

## **More than Play: Videogames as Platforms of Agency**

*Kamil Kocyigit, Languages, Linnaeus, Sweden*

### **Abstract**

The role of online gaming and videogames with features enabling online interactivity have been increasing in popularity when their presence on the internet is observed. Videogame titles such as *Helldivers 2*, *Baldur's gate 3*, *Elden Ring*, and *Lethal Company* which have sparked and initiated trends and online sensations on social media by means of the forums and communities established around them, have induced an impact on how the gaming market is handled digitally and from the developers' perspective. The approach of the studios behind these titles in terms of fan engagement and the way the gaming industry and companies handle backlash, criticism and demand from the playerbase highlight the players' reception of monetisation and marketing in the gaming industry. The memes that are created by the players and fans of these games and how they act both as promotional or subversive standing points online show that the gaming industry substantially influences and is influenced by social media representation and reception. This, in a way, could both make or break the game's success. It is crucial to examine how the player communities also dictate and influence the way popular media operates, such as advertisements and how the companies that makes these games utilise online media to garner more incentive toward their products. Furthermore, the way the game design and features change based on the target audience and the concerns voiced by the gaming community also are suggestive of the concept that videogames are becoming much more of online platforms that bring communities together and maybe even endorse particular moral, ethical or environmental agendas. On the other hand, the fact that there are modding communities that directly interact with how a game operates or gets added features entirely made by players shows that videogames are progressive forms of media that directly enable audience participation, not solely through gameplay, but also through game creation/game design. Specifically on the marketing aspect and payment features in a videogame, another commonly voiced yet widely dismissed issue with contemporary gaming is also monetisation and how a lot of gaming companies exploit and abuse the player engagement via microtransactions or paid features that can completely alter one's gaming experience, which can be observed in the

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reception of the title *Dragon's Dogma 2*. It is also important to address these “features” in terms of their psychological aspects for the experientiality of a videogame. Ultimately, videogames present a field of research that offers more than ludic and narrative foci, and pose an intermedial surge due to the medium's virtual presence on other forms of media. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine and deliberate on the conveyance and experientiality of agency in the stated videogames within the scope of their virtual presence through memes, online communities, the gaming industry's approach and their intermedial significance through other forms of media.

**Keywords**

Videogames, Online Gaming Communities, Gaming Industry, Memes, Communication

**Bio**

Kamil Kocyigit is currently continuing his second MA studies at Linnaeus University within the MELL programme. He has completed his BA and first MA studies in the field of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey. He wrote his masters thesis on psychospatial chronotopes in postmodern novels, with the title “Constructing the Textual Psyche: The Employment of Cyberspace and Psycho-spatial Chronotopes in Jeanette Winterson's *The PowerBook* and Steven Hall's *The Raw Shark Texts*.” His current research interests concern ludology, ecology and videogame studies.