person video games. Gentry (2011)

states that in horror games, an identity given to the main protagonist that the player can connect with is important, as are this character's motivations and thoughts, and feelings in response to the events in the game (p. 131). In the first-person perspective, the events are also related to the interpretations of the protagonist and it is easier to follow through in the protagonist's mind. Lovecraft's stories also did not include many characters, which may have both positive and negative effects for adaptation depending on the target medium.

4.1.2. Lovecraftian Gaming

Video games also aim to create a sense of achievement, often through beating a seemingly undefeatable boss to conclude the level and/or the game. While the creatures adapted for gameplay from Lovecraft's stories are often beatable, thereby giving the player a sense of closure, such neat conclusions are not totally true to Lovecraftian themes. Monsters are not the point of Lovecraftian cosmic horror; rather, what's important is the indifference of humanity and humankind's unimportance in the universe.

There are several video games that announce themselves as direct adaptations of Lovecraft's short stories and novellas. *Conarium* (2017) and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005) adapt, respectively, Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (1936). The overt declaration of adaptation can create certain expectations for the player in terms of narrative trajectory, specific creatures, setting, and aesthetics. Both of the games aim to evoke the Lovecraftian cosmic horror by staying as true as possible to the narrative as Lovecraft himself wrote it, and in both games, as Gentry (2011) proposes, "the protagonist—and by extension the player—should want not to get out, but to go deeper" (p. 131). Yet not necessary to achieve a level of alignment with Lovecraftian horror on par with that seen in *Conarium* and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* in order to be recognized as Lovecraftian; indeed, Leitch's (2007) notion of "extreme fidelity" seems to have little influence in the Lovecraftian universe. Other, highly inspired games draw out elements of Lovecraft's storyworld with identifiably Lovecraftian references or "derive from the original blueprint narratives," yet lack the

thematic thrust of his writing (Leavenworth, 2014, p. 333). Adapting in this more indirect mode, the games *Darkest Dungeon* (2015) and *Bloodborne* (2015) represent Lovecraftian ideas through narrative and game mechanics but have no identifiable source text in Lovecraft's *oeuvre*.

To begin with the indirect adaptations, all four of Joshi's elements of the Cthulhu Mythos are present in both *Darkest Dungeon* and *Bloodborne*, both of which are set in a xenophobic, Victorian-era town. *Darkest Dungeon* (2015) is developed by indie game developer Red Hook Studios, a name that itself alludes to Lovecraft's *The Horror at Red Hook*. Unlike the other games in this chapter, *Darkest Dungeon* is a rogue-like, turn-based role-playing game (RPG) in which the player-character, who is from a noble family, returns to an inherited estate to uncover the secrets in the mansion's catacombs and dungeons. Unraveling mysteries, gathering knowledge in a mysterious environment, and receiving a legacy are all recognized Lovecraftian tropes, and in *Darkest Dungeon* further details are revealed by progressing through the game and finding different objects. The hamlet where the characters queue before entering the depths of the dungeons resembles the one described in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. The Victorian era is evoked in the architecture, its northern wetland geography in its misty atmosphere. While it differs in its play structure, *Bloodborne* (2015) is an action role-playing game (RPG), and it shares the same Victorian style and setting: deserted roads lined with gothic-styled buildings and houses; gas lights; clothing such as top hats.

Following Joshi's second point about ancient and modern books, in *Darkest Dungeon*, the titular dungeons contain piles of books, described as a "stack of literary treasures" that can appear in unlikely locations. By reading them, a character can gain a positive trait, whereas if they read an unsettling passage their level of stress increases; if, instead, they use their torch to burn the books, the game warns that the player must bear the guilt of destroying knowledge and punish them with a higher chance of stress increase. As books and knowledge are important in Lovecraft's novellas, *Darkest Dungeon* integrates interactions with books into its gameplay. In *Bloodborne*, too, the character passes countless libraries filled with books, which themselves are filled with notes. While in both games, the content of the books is not explicit, they create an element of lore as Joshi's analysis indicates.

Bloodborne presents dark designs for humanity and earth, which are slowly discovered by defeating creatures and uncovering mysteries related to past events in a place called Yharnam. *Bloodborne* alludes to Lovecraftian creatures, and in the end the player must confront their own pointlessness in the incomprehensibly grand scheme of the universe. The whole game is about looking too far into the forbidden cosmic truth to become one with the elder gods, only to discover that humans were never meant for such greatness.

Following Joshi's four core elements of The Cthulhu Mythos, the game links a sense of visceral unease with the capacity to unravel, over the course of the game, the events that condemned the town. The game presents lore, books, scrolls, tombstones, and different pieces of evidence about the town's story and the interconnections in its history. "The written record," Gentry (2011) states, "is the protagonist's primary link to what is really going on, and it is the most important segment of the Lovecraftian quest" (pg. 132). While *Bloodborne* does not force the player to read or learn more – because wanting to make sense of things goes against the central notions of cosmic horror – this reticence must be constantly balanced against the will to explore with immense curiosity. The exploratory phase of the Lovecraftian game is therefore crucial: "Lovecraft wrote leisurely stories; the evil is always something that occurred in the past, and now lies dormant and deeply buried. Perhaps the player will awaken it once more, inadvertently (but, of course, inevitably), but give her time to explore first" (Gentry, 2011, pg. 132).

The game bosses in *Bloodborne* are often huge and hard or impossible to beat in just one go. Such multiphasic confrontations contradict Lovecraft's singular confrontations with cosmic horror, but *Bloodborne* has cleverly sought to resolve this conflict. The game refers to its monsters as 'Great Ones,' and sanity is quantified through collectible points called 'insight' that, as they accumulate, can reveal new information: "When the player reaches a specific Insight level, some NPCs or enemies might no longer be present, the sky and moon may change color, the player may start hearing different sounds (such as a crying baby and mysterious whispering), or enemies' attack patterns may change" (Saed, 2015). By gaining knowledge, the character starts realizing that entities surrounded the setting, and unnatural

occurrences are taking place. If a character holds a great deal of Insight, they are also prone to “Frenzy,” which is a mechanic in the game that slowly decreases the level of health points. This represents Lovecraftian madness, in which the protagonists are slowly corrupted as they cannot resist their curiosity for forbidden knowledge. *Bloodborne*’s mythos closely relates with Lovecraft’s in its feeling of isolation and other-worldly horror. The game’s safe zone is called the ‘Hunter’s Dream,’ which alludes to Lovecraft’s stories, and its DLC⁷ ‘The Old Hunters’ takes place in a corrupt fishing town, filled with fish-human creatures like the ones in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. Killing these entities is not what the game is about, but rather how defeating them helps uncover their secrets by coming across dream worlds and other-worldly creatures.



Figure 4. 1. *Bloodborne* in-game image, showing a typically Lovecraftian setting and mood- <https://hardcoregamer.com/features/articles/opinion/the-borne-identity-why-bloodborne-succeeded-where-dark-souls-failed/190224/>

Darkest Dungeon sets up a pessimistic world by having its playable characters die with no chance of revival. The narrator in the beginning of the game asks his successor to uncover the secrets beneath the mansion by collecting a group of

⁷ DLC in the video game industry stands for “Downloadable Content.” Not quite a sequel, but more like an extension on an existing game, a DLC is a product that adds new content to a base game to expand game experience.

volunteers: these are the playable characters, which also have various perks according to their classes. However, it is best not to get attached to the particular characters because they are likely going to die (as a result of gameplay) and never return; new volunteers come as the player changes the rotation. Through the dungeon crawl, the adventurers encounter a lot of weird-looking entities that recall Lovecraft's descriptions and battle creatures similar to the fish-human deities of *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. The madness and loss of control characteristic of Lovecraftian trajectories emerges structurally in *Darkest Dungeon* through the 'stress bar' that purports to measure the character's insanity. Furthermore, when this stress level increases, other character attributes decrease, causing the player to lose their sense of control in a way that also affects the other characters in the party. This stress that grows gradually leads to character breakdowns and fights. When the characters encounter cosmic horrors, their affliction harms other party members. There is also a "bark system," a character-driven dialog reflecting their current stress, affliction, and other attributes that humanizes the characters and reminds the player that they do not have full control over the characters' actions (Sigman & Bourassa, 2015). The disposable humans that traverse the dungeons underscore the insignificance of humanity in the face of cosmic knowledge. Reflecting Lovecraft's pessimistic endings, *Darkest Dungeon* leaves the player without a sense of catharsis: at the end of the game, the narrator claims that their discoveries and battles were for nothing, and the cosmic monstrosity is bound to return.



Figure 4. 2. A character's display of the in-game Darkest Dungeon game mechanic "Affliction System"

Looking at the directly adapted games, *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* (2005) is a first-person shooter (FPS) survival horror game, set in the year 1922, with a protagonist called Jack Walters, a mentally unstable private detective. The game's first-person narration, which echoes Lovecraft's novella, raises the level of intensity and immersion of play. The screen interface gives no visual measure of health, however, the character's condition is indicated through the sounds of heavy breathing and heartbeats, as well as general desaturation of color meant to signify the character's loss of blood. In *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, the protagonist slowly loses control of his senses and goes mad after seeing the fish-man creatures in Innsmouth; in *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*, the protagonist gradually loses sanity when he encounters unsettling aspects of the game world.

Indeed, one of the core selling features of *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* is its "Insanity Effects." "Krzywinska (2009) asserts that, "in centralizing these as a core gameplay mechanic, the game acknowledges most deeply the Cthulhean approach to horror (...) [Insanity effects] provide a very direct way of linking the character's psychological state to the perceptual and action field of the player, providing in some way an equivalent of literature's unreliable narrator" (p. 282). Swain (2012) adds that [Lovecraft's] work is all based on the idea that knowing a terrible truth is enough to make you go mad. What the game has managed to reflect of Lovecraft's signature cosmic natural scientific framework is that the knowledge of things beyond us is the true horror, and the creatures and cults are merely the embodiment of that horror.

In the beginning of the game, the player has no weapon, which represents the powerlessness of the characters in Lovecraft's stories. The player also gets to explore Innsmouth, which at first seem like a local shipbuilding and fishing town, and the non-playable characters (NPC's) that roam around convey an unsettling feeling of being an outsider coming into an unwelcoming place. The player arrives at night: the weather does not seem very clear, and the buildings are dark and old-looking. Innsmouth's denizens can be separated into two groups: healthy and sick-looking. The

sicker NPCs despise strangers and wield a more hostile gaze; this characterization can represent the Deep Ones mentioned in Lovecraft's *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. Other elements in the game, like its shooting system and sanctuaries marked with Elder Signs, exist to structure gameplay and therefore do not present the highest fidelity to the story. The game allows for the player to fight Lovecraftian entities like Shaggoth and Dagon, fulfilling the demands of the FPS genre while keeping the adaptation flowing. Overall, Krzywinska (2009) claims that *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* "is in many ways a respectful and careful adaptation that uses aspects of video game media to bring new dimensions to encounters with the Cthulhean" (p. 285).

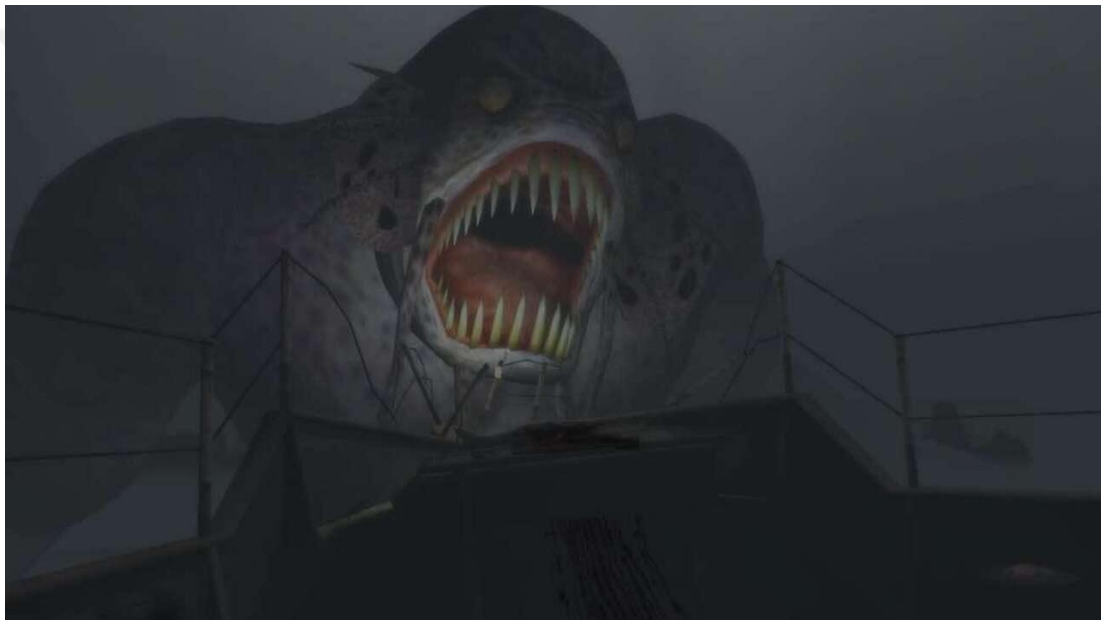


Figure 4. 3. An in-game image of Dagon from *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*

Conarium (2017) is a first-person adventure game developed by Zoetrope Interactive, a Turkish game developer studio. As in Lovecraft's novella *At the Mountains of Madness*, characters inhabit an Antarctic base to solve mysterious events that befell other expedition members; in the game, the solutions come by solving various puzzles and exploring gamespace. While aiming for a high-fidelity adaptation, the game follows what Gentry (2011) emphasizes as the "essence" of the Lovecraftian situation, where "a lone investigator arrives at an abandoned place, delves into written lore, and pieces together the Awful Truth" (p. 130). A game review in *Polygon* scored the game a 7.5 out of 10, adding that "(the game) could have pushed deeper, but [instead] it

stays true to the spirit of Lovecraft's work" (Kollar, 2017). This comment presumes a conflict between gameplay and fidelity, but in *Conarium* the focus on research remedies the typical Lovecraftian explorers' hunt for knowledge. The game mechanics introduce heartbeats in tense situations, creating a dense feeling that suits the cosmic horror and uncertainty of the narrative. When a character sees something that is out of the ordinary or creepy, the player can feel changes happening due to their high anxiety, like blurring images or reduced capacity for motion. The weird architecture, the statues of gods of the eldritch and the gloomy aesthetics all convey Lovecraft's ephemeral, psychological horrors.



Figure 4. 4. *Conarium* in-game image - <https://www.ps4blog.net/2019/02/conarium-hits-playstation-4-tomorrow/>

4.2. Paratextual Alignments

Before playing the games themselves, paratexts can signal these works as Lovecraftian in ways that those who know the author's work can recognize. Many types of paratexts announce and advertise video games to avid players. Genette & Maclean (1991) define paratexts as a threshold that accompanies the source text, but is not necessarily created by the same author or team. Gray (2010) emphasizes the stakes of getting paratexts wrong, in that a paratext's inaccurate vision can mean less satisfied consumers of the core text. For video games, Flanagan (2016) calls on

paratexts to convey “what the game feels like, including how to finesse the interface for success” (p. 11).

