Narrative Development in Video Games in Metro Universe and Arkhamverse

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Zadar, 2020

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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Zadar, 18. listopad 2020.

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of the academia, many media have found a way to become the subject of research, but never without the resistance from the conservative spectrum of the academia. One of the reasons is because all the new media is always introduced to the world of science through a method of cross-referencing with established and well researched theoretical framework of other media, which then, logically, means that the theories that already exist within the realms of the current mainstream media is usually used to describe the phenomena of the newly researched media. This worked reasonably well throughout history with the introduction of media such as cinema, graphic novels, but is causing problems with the newly established field of game studies, since there were certain dogmatic theories that were shown to be inadequate to be used in the field of game studies while the studies were in the early phases of its development. Considering the fact that the year 2020 is marking the 58th anniversary of the creation of the first publicly available computer game *Spacewar!* and the 40th anniversary of *PAC-MAN*, one of the first iconic video games in the history, it is pretty obvious that the computer games are here to stay, so it's high time to stop justifying gaming studies as a scientific direction, and instead, just treat it as such, with of course, minor and major obscurities in certain aspects of its current field of studies that need to be cleared. Video games are progressing as we speak. The technology is advancing and the different aspects of the production of video games are getting more attention recently. Within several periods of the history of video games, the narrative within the video games was overlooked because of the interactivity bias, and the other way around. Now, in 2020, there are more video games reworks and reboots and sequels than ever, with many of them being story-driven games. Games such as the *Mafia* series are getting a lot of attention, but so did the 2019 *Star Wars: Fallen Order*, which marked a return to the style of the older *Star Wars* games that were story-driven which is, in a way, a rework of the franchise as well as *The last*

of us 2 and *Cyberpunk 2077*. This is certainly an interesting move, because it is insinuating that the game producers and publishers are aware that the average gamer had grown up, and is no longer attracted to "Pulp" action video games that are largely deprived of most of the potential narrative.

Throughout the development of the game studies, one of the largest obstacles was ludology vs. narratology debate which was initiated by Jesper Juul who was one of the first scholars to address his issue. This debate became one of the largest reasons for the fact that game studies are still late, when compared to the development and the importance of video games today. This matter will be further discussed through this paper with the case study being made on two video game franchises, *The Batman Arkham* franchise and the *Metro* franchise that show two completely different approaches to building the narrative of these games with different success as well. The reason why these two franchises were selected lies with the fact that both of these games are transmediations. "Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story." (Transmedia Storytelling 101 — Henry Jenkins). In the case of transmediations that will be the focus of this work, books and graphic novels are transmediated into video games. This method allows a direct stimulation to become a consumer of several different media, rather than sticking to just one, and this process also results in the cannon offering a finished underlying narrative that can be used for the creation of the next sequel and offer an opportunity for the author of the sequel to base more on the creation of new and creative content.

The goal of this paper is to showcase the difference in the role that narrative plays in video games versus other media and how it works when put against interactivity, one of the

main innovative characteristics of video games. Video games have changed a lot in the last 20 years and it is interesting to monitor the development of video games, and the accompanying theory of games studies in the last decades. Most game studies scholars, when trying to prove the existence and the characteristics of the narrative in games, have used games that are usually less known games (niche games and indie games), or games from the earlier days of video games such as *Myst* (with some exceptions, especially with Bio Shock). However the trend of narrative-driven games is making a big comeback throughout the last decade and became quite popular. A lot of these games are "interactive story games" that are very similar to *Myst,* a game that raised many eyebrows in its prime time, with the exception of new games being far more advanced and interactive due to the advances in technology. Still, those video games are not going to be the focus of this paper, instead, this paper will be taking a look at genre-hybrid video games that are to a greater or lesser extent, striving to give the player a proper story-driven experience, with the underlying advanced game mechanics that allow player to read, learn and play at the same time. By some scholars, this is considered to be a utopia, but this paper will try to show that the video game world is slowly approaching this utopia by evermore improving on both, the stories used in the game, and the interactivity of the game, resulting in the ultimate game immersion.

2.0. "DEFINING *VIDEO GAME*"

Video game industry has been growing exponentially for years now, to the point where it became one of the world's leading industries. *The Asean Post* reports that "The global video game market is forecasted to be worth US$159 billion in 2020 – about four times box office revenues (US$43 billion in 2019) and nearly three times music industry revenues (US$57 billion in 2019), said the World Economic Forum (WEF).". Still it seems inappropriate that the field of studies of video games within the area of human sciences in many countries is largely overlooked. In the field of the IT, the video game development is

advancing in very fast pace worldwide, and Croatia isn't an exception to this, since video game development specialized university studies are expected to be opened in 2022 (Šimić), and high school course for "video game development technicians" had started in 2019 (Gelenčir). But video games need to be addressed from the standpoints of sciences other than just the IT, such as sociology, philosophy, psychology, philology etc. in order to gain a broader understanding and acceptance in society.

Depending on the context, we can say that video games are very young and yet we can also say that it's also a well matured media. Most agree that *Spacewar!* (1962) was the first video game to have ever been developed, but it took another 9 years to develop the first widely available *Computer Space* (1971) arcade video game and another year before the first extremely popular video game reaches the market in the shape of *PONG* (1972) (Wolf, 2008: xvii). This means that commercial video games have been around for 48 years. When you then take into consideration the fact that the first commercial film was shown only 125 years ago (History.com), it seems that we should be somewhat more advanced in most aspects of the video games studies.

Therefore, in order to provide a proper introduction into the topic of video games studies, it is important to clarify some essential terms.

"*Video game*": **"**an electronic game in which players control images on a video screen " ("Definition of VIDEO GAME"). The term video game might seem to be pretty clear to most, but Mark J.P. Wolf highlights the fact that its "usage has varied a great deal over the years and from place to place" (3) so he primarily defines the term *video game* as a *game* that uses "*video*" technology. Wolf also addresses the occurrence of both terms *video games* and *videogames*, where the first is "consistent with *board game* and *card game*, in a way of seeing video games as another type of games, while the latter one describes video games as a

different type of technology comparable to terms like *videotape* and *videodisc*" (ibid.). Wolf explains the terms *computer games* and *electronic games* that have been used as synonyms to *video games*, but makes a clear distinction between them since the first two terms don't require visuals, while the term *video games* wouldn't necessarily require a computer (ibid.). Even though all three of these terms imply exclusiveness to them, the term *video game* is "more accurate in regard to what kinds of games are meant when the term is used in common parlance" (ibid.). According to Wolf, video games feature common elements such as conflict, rules, player ability, valued outcome, "identity of the computer as a player" (ibid.). What is interesting is that throughout Wolf's entire book, the terms such as storyline or narrative are not seen as key elements to video games.

Salen and Zimmerman take an even more structuralized approach by also defining the term "game", and they offer 8 different definitions that all come from different fields of study. It is needless to say that these definitions are as different, as the fields of study of their creators are. So they take them all into account, and sum it all up into the next definition: "A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that results in a quantifiable outcome."(Salen and Zimmerman 93). They move further into defining "digital games" through four traits: "*Immediate but narrow interactivity*" (Successful use of mouse, keyboard or other peripherals, to which the game directly responds); "*Manipulation of information*"(in a way that the game can show or hide certain information to the player and then selectively reveal some of it throughout the game); "*Automated complex systems*" (all automated aspects of the video game such as the AI of the opponents, graphics engine etc.; "*Networked communication*" (All types of multiplayer gaming, either through internet connection, or local connection, with a result of players' extensive interaction and communication. (Salen and Zimmerman 102).

2.1. GAME STUDIES

On the surface, it seems like the definition of game studies is simple, but it is not until one attempts to structuralize theories and methodologies that includes all academic disciplines that are dealing with games, into one whole unit that can be presented and taught to students, that matters become extremely complicated (ibid.). Therefore, Mayra claims that if the goal is to include all theories from all academic fields, it could easily lead away from the "science of everything" to the "study of nothing". This is why it is necessary to address the historical development of games studies in order to define its current identity, which is again, far from its final form (6).

"Game studies: a multidisciplinary field of study and learning with games and related phenomena as its subject matter." (Mayra 5).

There are very few institutions in the world that specialize in this field, and as long as it stays this way, game studies are depending on individual enthusiasts, that are officially anchored in a different academic field, for the development of game studies, which is not sustainable. In many cases, rules applied to these scholars' original fields can be easily applied to the field of game studies, but unfortunately, not in all cases, which is causing a lot of issues in the development of the studies (5). An important feature, that is exciting and innovative in one way, but at the same time very challenging, is the feature of interactivity. According to Mayra, games are interactive by heart, and game creators today are learning how to make interactivity an enjoyable experience, to the point that it is becoming popular to refer to designing features and applications as the "design of experiences" (6).

Initially, serious work on the topic of video games didn't start until the late 90's and two very influential books: "Espen Aarseth's *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, suggesting that hypertexts, adventure games and MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons) provided a

fresh perspective to a form of textuality that requires 'non-trivial effort' from their readers to traverse the text… and *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, by Janet Murray, an influential work discussing the future possibilities for interactive drama and narrative." (Mayra 8). These two works are representing two different approaches that will collide and start the first debate within the community. Two more important works got published in 1999 by Gonzalo Frasca and Jesper Juul that will start the "ludology-narratology debate" (ibid.). Frasca proposed the term Ludology and it signifies the ""yet non-existent "discipline that studies game and play activities" , while narratology signifies the "concept "invented to unify the works that scholars from different disciplines were doing about narrative" (ibid.). Jesper Juul within his text *A clash Between Game and Narrative* established the early position of the ludologist who saw interactive fiction as a utopia due to the "fundamental conflicts between the player-controlled interactivity happening in present time, which is at the heart of games, and narrator-organized representation of events, at the heart of narratives." (Mayra 9). Juul claimed that it is possible to have a game without narrative elements and that the fact that computer games don't tell a story can be seen as strength of the computer games, which resulted in scholars pushing games in the opposite direction, creating interactive story games (ibid.). This showed that video games cannot use some of the traditional concepts especially from the field of narratology, and should be "considered in their own terms as forms of art and culture, were in some sense unique, and in need of their own theories and methodologies of research" (Mayra 9). A big step forward was made when an online journal, *Game Studies* was started in 2001, with Espen Aarseth as its main editor, and the formation of the Digital Games Research Association started by academics (ibid.). This debate is still unresolved, with some changed standpoints, but according to Mayra, it seems that "games can be several different things, depending on how one approaches them.

