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**Beyond Words and Worlds: Exploring Narratology,  
Ludology, and Dual Coding in *The Witcher* Saga**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a  
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation*

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## **Dedications**

*To my wonderful mother, my valued family, including my adored auntie, and my cherished friends*

*This memoir is a loving tribute to the exceptional people who shaped my life.*

*Thank you for your constant support and limitless love, mother. You've been my pillar and my lighthouse.*

*To my family, especially my dear auntie, your presence and support have made an indelible impact on my journey.*

*Thank you for the laughs, travels, and wonderful times we've shared, dear friends.*

*With heartfelt gratitude and love!*

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## **Abstract:**

Throughout history, storytelling, a vital component of human culture, has evolved and been adapted to a variety of media, including oral traditions, written literature, film, television, and video games. Stories are crafted, presented, and experienced by audiences differently depending on the medium due to its distinctive qualities and possibilities. In this Study, which utilizes the theoretical frameworks of narratology, ludology, and dual-coding theory to analyse *The Witcher* series, including both its textual story and video game adaptations, the focus shifts to the examination of visual cues, textual clues, interactive aspects, and their significance in promoting cognitive engagement and narrative comprehension. By applying the dual-coding theory, this investigation explores how information is conveyed between books and video games. Additionally, the comparative analysis of media delves into information representation, interaction, cognitive engagement, and audience preferences. As a result, this multidisciplinary analysis sheds light on the dynamic interaction between literary and interactive media, while providing valuable insights into the merits, difficulties, and cognitive advantages associated with the various storytelling formats employed in *The Witcher* series.

## **Key Words:**

Narratology – Ludology – Dual-coding– Interactive storytelling–Information transmission

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## **Epigraph:**

*We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories.*

- Jonathan Gottschall.

# **General Introduction**

Throughout history, storytelling has evolved and adapted to new formats and technologies, captivating audiences as a powerful tool for communication, education, and entertainment. Initially rooted in oral traditions and written literature, storytelling has undergone a transformative shift with the advent of digital technology. Books have traditionally served as the foundation, allowing readers to immerse themselves in vivid stories and engage their imaginations. However, the introduction of multimedia features and digital platforms has revolutionized storytelling, enhanced its immersive nature and provided new avenues for creative expression. The digital medium has also enabled interactive storytelling, empowering viewers or players to actively shape the narrative through choices, branching pathways, and decisions. Video games have been at the forefront of this innovation, seamlessly blending text, images, sounds, and gameplay elements to create immersive and expansive narrative experiences. As technology continues to advance, the evolution of storytelling will push the boundaries of imagination, captivating audiences in fresh and captivating ways.

This study was inspired by a developing interest in the relationship between story and interaction as well as a desire to learn more about the enthralling universe of *The Witcher* Saga and Trilogy. With its expansive literary universe and engaging video game adaptations, *The Witcher* series makes a great case study to look at how storytelling develops in both written and interactive mediums.

This study aims to explore the process of information transmission between books and video games using the framework of dual coding theory. We strive to comprehend how various mediums deliver information, engage audiences, and influence cognitive processes by examining the narratology, ludology, and cognitive psychology components.

This research uses a multidisciplinary strategy to accomplish its goals. The approach combines narratological analysis, ludological investigation, and cognitive psychology viewpoints. The narrative and interactive elements of *The Witcher* series can be understood using theories like narratology, ludology, and dual coding theory.

### Research Question:

How is *The Witcher* represented as a written narrative?

How do game-play mechanics / ludology contribute to the players experience?

How information is transmitted using dual coding theory?

### HYPOTHESES:

#### First Hypothesis:

The written narrative representation of *The Witcher* showcases a rich and immersive storytelling experience, characterized by intricate character development, complex plotlines, and thematic depth. The combination of a well-crafted linear narrative and interactive elements in the video game adaptations further enhances the audience's engagement and provides a unique and captivating storytelling experience.

#### Second Hypothesis:

By offering interactive difficulties, worthwhile decision-making possibilities, and a sense of agency inside the game environment, game-play mechanics significantly shape and improve the player's experience. The player's involvement, immersion, and overall enjoyment are greatly enhanced by the use of well-designed ludological features, such as game mechanics, rules, and feedback systems. In terms of enjoyment, motivation, and a sense of accomplishment, a well-balanced and pleasant gameplay experience that is defined by

difficult hurdles, satisfying progress, and skill mastery has the potential to produce a more immersive and fulfilling player experience.