Of all the paratextual forms used in advertising video games, trailers can reflect the broadest possible range of the game’s modalities: its visual design, its soundscape and dialogue, its use of motion---though what’s necessarily missing from the trailer is the interactive mode that comes from direct gameplay. The number and type(s) of trailers released can vary, but generally they can be split into two approaches to content: cinematic and gameplay. Cinematic trailers focus on the story elements and the narrative trajectory, while gameplay trailers demonstrate the game experience by including shots from within the game. Alongside these structural approaches are three categories that relate to the production timeline: teaser trailers offer a quick peek at a forthcoming game; reveal/announcement trailers are timed to hype the game while in its final stages of production; and launch/release trailers aim to attract attention to a game in its initial period of release. Teasers are often made up of cinematics and do not show gameplay, while reveal/announcement trailers can show either cinematics or gameplays to reveal more about the story and/or announce new additions to existing games such as DLCs or expansion packs. Both teasers and reveal trailers usually indicate the forthcoming date of release at the end of the trailer. Launch/release trailers are published just before the release of the game and tend to combine both cinematic and gameplay. The main purpose of the launch/release trailer is to get players hyped to play by showing more of what is there to come. No matter the structure or timing, the visual aspect of trailers should signify the “feel” of the game, as Flanagan (2017) states, and the rise of internet video since the late 2000s has made these trailers widely available to the global gaming community, furthering their appeal as an advertising strategy.

One would expect Lovecraftian games to declare themselves as such in their trailers, because invoking Lovecraft not only establishes a “tacit contract” with players/consumers, as Oates (2000) suggests, but also signifies characteristics of gameplay whose logic stems from the author’s worldview. The name defines an understanding between aficionados who expect to experience familiar formulae in new ways, and producers who shape the new work according to those conventions (p.

xiii). Following the logic of transmedia storytelling, a game's self-alignment with the Lovecraftian becomes, in itself, a meaningful way to attract players (Leavenworth, 2014, p. 346). In this way, video game adaptations draw on the affordances of authorship discourse not only to shape the game itself, but also to pitch it more effectively to their target consumers.

The launch trailer for *Conarium* is direct in its declaration, including in its early frames the standard phrasing "Based on the works of H. P. Lovecraft." It begins at a slow pace, accompanied by an uncanny melody, showing abandoned places and approaching what seems like a research facility in the midst of a snowy territory. Describing the game as a "terrifying adventure," the eerie music quickens as words appear simultaneously with the accelerating beat: "run," "hide," "lose your mind." Images of unnatural-looking places and entities flash on screen. The trailer does not strain itself to show an image frequently associated with Lovecraft: tentacles. The trailer that begins with an exploration concludes with an unsettling image of what seems to be an uncertain escape. The visuals become distorted and the abandoned scenes crowded with weird and malevolent creatures that surround the character. Unlike Joshi's four characteristics, the trailer does not reflect a New England topography nor has scenes that show a library however, the trailer includes some various entities or sculptures that present them, and with the quickening pace in music, the time feels faster and the scenes that are encountered align more clearly with the cosmicism of science fiction than with the supernatural associated with high fantasy.

The reveal trailer for *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* also opens at a slow pace, declaring in writing that "the Great Old Ones have come for you," an appropriation of Lovecraftian language. What follows is a man looking nervously at a book, with close-ups on his face showing his dread and fright, and images of various creatures. He commits suicide, at which point the music quickens and action-packed gameplay scenes show tense escapes, weaponry, and weird entities. At the trailer's climax, the character struggles with a massive creature, Dagon, which lets viewers familiar with Lovecraft get a glimpse of its adaptive bona fides. Similar to *Conarium*, unexplained happenings and unnatural beings – including fish-men and tentacles – are shown throughout. But *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* also has another

source text to contend with: the 1981 tabletop RPG also named *The Call of Cthulhu*, which has generated a number of video game offshoots and is credited here along with Lovecraft's fiction as the basis for the new video game.

Beyond their overt alignment with Lovecraft's fiction, trailers for direct adaptations of Lovecraft's work reinforce their genre categorization through narration, visual demonstration of the atmosphere and gameplay, and music. Again, connecting with Joshi's four elements, there are also weird entities and the visual evocations of a New England town. The trailer opens and closes with a book that has strange writings which appear to affect the protagonist holding it in a mysterious way. The chosen scenes for the trailer and Joshi's identification of core characteristics align well enough to suggest that there is no need to include Lovecraft's name in a trailer in order for the sequences to convey the Lovecraftian through gameplay design.

The indirect adaptations similarly use form to suggest their Lovecraftian genre. Unlike the other trailers, the launch trailer for *Darkest Dungeon* uses a narrator to describe the great horror beneath the abandoned manor (shown on screen) and to declare that the crawling chaos it contains must be destroyed. The screen turns red, immense tentacles appear on the top of the manor, then it cuts to a parchment showing a recognizable rendering of Cthulhu. Later scenes show the gameplay and the enemies, which seem like deformed variants of the fish-men of Innsmouth, set to the sound of eerie, accelerating music. The hamlet where the playable characters return to is shown, along with a place called 'Sanitarium,' which is a common setting in Lovecraft's stories. *Bloodborne*'s teaser trailer starts off showing a quiet, Victorian-era town, dark and gloomy-looking, covered in mist. The streets look abandoned, but their emptiness is interrupted by creatures that crowd the frame before a lone 'hunter' appears and kills them. The hunter appears to be searching for something. When he comes across a giant, unidentifiable skull in a dungeon, an ambiguous creature creeps up behind him. The trailer cuts to the title as the beast attacks, leaving the viewer wanting more, but presenting a summary that checks all the expected boxes for a Lovecraftian game. In *Darkest Dungeon*, the obvious tentacles is not the only entity that relates to Joshi's point. Here it can be seen that the characters often get affected from the creatures that they fight which are acolytes of the bigger entities that sometimes appear as 'gods'. A journey of the characters in the dungeons are shown so

there is also a temporal feeling as the entities they battle with progress and impower over time. *Bloodborne* also aligns with Joshi's point in its representation of the Victorian-era England scenery and entities that seem to be minions and serve a bigger entity that have the intention to harm the protagonist.

All four trailers are similar in their use of music and editing that changes tempo according to the tension of the action. The viewer catches brief glimpses of the game that are timed to the music. The climax evokes curiosity by showing mystifying places and uncanny entities. Directly adapted creatures like Dagon and Cthulhu appear alongside more generically Lovecraftian visuals like tentacles and fish-like men. True to Flanagan's observation that a trailer should give the "feel" of a game, they prepare the viewer for something dreadful and unexplained. For viewers unfamiliar with Lovecraft's mythos, trailers arouse curiosity firstly by not giving too much detail about what will be explored, and also by flashing unsettling scenes to suggest the nature of the game's discoveries. For those familiar with Lovecraftian fiction, the trailers promise that the game will satisfy the genre's categorial requirements. These trailers all connect with Joshi's points somehow, but to fully comprehend that the games are of Lovecraftian mythos, familiarity is what counts over everything, and the mythos itself counts for more than the author's written works.

Another important source of paratextual references are the Steam and Playstation Store game pages. Various trailers are embedded directly on Steam game pages, while the Playstation Store only offers direct access to trailers for players who access the site from their console; the store website does not connect to trailer content. But on the web, both pages include game summaries, poster thumbnails, and tags for genre, gameplay, and other searchable categories. For the summaries, only *Conarium*'s states the source text specifically as H. P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*. The posters show characters, signify atmosphere, and even assign the game a unique typography, yet none of these games' posters mentions Lovecraft. All of the posters include characters, but only *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* shows the playable character. With the exception of *Conarium*, which is set in an Arctic base, the setting used in the posters has a dark atmosphere. The *Bloodborne* poster's

typography and setting gives a Victorian vibe, while *Conarium*'s typography and character evoke the unnatural.

Unlike the trailer and poster paratexts, whose content is controlled by the game producers, the tags on the Steam page are user-defined, allowing players themselves to indicate game and gameplay genres and thus effectively advertising to one another through word-of-mouth. This differentiates Steam from the Playstation Store page, which relies on producer-driven rather than user-defined tags; while the Playstation Store has no specific tag naming Lovecraft, Steam users have used the tag “Lovecraftian” to group similar games under that genre category (see Table 4.1.). The “Lovecraftian” tag on Steam would be expected for *Conarium* and *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*, as their trailers show their status as direct adaptations, and indeed, both games are labeled as such on their respective Steam pages. Notably, the indirect adaptation *Darkest Dungeon* was also tagged as “Lovecraftian” by the Steam community. The conjunction of elements that comprise the Lovecraftian mythos were neither overlooked nor misunderstood by the community, illustrating how authorship discourse affords clarity and precision in descriptive categorization.

Table 4. 1. Paratextual analysis of game trailers and genre tags for the four games considered in the present study. This chart includes official releases only; fan trailers and other types of video content are not accounted for here. Shading indicates that the trailer includes a reference to Lovecraft by name.

	TRAILERS <i>Shading indicates that Lovecraft is mentioned directly by name</i>			DESCRIPTIONS	
	Teaser	Reveal	Launch	Steam tags (user-generated)	PlayStation Store tags (producer-generated)
Bloodborne	Date of Release: Jun 10, 2014 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G203e1HhixY	Date of Release: Feb 19, 2015 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTDvYvlyPaE&	Date of Release: Mar 19, 2015 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Crk_GpxGQE	Not available on PC	Action, Role Playing Games
Darkest Dungeon	Date of Release: Oct 7, 2013 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQLxdHfMPF8	Date of Release: Feb 11, 2014 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjiBB3nBR-w	Date of Release: Jan 18, 2016 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-mXN3akTPU&	Turn-Based Combat, Dark Fantasy, Dungeon Crawler, RPG, Rogue-like, Lovecraftian	Role Playing Games, Strategy
Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth	Date of Release: May 20, 2011 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98L-j428oI0&	Date of Release: Apr 1, 2007 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JlVvuSGsE&	-	Horror, Lovecraftian, First-Person, Survival Horror	Not available on PlayStation
Conarium	Date of Release: Oct 6, 2016 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkXZAgyQjDg	-	Date of Release: May 24, 2017 Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LNUzrWv50EI	Adventure, Lovecraftian, Indie, Horror, Puzzle	Adventure, Horror

This shared language among both producers and players cements Lovecraft's status as a riffable, self-contained author-genre whose signature characteristics have the capacity to transcend specific media forms. As also Joshi suggests, some characteristics of Lovecraft's cosmicism is what makes the Lovecraftian genre recognizable. Therefore, among the four trailers studies, it does not come as surprising to not see the name of Lovecraft written in the trailers. The directly adapted games vary in this case. *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*, did not include the name of Lovecraft, however, the hints like the "old ones" written in the trailer also give huge hints towards players who have already read Lovecraft's work and through the scenes used in the trailer. Conarium, on the other hand chose to include Lovecraft's name, even though the games' trailer are similar to that of the other Lovecraftian games analyzed here, it can be sensible to comment that the developers chose to also not hint the gamers that the game is Lovecraftian, but directly telling them that they are crediting the author, and that it is a direct adaptation. Also, it also applies that smaller developers want to attract more players, and here this may be the case as the game is targeted for players and players who are interested in and have read Lovecraft's work. Even though his writing was published long before digital media was a widespread reality, Lovecraft's cosmic horror has inspired many different developers to create games that are direct adaptations or highly inspired by his work. While authorship in video games is not a strong determinant of its mass appeal, it carries different weight when adaptation is at stake, and looms large indeed when an entire transmedia genre is synonymous with its literary creator.

CHAPTER 5: TRANSMEDIA AUTHORSHIP: *THE WITCHER*

In this chapter, transmedia storytelling and transmedial worlds will be introduced to explore how authorship is discursively constructed in transmedia franchises that are based on an initial adaptation across media forms. It will further focus on the case study of *The Witcher* franchise to analyze the author and the video game company's approach on the author's relationship to transmedia adaptations is approached through discourse analysis using author interviews as a unit of analysis. The last part of the chapter will also analyze selected responses from the survey in Chapter 1, focusing on those that show particular interest in *The Witcher* video game series.

5.1. Transmedia Storytelling

Transmedia storytelling, theorized by Jenkins (2006), is the convergence of textual forms and involves the telling of “stories that unfold across multiple platforms, with each medium making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the storyworld; a more integrated approach to franchise development” (p. 334). Some very known and acknowledged examples are J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* both of which began as books but ended up encompassing a full range of media platforms. The most important element in transmedia storytelling according to Jenkins (2006) is how the narrative is built and expanded through different media, and he claims that transmedia storytelling is the “integration of multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium” (p. 95). His central example is the *Matrix* franchise – which unusually began as film – and he considers it one of the best representatives because the works in the franchise are in harmony and work in accordance to converge in different media to form the whole *Matrix* story (Jenkins, 2006). He expands on this idea on his blog when he states “each medium makes its own unique contribution to [the story] ... There is no one single source [...] where one can turn to gain all of the information needed to comprehend the *Matrix* universe” (Jenkins, 2007). Worldbuilding, to him, allows participants to navigate and master as much of the

fictional world as they want/can, and *The Witcher* franchise operates according to the same logic.

Transmedia storytelling allows recognition of growth and popularity and expansion into other media. Andrzej Sapkowski's *The Witcher* began with books, and since then has become a universe that includes video games, a film, comic books, board games, and a Netflix series. World building, according to Jenkins (2006), concerns "the process of designing a fictional universe [...] that is sufficiently detailed to enable many different stories to emerge but coherent enough so that each story feels like it fits with the others" (p. 335). Transmedia storytelling allows those who have never before encountered the source material to enjoy the story in a range of media forms, creating an extension of the story and perpetuating the characters and other elements unique to the narrative; Jenkins (2007) notes this advantage of the practice: "transmedia storytelling practices may expand the potential market for a property by creating different points of entry for different audience segments". In addition to drawing new audiences/players/consumers, transmedia storytelling also rewards those who have invested the most time across formats. Jenkins (2006) calls this benefit "additive comprehension," which describes how players' enjoyment of these games is enhanced by their prior knowledge of *The Witcher* storyworld (p. 123).

The appeal of adding elements to an existing world is a major draw for fans of transmedia narratives. Narratologist Marie Laure-Ryan (2008) points out that narrative structure is less important than world building: "the ability to create a world, or more precisely the ability to inspire the mental representation of a world, is the primary condition for any text to be considered a narrative" (p. 363). She further proposes that a "storyworld is initially projected by individual texts, but also exists as a recipient's imaginative experience" (Ryan, 2014, pp. 32–34). Similarly, Klastруп and Tosca (2004) define transmedial worlds as the result of engaging storytelling both as "abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories [...] can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms" and as "mental constructs shared by both the designers/creators of the world and the audience/participants" (p. 296). They take the factor of world-building more carefully and focus on the *worldness* of the story. New story/world content is being presented to the participants through multiple media, which encourages them to take part in all of them. Hutcheon

(2013) admits that adaptation studies' emphasis on narrative might not appropriately capture the nature of all processes of adaptation within transmedial franchises. Especially with regard to video games adaptations, she argues that it is less the story itself than the storyworld that is being adapted: "Thematic and narrative persistence is not the name of the new adaptation game; world building is" (p. xxiv). Also, Harvey (2015) argues that terminology-wise, some scholars would insist on using the word "transmediation" instead of "adaptation", as adaptation assumes "retelling existing stories, whereas transmedia storytelling tends to be characterized as telling new stories in different media but set within a consistent diegetic world" (p. 3).