Looking for narratives, one can find (or construct) them, and it is equally possible to search and find the essence of games in their interactive character – in their gameplay." (Mayra 10).

3.0.NARRATIVE

Ever since the 90s, the term narrative went from being applied only in humanities, to the point where "few words have enjoyed so much use and suffered so much abuse as narrative and its partial synonym, story." (Ryan, "Toward a definition" 22). Some use it without knowledge of what it represents, while some use it in order to avoid strong positions:

> "One says 'narrative' instead of 'explanation' or 'argumentation' (because it is more tentative); one prefers 'narrative' to 'theory,' 'hypothesis,' or 'evidence' (because it is less scientistic); one speaks of a 'narrative' rather than 'ideology' (because it is less judgmental); one substitutes 'narrative' for 'message' (because it is more indeterminate)." (ibid.)

This means that the term narrative started being used widely in a metaphorical way, but what does it actually mean? The answer to this question is not easy, and there are many definitions that have imperfections, and Ryan concluded that the definition of narrative "should support, even entail, statements like these, but it does not have to spell them out: Narrative is about problem solving. Narrative is about conflict. Narrative is about interpersonal relations. Narrative is about human experience. Narrative is about the temporality of existence." ("Toward a definition" 24).

The theory of narrative originally stemmed from the world of literature, so it is natural that with the development of the new media, the theory had to somewhat change in order to adapt to the new ways of seeing things, once it was finally accepted that the term "text" was not reserved exclusively for the media of literature. According to Bal *text* can be defined as a "finite, structured whole composed of signs" that can be "linguistic units, such as words and sentences, but they can also be different signs, such as cinematic shots and sequences, or

painted dots, lines, and blots" (5), while a *narrative text* would be a "text in which an agent or subject conveys to an addressee ("tells" the reader, viewer, or listener) a story in a medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof." (ibid.).

Furthermore, Bal defines the *story* as "the content of that text and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and coloring of a fabula, and defines *fabula* as a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (ibid.). Bal considers this "three-layer distinction – text, story, fabula, a good basis for the study of narrative texts", but emphasizes that even though it is possible to analyze these layers independently, it doesn't mean that they exist independently (6).

Moreover, one of the more challenging aspects of the theory of narrative is the fact that it is impossible to claim something "objectively". Reading itself, together with all the processes that happen after reading Interpretation is, just like analysis and description very subjective, and Bal calls this "intersubjectivity" (3). Furthermore, every reader is "susceptible to cultural constraints", meaning that every narrative analysis is actually a cultural analysis (Bal 10). Because of the different approaches that are defined by the cultural background of every consumer of content, what could happen in Bal's words is that "someone else may use the same concepts differently, emphasize other aspects of the text, and, consequently, produce a different description." (4).

Moreover, the events, actors, time and location make up the *elements* of fabula, which, when organized in a different ways, result in the possibility of a different emotional responses (ibid.). In order to achieve narrative text you need to have a story told to recipients through a medium using signs, and the agent that utters the signs is also producing them, which means that it is not the creator of the content: writer, painter etc. that can be seen as the agent. This agent is a "fictitious spokesman" that is also known as the *narrator* (ibid.). Narrator is not

always the agent uttering the narrative, because whenever direct speech occurs, this role is given to the actor uttering, and in the analysis of the text, it is necessary to define who is doing the narrating (ibid.).

3.1. NARRATOR

As was mentioned earlier, Bal claims that in order to be able to analyze a text, it is always necessary to determine who is performing the role of the narrator (6). The reason why this is so is because every narrator possesses a character that is applied to the text that is narrated, and in this way the narrator is coloring the fabula with his own point of view (Bal 12). Just like with having layers in the narrative text, we have layers in the narration as well, where we have the narrator, the focalizer and the actor, which can or don't have to overlap in a single "person" (ibid.).

According to Abbott, "Two aspects of narration that always have significant consequences are the sensibility of the narrator and his or her distance from the action", which entails that narrator can possess different characteristics, such as "brilliant, dumb, deranged, passionate, or cod as ice", which has a result in how the story is narrated (42).

"Traditionally, narratives have been called, according to the *voice* of the narrator, *first-person* or *third-person* novels, with an exceptional *second-person* experiment." (Bal 13). This also tells us how far the narrator is from the action and the third - person narrator tends to be more reliable and inspires "more confidence in the information and views they convey"(Abbott 42). Another division can be made between an *external* narrator that never refers to itself as a character, and a *character-bound* narrator who is at the same time a narrator and an actor (ibid.). A feature of the character-bound narrator is in the fact that it is personified, which implies that the narrator is telling the truth about him/herself, even if the fabula seems unlikely to be real, the reader is expected to trust the narrator, while the external

narrator tells a true story about someone else (Bal 14). Abbott on the other hand, argues that the third-person narrators often possess developed personalities, which can result in the consumer's suspicion of the reliability of the narrator (42).

An important element of the narrative text is the non-narrative comments that can hide certain ideological statements that can be visible from the narrative as well, but not necessarily which can be seen in the use of adverbs such as fortunately and unfortunately which shows narrators bias towards a certain opinion (Bal 23). So, how did the *text* get transferred into the digital world?

3.2. DEFINING CYBERTEXT

Espen Aarseth approaches text from a completely different angle where he pays attention to the consumer and the way how a consumer approaches the text. He uses a term *ergodic* which is a concept where a user has to make "nontrivial effort" in order to be able to understand the text. This automatically means that there is such a text that does not require nontrivial effort which would be called *nonergodic* (1). Aarseth claims that *cybertext*, which is a type of a text made under the influence of the mechanics established in the world of computers, such as hypertext, adventure games etc., is different from conservative text by not being linear, which means that it is different in every reading and can be indeterminate (2). A problem that Aarseth then approaches is the problem of the perception of text, because he was confronted with a thought that every text that is being read is processed linearly, but he emphasizes that he is not focusing on "what was being read", but "what was being read *from"* (2). The *cybertext* is different in a way that, once you make a certain decision, you are taking a route that closes all other possible routes, which means that there could be a part of the story that you are completely missing out on, and this is something that doesn't happen in the traditional literature (ibid.). The interaction between the reader and the narrative is narrowed down to observation in the traditional style of literature, to the point of the reader being

compared to an observer of the football game, while the consumer of the *cybertext* is being compared to the player in the game, that can control the outcome of the game, and move the game in a different direction (Aarseth 4). Therefore the reader's pleasure of a contemporary text is sort of a voyeur pleasure which is in Aarseth's words "safe, but impotent", while *cybertext*'s consumer is not safe, and such a high amount of intervention is required of him, that it can only result in intimacy or failure (ibid.). When this intimacy is achieved, the consumer wants to achieve narrative control: "I want this text to tell my story; the story that could not be without me.", which can in some of the more personalized games with many possible outcomes, especially MMORPG games be a true statement to a certain extent, even though it is in most cases "the sense of individual outcome is illusory, but nevertheless the aspect of coercion and manipulation is real." (Aarseth 4). Furthermore, Aarseth claims:

> "cybertext reader is a player, a gambler; the cybertext is a game-world or world-game; it is possible to explore, get lost, and discover secret paths in these texts, not metaphorically, but through the topological structures of the textual machinery. This is not a difference between games and literature but rather between games and narratives. To claim that there is no difference between games and narratives is to ignore essential qualities of both categories. And yet, as this study tries to show, the difference is not clear-cut, and there is significant overlap between the two. "(5)

In addition, Aarseth also highlights that the term *cybertext* signifies a "broad textual media category"…."and not in itself a literary genre of any kind"…"and they share a principle of calculated production, but beyond that there is no obvious unity of aesthetics, thematics" etc., but "is a perspective I use to describe and explore the communicational strategies of dynamic texts." (ibid.). In addition, he concludes that *cybertexts* possess some aspects of narrative, just as it is the case with some other non-narrative literary genres and he abandons the possibility of applying pure literary forms and genres in the case of *cybertext*, but instead

proposes to describe the various types of *cybertext* as "synthetic, composite genres", which, when analyzed, can actually give us additional clues to what is actually narrative (ibid.).

Aarseth's motivation for writing this book comes from the wish to challenge the direct application of "theories of literary criticism to a new empirical field, seemingly without any reassessment of the terms and concepts involved" which can lead to misinterpretations of the new digital media; but he also wishes to challenge the opinions of the critics that claim that the new text media is completely different from anything before, rendering the ability of using, at least some aspects of traditional theories, completely impossible (14). What can turn into a problem is the transition of some of the problems within literary theories into the study of *cybertext* which could result in even more problems for the new media, making it even harder to entirely map out the new field of study and could ultimately divert attention from what is actually important, and it is not necessarily exact media technologies, nor is it the competition between new and old media, but what can the new media tell us "about the principles and evolution of human communication" (Aarseth 16-17).