### Third Hypothesis:

According to the dual coding hypothesis, information can be efficiently communicated when verbal and visual channels are used in tandem. According to the theory, people are more likely to engage in deeper processing, which improves information encoding, retention, and retrieval when information is presented in both verbal and visual forms. In comparison to information presented through a single modality, this verbal and visual integration helps the construction of a complete and more integrated mental image, leading to improved understanding and memory recall.

In order to accomplish the research goals, we divided this study into numerous chapters that penetrate into various aspects of narrative analysis and interactive storytelling. The following chapters serve as the foundation of our investigation:

Narratology, ludology, and dual-coding are three theoretical frameworks that are covered in the first chapter “Theoretical Frameworks of Narratology, Ludology and The Dual-Coding”. In this part, we look into the composition and analysis of narratives while addressing any drawbacks or objections to these theoretical frameworks that might exist. We set up our analysis of *The Witcher* series by comprehending these theoretical grounds.

The second chapter “The Narratology of *The Witcher* SAGA as a Written Narrative” focuses on the textual narrative's narratology of *The Witcher* Saga. We examine the themes, elements, and narrative devices used in Andrzej Sapkowski's work. We inspect the characterization strategies, character arcs, relationships, motivations, and symbolism contained in the literary form of *The Witcher* series through a thorough character analysis.

In Chapter three “Exploring Ludology in *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt*”, we deal with how *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, the video game adaptation of *The Witcher* series, uses interactive storytelling components. We focus on the gameplay elements that support an immersive and interactive experience in the game, evaluating how they affect player agency and mental processes. We learn more about the interactive features of *The Witcher* series by comprehending the special storytelling opportunities that video games provide.

Finally, Chapter Four “Understanding Information Transmission between Two Mediums Using Dual Coding” investigates how information is transferred across *The Witcher* series' books and video games using the theoretical framework of dual coding theory. We explore how information is transmitted, how cognitive engagement and narrative comprehension are impacted by interactive components, textual clues, and visual representations. Additionally, we compare the information representation, interaction, cognitive engagement, and audience preferences of books and video games.

# **Chapter One: Theoretical Frameworks of Narratology, Ludology and The Dual- Coding**



## **Introduction:**

The study of interactive storytelling has gained prominence alongside the rise of video games in popular culture. Narratology and ludology have emerged as distinct approaches in game studies, reflecting the depth and diversity of video games as a storytelling medium. While seemingly incompatible, these methodologies can be employed together to investigate interactive storytelling.

Narratology offers a framework for understanding narrative elements in video games, such as plot, characters, setting, and point of view. By analyzing narrative frameworks and storytelling techniques, narratology can uncover themes, character arcs, and inter-character connections, shedding light on how stories are crafted and their impact on players.

In contrast, ludology focuses on player interactions and game mechanics. It provides insight into how players engage with the game, make decisions, and affect the plot. Ludology helps identify objectives, challenges, rewards, and feedback systems that keep players engaged.

Together, narratology and ludology provide a comprehensive understanding of interactive storytelling and the unique ways games can convey narratives. This understanding is essential for developing games that offer players deeper and more meaningful experiences.

In summary, grasping both narratology and ludology is crucial for comprehending narrative in interactive media. By examining both narrative and gameplay aspects, we can gain insights into how stories are created in games, how players engage with them, and how these interactions shape the overall storytelling experience.

## **1.1. Definitions:**

### **1.1.1. Narratology:**

According to Mieke Bal, narratology is "a discipline that investigates the ways in which narrative structures shape the telling and reception of stories, across a range of media, including literature, film, and other narrative forms." (Bal, M. 1997). Therefore, Narratology is a field of study that analyses and interprets narratives, exploring the creation, communication, and experience of stories. It examines storytelling fundamentals, forms, and purposes, including elements like plot, characters, point of view, narration styles, and overall story structure. Narratology also investigates the interactions between the narrator, characters, and audience, as well as the impact of narratives on engagement, meaning, and emotions. It provides a systematic approach to understanding storytelling in various media, such as books, movies, television, and video games.