Transmedia storytelling helps producers extend their brand across multiple platforms to reach a wide variety of audiences and engage them further in the world. Transmedia storytelling is a widespread business strategy of media corporations (Scolari, 2009). In economic terms, world building can attract more and more audiences from other media texts so that they can gain a richer experience from the world that they are curious about. Booth (2015) makes a threefold distinction between "transmediation as the expansion of a narrative across multiple media products, adaptation as the process of recasting a text into a new format, and franchising as the addition of multiple media products under one brand". Such fictions are no longer conceived as single products, but as larger narratives that share parts of the story in different media to expand their marketing value. Such synergistic efforts require a great deal of corporate coordination across different areas of the industry, and they also mean that transmedia storytelling is not only controlled by the authors or directors, but audience(s) as well. Ideally, the more a participant engages with the universe, the more effective and comprehensive the narrative presented in a media ought to be.

5.2. Author's Role in Transmedia Adaptations

This chapter examines the role and the extent of an established author's involvement in transmedia adaptations and expansions of their work, especially in video games. For books, there can be a conventionally recognized single author, but for video games such cases are rare and generally up for debate. Moreover, video games'

connections to transmedia franchises draws attention to the relationship between the author of the book and the company that creates the video game from the book's adaptation. Flanagan (2016) claims that:

Adaptation studies is interested not just with texts that exist in a one-to-one relationship (...) but also with the process of adaptation, wherein several sources, media, and the affordances and constraints of choices made to address multiple exigencies means that texts exist in complicated relationships to and with one another. (p. 3)

This complication also occurs for the role of the author, to determine the level and importance of their contribution in the adapted medium.

Jenkins, in his definition of transmedia storytelling, also emphasizes the participatory factor. There must be a great narrative and a solid world in order for it to become a participatory storytelling experience. His participatory model envisions an authored story that was introduced in the beginning, then eventually expanded by its fans. In his idea of a transmedia franchise, there is one worldbuilder – or a discrete, publicly identifiable team of creators, as with the Wachowskis and the *Matrix* – who controls the canon that will be expanded by the fans. Herman's and Ryan's (2005) notion of the "top-down" storyworld reflects the first part of Jenkins's view, but the stage after that, "bottom-up" as they call it, refers to a storyworld "being updated, revised, or even abandoned in favor of another with the accretion of textual cues" (p. 570). Maj (2015) brings together Ryan and Thon's attitudes toward fictional worlds and draws a conclusion that there can be two different major types of transmedia:

(1) Transmedia storytelling that allows top-down design of a given storyworld with the highest level of authorial control and (2) transmedia world-building which enables combining the effort of the world's creator with those of all the voluntary contributors who want to support him or her in his or her endeavor. (p. 85)

For transmedia worlds that are "top-down", it is easier to pinpoint the author as they have built everything and receive that credit while participants enjoy their world

through different media. “Bottom-up” however, can become more complicated as its storyworld involves many creators who grow the world through their contributions, making it more difficult to track or even identify the role of the source text creator. “Usually, the creator of a fictional world is forced to step aside and become the *deus absconditus* figure” (Maj, 2015, p. 84). It seems that in most cases for bottom-top transmedia experiences, the source text creator disappears more and more as the world expands and it becomes uncontrollable even though the essence of the world stays the same. In these cases, authors can either draw on claims to authorship to assert their role if not their control; or else they follow the *deus absconditus* model, either through deliberately withdrawing from the discourse or through their death (as the Lovecraft example illustrates in Chapter 4). According to Drewniak (2020), “transmedia storytelling typically involves world building, dispersed authorship (since different media instances can be authored by different creators), and unified branding” (p. 212). In accordance with his view, the dispersed authorship hinders the source text creator from participating in all other texts and media. An adaptation of a transmedia world requires a serious approach and sensitivity towards the source material.

As authors are fully aware of the world that they created, their degree of participation in adaptation and transmedia worldbuilding may vary. To look into the case in video games, Wolf argues that in the process of “interactivation”, i.e. adapting non-interactive media into interactive forms, a “model of the world [...] must be constructed which can be interacted with by the user” (2012, p. 260). The author of the non-interactive medium may have difficulty in adapting their world into an interactive one on their own. Oftentimes, book authors, even if they are at least partially knowledgeable in the target medium, may not be the right ones to bring their creation to that medium. If an author tries to control or have a say in every part of the media that their story is adapted into, it might unforeseen more problems and consequences. Of course, authorship can become a marketing technique, as Corrigan (1998) found in the movie business, but this observation may extend to video games. The adapted author’s name can increase consumer interest and cross-market the new story content through existing products released in various media. In the end, impressions of authorship and activation of certain facets of authorship discourse depend heavily on a source author’s involvement – whether through active appearances in paratextual discourse or through actual hands-on work in the

transmedia adaptation. But the survey results (see chapter 3) demonstrate that players understand very well that source creators are not solely responsible for producing an adapted game. For video games, a collaborative medium but one that differs starkly from book publishing production decisions mainly come down to video game developers and directors. Even then, directors have a whole studio of writers, visual artists, game designers, level designers and more. The author may be involved in the writing or advising further or new creations that come new with the transmedia adaptation but the end-product is also attached to the game director/developer with the contributions of an experienced creative staff.

Rather than following a linear storyline as in the adaptive or top-down models, worldness emphasizes elements like exploration and research, which opens more opportunities for the growth of the world and the story. The strongest factor for *The Witcher* franchise is its world-building, making its expansion more like the bottom-up design. The most important transmedia feature the consumer's ability to enter the world through any media, therefore it is more than the top-down author view that Jenkins presented. Someone coming into the world from a text other than the author's book(s) may not at first identify an author instantly and thus it is important to indicate their name as it is their own creation in the beginning although it has not still become a tradition to do so. The growing bottom-up transmedial world shows a more discursive authorship and shows an inconsistent level of contribution for the source text creator for other transmedia adaptations.

5.3. Case Study: *The Witcher*

5.3.1. CD Projekt Red & Game Series

CD Projekt is a Polish video game developer, publisher and distributor founded in 1994 and based in Warsaw. CD Projekt Red (CD PR), formed in 2002, is known for developing the original video games *The Witcher* and *Cyberpunk 2077*. Since 2008, CD Projekt have their own digital distribution platform Good Old Games (GOG.com). After achieving success localizing games for the Polish market, *The Witcher* franchise and its success popularized CD Projekt Red and led the recognition

of the books since the games are based on the works of Andrzej Sapkowski, first published in 1986. *The Witcher* (1986-2013), *Wiedźmin* in Polish, is a series of 6 fantasy novels and 15 short stories. Sapkowski started his journey as an author with a short story in *Fantastyka* magazine, followed by 14 more short stories before starting his series of novels in 1994, after which point he wrote a book every year until 1999. The stories relate the adventures of Geralt of Rivia, who is revealed to be a “witcher”: a genetically enhanced human with special abilities to hunt and slay wild beasts and monsters that would be beyond a regular human’s strength. *The Witcher*’s narrative expands across different media, including a screen adaptation for film and TV called *The Hexer* (2001-2002), the Netflix series *The Witcher* (2019), a graphic novel series, an upcoming board game, an animated film on Netflix and a VR mobile game.

The Witcher games, under the titles *The Witcher* (2005), *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings* (2011), *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* (2015), are open world action role-playing games released on several gaming platforms. The gameplay narrative takes place after the events in the books. The game follows a non-linear gameplay where the player’s actions have consequences that change the course of the events. Players also have the ability to select from various complex gameplay combat techniques that can be progressed through perks earned by leveling up. The element of interactivity stands out the most in game genres like RPG’s (role-playing games), where the player can roam around the created environment, create a story for the character or change the course of the playthrough via choice-based narrative. The games are an important part of the transmedia storytelling technique of worldbuilding as they are “advancing fictional worlds that sustain interrelated characters” to introduce new but related characters to *The Witcher* narrative (Jenkins, 2007).

Book author Andrzej Sapkowski, who had no interest in the development of video games, granted CD Projekt Red license to create a new story in the same world. *The Witcher* might have been famous in Poland when the books came out in the 1990s, but it was not until the mid-20s that the saga attracted international attention with the release of the games; it is worth noting that Sapkowski’s books were not translated to English until after the games came out. There are many different versions and translations of the books, making it hard to provide exact sale figures before the games but the rise in interest in the books coincides with the translation of the books

to English and the release of the third game, which is the most commercially successful of the series. The game trilogy is considered to be more successful than the books that it adapted, and ended up helping to sell more books: over 50 million copies as of May 2020. Since *The Witcher* game trilogy, CD PR has also released two games which are profoundly connected to the transmedia story world: *Gwent: The Witcher Card Game* (2016) which is a spin-off series of the popular card game in *The Witcher 3* and *Thronebreaker: The Witcher Tales* (2018) that is a standalone single-player campaign also based on *Gwent*. The latter two games include characters from the books and the initial game series, and the storyworld is built so that the players can be aware that they are of the same world and story. Following *The Witcher 3*, CD PR's newest IP, *Cyberpunk 2077* (2020) became one of the most anticipated video games.

5.3.2. Sapkowski's Role in Video Game Adaptations

CD Projekt Red can be recognized as the auteur of the game series, if we understand a more corporate responsibility as opposed to individual studios or developers. As Wolf (2012) emphasizes, "the growth and adaptation of a world, however, goes beyond narrative, and may even have very little to do with narrative," and to him:

Some degree of a world's aesthetics (the sensory experience of a world) and a world's logic (how a world operates and the reasons behind the way it is structured) must be carried over from one work to another or from one medium to another. (p. 246)

CD PR has managed to preserve the stylistic coherence while adapting the storyworld from books to the game franchise.

Their success in telling the story of *The Witcher* not only managed to intrigue the video game community, but also boosted curiosity for the adapted books. Garda (2010) attributes the global success of CD PR's *The Witcher* franchise first and foremost to the eponymous character and the expansion of the universe far beyond the world of Sapkowski's novels (p. 20–21). The world and characters were based on his books, but the narrative and the gameplay were revised or added by CD PR, to whom

he had given the legal rights to proceed this way. “The branching structure within each Witcher game and over the arc of the three-game series has meant that CD Projekt Red has radically altered the Sapkowski source novels in terms of plot and characterization, perhaps not to the point of unrecognizability, but at least to the point where they are distinct media objects, story worlds, and aesthetic experiences” (Pettersen, 2016, p. 232). Notably, the games have been a huge success even without the involvement of the book author in the making process. CD PR, in terms of the narrative, imagined how the story would continue ten years after the action in the books while staying true to its characters and the world. Wolf (2012) claims that “one would expect simplifying and translating the world’s ethos into actual game rules to be the most salient strategy of adapting a transmedial world as a video game” (p. 260). The successful company carefully translated the experience into a game by representing familiar characters, settings and the social dilemmas that Sapkowski established in his books.

By applying the story world into game mechanics that already had proven their market appeal, CD PR’s authorial consistency encouraged the consumption of multiple texts across multiple media by transmedia storytelling. CD PR with their video games, successfully transmediated these constitutive elements. Marie Laure Ryan, (2013) suggested that this kind of narrative can have a snowball effect, in which “a certain story enjoys so much popularity, or becomes culturally so prominent, that it spontaneously generates a variety of prequels, sequels, fan fiction and transmedial adaptations” (p. 363). This seems to have been the case for *The Witcher* games.

To Klastруп and Tosca (2004), a transmedial world is characterized by a shared mental image of prominent features of the story world by the audience and designers, and even though this image of the story world originated from the source text that has been presented, it is malleable and can be expanded and go through changes over time. CD Projekt Red have become a developer with a recognizable, corporate authorship in video gaming but according to Klastруп and Tosca’s view, CD Projekt Red was successful in observing the world created by Sapkowski, which is the canonical imagery, and adapting the transmedial world into video games. Even though Still, Pettersen (2016) suggests that RPG production takes a lot of time to

develop by teams of a lot of people, and “it is primarily for this reason that the auteurist conception of the film director as sole creative author of the film is difficult to apply to RPG franchises” (p. 230-231). Garda (2010) notes that “the source of worldbuilding in ‘the Witcher’s universe’ has clearly shifted from Sapkowski’s fiction to the new media,” and games in particular (p. 25). CD PR, developed unique aesthetics that they have from the stories, meaning that their contribution in the visual sense to the new media has affected how audiences continue to perceive the world and characters. Their worldbuilding decisions beyond Sapkowski’s source novels have affected the subsequent Netflix series, for example, and even the *Witcher* universe’s board games as well. The newest board game *The Witcher: Old World* that will be released 2022 has illustrations included from the *Gwent: The Witcher Card Game*, which in turn was inspired from the visuals in the video games.

5.3.3. Legal Disputes

Regarding the question of the source text creator’s contribution in making the video game adaptation, Sapkowski and CD PR’s case is an intriguing one. According to Purchase’s article (2017), in the early years of the game development, after giving approval on the adaptation for the games, the writer stated that he does not want to get involved in the gaming industry and refused to actively cooperate on the project. Sapkowski was sure that the game would not be successful, as he frowned upon games as a storytelling medium. CD PR offered a percentage of their earnings from the games, but Sapkowski took the lump sum for a faster payout, thinking that it would not reach success. Sapkowski’s poor decision was what actually caused him to be recognized after the game became a huge success, and CD Projekt Red rode the games’ success to become a \$2 billion company. Soon after publicly regretting this outcome, Sapkowski demanded further compensation from CD Projekt Red.

Robert Purchase (2012) points to a translated interview with Sapkowski in Eurogamer Poland, to emphasize Sapkowski’s view on adapting his books for the video games. Sapkowski admits that he does not play computer games as they are beyond his sphere of interest, and claims that “I don’t feel like a co-author of the game” (Purchase, 2012). Given the deal that CD PR made with Sapkowski for the rights to

make the game, it is strictly concluded that he does not accept himself as the co-author of the game nor did he take any part in neither the process nor making of the game. For Sapkowski, the game is not an “‘alternative version', nor a sequel” for him, “the game is a free adaptation containing elements of [his] work; an adaptation created by different authors" (Purchase, 2012). In his strict view, the writer is the one that creates the story and adaptations are not intended to follow it up, nor to add prologues, prequels, epilogues and sequels. He agreed and acknowledged that “[CD PR] would write a completely new story using my characters, my ontology of this crazy world. But they would create completely new stories. I said, 'Why not? Please, please, show how good you are" (Purchase, 2017). Sapkowski does not deny on the fact that he views *The Witcher* as a well-made video game and that the creators deserve the honors of its success. He adds that visuals are more delightful for players. However, he persists in the view that "it is the book that's the original, this book is the result of the author's unique, inimitable talent. 'Transfer a book into a virtual world'? Funny. It's impossible" (Purchase, 2012).