To conclude, it was important to define what is *cybertext*. The answer to this question would be that it is "a perspective on all forms of textuality, a way to expand the scope of literary studies to include phenomena that today are perceived as outside of, or marginalized by, the field of literature-or even in opposition to it, for purely extraneous reasons.", which coincided with the technological advances made in the 90s (18).

4.0. NARRATOLOGY VS. LUDOLOGY

Even though Aarseth's views on ergodic literature and the role of video games seems quite controversial, the real debate, which resulted in the growing pains of a young empirical field, actually only started with two scholars; Jesper Juul and Gonzalo Frasca taking the side of ludology, and nobody taking the side of narratology. Which resulted in a one sided debate

that still managed to give some results, since it was the first major theoretical investment into video game studies in general.

In Juul's opinion, narrative and video games cannot be combined because they are too different. Yet he does admit that the creation of interactive narrative is quite possible, but, according to him "it does not create something new, something just equal to the sum of its parts" (76). He agrees to the critics of video games that claim that video games cannot achieve an experience of a good story, such as is in the case of film and literature, and that they are lacking in depth of content.

In addition to this, Juul claims that a game whose content would be closer to a content of a novel, with less violence and action and more narration would be always unsatisfactory to play (ibid.). He wonders if it would be possible to create an alternative utopistic game that would not control the entire plot, but would, instead of constructing the certain amount of endings that should be played out, construct a certain amount of elements that are intercompatible, and would create random patterns (ibid.).

The focus of the game development in the 90's was, according to Juul on "make the computer game a story" and the "experience of the user/player was forgotten", but the issue at the time was that computers lacked sufficient cognitive skills which results in unnatural digitally simulated human behavior that wasn't very smart (Juul 77-78).

Moreover, a topic that is innovative in the aspect of video games is the aspect of space, which in video games has to be much larger by default because in the overwhelming majority of situations, we have the aspect of travelling from point A to point B, which is in literature and films omitted in the cases where it isn't a part of the narrative, unlike video games where it usually happens in real-time (Juul 79).

An interesting observation on the games in the 90's is that games usually didn't feature a morale system, which is something that is not necessarily limited by any technological limitations, but according to Juul, "player's reluctance against getting caught in a too limited game universe that leads to the slightly amoral character of many games" (ibid.).

Moreover, computer games also possess characteristics of structuralism and post-structuralism, since every time a player plays a game he can have a unique experience which would be characterized as poststructuralist. However, this seeming non-linearity of computer games is very deceptive, since all the options that a player has are programmed, and are the "product of some formally defined mechanisms" (Juul 81). This duality found with computer games is according to Juul, uncommon in the human sciences, and it can help us understand the "potential conflict between the construction of the text/game and the material, used for presenting this construction. This realization helps us telling the difference between the description and the phenomenon, be-tween the advertising and the game before us." (ibid.).

In conclusion to Juuls' theory, he claims that the critics' opinion of computer games as a medium that is not telling good stories is to a fair point correct, which in his opinion, doesn't devalue this medium, but is rather a point to clarify that their qualities lie with other features. One of these features is the "replayability" and the motivation to research the world of the game and get better at completing it, while if more story is added to the game, it "inevitably leads to less freedom and less game, and to the player playing the game fewer times" (81). The lack of narrative can become one of the reasons why games are more captivating then literature which ultimately leads to the better replay factor, and Juul believes that the fact that computer games do not tell stories can be seen as their strength (ibid.).

Frasca expanded on Aarseth's thoughts as well, by admitting that computer games possess elements that are common with the elements of narrative, but he highlights the angle

which is sometimes ignored when looking into this subject, which is to analyze video game primarily as type of a game (Frasca). It seemed to Frasca that studying analog games even before video games came to existence, seemed to have been neglected and perceived to have a much lower academic status, especially when compared to narrative. Frasca claims that his goal is "not to replace the narratologic approach, but to complement it. We want to better understand what is the relationship with narrative and videogames; their similarities and differences." and in order to do this, he calls for a an affiliation of all the disciplines that are researching games and play under one study that he proposes to be called *ludology.* Frasca attempts to clarify clumsy terminology with terms such as *play* and *game,* both of which can be used as a noun and a verb, potentially causing issues, so he proposes, according to Caillois, to use *paidea* instead of the noun "play", and *ludus* instead of the noun "game", in order to evade misunderstandings. He presents the definitions for *paidea* as a "Prodigality of physical or mental activity which has no immediate useful objective, nor defined objective, and whose only reason to be is based in the pleasure experimented by the player"*,* and for *ludus: "*a particular kind of *paidea*, defined as an activity organized under a system of rules that defines a victory or a defeat, a gain or a loss.". As a result of looking somewhat deeper into the ludus, Frasca thinks that a better understanding of the relationship of narrative and games can be achieved, since ludus is made up of a defined set of rules that, when described looks quite simple to description of the narrative roles, but concludes that video games produce narrative, but are not in their essence a narrative.

Frasca touches on the topic of play (paidea), which is the way how he characterizes software that doesn't have a clearly defined goal, such as simulators. The point of this type of software is not in completion or victory, but in the "ride" itself, such as the case of flight simulators, which could have the rules of defeat, but not necessarily the rules of winning.

To conclude, Frasca highlights that the approaches he took here were done in a very basic way and that it is necessary to have a more complete study that would go much deeper into the subject, but he does not entirely discard the option of narrative being used in video games, he is rather debating its position within them instead.

4.1. AFTERMATH

Juul again referred to this topic in a later text, where he clarifies that he is not against "more meaningful game content", because it is something that everyone is wishing for, but in his opinion, the narrative theory would not become a key to understanding video games. The whole debate didn't really advance a lot, but the debaters moved away from it entirely, and Juul claims that it became quite tiresome because a lot of people that commented on it don't understand narrative to begin with, and thinks that this debate should move to the aspect of the design of video games. He offers several ways of how people see ludology, and instead of using a definition that excludes traditional narratology, he uses a theory that is inclusive in all possible fields of research which is that *ludology* is the study of games. In a post scriptum of this text Juul qoutes Susana Tosca and Marie-Laure Ryan: "ludologists are fighting an imaginary narratological straw man – indeed that the narratologists do not exist at all". He admits that now it seems to be true, but that at the time he started writing about it, narrative was "at the height of vogue, which sparked his revolt towards narrative." (Juul)

It's a shame that Juul and Frasca were not challenged by somebody taking the opposite side. This debate resulted in many important remarks for the development of the games studies, and chances are that, if ludologists were met with somewhat of a harder stance, the debate would have ended sooner, or with better results, since the debate would actually have been two sided.

Instead of looking further into the opinions of the pioneers of ludology and if and how they've (not) changed throughout the 21st century, it is necessary to see where did it lead the younger scholars coming into this an even younger science of video games studies.

A good example of an open debate of Tom Bisell and Simon Ferrari, two video game critics that find each other on the opposite sides in the ludology – narrotology debate. Tom Bisell, claims that, within the academy, there hasn't been enough "serious writing about games", which was answered by Ferrari with the opinion that video games should be analyzed from the standpoint of the "wider tradition of games". Bisell disagrees thinking that video games are very different and far from analog games because of the "intellectual and emotional potency of the video game experience that most separates them from my experiences playing analog games. ".

Furthermore, Ferrari as a ludologist is not interested about videogame storytelling at all, and argues this with the fact that most people, including game designers think that they are interested in the "storytelling potential", but the games that obsess them are usually not story driven games, such as Halo, Madden etc. Ferrari offers two reasons for this, one of them is that they might be disappointed with their past playing experiences, and the other one, which he favors, is that this is the case of a conditioned response that is the result of educational indoctrination which demands for a more serious reason for studying games, resulting in their answer: storytelling. Ferrari claims that "games are systems of rules and artificial spaces before they are stories. And if we want to foster creativity, depth, and breadth in the design of future games, then we need to begin by teaching the reading, writing, and critique of rule systems at an early age." Additionally, he thinks that literature based education is unfairly heavily represented at the expense of visual media in schools.

Another reason why Ferrari doesn't care about storytelling is because he finds the video game stories terrible in every way, and also by skipping through the cut scenes and text bubbles one gets to save time in order to play more games. Nevertheless Ferrari claims that he would like to see storytelling in games approving, instead of being just a thin veneer of story applied at the last moment in order to polish the game, but that writers should never become creative leads of future games. Bisell agrees with him that writers should never be creative leads because video games are not a "writer's medium" and there is so much work put into video games from many different aspects, that a mere storyteller would never be able to manage the process. Therefore he concludes that a good story is an important piece of puzzle, but it should be achieved "without any sacrifice in mechanics or rule systems".

Ferrari does admit that there are very few people that are persistent in writing on the subject of video games from the point of view of a narratologist, since they usually come from other field, where if they have that ability, they usually advance to other positions and topics, which could provide a reason to why the narratologists position in all the debates was somewhat unfulfilled.

The question is, why don't scholars see development of games studies as important as other studies? Moreover, stemming from Bisell, who writes about video games from an academic standpoint of an English teacher, but also writes scripts for games, and considering the size of the gaming industry, why do we have more and more books whose rights are bought away by the movie industry, but not the video game industry, and writers writing scripts for video games? Why is it so rare that a famous book author, writes the plot for an AAA game, but it isn't as rare that they write scripts for blockbusters?