### **1.1.2. Ludology:**

Espen Aarseth defined ludology as "the study of games and play activities, particularly the formal structures and experience of play" (Aarseth, E. 2001). Gameplay mechanics, rules, and player interactions are the main topics of study in ludology. The formal components and frameworks that influence the player's experience are examined, including the goals, obstacles, rewards, and rating and review procedures of the game. The goal of ludology is to comprehend how gamers interact with them, choose their actions, and use the

game's interface. Ludology provides information about the player's immersion, agency, and general experience in the game environment through the analysis of gaming dynamics.

### **1.1.3. Dual-Coding Theory:**

The Dual Coding hypothesis is a cognitive psychology hypothesis that describes how humans absorb and represent information in two modes: verbal and nonverbal (or visual). This theory holds that information is expressed in the brain by two distinct but connected systems: a verbal system that processes language-based information and a nonverbal system that processes visual and spatial information.

The theory contends that these two systems are linked and that they cooperate to promote memory and learning. A person can digest information in either a verbal or nonverbal format depending on how it is presented to them (for example, via reading, listening to a lecture, or observing a demonstration or seeing a picture). According to the dual coding theory, when information is provided to the brain concurrently in both formats, it can process and retain it more efficiently. This is so that the information will be easier to remember and find later on. The two systems cooperate to produce additional linkages and associations between the information.

The hypothesis contends that using mental images might improve recall and comprehension. We effectively use the nonverbal system to support the verbal system when we build mental images in our minds, which results in a more vivid and memorable representation of the information. Because they can assist students in evoking up images in their minds that support the verbal content, drawings and visual aids are frequently utilized in educational materials. Generally speaking, the Dual Coding Theory offers a framework for comprehending how various kinds of information are handled and stored in the brain. It emphasizes the need of utilizing both verbal and nonverbal formats to improve memory and

learning, and it implies that mental imagery can be an effective technique for consolidating and remembering knowledge.

## **1.2. The Potential Limitations or Criticisms:**

### **1.2.1. Narratology and Ludology:**

While it's clear that the narratological and ludological methods have a lot of potential for studying different types of storytelling, it is vital to recognize that there may also be drawbacks and critiques that need to be taken into account. These approaches offer helpful tools for assessing interactive storytelling in video games and other mediums, although they might not be appropriate for all analyses. It is important to approach these techniques critically and take into account their applicability to the particular context of the material being studied. Because of this, even while narratology and ludology provide useful insights into the realm of interactive storytelling, it is crucial to take into account any potential drawbacks and objections before using them in any particular analysis.

It is necessary to unfold these limitations before proceeding to use it because it allows us to fully understand the scope and boundaries of the theory. Acknowledging the constraints helps us spot possible analytical flaws and prevents us from asserting things that the theory is unable to sustain. Determining the areas where the theory may need to be improved or altered to better suit the study setting can also be aided by identifying the theory's shortcomings. We can make sure that the analysis is complete, rigorous, and based on strong theoretical concepts by outlining a theory's limits in advance.

#### **1.2.1.1.Reductionism:**

Reductionism is a concept in ludology that holds that games may be understood by dissecting them into its component pieces, such as rules, mechanics, and goals.

Reductionism, as used in narratology, is the notion that stories may be examined by dissecting them into its component pieces, such as story, character, and place. Before we breakdown how it can be a constraint, let's first look at what is reductionism in both theories.

Reductionism in ludology is the method of breaking down a video game playing experience into its most fundamental mechanical elements. This method examines the game as a strictly utilitarian system and overlooks its creative, emotional, and narrative components. Leading ludologist Jesper Juul asserts that while reductionism is an essential component of game analysis, it must be matched with a comprehensive strategy that considers the player's experience: "Analysing games by breaking them down into their constituent parts is necessary, but it must be balanced with an understanding of how these parts work together to create the player's experience." (Juul, 2005)

In narratology, reductionism is frequently linked to the structuralist approach, which aims to pinpoint the fundamental components of a tale and their interrelationships. Tzvetan Todorov, a structuralist, claims: "Structural analysis . . . involves breaking the text down into its constituent parts (narrative units) and determining their relationships to each other" (Todorov, 1969).