Going against the conventions of transmedia, Sapkowski insists that "there can never be a different relation between a book and its adaptation, other than the one that without the book the adaptation would not exist at all" (Purchase, 2012). He insists on not accepting ideas and concepts of 'complementary plots' and 'building coherent stories' as he argues that “a story can only be contained in a book" which shows that he is aiming for a very traditional view of authorship (Purchase, 2012). However, CD PR has claimed that, “without *The Witcher* game, there wouldn't even be *The Witcher* [transmedia universe] at all”, as the stories were popular in Poland, but the video game turned main character Geralt and his universe into a worldwide sensation (Pitts, 2016.) Although Sapkowski agrees that the games had a positive impact on book sales, he also argues that the success of his books significantly affected the popularity of the games. To Purchase’s (2017) question on whether the games helped him or not he answered: “Yes, to the same extent *I* helped the games. It was not so that the games promote me: *I* promoted the games with my name and characters." Sapkowski strongly believes that the successful world he created had a bigger influence on the promotion of the games than the reverse.

Referring to CD PR's purchase of *The Witcher* rights they claimed: "we weren't buying *The Witcher*, we were buying a [story] and then we turned it into *The Witcher*, which became known all around the world" (Purchase, 2017). In Eurogamer Interview (2017) Sapkowski admitted that the company offered him "a big bag of money" for the IP and that was all he cared about in an adaptation, finding in retrospect that he was "stupid enough to leave everything in their hands because [he] didn't believe in their success" (Purchase, 2017). The writer forced a new agreement between CD PR to set out new rights and a new framework for any future releases the developers may create. In the beginning he opted for a lump sum payment that was negotiated, but now he requests 6% of the profits obtained acquired by the franchise. "For the earnings on *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* alone, the letter claims Sapkowski is entitled to at least 60 million Polish Zlotys, or around \$16.11 million" (Hall, 2018). Sapkowski's lawyers claimed that his compensation was too low and the agreement was initially only applicable for the first of the video game series⁸ (Gach, 2018) and Sapkowski wanted to get profit from the distribution of all other games, including their expansions, add-ons etc., (Hall, 2018).

CD Projekt Red announced in their website that "it is the Company's will to maintain good relations with authors of works which have inspired CD Projekt Red's own creations," and "consequently, the Board will go to great lengths to ensure amicable resolution of this dispute; however, any such resolution must be respectful of previously expressed intents of both parties, as well as existing contracts" (Gach, 2018). In the midst of these political, legal, and financial issues, the legal dispute, at least, has come to an end with a new agreement that "grants CD Projekt new rights, as well as confirms the company's title to *The Witcher* intellectual property in video games, graphic novels, board games, and merchandise" (CD Projekt Red, 2019).

With this it can be said that Sapkowski will be more involved in the creation of forthcoming game(s), just like he was involved in the Netflix series. "I worked as a consultant for the series, in the initial phase of writing the story, and I was very well paid to do it. (...) The truth is that I don't visualize the characters and the scenes I write, I don't have an image of their own in mind. (...) I have no idea how they

⁸ Receipt of a demand for payment submitted on behalf of Mr. Andrzej Sapkowski: <https://www.cdprojekt.com/en/investors/regulatory-announcements/current-report-no-15-2018/>

should appear on screen” (James qtd. Sapkowski, 2019). Netflix’s *The Witcher* series was released in 2019 and is closely related to the books while also taking inspiration from the video game series. For example, the Netflix series includes the famous ‘bathtub’ scene of Geralt of Rivia, which was shown in the beginning of *The Witcher* 3. The scene is recognized by many from the games, and the newest trailer of the upcoming anime series *The Witcher: Nightmare of the Wolf* (2021) also includes a few seconds of the ‘bathtub’ scene with the anime’s protagonist, Geralt’s mentor Vesemir. This scene has become something of an inside joke amongst the fandom. Also, Geralt’s actor Henry Cavill has admitted that he was supposed to use his ‘normal’ voice for his character, however, Cavill used a deeper voice throughout the Netflix series and affirmed that he had taken a lot of inspiration from Geralt’s video game voice actor, Doug Cockle (Chalk, 2021). The success of the streaming series led Orbit Book’s US division due to reprint 500,000 copies of Sapkowski’s books. Yet, while his role for Netflix was initially thought as a creative consultant, and he is credited as such on the series, he claimed that he was not involved very much, commenting: “I do not like working too hard or too long. By the way, I do not like working at all” (Elderkin, 2020).

In Sapkowski’s interview with io9, he was asked whether there was anything he insisted to be included and his response was that he strongly believed “in the freedom of an artist and his artistic expression. [He] does not interfere and does not impose [his] views on other artists. [He] does not insist on anything and does not fight for anything.” And added that: “I advise. When necessary. And asked for” (Elderkin, 2020). On the topic of fidelity and creative changes that occurred for the series, Sapkowski claimed that “[changes from the books were] was inevitable. The process of transforming words into pictures cannot be done without some losses. But I’d rather keep the details to myself” (Elderkin, 2020). In Sapkowski’s opinion, “TV series and video games—any of them—cannot be compared. They are too different in approach, making—and objective. (...) Even though both have advantages and disadvantages” (Elderkin, 2020). Sapkowski’s suggests the reason why he did not want to get involved in the creation. He is aware of the differences of the media and prefers to stand back when his work is adapted into another medium that he is not proficient in even though he is the creator of the world.

Sapkowski carefully points out that, unlike the Netflix series, CD Projekt Red "bravely conceals the game's origins," choosing to keep in the fine print the fact that they're based on his books (Jones, 2020). His claim is somewhat misleading, as the indication that *The Witcher* game is based on the prose of Andrzej Sapkowski appears in both the opening and final credits of the game. From the author's point of view, it is clear that he is criticizing CD PR, and although Sapkowski was never involved in the development of the video games, he suggests that their decision was a mistake. It can be said that whether the source text author is involved in the production or not, it is only fair to include their name or mention in the beginning or the credits. Sapkowski clearly expected to be credited, which may or may not have been included in the legal deal with CD PR; however, his larger point is that credit should be at least a matter of courtesy. The survey results (discussed in Chapter 3) also show that players clearly expect that a credit must be given to the source text creator in the adapted medium.

Andrzej Sapkowski's concern also extends to the book covers and how they affected the perception of the books to the readers. He stated that "(...) book publishers saw it as a way of reaching a new audience and so republished the series with game-related images and blurbs. It muddled the waters, making the distinction between game and author less clear" (Purchase, 2017). This was especially concerning for audiences outside Poland, as the English translation did not appear until 2008. Sapkowski expressed discontent at the majority of the English-language book covers, adding, "In 20 years somebody will ask, '*Witcher*, the game - and who's the author?'" No one will know. "*Somebody*," they'll say" (Purchase, 2017).



Figure 5. 1 Covers of the Witcher book series- <https://comicbook.com/gear/news/the-witcher-books-are-buy-2-get-1-free-on-amazon/> – The book cover on the upper left is the icon from the Netflix series whereas other covers (especially the two at bottom left) are from the video game series.

The revised agreement satisfied both the novelist and the company, as CD PR also got to keep their license for *The Witcher*-themed video games, graphic novels, board games, and merchandise. As a novelist, Sapkowski did not believe in the power of video games and thus offered no direct contribution in their creation, whether in terms of gameplay mechanics or the new narrative world they built. The game narrative deviates substantially from the books, without Sapkowski even intending to create a transmedia universe: "I realize that current times accustom us - which I find terrible - to the strange convergence of media and the freedom of mixing them. To me as a writer, the idea to write 'adjuvant content' and create something 'complementary' to a game or a comic is an absolute pinnacle of idiocy" (Purchase, 2012). CD PR has contributed a lot to Poland's video game industry, and the video gaming community would assert that the game's recognition easily overshadows the books; indeed, looking at the covers in Figure 5.1 it becomes clear how much of the book sales are driven by would-be readers' recognition of the world that games brought to the screen. One may not know how much the creator of the world and the story will or should be involved in the creation of the video games, but it is certain that there is a relationship between both sides.

For the case study of *The Witcher*, Sapkowski's approach was just one way showing that the authorial concept in transmedia adaptations is highly discursive. As someone who did not want to get involved in the making of the video game adaptations he recused himself as their co-author, yet still believes that he helped the games and the games helped him. In contrast, CD PR believes that the games made the biggest contribution to the franchise's growth. For transmedia adaptations and convergence culture, marketing, audience experience and participation can make it difficult to pinpoint objectively which medium most affected growth. According to Sapkowski, literature is the higher ground where the storyworld can be built and insists that even though he created the world, because he does not want to get too much involved and trusts the professionals in other media. This approach of Sapkowski is extremely in line with old-school adaptation scholarship. It is normal for him that he is consulted for ideas, and also normal that changes would be made in these adaptations, yet it is also important for him that the adaptations give clear credit to his work as a point of creative origin.

But not every book author is as willing to divest from the creative process in transmedia adaptations. Control was key for Dmitry Glukhovsky, the author of *Metro 2033*, which like *The Witcher* has also been made into three video games. However, when his story, set in post-apocalyptic Moscow, was to be adapted to a film announced in 2016, he pushed successfully to cancel production because the adaptation would be set in America (Moore, 2018). Glukhovsky was bothered that his work was getting "Americanized" and that the villains were turned into "some kind of random beasts". Glukhovsy commented that staying true to the source material would be much more unique than yet another "America against the bad guys" story (Moore, 2018) and shut down the MGM production. Here, Glukovsky used his contractual control on his work to decide that the adaptation was not suitable and did not reflect his work, and his legal agreement gave him the last say in cancelling it.

Another famous example is writer George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-) novel series, another big transmedia series especially known for its adaptation as HBO's *Game of Thrones* (2011). The author had already worked as a TV writer before penning the novels, so he was not completely new to the medium. Martin,

according to *Game of Thrones*' credits, was a co-executive producer on the series and wrote a few episodes until the end of the fourth season, at which point he opted to focus on writing the novel *The Winds of Winter* (Hedash, 2020). Martin's departure from the series happened around the same time that the plot began to veer off in a different direction from the novels (Hedash, 2020). There are also several video game adaptations influenced by Martin's books and the tv series as well. One of the games, *Game of Thrones* (2014) was "originally a game based solely on the *A Song of Ice and Fire* novels, [and] French developer Cyanide Studios made a deal with HBO to use art assets, music, and voice actors from the television series, and even involved George R.R. Martin as consultant on the game's script" (Schröter, 2015, p. 73). Even though the game's plot and characters were altered significantly from the books and TV series, most of its elements were influenced by both, but also had the active involvement of the author as well. Even in the big storyworld that was created, as much as he can, Martin conveyed a sense of pleasure to be actively involved in most of the transmedia adaptations of his world, making him an opposing example compared to Sapkowski.

5.4. Survey

In the case study of *The Witcher*, it was important to understand the stance of the source creator and his opinions on adaptations for his own project. From the interviews, it made possible to comment on the role of the source text creator and their contribution level and engagement for an adaptation especially video games. It is also very important to look from a players' perspective at the role of the author in transmedia adaptations. Drawing once again on the results of the gamer survey discussed in Chapter 2, in this section I put forward the ideas of the respondents who selected at least one favorite game from *The Witcher* series and consider what these responses can tell us about authorship in gaming.

Sixteen survey participants selected at least one of their favorite game from the *The Witcher* franchise, and these full surveys were isolated for a close reading of this subset of the overall responses. Of the three games, the most recently released *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* was the most frequently selected. The respondents who selected

Witcher as a favorite game also selected their second game from AAA developers as well. *The Witcher* respondents did not differ significantly in their other responses from the general pool: when choosing a new game to try, trusted game design company, game writers, recent releases and advertising are least likely to strike their attention. As with the general response, for these respondents, game genre and type of gameplay mean a great deal, and characters and setting are also very important. Interestingly, in the question that indicates the **most** important consideration for their choices, respondents who preferred *The Witcher* games claimed to trust game design company, published reviews and game genre. In this, their choice differs from the general pool in their inclusion of trusted game design company and published review into this group; these responses scored lower overall. *Witcher* respondents also show a higher frequency in seeking out information about the creator(s) of the games that they enjoy. For most questions, this subgroup's responses do not change significantly compared to the overall sample group, although the survey finally shows that they are also more likely to play a game solely because of who/which company created it, and their highest recorded answer to name that company is CD PR.

As expected, all respondents affirmed that they have played games that were adapted from other media, (though it is not clear if this experience extends beyond *The Witcher* games. The three factors that motivated their selection of adapted game(s) are preferred genre/type of gameplay; because they were familiar with the source text(s) and/or the source author/creator; and that their friends have recommended it. These respondents also identified characters and theme as the most important aspects of the source to be reflected in an adapted video game, followed by visual aesthetics and narrative/plot. Two participants did not continue in completing the survey, and two out of the remaining 14 respondents noted that they have not started playing a certain video game because of its transmedia connection. All of the participants answered that the ability to interact with the source text's narrative universe was the aspect of the video game adaptation that most excited them, a response that shows great importance in how players approach video game adaptations when they have some knowledge of the source text in advance of gameplay.

Most of *The Witcher*-preferring participants' claim that they have sought out information about the creator(s) of the games that they enjoy, mostly through online

research and/or developer or company websites. Ten out of 14 responded that they have played games solely because of its creator company, but fewer than half (6 out of 14) indicated that they have a favorite game company. Two of the 6 respondents claimed CD Projekt Red as one of their favorite game companies. Ten of the 16 participants included their games that they have selected based on its creative team, half of them included games *Witcher* and/or *Cyberpunk 2077*, which both come from CD Projekt Red, only one person wrote that they chose *Cyberpunk 2077* because of the game's company, while the others did not propose which role(s) or what specifically motivated their choice. From the six participants who claimed that they have a favorite game, the game genres, character/environment designs and narrative designs are the top qualities that led them to make the selection for their preferred company. For the two participants who named CD Projekt Red as their favorite game company had character/environments designs and narrative designs were their preferred qualities that led to their selection in choosing CD Projekt Red. Eleven participants out of 14 indicated that they consider the “author” of a video game to be the company as a whole, two have selected the player as “author,” and one selected the director. Interestingly, both of the two respondents who named CD Projekt Red as their favorite company also indicated that they consider the director and the player as the author—neither granted authorship to the company.

Eight participants selected both the source text and text creator and the video game company for the choice of who deserves primary credit as the “author” of an adapted video game. Ten participants affirmed that they generally expect that the source text creator(s) to be involved in the making of the video game adaptation. Overall, the participants agree that the author of the source text must be involved in the process of the video game adaptation. Two of the people who indicated CD Projekt Red as their favorite company strongly agree or agree with the idea that the source text creator must be involved in the game-making process; however, as his interviews make clear, Sapkowski was never involved in the process of the creation of the games. Further complicating the interpretation of respondents' opinions, it seems they also believe that it would be highly concerning if a video game adaptation does not have a high fidelity to the source text, and *Witcher* games do not have a high fidelity to the narrative of the books even if the world and most of the characters can be traced directly to the source text. For the overall score, while fidelity is not a universal

concern, most of the participants do seem at least somewhat invested in the fidelity of a video game adaptation to the source text.