A part of the answer to this can be found in Roger Ebert's famous quote: "Video games can never be art" (Ebert). Roger Ebert, a famous film critic became a big advocate for

this statement through several of his blog posts on this topic that drew quite a lot of attention. In one of these posts he reaffirms his opinion by reviewing a *TED talk* by Kellee Santiago, a video game producer and designer who claimed that "video games already ARE art", yet she cited Ebert saying that there are currently no games that could be put side to side with works of great writers, composers, filmmakers etc, because video games are currently in a very early stage of their development, to the point where she compares them to the prehistoric drawings found in caves. Ebert disagrees with this statement, claiming that he finds far more art in the cave paintings than in video games and he compares video games with different sport games that cannot be defined as art. Therefore, according to him, a video game cannot be art due to its basic form of a *game*. Ebert then refers to games that have no rules, that Frasca would refer to as *paideas* which could technically be considered art since they are technically not games, but he claims that: "an immersive game without points or rules… ceases to be a game and becomes a representation of a story, a novel, a play, dance, a film. Those are things you cannot win; you can only experience them."

Of course, the topic of this paper is not video games as an art form, therefore this analysis will not proceed into that direction, but Ebert's opinion can give us an insight into a possible reason why video games are barely finding its way into the academy, but also the reason why artists, that are not a part of milieu of video games to begin with, do not find their way to video games as easily as they do to films. Kellee Santiago's claim that we should already consider video games as an art form is not good because of the lack of self-criticism of the "artistic medium of video games". Of course, there is a lot of visual art that goes into the creation of video games, and most people that are behind the visual representation of games could be seen as the artists in the same way that master builders that put together all the artistic pieces in order to build a cathedral can be seen as artists. But in Ebert's words, can the cathedral itself be seen as art? Santiago's claim would be much easier to defend if

ludology was well organized and developed and Santiago did make one really great point, with comparing video games with cave drawings. While reading the theory behind video games, I couldn't help but wonder, why was everyone so fixed on the analysis of the games at hand, without any kind of possible future projections made from the current context. Even at times it seemed that some of the theoreticians stopped playing video games a long time prior to writing that text. At times I really wondered, is it possible that a lot of what the scholars based a lot of their theories on current technological limitations of video games.

A good example of this can be found in Juul's remark where he considers that the narrative theory cannot be used with video games because of the problems of narrative translation across different media (Juul). So as an example of the fact that it is impossible to translate narrative from film to video game he offered an example of an arcade game *Star Wars* from 1983 where the player flies an X-wing in order to destroy the Death Star, but the rebel fleet is missing in the beginning but also later when, just like in the movie the player flies closer to the Death Star, giving all the credit to the player for destruction of the Death Star, which is obviously because of technical limitations (ibid.). He also gives an example of *Mortal Kombat* games that, upon being transferred from video games to movies, got severely expanded in narrative that didn't exist in the original video game. Again he fails to observe that a fighting game from 1992 didn't have any technical predispositions to have a well-developed narrative. It feels a bit unfair to criticize these authors 20 and more years after these texts were published, since it wasn't easy to see, at the time, the direction where video games were headed in the future, but the same can be found with the authors analyzing video games in the late 2010s, especially the ones analyzing video games from a game design-point of view.

The world of video games is changing, gamers from the 90's are aging, and some of them are actually still active players. Nevertheless, in order to keep aging gamers gaming,

video games need to be more than just games. They need to possess a certain depth, and one of the possible ways of achieving this is for them to have a good narrative. What used to happen is that as gamers used to be mostly children, and as they became adults they would look for this depth in other media such as literature, films, etc., while their kids were playing (video) games. These days it is not hard to find whole families of gamers. And there are video games for all generations because video games with narrative are covering the adults' needs for "deeper" content. Ludologists have been asking for narrative to be put second, in favor of gaming mechanics, which at some point might have seemed as a revolutionary statement, especially coming from young scholars such as Juul and Frasca. In the meantime, this made a big trip from being a revolutionary statement in the 90's when some of the games unsuccessfully tried to implement narratives into primitive games, to the point where this is, as a matter a fact conservative statement for today's standards.

5.0. NARRATIVE IN GAMES

"The very act of narration in games defies the conventional understanding of how stories are told because the player must participate in the narration and because the story is also told by the environment in response to the player's actions – all nonverbally" (Thabet 4).

One could have noticed that, while describing the narratology vs. ludology debate, the narrotology side was not fairly represented in this paper. This is because the narratologysts, or how Frasca refers to them as narrativists such as Janet Murray, usually positioned themselves on the middle ground within this "debate". This "debate that never took place" did at least draw some attention, and drew some of the authors that researched narrative towards video games. Therefore this text will now look into the narrative aspects of video games.

Thabet, even though a narratologist, approaches the matter from a critical point of view and defines two questions that need answering: "How this story is told? And how should it be interpreted?". Considering the specific position that the player assumes in storytelling of

video games, certain concepts such as: narration, characters, events and time need to be reconsidered, but then there is also a matter of "two conflicting narrators telling the same story", the player and the computer (Thabet 4). He continues to claim that he treats games as "spatial, audiovisual, and intelligently responsive story worlds in which the player assumes the roles of a co-narrator and protagonist", and draws connections with traditional and film narrative concepts (ibid.). Gameplay should be seen as an act of narration, which puts him right on the opposite end of the spectrum from Jesper Juul, claiming that establishing the roles of the player in storytelling will help define the narrative since the player assumes three different and independent roles (in the case of the first-person game): the role of the protagonist, the role of the narrator, and the role of the audience, which means that the player is both participating in the telling and the reception (Thabet 5). Thabet moves on to compare the term *text* in written literature to the term *world* in video games, and claims that the different "acts of reading, seeing, watching, listening, navigating, controlling, and effectuating are afforded in a fictional world programmed to make its visitor live and tell a personal story through gameplay" which is then paralleled with reader-response theorists such as Rosenblatt , Iser and Holland where they claim that the text is: serving as a blueprint that guides the readers reading, which is full of gaps that readers have to fill in order to create a story, or alternatively, that readers turn the text into their own world where they can deal with their feelings (ibid.). This means that readers, in combination with their previous knowledge, through the processes of retrospection and anticipation create the meaning of the text which all of a sudden doesn't seem to be too far away from what player does in video games (Thabet 6).

Therefore, gameplay doesn't change everything we know about narrative, but it makes narratives "simultaneous and more complex". This can be seen through Thabet's example of the game *BioShock* which is an adaptation of Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged* where the

consumer goes from observing the protagonist to being a protagonist, which means that the story is about what the consumer sees and hears, but also what the consumer does, feels, perceives and learns, in essence what does everything mean to the player (ibid.). The difference between the emotional and psychological processes that happen when a reader reads a text and a player plays a game is that when it comes to the reader, these processes happen in his or her head, while in the case of the player it can be happening within the game in "a more material manner" (Thabet 8). A lot of what actually happens within the game depends on the amount of input a player puts in, that can relate to his actual world self, or a metaphorical version of the player, and the example of this can be the way the player decides his character will look like, to the point of choosing certain characteristics which then defines our gameplay, because "characters react and events happen and change under the player's personal influence" (ibid.).

Thabet therefore argues that the choices we make within the game that help to define how the protagonist is presented result in performance of the player, and that player's performance, would result in the plot and the "communication between the player and the system" (13). Thabet quotes Richard Hand when he says that "performance is an important point of access to studying games from a dramatic perspective" and establishes the connection between film and video games on the fact that both media are made up of the substance such as "text, pictures, sounds in the case of film", which is similar to games': "written language, cinematic clips (cut-scenes), pictures, graphics and the three filmic sound tracks (dialogue, music and effects)", and this would mean that video games belong to the same category of genres with plays films and operas (ibid.).

As a rule, most narratologists claim that narrative art requires a story and a storyteller, projecting a voice into the text and creating a discourse, which is the way how the content is presented, but as Thabet says, as soon as player moves his or her hands of the controller or a

keyboard, everything stops, and the only thing still managing the discourse is the computer running the game (17). "Therefore the story scene is presented by both, the player and the system" (ibid.). Clearly, according to Thabet, the player performs the role of a narrator in video games, who is a real human, not an anthropomorphized textual entity (20). The control that the player assumes within video games can be quite radical, and it is visible through Thabet's example from *BioShock* where a player has to choose whether to kill an orphan for better benefits, or to keep the orphan alive and have a harder gameplay (21). As was stated earlier, according to Juul, games used to fail to provide a moral system, even though, at the time it was technically very much possible to create but players weren't very eager to position themselves into a morally questionable position. Marie-Laure Ryan has a similar opinion, and she argues that this is the reason why the possible future "holodeck" as a model of digital narrative isn't very likely, because who would like to put themselves into a position of a character such as Ema Bovary or Gregor Samsa. But then again why would anyone put themselves into the positions of Senua from *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice,* a game that gives people insight into how it is like to have a mental disease; or *Dark Souls*, a game within which the player repeatedly dies only to die again (Ryan). This example shows us that games are changing in character towards a more narrative medium that does possess a transparent, or a subtle moral mechanism.

In addition to the topic of narrator, it is also helpful to define a narrator in the world of film in order to see if there is a similarity with film in that aspect as well. Thabet brings out arguments made by several theoreticians in order to separate two narrators in the world of film, a voice over narrator that usually represents a character from the film, and the cinematic narrator or intrinsic narrator, fundamental narrator which are all alternative names for the cinematic narrator, who is not actually human, but a telling authority in the film that makes up all the auditory and visual content that is presented to the viewer (24). To a certain point this

can be compared with the role of the game (or the computer itself) as a co-narrative factor in video games. According to Thabet, Jahn calls this phenomenon the "filmic composition device", which "arranges, edits, and composes this information for telling a filmic narrative (FCD). A film shows us what the FCD has arranged for us to see. "(27). Thabet uses this term in game studies but renames it into "game composition device" (GCD) which is identical to the phenomenon happening in film with the difference of allowing the player opportunity to co-narrate (27). Wolf argues that video games are not like other traditional media, such as films, music and literature, which you can easily fully consume, because it is easy to sometimes skip some parts of the game that is not key for the story, come back to it later or not come back at all, which means that every gameplay experience varies (23). Therefore, the player has a major influence on the development of the narrative, since some segments of the game, or the pieces of information, can easily be ignored and played later, or not played at all (Thabet 25).