Applying narratology and ludology to video games and novels might have limitations or draw criticism since it can oversimplify and ignore significant facets of the medium. Applying ludology to video games can result in reductionism, which puts the player experience and immersion in the game world aside in favour of the mechanics and rules of the game. The cultural and social circumstances in which games are played, as well as the potential emotional and psychological consequences that games can have on players, may

potentially be overlooked by this method. Similar to how applying narratology to novels or video games can be constrained by reductionism, since it might ignore the interactive and immersive elements of the medium in favour of the storyline and character development. This method may ignore the player's agency, the manner in which their decisions and deeds affect the story, as well as the medium's sensory and aesthetic components.

#### **1.2.1.2.Player agency:**

Player agency undermines the conventional linear and planned narrative framework that is frequently at the centre of both disciplines, which can be a restriction or critique of applying narratology and ludology to video games and novels. The traditional idea of a set narrative with a predetermined storyline, characters, and events is challenged by player agency in narratology. It is challenging to evaluate the narrative in video games in a linear and predictable fashion since player agency allows the user to make decisions that have a big influence on the plot and the resolution.

Similar to this, the traditional idea of a predetermined set of game mechanics and rules is challenged by player agency in ludology. It is possible for players to engage with the game environment in original and imaginative ways that the game designers may not have foreseen, resulting in emergent gameplay that can be challenging to understand using conventional ludological frameworks.

Ultimately, player agency calls into question both the assumptions and constraints of narratology and ludology, necessitating a more dynamic and flexible approach to understanding the experience of playing video games and reading books. To truly capture the depth and diversity of player experiences, a more integrated and multidisciplinary strategy that takes into consideration the complex and dynamic character of various mediums may be required.

### **1.2.1.3. Technical limitations:**

Technical limitations, such as hardware and software limits, can limit the degree of detail and complexity that can be incorporated in video games. This can have an effect on the game's narrative, game mechanics, and overall gameplay experience, making it difficult to completely grasp and examine these components. Similarly, technical limitations in books, such as formatting, publishing constraints, or even translation challenges, can limit the perception of story, characters, and themes. This might narrow the field of study and result in a skewed comprehension of the work.

Furthermore, technical limitations like as bugs, glitches, and other technical difficulties might impair the player's experience of the game, making proper analysis of the gameplay and the player's response to it difficult. This might lead to erroneous judgments and inadequate understanding of the game's design and functionality. Thus, technical limitations might make it difficult to apply narratology and ludology to video games and novels by restricting the degree of information and complexity that can be included in the study. To overcome these limits, it is critical to consider the medium's technological constraints and to concentrate on parts of the game or book that can be accurately examined given the available technical resources.

### **1.2.2. Dual-Coding Theory:**

According to the dual coding theory, language-based information is processed and stored in the verbal system, while sensory-based information is processed in the nonverbal system. Although the idea has an intuitive appeal and has been used to explain a variety of cognitive processes, some detractors contend that the hypothesis has a number of possible flaws. The theory's lack of experimental proof is one potential drawback. While some researches have supported the notion, others have yielded conflicting or ambiguous results.

Due to this, some detractors have questioned the theory's viability and asserted that additional empirical data is required in order to completely assess it.

The theory is also criticized for emphasizing visual processing over other sensory modalities like auditory and tactile processing in cognitive processes. This can restrict the theory's applicability to particular kinds of data and situations. Additionally, the theory may only have limited validity to more abstract or complicated sorts of information because it was first put forth to describe the processing of physical things and events. For instance, it might be less helpful in understanding how language is processed, a highly abstract and intricate phenomenon.

Further, there is some ambiguity in the theory's definitions, especially when it comes to the distinction between verbal and nonverbal processing. Some detractors contend that the definitions of these concepts are not always precise and sometimes overlap, which may affect the veracity and accuracy of the theory. Finally, some critics contend that by dividing cognitive processing into two categories—verbal and nonverbal—the theory oversimplifies the complicated nature of cognitive processing. This could result in an overly simplistic understanding of how the brain represents and processes information, which could restrict its applicability in describing specific cognitive occurrences.