To conclude, even though it is technically possible to have one specific auteur, video games generally come from a collaborative and corporate-based authorship. In the case of adaptations, particularly when adapted from a single-author medium to a corporate medium, authors can take different approaches to their involvement in expanding these adaptations into a transmedia franchise, and their involvement (or the lack thereof) can in turn lead to different outcomes in industry and popular discourse about the storyworld. In the case of *The Witcher*, book author Andrzej Sapkowski started out with a poor position and a bad reputation by signing over full IP rights to CD Projekt Red. Then, trying to go back on this agreement by claiming authorial rights to *The Witcher*'s world, he cast himself as greedy by demanding more money from the video game company. Sapkowski managed to use a classic argument about authorship as leverage to improve his benefits from CD PR's transmedia creation. The fact that Sapkowski was not involved in making the games was due to his lack of confidence in the medium itself, underestimating the potential for growth and popularity of the video game that was to be created. By becoming a huge success, *The Witcher* universe has become widely known through gaming, and the transmedia authorship has been attributed at least in part, if not entirely, to CD Projekt Red. In transmedial world, the authorial concept is discursively generated, though this can be reinforced by direct participation in bringing the universe into new formats. Both the author and the transmedia universe stand to gain from the source author's willing and public cooperation in this process of expansion.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to combine three different areas; authorship, adaptation and video games. The project aimed to answer three main research questions by using methodologies of conducting a survey, and forming case studies. The first question, what players thought about authorship in video gaming was analyzed through the data from the original survey that was conducted. The second question: How can an author brand be mobilized in gaming marketing, and how does this affect perceptions of authorship was intended to be analyzed through the case study of Lovecraft and the Lovecraftian genre and analyzed using game trailers and tags on games' Steam and PlayStation pages as units of study. Lastly, the question about how living authors position themselves within a transmedia franchise was observed through the case study of *The Witcher* franchise looking especially at the author's interviews.

Examining older theories to adapting and new media can be hard but can also bring out many different approaches. Auteur theory was used to criticize films and art films to rank them. The changing of the film industry, the ongoing discourse on authorship, also changed the perception of video games. The comparison of Narratology and Ludology emerged as a debate but developed to be something more cooperative in viewing video game adaptations and authorship. The importance of game mechanics intertwined with the development of story and creation of meaningful play. Jennings (2016) claims that "examining the authorship of video game works has significant implications for the interpretation and criticism of game texts" and she comments that:

Authors influence the assemblages of works; and the assemblages of works influence the assemblages of texts. Thus, understanding who the authors of video games are and how they conduct their acts of authorship has profound ramifications for how we conduct critical analyses of video games. (p.125)

The discourse in theory of authorship reflects the already adaptive environment of video games. As a collaboratively created medium that also demands player interaction, it is expected for many new concerns to emerge for authorship, especially in video game adaptations of non-interactive works. The literature review presented in the beginning of Chapter 3 shows how authorship is perceived through different theories in video games and video game adaptations. The survey also collected some interesting results on the perspectives of players. It seems that the discourse and players do not look at this conception in the same ways. Just like Ludologists, players' answers were leaning towards an understanding of how video games center on genre and gameplay. Even though a majority of player-respondents who know and play games that are adaptations and transmedia adaptations, their main concern is always the gameplay rather than the other particulars of the adaptation. This shows, therefore, that for an adaptation to achieve success in this medium, the players expect to see a gameplay meets their expectations for the player engagements. From the survey it is also observed that players have and follow their favorite companies but their motivation for playing the games of their favorite companies is not because of the name but once again, gameplay. The results do not show that auteurism is a major factor in games as a general category of media; however, players perceive authorship differently when games have been adapted from existing IP. Therefore, it is important to observe the value of an adaptation-minded approach both to these transmedia games and to the question of authorship in gaming.

The case study of Howard Phillips Lovecraft's influence on horror and similar genre fiction shows his work posthumously spread across a range of media platforms and the chapter examines how notions of authorship have affected the structure of the games and the marketing strategies for both direct adaptations and heavily inspired intertexts. Lovecraft's collected work has inspired many to create and expand works after his passing. Therefore, his name has become a brand and an auteur genre of its own. "Cosmic horror" becomes intertwined with the themes of madness and the unknown to create the unique Lovecraftian sub-genre. From the analyses of the games presented in the case study, it is observable that the author's name has become a brand of its own. Players of the games that appear as direct adaptations has different expectancies as they know what they are in for and the properties of the genre. However, the intriguing case is that the heavily inspired games, even though they do

not openly present the games as Lovecraftian, appear as Lovecraftian games due to the elements that Lovecraft and his mythos has presented. His work initially did not aim to be part of transmedia but, after his death his work expanded immensely. In Lovecraft's case, authorship discourse allows him to stand for unique genre and even a brand that does not belong to the adapter and surpasses each individual adaptation and expansion of his narrative universe. For this chapter, paratexts are viewed as crucial pieces of video gaming discourse; the release trailers of these games echo the "Lovecraftian" sense in ways that attract the attention of players with narration, atmosphere, the gameplay, and music, whether or not his name appears directly on screen. Trailers not only get the players excited but also give information on the content that the players should expect. In analyzing these games' online trailers, some discrepancies and similarities were observed. As the trailers are understood to have Lovecraftian elements, his name and his work can be seen as an advertising strategy, an invitation for the players to recognize the brand name and be more interested in the game because of this author-branding.

The last chapter focuses on *The Witcher* franchise to explore how living authors have positioned themselves within a transmedia franchise that is rooted in their work, but has grown largely out of their control. The conventions of transmedia storytelling and building of the transmedial storyworld were initially introduced. The creator of *The Witcher* universe, Andrzej Sapkowski, dealt with a lot of legal and financial issues against CD Projekt Red, the creator of the video games adapted from his narrative world. Sapkowski's lack of confidence in transmedia adaptation and disinterest in other media forms especially video games, have affected *The Witcher*'s ability to project its construction of authorship as a collaborative effort that has the blessing of its "original" creator. Rather than celebrating his work's transmedia adaptation success, he fell into the trap of money. In interviews, Sapkowski evokes a traditional approach to authorship in order to win public sympathy for his legal case, but this has caused a negative impact on his reputation in the industry. In the midst of publicized disputes with Sapkowski, CD PR has managed to preserve stylistic coherence and enhance the storyline of the world and the characters, ultimately attracting an audience bigger than the readership for his books. Even though he is recognized as the creator of *The Witcher* universe, much of the audience is keener to consider the video games as the most central elements of the transmedia franchise. The nature of

transmedia storytelling relies on the growth and expansion of the world created, but unlike contemporaries such as George R. R. Martin, it seems that Sapkowski does not want to assume an active role.

Although there is no clear consensus in theory or among the gaming public about its parameters, constructions and evocations of authorship can be productively applied to video games in order to gain advantages for game developers and authors of works that have been optioned for video game adaptation. Looking at players' impressions of authorship, game developers' use of a long-dead author in their marketing, and an author's response to his work's expansion into a transmedia franchise, this thesis combines adaptation studies with video gaming to explore how authorship impacts them both. The survey "Video Gaming Experience" conducted for this innovates the study of authorship in video games and video game adaptations by including the perspectives of the players and their ideas and opinions. The survey results show significant difference compared to academic theorists in how they approach the concept of authorship in video games and it appears that players do not care about this question as much as theorists do.

There remains much to discover about authorship in video games and video game adaptations and this thesis aimed to expand the conversations in adaptation studies and video games scholarship with new and varied approaches to these industry-relevant questions.

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APPENDIX

Video Gaming Experience Survey: Questions and Full Results

This appendix consists of the questions and the data of the survey “Video Gaming Experience”. The survey is constructed to gather information from video game players on their preferences in gaming, and opinions on authorship in transmedia and adaptations to make a comparison with the discourse and analyze the views on both sides. 215 participants contributed in the survey.

Response Data of the Survey Questionnaire

I am conducting a research for my master’s thesis on video game studies. The survey aims to gather qualitative data about participants’ video game experiences.

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The responses are anonymous. If you proceed with Yes, you are confirming that you are a) older than 18 years of age, and b) consent to your personal data being processed for the purposes of this research.

1. Please enter your year of birth. (YYYY)

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Year	Amount	Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1962	1	1982	5	1993	11
1968	2	1984	2	1994	31
1972	1	1985	2	1995	12
1973	2	1986	7	1996	17
1974	1	1987	5	1997	13
1976	1	1988	2	1998	10
1978	1	1989	6	1999	13
1979	5	1990	6	2000	20
1980	2	1991	5	2001	13
1981	1	1992	11	2002	5

2. To which gender identity do you most identify?

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Answer Choice	Responses	Amount
Female	33,95%	73
Male	62,79%	135
Non-Binary	2,79%	6
Prefer not to answer	0,47%	1

3. Please enter your country. [comment box]

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Country	Amount	Country	Amount	Country	Amount
Australia	2	Indonesia	1	Russia	1
Austria	1	Ireland	1	Scotland	1
Azerbaijan	1	Italy	5	South Africa	1
Brazil	2	Lithuania	1	South Korea	2
Canada	4	Netherlands	2	Sweden	1
Czech Republic	1	Northern Ireland	1	Switzerland	1
France	1	Norway	1	Turkey	122
Germany	6	Pakistan	2	United Kingdom	8
Greece	3	Poland	1	United States	37
Guatemala	1	Portugal	1	Vietnam	1
India	1	Romania	1		

4. How would you rate your proficiency with the English language?

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Degree	Percentage	Amount
Not Proficient	0,47%	1
Below Average	0,93%	2
Average	7,44%	16
Proficient	30,70%	66
Native/ Highly Proficient	60,47%	130

5. What are your top 2 favorite video games? [two textboxes]

Answered: 212

Skipped: 3

First Game	Second Game
Black Desert Online	Battlefield V
Fallout New Vegas	Zelda: BOTW
The elder scrolls V: Skyrim (PC)	SummonKnight SwordCraft Story (GBA)
Undertale	Pokemon Ranger Shadows of Almia
Dead by daylight	PUBG
LA Noire	Red Dead Redemption
Shenmue 2	Legend of Zelda Ocarina of Time
Wizard101	Animal Crossing: New Horizons
League of Legends	Overwatch
Legend of Zelda Series	Valorant
Sports	Platform
Red Dead Redemption II	-
Counter Strike - Global Offensive	Skyrim
The Sims 4	The Last of Us
The legend of Zelda, Ocarina of time	Hollow Knight
Mass Effect Saga	Counter Strike
Simulation	RPG
Dragon Age	Skyrim
Dishonored 2	SOMA
Max Payne 2	The Elder Scrolls 5 Skyrim
The Sims 4	Stardew Valley
Portal 2	Borderlands 2
Terraria	Skyrim
Mass Effect franchise	Rocket League
Super Smash Bros	League of Legends
Stardew Valley	Minecraft
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	Bloodborne
Animal Crossing (the series as a whole)	Splatoon 2
Monster Hunter 4 Ultimate	Pokémon Sapphire
Fire Emblem: Three Houses	Dragon Age Origins
Hearthstone	Heroes of Might and Magic 3
Need for Speed Most Wanted	Spiderman PS4
Dota	Call of duty
Bioshock	Dishonored
Crusader Kings 2	Heroes of Might and Magic 3
Celeste	Dragon Age Origins
Overwatch	Destiny 2
The Sims	Monstrum
Hot dogs, horseshoes and hand grenades (h3vr)	Digital combat simulator (dcs world)
The Sims	Zelda

First Game	Second Game
The Binding of Isaac	Bloodborne
The Witcher 3	Borderlands series
Counter strike	Dota
World of Warships	Skyrim
WoW WotLK	Skyrim
League of Legends	Hearthstone
Cs-Go	WoW
Stardew Valley	Plants vs Zombies
Victoria II	Europa Universalis IV
Persona 5 Royal	Fire Emblem: Three Houses
Europa Universalis 4	Rising Storm II: Vietnam
Ar Tonelico 2	Disgaea
Mine craft	Imposter
Fallout: New Vegas	Doom (1993 version)
Ever17	Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D
Witcher 3	Undertale
Guild Wars	Crusader Kings 2
Bioshock Infinite	Undertale
AOT Wings of Freedom	The Sims 4
Dishonored 2	Disco Elysium
Gris (nomada studio)	Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (bethesda)
Final Fantasy VI	Final Fantasy X
Winning Eleven 2001	Double Dragon
The Elder Scrolls V - Skyrim	Thief - Deadly Shadows
The Binding of Isaac	Pokémon Black
Control	Bioshock Infinite
Fallout: New Vegas	Mount & Blade: Warband
Animal Crossing: New Horizons	Spelunky
Life is Strange	Fran Bow
Control	Bioshock Infinite
Gris	Dark Souls
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	Outlast: Whistleblower
Call of Duty 2	Crysis 2
Call Of Duty	Mortal Kombat
Championship Manager 01/02	Championship Manager 03/04
LA Noire	Uncharted
Valorant	The Sims
TESV: Skyrim	Disco Elysium
Rogue	Untitled Goose Game
Life is Strange	LittleBigPlanet Karting
Life Is Strange	Beyond Two Souls
Disco Elysium	Red Dead Redemption 2
Nuclear Throne	Danganronpa
Gris	Alice madness returns

First Game	Second Game
Rimworld	Paradox Grand Strategy Games
Virtual Villager	No
Final Fantasy XV	Final Fantasy XII
Riven: the sequel to Myst	Final Fantasy XIV
Lol	Mortal Kombat
Riven	Star Wars: The Old Republic
Call of Duty: Warzone	Europa Universalis IV
Kentucky Route Zero	Fallout 1 & 2
Grand Theft Auto 5	Elite Dangerous
Dragon Age: Inquisition	Pokemon GO
SSX Tricky	Journey
Stardew Valley	Animal Crossing
Total War Warhammer 2	Zelda: Breath of the Wild
Crash Team Racing (First video game I have played)	World of Warcraft
Far Cry	Call of Duty
Red Dead Redemption 2	Witcher 3
Counter Strike Global Offensive	Fifa
Pro evolution soccer	Assassin's Creed
Rime	Subnautica
Call of duty	League of Legends
Fifa	Call of Duty
Utawarerumono: Mask of Deception	Skyrim
The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild	Super Mario Odyssey
Jak II Renegade	Age of Empires II
Bioshock Infinite	GTA 5
Minecraft	Mario Sunshine
Planescape: Torment	The Legend of Heroes: Trails in the Sky (trilogy)
Dark Souls	Vagrant Story
Company of Heroes	Dishonored
Hearts of Iron 4	Call to Arms
Persona 5: Royal	Psychonauts
GTA V	CIV V
No	No
Knights of the Old Republic	Chrono Trigger
Counter strike global offensive	Fortnite
Gs-go	Valorant
Halo Reach	Skyrim
The Witcher	The Sims
FIFA	KOTOR
SIMS	Mortal Combat
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	Assassin's Creed 3
Grand Theft Auto Series	Football Manager Series