Consequently, Thabet claims that GCD controls everything that player doesn't, such as other characters in the game, game events and the rules of play and presentation, but since it has been already stated that there are two narrators, the GCD and the player, it is obvious that they are in a conflict, because sometimes the GCD takes control over the player and chooses what player needs to see (29). Normally it is the player that always decides what he or she will be looking at, which also differentiates video games from film, another example is when the character gets injected with a drug, or gets drunk, the screen usually distorts in order to showcase the state of the character to the player, which is also GCD's "fault". In this way, GCD is making sure that "player's input does not jeopardize the integrity of the fictional realm", and showcases the relationship between the two narrators as constantly challenging each other (Thabet 30).

Among many other arguments against the possibility of applying theory of narrative with video games is the fact that there should be two narrating "I"s, as Stanzel according to Thabet explains, "the narrating "I" and the experiencing "I"", basically that the story has to be told in the past tense, otherwise it is not narrative (31). This temporal division of two "I"s in video games is, as Thabet claims, not available because as the player narrates, he is not actually telling a story that had already happened, but a story that is happening, even though games might use tools such as flashbacks and going back in time and playing something that happened before the main storyline, it still does not create this effect of two "I"s, but it only creates "different time zones" (32, 35). Another video game "tool" is the possibility of GCD to take over the control of the player in order to guide the player where "the GCD imitates the protagonist's voice while the player impersonates the protagonist" (Thabet 33).

As was mentioned earlier, Bal differentiates 3 layers within narration: narrator, the focalizer and the actor (12). So can a player "play" the role of the focalizer? According to Thabet, within computer games, the roles of the narrator and focalizer overlap and the role of the focalizer manifests itself in video games is through player's control of the camera and what is seen. This is especially visible in first-person games where the camera is mounted in the actor's eyes, which is called the *mouselook* because the view is controlled by the computer mouse, creating "a visual illusion that locates the player inside the character's body" (Thabet 38-39). The third-person narrative is somewhat different in the way that the player's function resembles the role of the "puppet master" (ibid.). Some of the before established functions are still applicable in this case: "The player is again a co-narrator in a simultaneous narrative where his or her discourse is in conflict with the game world's discourse.", but the player is not synonymous with the protagonist anymore (Thabet 41). Additionally, the camera trails the protagonists, while in some cases is even locked into position in every room[1], therefore

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[1] This case can be seen in the older *Resident Evil* franchise games.

"the player himself or herself is not present in the story", and is constantly reminded by this because the camera is fixed on the protagonist (ibid.). This does not completely compromise the role of the focalizer, but it does change it to an external focalizer, one that is limited to the point of not being able to look away from the protagonist (ibid. 42). This means that "the story is not as personal as it is in first-person games, because of the player's distance from the level of narrative. The protagonist becomes the player's surrogate in the fictional world where the player is only the external patronizing figure." (ibid.). This situation resembles more the chessboard situation in which "the player acts to narrate a story in which the protagonist survives the perils of the fictional world while the game challenges the player's narrative action." (ibid.)

Moreover, according to Stork "Contemporary games have dual structure: Gameplay and Cut-scenes. In gameplays, the player is an active participant, while the cut scenes are recorded mini movies where the player becomes an observer". The characteristics of the gameplay have already been addressed, but the characteristics of cut-scenes can be a defining factor in game immersion, or how Stork defines it "the illusion of video game space". If the game has many cut-scenes, they "overshadow the gameplay and alter the traditional gaming experience. You, the player do not make the plot decisions. You're not in control of what happens next. You're not free to go off and explore as you want. Due to the large amount of cut-scenes the player may become more of a spectator then a participant.". Stork distinguishes 3 different types of cut-scenes. *Full motion video cut-scenes* are small real performance movie extracts that had been placed in game in certain intervals that contribute to the narrative. This method of cut-scenes was popular in the 90's and the 2000's, but is not being widely used anymore because it "interrupts the gaming experience" (ibid.). *CGI cut-scenes* is a method where the game again creates small video extracts, but in this case it uses CGI instead of live performance which again interrupts the flow of the game. Finally, the third type of cut-scenes

is the *in game cut-scene* which is made using the existing game engine, and can seem, or at times eve be a part of the gameplay, since some games allow interaction within these types of cut-scenes that results in "control over the outcome of the cut scene" (ibid.). Of course, the *in-game cut-scene* is the best solution for the illusion of video game space, and is the usual choice of cut-scenes in the last decade.

To conclude this chapter, in the first-person video game narratives, the player assumes the position of the character and tells the story of that character, which is also a trait of interactivity, since, in the name of the protagonist, the player has to resolve different sorts of challenges that are put against him virtually, which (immerges) connects the player with the character to the point where through, primarily narrative mechanism, the player's experience actually becomes the personal experience (Thabet 41).

5.1. TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

> "If we imagine the title removed from the game, the connection would not be at all obvious. It would be a game where one should hit an "exhaust port" (or simply a square), and the player could note a similarity with a scene in Star Wars, but you would not be able to reconstruct the events in the movie from the game." (Juul)

As was concluded earlier, the existence of a story doesn't guarantee the presence of narrative, but if there is no story, it becomes harder to create narrative. Throughout the history, game developers have made an extraordinary amount of games on many different topics, but the topics and the storylines are sometimes just a little more than a thin veneer of a story applied in the last moment (Bisell and Ferrari). Something that was very popular in the 2000's was making video game adaptations of films, such as *Harry Potter* games and *Lord of the Rings* games, that were not adaptations of the books, but the movie serial that accompanied the release of the films. In the meantime, something that became popular in the world of TV, film and computer games, was spin offs. The definition of the spin-off would be "a programme or other show involving characters from a previous programme" ("SPIN-OFF |

Meaning In The Cambridge English Dictionary"). A logical continuation of the trend of spin-offs was the creation of *universes* as seen from the narrative point of view, or *franchises* from the business point of view. There are numerous examples of universes, such as *Star Wars* universe, *Harry Potter* universe etc. Usually what the newer editions from these universes represent is prequels or sequels to the original storyline. The issue here is that the people creating the newer editions of the story tend to change, such as film directors, screenplay writers and this can actually create accidental or intentional inconsistencies with the original *dogma* that established the universe. An example of that is the sequence trilogy of the *Star Wars* which has left a lot of people dissatisfied with the direction that the story took. But there is also another type of storytelling, that needs further description because of its peculiarities, and it is *transmedia storytelling.*

Christy Dena uses several different descriptions of this phenomenon: such as "entertainment for the age of media convergence, integrating multiple texts to create a narrative so large that it cannot be contained within a single medium" by Jenkins, but also Jill Walker Rettberg's description of what she calls "the emerging form of distributed narratives" and she defines that these distributed narratives "can't be experienced in a single session or in a single space" (2). Marc Ruppel describes this phenomenon as "new structures that shatter the fixity of narrative as a single-medium endeavor and establish instead a multiply-mediated story world,", while Glorianna Davenport claims that the "narratives of the future are capable of expanding the social engagement of audiences while offering intensive narrative immersion in a story experience that plays out in multiple public and private venues," (Dena 2).

The first franchise that had significant commercial success in applying transmedia storytelling in video games was Wachowskis' *Enter the Matrix* (2003), which came out at the same time as *Matrix: Reloaded* and featured an hour of footage that Wachowskis had shot exclusively for the game. What made *Matrix* interesting was the fact that Wachowskis went

for quite an extreme version of transmediated storytelling, where you had to see all the films and play the game to understand the whole story, including the fact that neither films nor the game had recaps in its beginning. Therefore, if you haven't played the game, you were left with an incomplete experience because the "films were not self-contained enough" (Jenkins, Convergence Culture 96) and especially if you haven't seen the previous episode, you were left completely clueless. Still the *Matrix* franchise raised some interest, and opened the doors for video games to collaborate with the film industry in an innovative way.

Dena cited Jane McGonigal's opinion of what she called "ubiquitous games" that are ""distributed experiences: distributed across multiple media, platforms, locations, and times" and are "perceptually powerful and socially important vision for future networked play" (2). But as Dena highlights, this phenomenon is not limited to big corporations making large amounts of money, but can also happen in bedrooms of people that do this in order to "reveal some highly personal vision, or altruistically endeavoring to change the world", not limited by the type of media used as well. Examples of this are video games sending people e-mails in real life, but also literature that makes its way to video games or movie screens, and the other way around, including fan fiction (3). The problem of transmedia storytelling lies in the fact that the author of the content is not likely to be able to create the content in all available media, and on the other hand, the consumer isn't always able to consume or to approach the content in certain media (such as video games). Therefore, how can one evaluate computer games if that person hasn't had any experiences playing them from before (Dena 5)? Dena quotes Long when saying that "transmedia narratives can be evaluated by how well they set themselves apart from transmedia branding through narrative cohesion and canon", but she still thinks that these criteria are not sufficiently clear to differentiate this phenomenon (5).

On the other hand, Marie-Laure Ryan claims that "the abstract cognitive structure we call narrative is such that it can be called to mind by many different media, but each medium

has different expressive resources, and will therefore produce different concrete manifestation of this abstract structure." (Beyond Myth and Metaphor). Jenkins Agrees with this statement saying: „In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experience as an amusement park attraction. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game and vice versa" (Convergence Culture 96).