## **Chapter Two: The Narratology of *The Witcher SAGA* as a Written Narrative**

## **Introduction:**

Prior we proceed on to the analysis here's a synopsis to help you comprehend the story sequence more vividly, the five novels that make up *The Witcher* series mostly portray the adventures of Geralt of Rivia. Blood of Elves, Time of Contempt, Baptism of Fire, The Tower of Swallows, and Lady of the Lake are among the novels. Yet before the books were released, Andrzej Sapkowski wrote a number of short stories with Geralt in them. The two collections "The Final Wish" and "Sword of Destiny" were formed from the short stories. Geralt's world, demeanour, and interactions with other characters are introduced in these short stories. Several of the topics and motifs that are addressed in the novels are also established by them.

Finally, *The Witcher* Saga's two storylines offer a rich and intricate narrative framework, with the short story collections serving as an introduction to Geralt and the world he lives in and the novels diving more deeply into the bigger political and socioeconomic concerns at stake in the world. as The Saga is divided into two sections, it is essential to conduct a detailed examination of each, therefore I'll start with the short story collections before moving on to the novels and as the objective is on the wider "Witcher" series narrative arc, the approach is to analyse the short stories and the novels as a two individual groups.

### **2.1. The Short Stories:**

As a witcher, Geralt has undergone a number of mutations and training that have given him superhuman powers, making him a deadly foe to even the most terrifying creatures. Throughout the many storylines, Geralt is frequently employed by locals or nobility to slay creatures plaguing their villages. But he also runs across a number of other difficulties on his journey, including romantic complications, treachery, and political intrigue.

The stories skip about in time rather than being narrated in chronological order, giving us a look at Geralt's history and present. With his many experiences, Geralt gets to know a lot of other people, including as his adopted daughter Ciri, Yennefer, the formidable sorceress, and his buddy and fellow witcher Eskel. As the stories go on, Geralt is drawn into a greater plot involving a prophesy about a child who would transform the world and the strong powers that want to either control or destroy her. The "Witcher" short tales provide readers a complicated and exciting introduction to this universe, laying the groundwork for the considerably more extensive narrative portrayed in the Novels.

After a glimpse into the plot for a clear vision over the short-stories timeline, we'll follow the narratological theory approach to break down further flavours the narrative delivers starting with narrative structure, character analysis, theme analysis and finally the significance considering the broader implications of the narrative.

### **2.1.1. Narrative Structure:**

#### **2.1.1.1. Framing device:**

A framing device is a structural part of a narrative text that creates a division between the narrative and the narrated levels. It contains a narrative by presenting it as a story within a story or by placing it in a frame that isolates it from its surroundings. The framing mechanism, which provides the story a framework and may affect the reader's interpretation, is an essential component of narrative structure.

In the case of The Witcher short stories, the narrative structure that frames the tale gives the stories an added depth of intricacy, as observed in the series. The stories are being delivered by a narrator who is hearing them from the perspective of a different character, which serves as Sapkowski's framing method. This framing device distances the reader from the stories as they are not witnessed directly, but rather from the perspective of a listener.

The narrator's ability to travel through time and location as he listens to the recounted stories allows for a non-chronological presentation. This provides the reader with a more thorough understanding of Geralt's life and experiences, as they get to witness different points along his journey. In the short story "The Last Wish," the framing device is used to establish the character of Geralt and his work as a Witcher. A dialogue between Geralt and Dandelion, a bard attempting to create a poem about Geralt's experiences, serves as the framing device. This technique sets the stage for the storylines and allows the reader to view Geralt through Dandelion's perspective, maintaining their interest.

On the other hand, in the tale "A Shard of Ice" from "The Sword of Destiny," the framing device is revealed through a correspondence between Geralt and Yennefer. This exchange of letters offers a distinct perspective on their relationship and each character's viewpoints, effectively organizing the plot. Through this framing approach, the reader gains insights into their feelings, intentions, and power dynamics.

#### **2.1.1.2.Narrative voice:**

The reader's experience of a text is largely shaped by the narrative voice. The narrative voice has the power to produce an air of authority or trustworthiness, shape the reader's emotional reaction to the story, and develop a specific mood or tone. Gérard Genette, Mieke

Bal, Wayne Booth, all these Scholars stresses that the author's decision to adopt a certain narrative voice was purposeful and that many voices may be utilized to produce various results.