First Game	Second Game
Ratchet And Clank 2	Team Fortress 2
Uncharted	CS GO
The Elder Scroll V Skyrim	The Battle For Middle Earth II
Uncharted	CS GO
Mount and Blade (Warband/Bannerlord)	Total War: Warhammer 2
Super Mario Odyssey	Monster Hunter Rise
PubG	Zula
Diablo II	Vampire The Masquerade: Bloodlines
World of Warcraft	Command & Conquer Red Alert
Age of Empires	Football Manager
Witcher 3	Bioshock Series
Hay Day	Mobile Legends
Ratchet and Clank	Total War: Shogun 2
Sims	Lara Croft
World of Warcraft	The Long Dark
Football Manager Series	Battlefield Series
GTA 5	GTA San Andreas
Life is Strange	Bioshock
Warcraft	Call of Duty
Mega Man 3	Team Fortress Classic
Path of Exile	Rocket League
Call of Duty Modern Warfare	Battlefield 4
Mount and Blade Warband	Red Alert 2
Civilization VI	Nier Automata
Galaga	Mass Effect
Super Mario Bros.	Sonic the Hedgehog 3
Mega Man X	Mega Man 2
Starcraft 2	Path of Exile
Final Fantasy XIV	World of Warcraft
Total War	EU4
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	Journey
Clash Royale	PUBG
Fallout 2	Witcher 3
Divinity Original Sin 2	World of Warcraft
Battlefield 4	Skyrim
Call of Duty	Assassin's Creed
Resident Evil series	Grand Theft Auto 5
World of warcraft	Witcher 3
World of Warcraft (Classic)	Pokemon Emerald
Life is Strange (series)	Dragon Age (series)
Skyrim	League of Legends
World of Warcraft	Assassin's Creed
Sims 2	Just Dance
Red Dead Redemption	Sea of Thieves

First Game	Second Game
Red Dead Redemption 2	The Witcher 3
Dota Underlords	Overcooked
Animal Crossing: New Horizons	Stardew Valley
Escape From Tarkov	FIFA
PUBG	CS GO
Lotro	Diablo
Borderlands	Witcher 3
World of Warcraft	Rainbow Six Siege
Celeste	Mario maker 2
Gta 5	Dota 2
Cyberpunk 2077	World of Warcraft
World Of Warcraft	Diablo 3
Dota 2	Mount and Blade series
Bioshock	Witcher 3
World of Warcraft	Dota 2
Disco Elysium	Mass Effect 2
Diablo 2	Borderlands
Don't Starve	Sims 4
League Of Legends	Escape From Tarkov
Metal Gear Solid	Disco Elysium
The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt	The Last of Us: Part 2
Tropico	StarWars Jedi Outcast 2
Skyrim	Legend of Zelda
World of Warcraft	Sims 4
God of War	Call of Duty
Overwatch	Witcher 3
World of Warcraft	Dota 2
World of Warcraft	Borderlands
The Last of Us	Red Dead Redemption II
Botw	Okami
Overwatch	Lol
Bloodborne	Overwatch
NFS	FIFA 2020
Persona 5	Rocket League
World Of Warcraft	Kingdom Come: Deliverance
Strategy	Indie
Bioshock	Battlefield
Hotline Miami	Monster Hunter World
Mario's Picross	Lego The Hobbit
Football Manager	Witcher 3
The Witcher 3	Tomb Raider
The Witcher 3	Football Manager 2021

6. Which gaming platform(s) do you prefer to play on? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
PC	85,12%	183
PlayStation home console	37,21%	80
Xbox home console	10,23%	22
Nintendo Devices	21,86%	47
Other (please specify)	10,23%	22
	Mobile	
	30 years worth of console gaming	
	Phone	
	Mobile	
	And by PC I mean only PC based VR	
	Macbook Pro	
	Phone	
	Iphone switch	
	Raspberry Pi	
	PSP	
	PSP	
	ipad	
	iPhone	
	I dont play	
	Mobile phone	
	Sega Consoles	
	Android phone	
	Mobile gaming	
	Mobile (Android)	
	I play some casual games every once in a while on my mobile phone whenever I am bored outside.	
	Mobile	
	Mobile	

7. To what extent do these factors initially strike your attention when first choosing a new game to try?

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

a. Trusted game design company

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	9,35%	13,55%	23,36%	31,31%	22,43%
Amount	20	29	50	67	48
Average	3,44		Total	214	

b. The game writers

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	26,54%	24,64%	20,38%	20,85%	7,58%
Amount	56	52	43	44	16
Average	2,58		Total	211	

c. The narrative

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	6,28%	8,70%	17,39%	35,27%	32,37%
Amount	13	18	36	73	67
Average	3,79		Total	207	

d. The characters

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	3,74%	10,28%	20,56%	29,44%	35,98%
Amount	8	22	44	63	77
Average	3,84		Total	214	

e. The setting/environment design

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	1,40%	1,40%	13,08%	33,18%	50,93%
Amount	3	3	28	71	109
Average	4,31		Total	214	

f. Game genre

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	2,33%	2,33%	12,56%	33,02%	49,77%
Amount	5	5	27	71	107
Average	4,26		Total	215	

g. Its type of gameplay

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	1,40%	2,34%	10,75%	28,04%	57,48%
Amount	3	5	23	60	123
Average	4,38		Total	214	

h. Recent release

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	34,60%	27,49%	23,70%	11,85%	2,37%
Amount	73	58	50	25	5
Average	2,2		Total	211	

i. Published reviews

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	14,15%	24,06%	26,89%	23,11%	11,79%
Amount	30	51	57	49	25
Average	2,94		Total	212	

j. Word of mouth

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	7,08%	16,98%	32,08%	27,36%	16,51%
Amount	15	36	68	58	35
Average	3,29		Total	212	

k. Advertising

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	A Great Deal
Percentage	26,67%	35,24%	25,71%	10,00%	2,38%
Amount	56	74	54	21	5
Average	2,26		Total	210	

l. Other (please specify)

Total: 12

Interesting USP.
Realism above all, especially regarding firearms
the game should be easy to understand and play.
financial model
Available & Upcoming DLC
Pitch front page
graphic quality and cinematics
Image quality
Value I get for my money: Enjoyable gameplay hours and multiplayer affect positively while pointless "goose chases" created to artificially elongate gameplay time and micro transactions affect negatively
Gameplay Design

YouTube reviews
The most effective factor is seeing if the developers value their consumers and listening to their advices about game improvements too (of course if they make sense and applicable) but this factor is obviously not valid for new released games for a few months

8. Of the above-listed factors, which is generally the MOST important consideration for your choices? [drop down menu, **one response**]

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Its type of gameplay	31,16%	67
Game genre	16,74%	36
The narrative	13,95%	30
The setting/environment design	10,70%	23
Trusted game design company	6,98%	15
The characters	6,05%	13
Published reviews	6,05%	13
Word of mouth	5,12%	11
The game writers	0,47%	1
Recent release	0,47%	1
Advertising	0,47%	1
Other (please specify)	1,86%	4
	Not interested	
	Price	
	Gameplay Design	
	It is the same with what i wrote above in other section	

9. Have you played video games that were adapted from other media before? (ex. a book that has a related video game) (Y/N/Don't Know) ***logic question**

Answered: 215

Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	74,42%	160
No	10,70%	23
Don't Know	14,88%	32

10. If YES, to what extent did these factors motivate your selection of the adapted game?

Answered: 151

Skipped: 64

a. It was well reviewed

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	9,46%	8,78%	25,00%	43,24%	13,51%
Amount	14	13	37	64	20
Average	3,43		Total	148	

b. My friends recommended it

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	8,11%	14,19%	14,86%	45,27%	17,57%
Amount	12	21	22	67	26
Average	3,5		Total	148	

c. I am familiar with the source text(s) and/or the source author/creator

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	7,33%	8,67%	16,00%	47,33%	20,67%
Amount	11	13	24	71	31
Average	3,65		Total	150	

d. My favorite game company created the game

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	18,24%	26,35%	25,68%	18,92%	10,81%
Amount	27	39	38	28	16
Average	2,78		Total	148	

e. It was my preferred genre/ type of gameplay

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	3,36%	5,37%	16,78%	45,64%	28,86%
Amount	5	8	25	68	43
Average	3,91		Total	149	

f. Other (please specify)

Total: 4

It was a gift
It was lord of the rings conquest
I saw it on Twitch
I like the television show

11. If you answered NO, why have you avoided adapted games? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 24

Skipped: 191

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Nothing particularly appealing about the adaptations I've seen	66,67%	16
I am unfamiliar with the source text(s)	33,33%	8
Adapted games offer less enjoyment than standalone games	25,00%	6
The story/ characters are harder to follow or understand in an adapted game	20,83%	5
No one else would agree to play the game with me	0,00%	0
Other (please specify)	8,33%	2
	they are trash games	
	Adapted/licensed games are often not a high quality as game IPs.	

12. *In adaptations, some aspects of the source text may or may not be crossed over to the adapted medium.*

Which aspect(s) of a source text would you expect to see reflected in an adapted video game? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 201

Skipped: 14

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Characters	80,10%	161
Theme	72,64%	146
Narrative/plot	67,66%	136
Setting	60,70%	122
Visual Aesthetics	58,71%	118
Other (please specify)	2,99%	6
	Ethical backstory	
	I have to leave something here ig	
	it depends heavily on the source and genre of game it gets ported to	
	it depends on what's being adapted - adapting a novel directly (making a novel a game) is different from making a new game set in the World Of a novel, so only some of this might apply	
	Cinematics	
	doesnt setting include theme?	

13. *Transmedia storytelling is a technique of creating a narrative universe that grows from telling a story across multiple media platforms and through multiple different texts.*

Have you ever started playing a certain video game because it was a part of a transmedia narrative universe? (ex. The Matrix, Marvel, DC Universe, Lord of the Rings, etc.) ***logic question**

Answered: 201

Skipped: 14

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	55,72%	112
No	37,31%	75
Don't Know	6,97%	14

14. Having some knowledge of the source text in advance of gameplay, which aspect of the video game adaptation most excited you?

Answered: 110

Skipped: 105

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Ability to interact with the source text's narrative universe	53,64%	59
Ability to engage in gameplay as a known character	27,27%	30
Curiosity about the adaptation	16,36%	18
Other (please specify)	2,73%	3
	exploring the world	
	entering the world of the book	
	not really into adaptations	

15. Have you ever sought out information about the creator(s) of games that you enjoy? ***logic question**

Answered: 200

Skipped: 15

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	69,00%	138
No	31,00%	62

16. How frequently do you seek out information about the creator(s) of games that you enjoy?

Answered: 135

Skipped: 80

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Very Frequently
Percentage	16,30%	36,30%	14,81%	21,48%	11,11%
Amount	22	49	20	29	15
Average	2,75		Total	135	

17. Where do you look for information about game creators? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 136

Skipped: 79

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
----------------	------------	--------

Online research	93,38%	127
Developer/company websites	47,79%	65
Game credits/ paratextual materials (advertisements, posters, booklets or other materials included with purchased package, etc.)	30,88%	42
Message boards	26,47%	36
Industry recognition (e.g. award listings)	16,18%	22
Other (please specify)	6,62%	9
	I run a game development company. So events, ex co-workers etc	
	Youtube	
	Twitter	
	Mostly friends posting info/articles to a private discord/slack/groupchat	
	Steam	
	Their blogs or social media accounts	
	YouTube, Wikia	
	Blogs	
	Game documentaries on NoClip or profiles written in gaming websites	

18. Have you ever played a game solely because of who/which company created it? (Y/N)

Answered: 195

Skipped: 20

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	50,77%	99
No	49,23%	96

19. *“Video game creative roles” here represents an umbrella term for, video game developers, video game designers, video game artists, video game directors, video game writers, and other creative professionals who participate in the creation of a video game.*

Which game(s) did you select based on its creative team, and which creative role(s) motivated this choice? [comment box]

Answered: 110

Skipped: 105

Responses
Hideo Kojima games only.
Skyrim, based on the video game developers, Bethesda.
Cyberpunk 2077. The video game artists, and designers led me to play this game. Another factor was the "hype" surrounding the game
Deltarune and Pokemon ranger alternatives. Music for the former, writing for the latter.
I don't usually play games just because of the creative team
Anything by naughty dog, anything by Kojima. Others too
I have never chosen a game based on creative rules but based on company
Bethesda
Mass Effect, Paradox' Hearts of Iron and similar series. Civilizations series.
TLoU by Naughty Dog for writers Battlefield by DICE for devs Borderlands by Gearbox for writers/devs
none
Cyberpunk because the creators (cd red) also developed witcher series.
My decision to play a video game has never been influenced by the creators of the said video game. This is true for the studio, the publisher and all the creative persons involved.
None
The Outer Worlds, mainly the writing team
FROM Software games
Animal Crossing! I love Nintendo and the creative role that motivated this choice was one of the game designers, Shigeru Miyamoto.
Shining Force, Sonic the Hedgehog 2
Watch Dogs Legion, creative director worked on Far Cry 2 and Splinter Cell Chaos Theory. I did not enjoy the game much sadly. I played Sunset Overdrive because it was made by the same developers as Spiderman PS4. It was alright. I didn't know a specific role though.
Zelda
I guess sekiro because I liked all the soul games but I can't really specify a singular role
League of Legends
Bloodborne, Dark souls
Borderlands
Cyberpunk
city skylines, surviving the aftermath
none
Maybe Wow and Dark Soul. Good communication with the community
Various phone games in the Bonte Games family; I enjoyed one game and subscribed to the creator's e-mail list
Dark Souls
Paradox Games - Hearts of Iron 3 among others

Responses
Death Stranding, mostly because of the director Kojima himself Ar Tonelico, the artists, composers, director, game design Nier Automata, long time fan of Yoko Taro & Emi Evans Fall of cybertron, the director, artists, writers
Minecraft director - Markus Persson
Pillars of Eternity (Director Josh Sawyer), Bayonetta (Director Hideki Kamiya), Legacy of Kain (Writer/Director Amy Hennig), Nier (Writer/Director Yoko Taro)
Night in the Woods - Alec Holowka Ever17 - Koutarou Uchikoshi
Witcher
I played Until Dawn and that lead me to The Dark Pictures Anthology
Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3
Skyrim, writers / gris, artists
most final fantasy games
When I was a kid I used to play Konami games since I was enjoyng their sport titles
"Inside" is one of the decent examples that I picked up especially because of the developer team behind, Playdead.
Alan Wake & Alan Wake's American Nightmare - Sam Lake (Lead Writer and CEO of Remedy Entertainment)
Pillars of Eternity 1 and 2, because Josh Sawyer, the director and one of the designers of Fallout: New Vegas was also directing those games.
Alan Wake Alan Wake's American Nightmare - Sam Lake (Lead Writer)
Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and Batman Arkham Franchise
Wolfenstein
Almost all Bethesda games, almost all Obsidian games and Cyberpunk 2077
The adventure company games
Life Is Strange, video game writers
Various strategy games from Paradox Interactive because I had positive experiences with their older games.
Torchlight serie because of blizzard north
Obduction (Cyan Worlds), because I'm a fan of their works since the first Myst and I love their artistic vision Sam and Max Save the World (Telltale Games) and Psychonauts (Double Fine) because the companies were founded by ex Lucasfilm Games writers/creatives.
Obduction, by Cyan Worlds Rand Miller (head) after playing Myst and Riven I knew I'd follow Rand to any production he does
Call of Duty by infinity ward and Rockstar Studio Games