To conclude, in order to create content that can be successfully applicable on more than one medium, writer has to keep in mind the possibility of his work being applied to more than one medium, or the content should be adapted to fit the new medium. An example of this can be seen in Game of Thrones series, since several complete seasons are made by utilizing transmedia storytelling from literature to series, and many changes had to be applied to fit the new medium. In order for the project to be a successful transmedia storytelling project, according to Jenkins, until now it has worked best for it to be entirely made by the same people in all media formats they wish to cover, or to have a very close cross collaboration (co-creation) with another company, which means that licensing (selling the rights to another company that is completely unaffiliated with the first one) is a much more inferior way of creating transmediated content (Transmedia 101).

6.0. BUILDING NARRATIVE IN VIDEO GAMES (METRO AND BATMAN)

The goal of the analysis will be to establish how successful were the game designers in creating a narrative based game that belong to the traditional type of genres of the first person shooter and action adventure games. In order to establish this, the theory of narrative, ludology theory and the transmediation theory will be applied. The analysis topics will be: how successfully was the text translated through different media and what were the changes

that were done to the text in order to function in a different media (actors, space, ideology); what is the categorization of the game (player-narrator relations, player immersion, question of morality) and how does it influence the gaming narrative; how successful were game creators in implementing the games into transmedia storytelling paradigm; what are the effects of transmedia storytelling on video games; video games interactivity.

There are many reasons why these two video game franchises were chosen for the analysis. Firstly, *Metro* games and *Batman Arkham* series games are two different sets of games that both have a large playing population. Secondly, there are not that many games that went down the path of transmedia storytelling and haven't already been thoroughly analyzed. Thirdly, another reason why transmediated games had been chosen for analysis is because it would be hard to make a transmediated game, that is deprived of all narrative, (but not completely impossible), therefore the debate whether or not there is narrative present at all in these games becomes completely redundant. An important thing to have in mind is the age of games and the advances of technology. Many of the scholars that write about computer games are not referring to what is currently going on in the world of computer games or what will go on in the world of computer games in the immediate future. Therefore, some of the limitations that had been limiting computer games are gone as we speak, in the same way that some of them were already removed as the game sequels kept being made and published.

In order to be able to fully comprehend the analysis, some background information will be provided about both of the universes that are then going to be addressed later.

6.1. *INTRODUCTION TO THE METRO UNIVERSE*

Metro: 2033, Metro: Last Light and *Metro: Exodus* are three games that are based on Dmitry Glukhovsky's series of *Metro* novels. But what makes the story of the coexistence of novels and games interesting in this case, is that this isn't a traditional example of just an

adaptation, but also an example of transmedia storytelling. Initially, Glukhovsky published the novels *Metro: 2033* (2007) and *Metro: 2034* (2009) which was followed by 4A games in cooperation with Glukhovsky publishing the video game *Metro: 2033* (2010), an adaptation of the first novel. Then Glukhovsky decided that the second experimental book was not a good base for a future game, so he wrote all the dialogues and the storyline for a completely new part of the story that was the game *Metro: Last Light* (2013) (Glukhovsky AMA). The latest novel *Metro:2035* (2015) connected all the games and novels into a continuation story, which is then only briefly addressed in the beginning of the last game *Metro: Exodus* (2019) before taking a turn towards the transmediated continuation of the storyline, similar to what had happened with the second game. An important factor to the development is the author, who is a gamer himself and who has been a part of the whole story from the beginning until the last sequel of the video game where he decided to let the developing studio take over the helm completely, which is very similar to the approach taken by the Wachowskis and is quite rare when it comes to video games transmediations. The author has always been working hard to promote his books through video games, but also he isn't hiding the dystopian background of the storyline which is a criticism towards the Russian society from the 90's onwards (Glukhovsky AMA). Throughout his social media accounts, many interviews on all platforms and an extensive *Reddit AMA*, he talks in detail about the values he is trying to promote in the *Metro universe.*

The game story describes the life in the Moscow Metro after the nuclear apocalypse that had made life on surface impossible and follows the character of Artyom, a young idealist and adventurer that dares to look beneath the surface of the dystopian society located in the underground Moscow Metro. Throughout the story, he learns about all the darkest secrets of that society, including the 3 entities that he meets: other humans divided into political fractions of metro stations, mutants that are clearly evil and want to kill humans, and the

"Dark Ones", whose intentions were originally unknown, but assumed evil by most. The "Dark Ones" were ultimately proven to be noble and conciliatory towards humans and are a metaphorical representations of "others" that people are always afraid, manifesting in xenophobia (Glukhovsky AMA). Humans become obsessed with the destruction of the "Dark Ones" and they almost eradicate them all in the end of the first book and the first game. Artyom turns out to become the channel through whom the "Dark Ones" are trying to communicate with humans without enough success. Artyom attempts to bring everyone to reason, and the failure to do so results in Artyom peeling off all the corrupted layers, exposing the rotten flesh of the society of Metro. Throughout the story, he is being exposed to all the atrocities that are happening in the Metro, such as the fact that the Red Line fraction is knowingly sending people into battle with the better equipped army of the Fourth Reich knowing that they would die, the concentration camp of the Fourth Reich, but also the betrayal on behalf of a part of his own unit that he joins during the first game, the Spartan Rangers, that are supposed to protect Polis, a conglomerate of stations that possess the largest wealth of money, electricity, knowledge etc. As it turns out, all that time there was another fraction, unknown to most, the Invisible Watchers, who are the remains of the Soviet government running the whole Metro and fueling all the conflicts, in order to keep control over all the people with the help of Spartan Rangers to conduct their orders. As a result of finding out that the entire world is actually not wiped away by the nuclear holocaust and that there are places on the surface that are not completely polluted, Artyom leaves Metro in *Metro: Exodus* with a group of friends, in order to find a new home, only to find out that in most of the places where there was originally an organized civilization, things got even worse than in the Moscow Metro. In the end the group reached Lake Baikal using the train that they stole in Moscow, where they could stop and create a colony.

6.2. *INTRODUCTION TO THE BATMAN: ARKHAMVERSE*

Batman as a character was invented in 1939 by an artist Bob Kane and the writer Bill Finger as an attempt to create a new superhero that would continue the success of the studio that was initiated with the success of Superman and was originally published as a part of Detective Comics #27("Batman, A History Of Heroics: The Beginning"). The character got its own comic only a year after, and it arrived to the big screen as early as 1943. The reason for the fact that this superhero managed to stay important for 81 years lies in "his ability to adapt and change with the period", with the exception of the first years of its existence, since it didn't adapt to the American WWII propaganda machinery as much as most other commercial content was (Brooker 33). Batman "managed to retain his own unique style", as Brooker states throughout its initial years, but also managed to adopt "elements of his surrounding culture, rather than adapting to it", which could be said for most of the franchise in its entire history when put into adequate context. Brooker highlights "Batman's resilience, consistency and fidelity to a strangely removed ideal of urban crime-fighting while the rest of his culture went to war" and again considers this valid only for the initial years of this superhero's life, but I would say that that this statement as well, is applicable to the entire history of Batman. Behind the impressive tall facades of skyscrapers of the cities in the USA lies a lot of rust and rot which is bound to swim out to the surface. This topic is addressed in an article *Urban Dystopia: The Architecture of Gotham City* by the *Architizer Journal*, where they claim that "Of all superheroes, Batman is the one that's most synonymous with the city he serves". The meaning of the word Gotham comes from a "reference to English popular tales about Gotham, a village near Nottingham, England, whose villagers were depicted as feigning stupidity and foolishness in order to avoid government impositions." ("Gotham"), while etymologically the meaning of the word Gotham comes from "homestead where goats are kept", from Old English gāt ("goat") + hām ("home")" ("Gotham - Wiktionary").

Therefore, what Gotham represents is a dystopian society which is not always transparently shown as such. *Arkhamverse* is a fan created name for the video games *Batman: Arkham Asylum, Batman: Arkham city, Batman: Arkham origins, Batman Arkham Knight* with several other spin off stories, comics and mobile games that belong to the DC Multiverse. An interesting thing about this game is the obvious expansion of the Arkham Asylum complex into a small city that is necessary in order to contain the rising numbers of criminals in the city of Gotham. Arkham City is interestingly enough located in the old town of Gotham, which metaphorically showcases the constant deterioration of a once great city. Within the general DC Multiverse cannon, this deterioration culminates in *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016) where Metropolis and Gotham are located next to each other and Wayne Enterprises are now located in Metropolis, while Gotham only becomes a setting for the final confrontation in an abandoned warehouse which is, according to *Architizer Journal*, a metaphor for an abandoned city that is ruled by criminals.

6.3. NARRATIVE IN METRO VIDEO GAMES

Firstly, *Metro* games are single player first person shooter games, meaning that all the arguments about the player being the co-narrator and focalizer are applied to this game. Because of the fact that the player plays the role of Artyom, the player goes through all of this turmoil with his/her hope and expectations being destroyed and then again rebuilt throughout all three games which results in a deep emotional connection with the protagonist and a lot of thrill.

Furthermore, games do contain some *in game cut-scenes*, but they very rarely occur and the method that the GCD uses to tell the story is the player's participation, in the way that cannot be skipped. Cut-scenes that happen can be skipped by holding the E button, but this is not transparently advertised on the screen, so the game stimulates player to watch them all. Also it is extremely rare that the game takes over the control of both the camera and the

player altogether. Usually the way how the game chooses to address the player is in the way that the player is forced to follow another character that is telling Artyom something important, and the player needs to keep moving in order for the storyline to continue. In this case the player is the focalizer, because the player controls the camera and chooses what to look at but not the narrator. A great example of this is a segment from *Metro: Last Light* when the small "Dark One" that Artyom befriends shows Artyom how the 3rd world war happened and draws a connection between that and the extinction of the "Dark Ones" caused by the missiles launched by Artyom himself. Another great example is the segment where Artyom gets flashbacks of what it looked like for a crew of an airplane to witness the rockets that ended up destroying the plane and killing them. This is all supposed to give the player a feeling of horror that humans did to each other.

