

Chapter 77

Anxiety of the Avatar: Relation of Character Design to Reception in Transmediatic Games

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ABSTRACT

Computer games create realistic and interactive spaces for people with the developing technology in virtual extent and they also build quotations surrounding every aspect of human perception. Computer games are not only a leisure time activity but also a transmedia case related to perception and the identification process. Another important factor of the computer games are graphics of the games. The main purpose of this chapter is to consider the relation of the technical level of the game in a graphical three-dimensional model to identification process in the context of “identification with the avatar.” The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt which was driven to the market and received positive criticism with its successful graphics will be analysed in the context of its transmedia features and graphic design. Then, a semi-structured interview will be conducted with 15 gamers who played The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, to analyse the relation of “identification with the avatar process” of the participants to the graphical modeling of the game.

INTRODUCTION

Computer games in virtual space, along with the developing technology, create more realistic environments for more and more people, and formulate the cues that surround every aspect of human perception. In this sense, computer games are not only a leisure activity, but a transmedia case which is related to the processes of perception and identification of the players. The concept of “immerse”, which is one

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of the motivation sources of the players, is much more impressive due to the transmediatic characteristics of the games in the way that the players continue to play a game. Cinematic videos presented in the normal playing process of the game, pre-launch activities before the game market, especially viral advertisements to stimulate curiosity about the game have gained importance. It is also important that the game allows the player to create his own story in the direction of his own preferences rather than a linear narrative in itself.

Another important factor in the computer game's perception and identification process is the game graphics and the success of how these graphics are similar the real-world images. In this point, this study deals with the relation of the technical level of the three-dimensional model in graphical terms with the identification process in the context of "identification with avatar". The study is important in understanding how the games as the real-world simulations are related to the real-world perceptions of the players.

Within the scope of the study, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, which was released to the market in 2015 and received positive reviews with its successful graphics, was handled in the context of transmedia features and graphic design. Then, a semi-structured interview was conducted with 16 players who played *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, and the relationship between the player's "avatar identification" process and the game's graphical modeling was analyzed. Finally, the findings were evaluated in the context of Baudrillard's "Theory of Simulation" and transmedia.

BACKGROUND

Virtual Reality

Nowadays, as technological developments progress extremely rapidly, including microprocessors, individuals confront computer graphics in many areas of everyday life. Along with the improvements in CPU speed and graphics engines, many industries have started to use these kind of computer technologies. As a result of all these developments, the concept of "virtual reality" is seen as the formation of "reality" in the virtual space and becomes a part of the lives of the individuals - and especially the young generation. Virtual reality is a concept that is used for environments that are computer-based, three-dimensional and allow users to enter and interact with alternative realities, while virtual concept is defined as a concept that creates an effect to seem real but that is not real (Temel Eğinli and Yeygel, 2008, p. 223). Users enter different levels of simulation of reality through artificial computer worlds. Virtual reality offers the opportunity to see the real world from different dimensions and it offers the opportunity to experience experiences that are impossible or even absent in real life. This technology which is without boundaries and promises infinite flexibility, can be created or modified by the individual himself (Mazuryk et al., 1996).

Baudrillard and Theory of Simulation

The concept of simulation is used to describe the representation or imitation of the truth (Slattery, 2012, p. 470). Baudrillard (1983) argues that the organization of computer technology, information processing, media, cybercontrol systems and organizing the community within the framework of simulation models are the signs of entering into a new era of simulation.

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