Responses
Games of certain studios (Blendo, Supergiant, Obsidian, Cardboard and many other authors) whom I feel loyal as a brand, I follow their work very closely. I'll probably play their future releases. When I see certain writers, visual artists, level designers even score composers at times whom work I follow, I definitely want to give the games a try. This can vary from writers like Brian Mitsoda, to interdisciplinary artists like David O'Reilly.
Mass Effect Andromeda, since I love the Dragon Age games.
Oxygen Not Included; it's developed by Klei, whose previous work (e.g. Don't Starve) and reputation as an ethical, small team was well-known to me
1. Blizzard and new expansion of World of Warcraft 2. Ubisoft and Far Cry series, (I played 3, it was awesome on every aspect and I automatically bought 4 and 5) 3. Rockstar Games. (I first played GTA: Vice City and after that I played every GTA that released.) 4. Bandai Namco (Tekken Series, I first played Tekken 3 in 2001 and now in 2020 I still play Tekken 7 that released in 2017, I also played every Tekken game in between). 5. CD Projekt Red, (Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings, Witcher 3: The Wild Hunt after these games CDPR was a company that I adore and I pre-ordered Cyberpunk 2077 as soon as possible).
I played several games by the creators of Journey because I loved it so much.
God of war
Miwashiba, after playing her game 'Alicemare'.
I don't care about roles and companies specifically but there's definitely been a time when I have saw a game made by X company and have then tried it out.
None at all.
1. As a fan of "Mass Effect", I was motivated to try out the "Dragon Age" games because they were developed by Bioware. 2. I've been closely following Supergiant Games ever since playing their first release "Bastion" 3. Since one of my favorite games "Psychonauts" has been developed by Double Fine, I've kept up to date on their releases for a very long time now. 4. As a big JRPG fan I try to follow news related to Square Enix and Atlus releases.
Car racing - super mario
Anything by Blizzard Entertainment. Motivation was all their previous games were amazing. Activision-Blizzard is an abomination of gaming however.
COD Ghosts Elder Scrolls 4
Grand Theft Auto V Disco Elysium Trine
Assassin's Creed
Zula

Responses
Warhammer Dawn of War I & II World of Warcraft Borderlands Series
Blizzard games
RDR2 and Divinity 2. Both of these games have the best design in their respective genres mainly because of who created them.
N/A
I remember playing games that were by iD software, and Raven, because most likely it was another rendition of the original Doom, Heretic, Duke Nukem 3D etc
Psychonauts, any Rockstar game
assassins creed
None
Bannerlord - gameplay, open world and everything basically
Halo (original from Bungie)
Cyberpunk 2077 Half-Life 2
Chrono Trigger
any Blizzard game
Wildstar
Modern Warfare - Activision Telltale games Bethesda BF - DICE Rockstar Naughty Dog Annapurna Interactive Square Enix FromSoftware Paradox Interactive Sid Meier Klei Supergiant Games CD PROJEKT RED
clash royale was created by supercell, who created the game clash of clans which i was playing at the time.
Fallout 1-2, Baldur's Gate 1-2, Planescape Torment; all created by Black Isle Studios, where some employees formed the Obsidian Entertainment which created KOTOR 1-2, Pillars of Eternity 1-2 and Tyranny -all had impressive world-building and game systems.
Baldur's Gate 3 - Company: Larian Studios Level Designer - Animator
-
Cyberpunk 2077 because of the company, overwatch because of blizzard, can't remember others
Cubia
Penny Arcade Adventures: On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness, the designers

Responses
Mass effect, dragon age
I enjoy high quality soundtracks in games so when playing Crysis 2 and Endless Space 2 Hans Zimmer and G4F Records were important factors for me to enjoy the game even longer
Cyberpunk 2077
Witcher 3
Borderlands 3, game designers
Assasins creed series, Rainbow six siege, Dota 2
I played Zachtronics' games just because the company created a new sort of puzzle genre that's called Zach-like. I played Death Stranding because it was a Hideo Kojima game - he assumes many roles in a game's creation but it'd be accurate to call him "game director" in general.
Monkey Island 2, silent hunter series, nearly all Lucas Arts
Bloodborne, designer
Mam we play games that looks fun, I do not think most players even consider the creative team. Players are only concerned with the outcome...
Cyberpunk 2077, Witcher 3 and Stellaris
None, I only care about gameplay
God of War because of Cory Barlog
Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice, Death Stranding
Pyre and Hades, based on the studio that created them.
God of War series, Uncharted Series Director, digital artists
The Witcher 3

20. Do you have a favorite video game company/director? ***logic question**

Answered: 195

Skipped: 20

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	47,18%	92
No	52,82%	103

21. Please enter your favorite video game company/director. [comment box]

Answered: 86

Skipped: 129

Responses
Bethesda
Bethesda

Responses
Nintendo
There's a few. Hideo Kojima, Yu Suzuki, Shigeru Myamoto to name some well known ones but there are countless teams who would qualify
VALVe
Riot Games
Nintendo
The death stranding creator
EA
Bioware (last game liked was Andromeda btw)
bethesda
Valve
Nintendo
IO Interactive
Paradox Interactive
Nintendo
Blizzard
Anton Hand from Rust Ltd, creator of h3vr
EA
paradox
Riot Games
Paradox Interactive
Akira Tsuchiya
Markus Persson
Josh Sawyer
Nintendo
Cd Projekt Red
Larian
Squaresoft
Bethesda
Obsidian Entertainment and also, Obsidian's predecessor, Troika Games since most of the key people of Troika work at Obsidian now.
Remedy Entertainment / Sam Lake
Remedy Entertainment / Sam Lake
Treyarch
Bethesda
The adventure company
Paradox Interactive
Cyan Worlds
Cyan Worlds
For the time being, that would be Supergiant Games.
BioWare
Tale Worlds
Rockstar Games
EA

Responses
Bethesda
Nintendo
Ubisoft, Valve, Landfall games, and Trese Brothers
Atlus
Blizzard Entertainment. Not Activision-Blizzard.
Bethesda
Rockstar Games
Imsoniac
Ubisoft
Hideo Kojima
Rockstar/Hidetaka Miyazaki
ID Software
Rockstar
Blizzard Entertainment
GGG(grinding gear games)
Brad McQuaid
Annapurna Interactive
Obsidian Entertainment
Larian Studios
Rockstar Games
Ubisoft
Capcom
Blizzard
Activision Blizzard Entertainment
Electronic arts
Bioware
Taleworlds Entertainment
Blizzard, Activision, EA Games
Blizzard
2K
Valve
Arkane Studios, Hideo Kojima, Devolver Digital (even though they are publishers)
CD Project RED
LucasArts
Nintendo
Blizzard
Blizzard
Naughty Dog!
From Software, Hidetaka Miyazaki
Supergiant Games
Devolver Digital
Blizzard

22. Which qualities of your preferred video game company/director led you to your selection? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 90

Skipped: 125

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Gameplay style	77,78%	70
Game genres	74,44%	67
Character/environment design	71,11%	64
Aesthetic design	58,89%	53
Narrative designs	57,78%	52
Continuity of games (ex. sequels & prequels, DLC's)	43,33%	39
Marketing	6,67%	6
Other (please specify)	8,89%	8
Long story short, since there was no FPS in existence on the market with realistic firearms (both mechanics and ballistics) simulation, when I got the Oculus Rift dk2 7 years ago in 2014 I started learning developing in Unity, for the purpose of one day (possibly in 2016 when VR went mainstream with the cv1 and the htc vive) releasing a Virtual Reality gun simulator. Then the week before I received the Vive in 2016 h3vr got announced and it was basically what I was trying to build, so not caring about money and fame at all I just sent the developer every suggestion I could from my experience shooting various guns in real life, and still do nowadays since after 5 years he still updates it with new firearms and accessories. TLDR: because he listens to my suggestions continuously improving guns realism, not bowing to dumbing it down only to sell to stupid kids who never touched a rifle in their life, nor to Facebook/Oculus evil market practices		
music		
Small, dedicated team with a reputation as ethical		
Cheapness		
deathmatch style arena shooter Multiplayer mode		
For Devolver, it's their "curation" - since if they publish a game, it probably has interesting mechanics.		
Quality (Performance, Bugs, Details)		
Streak of games that I enjoy from them		

23. Fill in the blank...

I consider the “author” of a video game to be...

Answered: 188

Skipped: 27

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
The company as a whole (team of developers)	70,21%	132
The director	12,23%	23
The player	10,11%	19
Other (please specify)	7,45%	14
	symbiotic relationship between developers and audience	
	Depends on game. Usually the team, but game directors often play a pivotal role	
	I don't consider anyone who makes or has a hand in creating the game at any point for anything when it comes to a game.	
	I'm not sure how to answer this. Since I work in the games industry I have some insight into this question. This simply depends on the studio, sometimes there is a narrative director responsible for the world building, story, character development. Sometimes there is a creative director and many developers are contributors to the story, with the creative director having the final say. In studios with flatter hierarchies(less leads and compartmentalization), the 'author' tends to be a significant portion of the development team.	
	scriptwriter	
	the person that made it. i don't play any AAA whatsoever, but your survey seems to assume AAA games.	
	Everyone who shapes its state	
	Head Story desingner/writer and has a say in mechanics and future of the game but not as a high director role but more of a comic book artist for their movie adaptations	
	Story/creative writers and producers	
	Mmm just the author?	
	There is a distributed/collaborative authorship that includes all stakeholders described above.	
	I think leaving some choices to player is a fine element in a game but leaving almost all decisions to player is tiresome and makes me wary rather than enjoying the game because of all the consequences so i think directors and the developer team should take the wheels sometimes to let player to focus the gameplay instead of making the player write a story	
	guys who write the story of the game	
	A team full of players in company (as employees)	

24. If a story is adapted from one medium to another (ex. a novel to a video game)
who deserves primary credit as the “author” of the video game?

Answered: 188

Skipped: 27

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Both the source text creator and the video game company	46,28%	87
Video game creative team (writers, coders, developers, etc.)	19,68%	37
The source text creator	14,89%	28
Video game company	8,51%	16
Video game director	2,66%	5
Depends on the game (explain)	7,98%	15
	Depends how much is actually taken from the book	
	If the game copies the plot of the novel back to back than both the novel writer and the video game creative team deserve the primary credit (also if the novel writer influenced the decisions made by creative team), if the game has adapted the concept only or some minor details of the novel but not all of the features (not all characters, not the same plot, etc) than the primary credit should go to the creative team of the game	
	The ‘author’ description confuses me. The answer to the question, in my opinion, depends on the studio, not the game. If I had to pick an option from above, I guess I would pick ‘Video Game Director’.	
	If something is adapted into a game and took the same story and spun it in a way that was different, unique, but true to the spirit of the original I feel that's more on the devs than the author though they should still be respected for creating the basis in the first place. For example, Fall of Cybertron redefined Transformers so well Hasbro made every cartoon/comic/ect. going forward be modeled after its theme/story in some way	
	the source creator in case of an adaptation, shared in case of an original scenario taht uses an existing setting/characters	
	I think it depends because a game in a transmedia universe like Star Wars where a new game may be in the Setting but entirely new characters/plot has a different crediting from a straight novel-game port like say Witcher	
	Depends on the context. If we are talking about video game as a commercial object, the developer /	

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
		publisher (again depends on context). If we're talking about the text, then somewhere between creatives in the development / marketing teams and the source text's authors (depending on the amount of their involvement).
		For instance: I don't see any problem if a Walking Dead game slightly go out of the original scenario, but I'd prefer a Matrix or Harry Potter game follows the actual scenario. It also depends on game genre.
		Depends on how closely the creator of the source text works with the game developers. If they are completely hands off then I would say the primary credit for the video games specifically goes to the developers.
		If it's inspired by the source material but it's basically an original story or an alternative universe of even a spin off creative team is the author as a whole. But if it's strictly strict to the source material it's more the author of the original text
		Directing is entirely different author is the writer of the game, not the coders not the developers. Source material author should always be credited. But writers of the game may change some aspects and they should also be credited.
		it depends on what characterizes the game experience and how much of that was taken from the source
		Depends on how/where one attributes authorship to. Authorship of the story would belong to the creator of the source text; the narrative structure to the developer/designers; and the gameplay would be the player.
		Depends on how it was adapted - does it assume a game form or is the game designed like a blockbuster film where the story is narrated through just cut-scenes and not game mechanics? How much of the original work has been changed?
		If the game revolves around the characters/narrative from the external medium, the source creator and the creative team are the "Authors". If it is only based on the source's universe but doesn't follow the narrative, then the creative team is the author. (IMO)

25. In video game adaptations, (ex. a novel to a video game), would you generally expect that the source text creator(s), if they are alive and still active, also be involved in making the video game adaptation? (Y/N/Don't Know)

Answered: 188
Skipped: 27

Answer Choices	Percentage	Amount
Yes	64,36%	121
No	18,09%	34
Don't Know	17,55%	33



26. Does authorship depend on the kind of text being adapted in order for the author of the source text to be involved in the game-making process? (ex. book authors/movie directors/screenwriters getting credit for the video game adaptation) [comment box]

Answered: 110
Skipped: 105

Responses
No
No.
No, The author should be involved regardless, so that the game's setting truthfully follows the novel's setting
nope
I'm not sure if I understand the question correctly, but I think the authorship depends primarily on the deal made between the game company and the author. Did they agree on just buying the franchise name and just using the name of the source novel for the game or did they agree on actually adapting the source to the game and keeping the key elements of the source and staying true to the original format? In the first case the author should be the game company

Responses
(they created the game, just under an existing name) in second it's the original author since his idea was adapted. Hope this makes sense
it shouldn't but you might expect film directors to be more involved than an novelist as it's a visual medium
Dependent on project. The Witcher games have no input from the book author. Cyberpunk 2077 conversely has a lot of input from the original creator.
Whatever the primary source was, it needs credit. The type of primary source does not matter, it could be an old drawing, saga, book, poem, historic fiction, a painting or other type of written or drawn expressions breaking threshold of originality. That includes creative ideas uttered by word or transported via other sound.
no
Yes
no
No
No
no idea. I just play the games
Yes
no
Very confusing question. From what I understand: Maybe? I think the creative team behind the adapted medium should be involved in the process every step of the way. If it's a movie to game adaptation, the narrative aspect can be influenced but not much else. Similarly if a game is adapted from a book/screenplay etc. It makes even less sense to diverge from the source material.
Not reallu
Not really, though it strongly influences the number of authors who are relevant here.
No
I suppose so.
No
It really depends on how much the author wishes to be involved and if the story is canon.
I don't know
no
Yes
yes
No
not unless they are a stickler about how their world is used
no
yes
Yes
No. Any kind of author no matter what is still an author in my eyes and should be recognized for making the original that made the game possible
No, the story/idea belongs to author.
No, they should always be at least consulted to keep the coherency and consistency of the

Responses
existing universe/characters
Maybe...
I don't know.
Yes and no depending on their creative effect on the narrative and what makes the story that particular story.
Nope
No
I think the source text author helping the video game adaptation would go a long way of making sure it is faithful to the original, but there are nuances to this as "faithful" is not synonymous with a "good" game. I don't think it depends on the text itself, but rather how the original author wants to approach this project and which facets of game design they think they can help/change.
No
Yes.
Yes
Both mixed as they complete each other, it's a game based on a novel. Game concept and the book concept, which both, must be successful
no
I don't know
All authorship demands recognition and involvement.
Depends on how faithful the adaptation is, but I still usually credit the original author more.
?
No
I think it depends on how much the original work can actually be traced to a limited number of people (say, a one-author book versus a film that has writers, directors, actors, artists and technicians and may be part of a franchise and based on a pitch by someone else who wasn't even involved). Crediting Neil Gaiman on a Sandman video game is clear-cut, but would Chris Pratt deserve authorial credit in a videogame of Guardians of the Galaxy? He's neither director nor screenwriter, but his acting shaped one of the characters. And what about the costumers and other artists? If the videogame uses the clothes and space ships they designed, do they deserve authorship too? Or does Disney trump them all as primary author, including the game company?
Yes I think so
Depends on how much of the source material used and in what way? How loyal is the game to source text?
No. If someone wrote a book that inspired a game, I'd expect them to be offered the opportunity to be involved regardless.
Yes
It is better to be a person involved in the game creation team that was or is in the project that is being adapted. If nobody knows what's going on in the adapted project, it will be disasterous on every aspect.
No
Yes
I just think that, most of the time, the creator of the source material should at least have some part in the adaptation.