Additionally, the games give player the opportunity to finish the game without killing any humans, by sneaking around instead and knocking people unconscious. Also throughout the game there are situations where the player can do a good deed, such as give money to poor people, or give the teddy bear that a child had previously lost back to the child. All of this is a part of moral mechanism that the game possesses which in the end decides the ending of the story and is an important part of its narrative. All three games have 2 endings, the good one and the bad one, but the interesting bit is that the player never knows which ending will be the ending chosen for the continuation of the story of Metro. The second game chose the bad ending of the first game, while the third game chose the good ending of the second game. From the way how the third game ended seems like the bad ending might mean the end of the franchise (unless the game continues with another character which is entirely possible), while the good ending would be used for the hypothetical next game.

In order to see alternative endings the player has to play the game from beginning, and do less (or more) immoral acts, or unfortunately, just find them on YouTube. The game is

incorporating aspects of interactive storytelling, but it isn't as well developed as some other games are today in this aspect. The storylines of the first two games are linear with the exception of their endings, but this can be attributed to the fact that these games always had a goal to tell one story with a clear agenda and messages promoting a certain spectrum of values, which was transmediated from the books. The third game did slightly change by implementing a limited open world concept, where the player can explore some of the settings up to a certain extent, and try and find collectible items. There are other games that have a goal of having an experience of a real interactive story, such as the example that David Cage gave of a game he wrote called *Detroit: Become Human* which has a big tree of storyline sequences. The sequences that the player experiences are depending on the decisions that the player makes throughout the game, which means that the writer has to write a lot of storylines that would be missed by the player. David Cage said that this game has about 6000 pages of a script. So it is understandable why some writers wouldn't want to go down this way for multiple reasons.

Furthermore, how is transmedia storytelling important for the narrative in the Metro video games? One could actually read all the books in continuation and never play a single second of any of the video games and have a well-rounded story, and the same goes for people playing all of the video games without reading the books and also if somebody decided to play any of the games before playing the earlier games, it wouldn't be nearly as confusing as seeing sequels of *The Matrix* without seeing the first one. However, if one wants to know the whole story or the canon and get more explanations, one would have to consume all the games and books. But it is very important that it was decided that the first game was going to be the adaptation of the first book, in order to stimulate the interest of the public that hasn't read the books, and in this way everyone has an equal starting position based on either the first book or the first game which is also a very smart business move. This gives game

developers an amazing opportunity to create a great narrative game experience since they are served with all of the necessary ingredients by the writer. The developers used that opportunity and in combination with really good graphics and created a really immersive and narrative-rich experience. The fact that bad endings of the second and third game result in Artyom's death could be seen as a proof that the story is not actually about Artyom, but about the world of Metro, and it is reinforced with the fact that the last game additionally received two DLCs that cover the stories of secondary characters, meaning that, even if Aryom does, in fact die, the story could technically still continue, which is an important characteristic of transmediation.

It is clear that every translation of content into another medium (regardless if it is adaptation or transmediation), implies changes that have to be done in order to successfully sustain the story. The obvious major differences between the books and the games are: the amount of killing, which defines the genres of both the books and the games, and also the type of narration. As was said earlier, the games are first person shooters, but in the books there isn't a lot of shooting that goes on, as well as the fact that the books are narrated by the third-person narrator. The first book and game defined their inter-differences that have remained the same throughout the later remediations, so for example in the first book Artyom only kills one human who was actually a Nazi officer, and he feels no regrets for doing this. In the adapted story into the game, you can kill hundreds of people if you don't care about getting the bad ending. The way how the game enabled the player to stay closer to the book is in the way of implementing a sneaking mechanism with the ability to knock humans unconscious with a single blow. In the books Artyom doesn't knock people out, but instead, the story evolve in a way where he isn't forced to use any violence. The difference between the types of narration is quite significant. The story serves the reader some quite extraordinary events that are sometimes somewhat hard to believe, so it helps a lot when one sees it through the

eyes of the actor, rather than learning about it from somebody that is retelling the story. This of course completely changes the genre of the story, from a pure dystopian adventure, to the first person shooter. The aspect of space is yet another thing that changed throughout the process of transmediation since large portions of storyline for the game were moved to the surface. This was an interesting change because in the initial two books and games, characters are dreaming about seeing the sky and the surface. In all the games, Artyom does it much more frequently. A lot of levels are partially or even completely taking place on the surface, with the opportunity to see the destroyed Red Square and many other important historical landmarks in Moscow from the outside, such as the Russian State Library. This culminates in the last game, where Artyom escaped Moscow with some of his fellow Spartan Rangers, only to find out that people that stayed on the surface might have been even more corrupt than the people that were stuck in the Metro. Another major difference can be seen in the amount of social critique that can be found in books versus the games. Both the books and games are swarming with social critique based on the critique of the ideologies of the fractions, of the culture that is as run down as the rest of the world, where the Bolshoi Theatre of the underground is heavily mocked, but there is a lack of religious critique in the first two games, while especially the original novel contains plenty of it. The Great Worm Cult Savage Cannibals, the Satanists, the Jehovah's Witnesses that even went so far that they've built The Watchtower within the Metro itself and are, unlike the previously two mentioned cults that are seen extremely negatively, only seen as foolish and non-dangerous. This was most likely done for two reasons, one is a smart marketing move, because criticizing religion is a far more sensitive matter then criticizing the political aspects of life, and most likely there wasn't enough resources initially to put this into the first game. Glukhovsky himself admitted that he is sorry that it didn't make it into the game because of "the describing texts of their beliefs and mythology for the worm" (Glukhovsky AMA) that he really likes. They did incorporate

segments of this cult into the third game, *Metro: Exodus* where Artyom encounters the Church of the Water Tsar that is worshipping a mutated beast living in the river Volga and a technophobic cult that believes in the fact that using electricity is a mortal sin and several other cults as well. Therefore, when seen as a whole, the Metro universe does contain some differences in the way how the story was presented to the consumer, but it is pretty consistent, accept for the religious critique, that the game creators did address more thoroughly in the last game.

Finally, some thoughts on the interactivity of *Metro* games will now be presented. Throughout all the games there are numerous items that a player can interact with, that are placed in the game for different reasons. The games do not have HUDs (head up display), but instead of that, all the information a player needs is located on the indicators on Artyom's hands, such as the time he has left before he needs to change his air filters on his gas mask while he is exposed to the radiation. Also as a result of all the fighting, the player's gas mask can get damaged and a player can temporarily fix it with some tape, but needs to replace it eventually. As well as the fact that the player needs to wipe their mask occasionally in order to be able to see. The mentioned features were put into game because of the game immersion. In addition to this, the player encounters instruments such as guitars and balalaikas that can be strummed, there are numerous photographs, paintings, writings and graffiti that were all intentionally placed and all have clues to the world of Metro, but also some Easter eggs, such as photographs of the game developers randomly placed, different books lying around that include the Metro books throughout the entire game, songs that people are singing while sitting around the campfire etc. In my opinion, the reason for some of these items being in the game is to give the player a better sense of immersion, improve the game's interactivity as well as an opportunity to learn a little bit about the Russian culture. The core interactivity of this game can be found in all the combat that inevitably happens against the mutants and in

the choice of how to defeat the game that is given to the player as well as all the mentioned objects one can interact with that are not at all connected with the game's main storyline. Therefore, the narrative didn't come at the cost of the interactivity, far from that.

6.4. NARRATIVE IN ARKHAMVERSE GAMES

Arkham games are third person single player action-adventure games that feature completely different relations within the narrative roles in comparison to the *Metro* games. The camera follows Batman around, and the player decides what the camera will be looking at, which means that the player has the role of a focalizer, but the roles of co-narration and protagonist are not merged together. Instead, the player is constantly reminded that he is not Batman, and is consequently controlling Batman, the protagonist, as a sort of a puppet master. As well as the fact that, within many instances in all the games, throughout the main storyline there are segments where the player has to take a position of other characters such as Catwoman in *Batman: Arkham City* and Joker in *Batman: Arkham Asylum*. In addition to that, there are many cut-scenes in the main story, and the GCD takes over the control much more frequently than it does in the Metro games. The cut-scenes can all be skipped, and the game openly and transparently advertises that possibility. The so called "Freeflow combat" (the combat mechanism of the *Arkham* games) becomes repetitive after some time, even though it is a modernized version of the typical old-fashioned fighting game mechanisms, where the timing is crucial, and the main goal is to hit as many enemies in an uninterrupted combo in order to collect points and unlock upgrades. All of the mentioned characteristics of this game go against establishing narrative as the leading aspect of this game while relying heavily on the ludological aspects of video games, and the fact that if Batman took off the suit, and if we didn't see the way how Thomas and Martha Wayne died in every single game which reminds us of the pain of Bruce Wayne and the reason why he became Batman, we wouldn't know

that we are playing a Batman game[2]. This is the thin veneer applied on top of game mechanics that Ferrari was talking about. Even though one could argue that this is the exact point of Batman. The fact that he can be anyone of us, and we can become him.