Responses
No. The author of the source text always has the right to have a say in all adaptations
I think the 'amount' of credit they should get depends on the amount of creative license that is granted/assumed by the game dev team to expand the world/narrative/characters but I believe the source authors should always be credited.
Yes
Yes.
I don't think so.
Question worded poorly.
I dont no
Yes. It will depend on what the game creators want.
Not really
Nope
Yes
Book or movie authors
Depends on the genre and the franchise
It should not?
No.
sure... I couldn't get Spielberg on the phone when I was making Jurassic Majong. Maybe I don't understand the question
Yes
As long as the original creator of source text is interested and/or participated in the game's making he/she should always be credited for the story/world writing/creation
Depends but me is okay with it
No
No
No, I believe that "close reading" of the original text should allow for the developers to be able to reproduce from what was written. It should be true to the authors vision -- as that vision was communicated, which is why the author should not be given a big say.
Yes
No.
for me it depends on what is taken from the text into the game, not the text itself.
Not necessarily.
I do not want to comment.
If the game is like a contuniation and the author lead or just give some consultation to the game company, yes. If they just adapt and existing source, maybe no.
The source and the creator must always get credit, regardless of the kind of the text. (Not necessarily direct involvement in the project, but at least the name should be in the credits)
I'd be more inclined to want to see author credits for adaptations from a novel, but any could be
No
To an extent
Yes
Yes
It does not
Not necessarily.

Responses
Yes - a game that is adopting characters or a setting would have less involvement of the source author than something adopting a specific story.
Yes, the reason why is the characters and the story lines mostly(and should be) depends on the ideas of author.
dunno.
Yes
didn't understand anything from this question
I think so, yes
No
All original content creators should be involved wherever possible to create a more canonical narrative.
I'm not sure
I think it doesn't depend
No idea
No
Yes
No

27. The author of the source text must be involved in the process of the video game adaptation.

Answered: 188

Skipped: 27

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Percentage	10,64%	21,81%	18,09%	38,30%	11,17%
Amount	20	41	34	72	21
Average	3,18		Total	188	

28. *Fidelity refers to the degree to which an adaptation reproduces aspects of the original text in its new version. If the reproduction is very similar to the original, it has a high fidelity.*

Would it be concerning if a video game adaptation does not have a high fidelity to the source text?

Answered: 188

Skipped: 27

	Not at all	Slightly	Undecided	Very	Highly
--	------------	----------	-----------	------	--------

	Concerning	Concerning		Concerning	Concerning
Percentage	10,11%	27,13%	28,72%	24,47%	9,57%
Amount	19	51	54	46	18
Average	2,96		Total	188	

Thank you for participating! If you would be open to have a follow-up interview about your experiences with adapted video games, please leave your contact information. If you have further inquiries about the survey, please email

We really appreciate your input!
[comment box]

Answered: 54
Skipped: 161





Bilkent Üniversitesi

Akademik İşler Rektör Yardımcılığı

Tarih : 19 Nisan 2021

Gönderilen : Serenay Günal

Tez Danışmanı : Colleen Kennedy-Karpat

Gönderen : H. Altay Güvenir
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

Konu : “*Authorship in ...*” çalışması etik kurul onay

Üniversitemiz İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu, 19 Nisan 2021 tarihli görüşme sonucu, “*Authorship in Video Game Adaptations*” isimli çalışmanız kapsamında yapmayı önerdiğiniz etkinlik için etik onay vermiş bulunmaktadır. Onay, ekte verilmiş olan çalışma önerisi, çalışma yürütücüleri ve bilgilendirme formu için geçerlidir.

Bu onay, yapmayı önerdiğiniz çalışmanın genel bilim etiği açısından bir değerlendirmedir. Çalışmanızda, kurulumuzun değerlendirmesi dışında kalabilen özel etik ve yasal sınırlamalara uymakla ayrıca yükümlüsünüz.

Kovid-19 salgını nedeniyle konulmuş olan kısıtlamaların yürürlükte olduğu süre içinde, tüm komite toplantıları elektronik ortamda yapılmaktadır; aşağıda isimleri bulunan Bilkent Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu Üyeleri adına bu yazıyı imzalama yetkisi kurul başkanındadır.

Etik Kurul Üyeleri:

Ünvan / İsim	Bölüm / Uzmanlık	
Prof.Dr. H. Altay Güvenir	Bilgisayar Mühendisliği	Başkan
Prof.Dr. Erdal Onar	Hukuk	Üye
Prof.Dr. Haldun Özaktaş	Elektrik ve Elektronik Müh.	Üye
Doç.Dr. Işık Yuluğ	Moleküler Biyoloji ve Genetik	Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Burcu Ayşen Ürgen	Psikoloji	Üye
Doç.Dr. Çiğdem Gündüz Demir	Bilgisayar Mühendisliği	Yedek Üye
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi A.Barış Özbilen	Hukuk	Yedek Üye

Kurul karar/toplantı No: 2021_04_19_01

Bilkent Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Hakkında:

- Kurul aşağıda ünvan, isim, uzmanlık alanı/bölümü belirtilen 5 asli ve 2 yedek üyeden oluşur:

Prof.Dr. H. Altay Güvenir (Başkan), Bilgisayar Mühendisliği

Prof.Dr. Erdal Onar, Hukuk

Prof.Dr. Haldun Özaktaş, Elektrik ve Elektronik Mühendisliği

Doç.Dr. Işık Yuluğ, Moleküler Biyoloji ve Genetik

Dr.Öğr. Üyesi. Burcu Ayşen Ürgen, Psikoloji

Doç.Dr. Çiğdem Gündüz Demir (Yedek Üye), Bilgisayar Mühendisliği

Dr.Öğr. Üyesi. Arif Barış Özbilen (Yedek Üye), Hukuk

- Kurul toplantılarına katılamayan asli üyelerin yerine yedek üyeler görevlendirilir.
- Kurul en az 3 üye ile toplanabilir.
- Bir başvurunun onay alması konusunda olumsuz oy kullanan üyeler bunu onay belgesindeki isimlerinin yanına muhalefet notu düşerek belirtirler.
- Bir başvurunun onay alabilmesi için en az 3 üyenin olumlu oy kullanması gerekir. Onay belgesinde isimlerinin yanında muhalefet notu bulunmaması, o üyelerin olumlu oy kullandıkları anlamına gelir.

Ethics form for graduate and undergraduate students - human participants

Note - group projects fill in one copy with all your names on it. Consult your project supervisor for advice before filling in the form.

Your name(s): **Serenay Günal**

Project Supervisor: **Colleen Kennedy-Karpat**

- A. Write your name(s) and that of your supervisor above.
- B. Read section 2 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1. Discuss what you are going to put on the form with your project supervisor.
- C. Sign the form and get your project supervisor to complete section 2 and sign the form.

1. Project Outline (to be completed by student(s))

(i) Full Title of Project:

Authorship in Video Game Adaptations

(ii) Aims of project:

The aim of this project is to gather qualitative data about participants' video game experiences and their awareness in authorship in video game adaptations.

(iii) What will the participants have to do? (brief outline of procedure; please draw attention to any manipulation that could possibly be judged as deception; for survey work, a copy of the survey should be attached to this form):

The participants will fill out a survey from the given link. The survey is designed to take about 15 minutes.
A copy of the survey is attached to this form.

(iv) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited? In the case of children state age range. (Any participant who has not lived through his/her 18th birthday is considered to be a child!)

The survey link will be distributed among participants who have experience in video games. Creating threads on platforms such as Steam where gamers are bundled will be preferred.

*If you are testing children or other vulnerable individuals, state whether all applicants have CRB** clearance*

(v) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to? Tick the appropriate boxes and then explain the form that they take in the space below, please draw attention to any content that could conceivably upset your participants).
Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[]; Caffeine[]; Alcohol[]; Other[].

The participants will not be exposed to any stimuli.

- (vi) Consent Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. The form should clearly state what they will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. It should be in language that the person signing it will understand. It should also state that they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. If children are recruited from schools you will require the permission of the head teacher, and of parents. Children over 14 years should also sign an individual consent form themselves. When testing children you will also need Criminal Records Bureau clearance. Testing to be carried out in any institution (prison, hospital, etc.) will require permission from the appropriate authority. (Please include documentation for such permission.)

Who will you seek permission from?

No permission from authorities will be needed.

Please attach the consent form you will use. Write the "brief description of study" in the words that you will use to inform the participants here.

I am conducting a research for my master's thesis on video game studies. The survey aims to gather qualitative data about participants' video game experiences.

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The responses are anonymous. If you proceed with Yes, you are confirming that you are a) older than 18 years of age, and b) consent to your personal data being processed for the purposes of this research.

- (vii) Debriefing - how and when will participants be informed about the experiment, and what information you intend to provide? If there is any chance that a participant will be 'upset' by taking part in the experiment what measures will you take to mitigate this?

A briefing and debriefing will be provided at the beginning and the end of the survey. In no situation the participants will be upset.

- (viii) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data? Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should only be stored if absolutely necessary and then only in such a way that they cannot be associated with the participant's experimental data.

Participants' personal data and identities will not be recorded and will not be included in the research. Their statements will be included in the research anonymously. Name, surname or contact information will not be recorded or reported.

- (vii) Give brief details of other special issues the ethics committee should be aware of.

- (viii) Tick any of the following that apply to your project

- ☐ it uses Bilkent facilities;
- ☐ it uses stimuli designed to be emotive or aversive;
- ☐ it requires participants to ingest substances (e.g., alcohol);
- ☐ it require participants to give information of a personal nature;
- ☐ it involves children or other vulnerable individuals;
- ☐ it could put you or someone else at risk of injury.

Student's signature:

date: 07.04.21

(all students must sign if this is a group project, please initial all other pages)

The signatures here signify that researchers will conform to the accepted ethical principles endorsed by relevant professional bodies, in particular to

Declaration of Helsinki (WMA):

<http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/index.html>

Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA):

<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>

Ethical Standards for Research with Children (SRCR):

<http://www.srcr.org/about-us/ethical-standards-research>

2. Supervisor's assessment (supervisor to complete - circle yes or no)

☒ Yes/No - I confirm that I have secured the resources required by this project, including any workshop time, equipment, or space that are additional to those already allocated to me.

☒ Yes/No - The design of this study ensures that the dignity, welfare and safety of the participants will be ensured and that if children or other vulnerable individuals are involved they will be afforded the necessary protection.

☒ Yes/No - All statutory, legislative and other formal requirements of the research have been addressed (e.g., permissions, police checks)

☒ Yes/No - I am confident that the participants will be provided with all necessary information before the study, in the consent form, and after the study in debriefing.

☒ Yes/No - I am confident the participant's confidentiality will be preserved.

☒ Yes/No - I confirm that students involved have sufficient professional competency for this project.

☒ Yes/No - I consider that the risks involved to the student, the participants and any third party are insignificant and carry no special supervisory considerations. If you circle "no" please attach an explanatory note.

☒ No/Yes - I would like the ethics committee to give this proposal particular attention. (Please state why below)

Supervisor's signature:

date: 21 April 2021

Please e-mail an electronic version of this word processed form (without signatures) along with other application material to the committee to start the evaluation process. Paper copies of all application material, (properly signed where indicated, and initialed on all other pages) should be sent after possible modifications suggested by the committee are finalized.

Bilkent University does not allow the use of students of research investigators as participants. Students who have the potential of being graded by the investigators during or following the semester(s) in which the study is being carried out should not participate in the study. Students may not receive any credit for any university course, with the exception of the GE250/GE251 courses, for their participation. The GE250 and GE251 (Collegiate Activities I and II) courses include an optional activity which encompasses volunteering as a participant in a research project.

Informed Consent Form and Information on Briefing and Debriefing

Study name: Authorship in Video Game Adaptations

Supervisor:

Asst. Prof. Dr. Colleen Kennedy-Karpat

Email:

Phone :

Researcher:

Name: Serenay Günal

Email:

Phone:

Purpose of the research:

The aim of the research is to gather qualitative data about participants' video game experiences and their awareness in authorship in video game adaptations.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

A survey will be done. The participants, if they choose to, will be able to leave their contact information to give further opinions related to the survey.

Risks and discomforts:

Participating in this study does not involve any risks and is not expected to cause discomfort to participants.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you:

There are no major benefits for participating in this study. A chapter of my thesis consists of the results of the survey therefore it will be beneficial for my thesis research. If this research is published, the participants' names or identities will not be reported.

Voluntary participation and Withdrawal from the study:

Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary and if you decide to do so, you can stop filling out the survey at any time. Your decision not to participate in the study or not submitting the survey will not affect your relationship with the researcher or with the university. If you withdraw from the study, your data will not be used for analysis.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of study participants is important for the researcher. The identity of the participants will not be revealed or used at any time, the personal data will not be recorded or transcribed. You will not be asked to provide personal information such as your name, last name or any other contact information that may help identify your personality. You may wish to leave your contact information at the end of the survey. Names, identities and organizational affiliations of participants will not be reported.

In order to participate in the study, please provide a signature next to the statement below.

_____ I agree to participate in the study.

Person carrying out the work

Serenay Günal.

Briefing and Informed Consent Form:

Dear participant,

I am conducting a research for my master's thesis on video game studies. The survey aims to gather qualitative data about participants' video game experiences.

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. The responses are anonymous. If you proceed with Yes, you are confirming that you are a) older than 18 years of age, and b) consent to your personal data being processed for the purposes of this research.

Person carrying out the work

Serenay Günal.....

Information on Debriefing:

Thank you for participating!

The purpose of the survey was aimed to analyze players' video game experiences and their awareness of authorship in video game adaptations.

If you would be open to have a follow-up interview about your experiences with adapted video games, please leave your contact information. If you have further inquiries about the survey, please email

We really appreciate your input!