Nevertheless, there are aspects of the game that work in favor of the game's narrative. There are many cases where, in all the games, Batman gets poisoned by Joker (in *Arkham City)* or hypnotized by the Mad Hatter (in Arkham Asylum and Arkham City) which distorts the entire screen (similar to the effect that also happens in Metro games when the player drinks a couple of drinks in-game or the radiation becomes stronger, but in the first-person view it feels much more realistic) or takes the player on a drug trip. Furthermore, *Batman: Arkham Origins* is different from the others in the way that the whole game is happening on Christmas Eve, and the atmosphere that is achieved through snowy weather, Christmas decorations and music in combination with somewhat more theatrical voice acting and representation of the characters in cut-scenes brought the experience somewhat closer to the experience of watching a movie, with some of the influence from the darker approach of Tim Burton's *Batman: Returns*. This resulted in very much of a familiar experience for everyone that had seen the movie. All the *Arkham* games seem to have taken a lot of inspiration from Burton's way of representing Gotham which, according to *Architizer*, is depicted more as "a magnificent art-deco metropolis in decline". All the four games are critically acclaimed for their graphic designs which were all really advanced, for being challenging to complete, but the introduction of the Bat-mobile in the *Arkham Knight* was something that could have easily resulted in even better immersion if used tastefully (such as in Tim Burton's movies), but instead, it became so heavily used to the point where you forget that there is the gameplay without the car which ultimately becomes very repetitive and at times looked rather foolishly and completely

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[2] The fact that the consumer gets familiarized with the history of Bruce Wayne enables consumers points of access to the storyline in almost every instance of the franchise, which is something that is an important characteristic of the transmedia storytelling practice.

unrealistic (such as in *Batman Forever*). Adi Robertson has made some great remarks, within her analysis of *Batman: Arkham Knight*, about the fact that the repetitiveness of elements such as quests and missions and phrases that are shouted by thugs is a sign of bad writing, "or is it a commentary on how video game writing is more about giving mechanical feedback than crafting fine prose?"(The Verge). Unfortunately, in my opinion, this is not just the case with the last game, but is the issue of all four games.

Gotham, just like the Moscow Metro can be seen as another protagonist, or even the antagonist of the stories that represent dystopian future. Both of the stories are centered on the protagonist that wants to change his world for the better, but Batman (at least in this universe) stays in Gotham, while Artyom (for now) had left Metro only to either die, or to actually go back to the Metro. A key difference is that Batman symbolically outgrew Gotham, while Artyom as a character is in the shadow of the dystopian world that he belongs to. Jenkins highlights that transmedia storytelling is the "process of world-building" that isn't based on "individual characters or specific plots but rather complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories" (Transmedia 101). Artyom is not a superhero and the world of Metro could continue without him, in the same way that the world of *Matrix* can continue without Neo (or at least without the Neo we had seen in the movies). The world would organically create a new anomaly in the system, as it did constantly with Neo. On the other hand, one could say Batman is not a superhero either, at least not in the way of having any kind of superpowers, but there are a couple of key differences between them. Story wise, if Bruce Wayne was to die for real, it is questionable whether the world of Gotham would be able to produce anyone like him (probably not). This makes Batman fail in this aspect of the transmedia storytelling. Another aspect that is not going in the favor of the Batman franchise when it comes to transmedia storytelling was the fact that it was overtaken by many different writers that (including in the video games) gave their own interpretations of

what Batman is for them. The consumer is facing constant reboots of the same story with some (ir)relevant changes being made to the main storyline. Therefore, it is not hard to find many inconsistencies within the canon, since many of them are intentional, which means that it can be said that some installations of the batman story can be seen as transmedia storytelling in connection with others, but all the Batman themed content is not a part of a single narrative storyline, like it is the case with *Matrix* or *Metro.*

When compared to the representation of Batman in other media, something that stands out is the length of time that the player spends as Bruce Wayne is neglectable when compared to the film, series and comic book representations of Batman. The background story is provided by the game in small chunks that are told to Batman by other character, and the character development is almost non-existent. Instead, games are serving the player only the combat parts of the story that have been subtly filled with narrative in order to keep the player entertained with all the ""takedowns" that knock thugs out with your car's guns or let you beat them with bats and slam their heads into fuse boxes."(Robertson). Robertson makes another interesting remark that this makes *Arkham* games seem like an "an enjoyably silly and self-aware Tom and Jerry sketch. The game assures us that all of Batman's deadly-sounding gadgets are non-lethal, down to the little jittery moans when you knock someone aside with the Batmobile's electrified cow-catcher.". In other media representations of Batman, instead of doing his best to make the fight last as long as possible to rack up the combo counter of the fighting mechanism, Batman always finds the most efficient ways of knocking out his enemies. If the player did this in the game, and sneaked around knocking his enemies out all the time with the least amount of combo, the player wouldn't be unlocking many of the possible upgrades that the game has to offer. As was mentioned earlier, the game does create a setting similar to Tim Burton's vision of the Gotham, with spectacular voice overs on behalf of actors such as Mark Hamill.

The interactivity of the game is largely depending on the players interactions with Batman, in the way that most of exploration relies on the weapons that batman can use in combination with world elements provided by the game.

To conclude, I will again cite Robertson's opinion on the *Arkham Knight*: "It's a shame that the writing breaks down so often, because Rocksteady can mess with the actual mechanics to great narrative and cinematic effect". Of course, for anyone that possesses knowledge of the western pop culture, if a game is called Batman and the character wears a costume with a cape and bat's ears, it evokes a lot of narrative from the background knowledge of the player, but there is a lot more potential to the franchise that wasn't used as well as the developers of *Metro* did in the means of creating new and complete creative narrative from the storyline standpoint as well as game mechanics and interactivity. Jenkins has an interesting analogy, where he compares big franchises with *The Odyssey* saying that "when the Greeks heard stories about Odysseus, they didn't need to be told who he was, where he came from, or what his mission was."(119), "This is why high school students today struggle with The Odyssey, because they don't have the same frame of reference as the original audience."(120). This is, in my opinion, the case with *Batman* as well, but is not the case with *Metro*.

7.0. CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to show that video games can be much more than just games. A medium that became so popular that according to Jane McGonigal, people spent 5.93 million years playing *World of Warcraft* by 2010. 5.93 million years ago, the first human ancestors stood up, and by 2010 there were over 500 million gamers in the world. By 2020s it is expected that there will be more than 1.5 billion gamers in the world. Video Games used to be reserved only for children, but in the meantime they became a medium for all generations

with the average age of a gamer in the USA in 2019 being 33 years old ("2019 Essential Facts About The Computer And Video Game Industry - Entertainment Software Association"). The thriving gaming industry is constantly on a hunt for new solutions for capitalizing on the fact that the public that is playing video games is growing exponentially. As a result of this the developers are now trying to create innovative and exciting experiences that can be meaningful and educative. Therefore, video games are attracting a more serious wave of writers that have been writing scripts for games, but it is only a matter of time before people that represent other media, conclude that it is time to jump train and join in the struggle to create meaningful content in video games. During the COVID-19 crisis, theatres started closing down due to the lack of films that can be shown. Film premieres are being postponed because the film industry is unable to capitalize enough, since unless they achieve serious success in the opening weekends in the movie theatres, they cannot make enough money to cover the production costs. In the meantime, Netflix is achieving great success with films that are made exclusively for their streaming platform. The question is, is it time for the film industry and video game industry to start acknowledging each other and join together in order to cut the cost and improve the experience of all content consumers? A possible answer to this question is transmedia storytelling. It's been around for a while now, and this paper has shown that video games can successfully incorporate narrative from other media and keep, if not even improve on its native characteristics such as interactivity. Stork claims that "in a lot of cases, the newer medium harvests techniques from films, but the latter also discovers its own conversions anew, finding new inspiration, which results in an ever evolving stimulating set of transmedia synergies." Instead of limiting the new medium in picking up the characteristics of old media, in hope to keep it as pure and original as possible, game studies should learn from other media studies. Hopefully as video games' popularity grows even further, game studies will get consolidated and organized in order to start making a relevant

presence in the academia and welcome the new Shakespeares and Dantes of the new era and the new medium. It seems as though narrative is a good place to start at after all.

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9.0. SUMMARY

Narrative Development in Video Games in Metro Universe and Arkhamverse

This thesis focuses on the narrative development in video games on the examples of the *Metro* universe games and the *Arkhamverse*. The thesis begins with an introduction and the overview of the history and the current state of the young science of game studies, its standings towards the theory of narrative and the way how the narrative is built within the video games. The games that are further analyzed are examples of transmedia storytelling, which is a method of storytelling that includes different media, each telling one fragment of an ultimately unified story. After providing the background information on these transmediations, the thesis presents an analysis of how game designers incorporated the narrative into the new interactive medium. The thesis ends with the conclusion of the analysis and the views of the position of narrative within the young and aspiring media of video games currently and in the times to come.

Key words: video games, game studies, narrative, cybertext, transmedia storytelling, Metro universe, Batman Arkhamverse

10.0. SAŽETAK

Razvoj narativa u video igrama na primjerima Metro univerzuma i Arkham univerzuma

Ovaj rad fokusira se na razvoj narativa u video igrama na primjerima igara iz serijala *Metro* univerzuma te *Batman: Arkham* univerzuma. Rad započinje s uvodom i pregledom povijesti medija video igara, potom se bavi pregledom trenutačnog stanja mladih i nedovoljno definiranih studija igara, odnosa između video igara i teorije narativa, te naposljetku, načina na koji se narativ gradi u video igrama. Igre koje su potom analizirane, primjeri su transmedijalnog pričanja priče. Ovaj vid pričanja priče uključuje različite medije, od kojih svaki priča jedan fragment priče koji se ujedinjuje u jednu cjelinu. Po izlaganju pozadinskih informacija prethodno navedenih transmedijacija, u radu se izlaže analiza načina na koji su dizajneri video igara uklopili narativ u novi i interaktivni medij. Rad završava sa zaključkom analize i viđenjima pozicije narativa u mladom i perspektivnom mediju video igara u ovom trenutku i u budućnosti.

Ključne riječi: video igre, studije igara, narativ, cybertekst, transmedijalno pričanje priča, Metro univerzum, Batman Arkham univerzum