The main narrator in *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny* is a third-person restricted narrator. In the context of *The Witcher* short stories, the narrator is an impartial voice who describes the characters, actions, and places rather than being a character in the narrative. Nevertheless, the narrator can only see things from one character's perspective, generally Geralt.

This implies that the reader experiences and perceives the narrative via Geralt's eyes, thoughts, and emotions, but is not otherwise given access to other characters' ideas and feelings until Geralt notices or interprets them. Additionally, as was already noted, both collections' framing device function as a kind of narrative voice. It gives the reader a feeling of closeness with the narrator/storyteller since the stories are presented as though they were being told to someone. The narrator can add commentary on the incidents and individuals in the stories by using a framing mechanism, giving the reader context and perspective.

#### **2.1.1.3. Time and sequence:**

The short story collections, "The Last Wish" and "Sword of Destiny," present their events in a non-linear format, deviating from chronological sequence. This non-linear structure adds complexity and depth to the stories, as readers piece together the events and establish connections between them. Phelan highlights the significance of how time is portrayed in a narrative, as techniques like flashbacks and flash-forwards can disrupt the linear flow of time and evoke surprise or suspense. In the case of these collections, the non-linear format allows readers to experience events out of order, creating a sense of confusion and mystery that enhances the overall mood.

Sapkowski's mastery of narratology is evident in his skillful use of time and sequence in "The Last Wish" and "Sword of Destiny." By shifting back and forth in time, he provides readers with insights into both the past and present exploits of the protagonist, Geralt. This temporal manipulation shapes Geralt's character and lends meaning to his actions. Additionally, Sapkowski employs various narrative voices, including first-person and third-person perspectives, to give each character a distinct voice and offer a comprehensive understanding of the story's events.

In conclusion, Sapkowski's adept utilization of time, sequence, and narrative voice showcases his ability to construct an engaging narrative framework that captivates and invests readers in the stories. The non-linear structure, combined with multiple perspectives and thoughtful narrative voices, contributes to the richness and intrigue of the tales.

#### **2.1.1.4.Settings:**

*The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny's* environment is crucial to the narrative structure and have a significant impact on the plots. These collections of short stories take place in a wide range of dramatic settings, such as bustling cities, lavish castles, and little rural towns. The settings of Geralt's adventures in *The Last Wish* each add to the story's atmosphere and mood. For instance, the first story, *The Witcher*, takes place in a little town on the outskirts of a dark forest. The isolated setting, the fearful locals, and the drama's overall tone all contribute to a feeling of unease and danger. On the other hand, the second story's location, *A Grain of Truth*, gives the narrative a feeling of grandeur and refinement. At the end of the day, the setting of *The Last Wish* provides a rich and varied terrain for the tales to grow, giving the narrative depth and complexity. To better illustrate the settings, consider these examples:

“The witcher stopped in front of the tall village cross and looked around. The village was abandoned, no smoke rose from the chimneys, the gates were wide open, the roofs were

covered with snow. Everything was silent, except for the snow crunching under his boots. He felt the chill, the presence of the cold, the penetrating wind, and the snow, which had been falling incessantly for three days and three nights, burying everything under it, cut off from the world. The forest surrounding the village was dark, dense, and threatening. It was the perfect place for a monster.” (2008, p. 09)

This section highlights the village's disturbing remoteness and the forest that envelops it, which heighten the tension and create a sense of foreboding. The abandoned hamlet serves as the setting for Geralt's encounter with the striga, which enhances the tone and atmosphere of the narrative.

“Geralt looked at the lighted windows of the houses, the crowds thronging the streets. He smelled the aroma of wine and spices, the stench of refuse, the scent of women. He felt the beat of the music, the pulse of the city. He felt alive.” (*A Little Sacrifice*, p. 252)

The settings in *Sword of Destiny* are all equally significant, despite the fact that each one has a different plot function. The locations in this collection are utilized to examine various facets of Geralt's personality and reveal his objectives. For instance, Geralt visits a secluded island to hunt a dragon in the tale *The Bounds of Reason*. Geralt's internal unrest and his search for direction in a chaotic world are mirrored in the barren and stony surroundings. In the narrative *A Little Sacrifice*, Geralt also travels to a busy metropolis and falls in love with a singer. Geralt's amorous side can be explored in a more restrained manner because of the city's surroundings, which also reveal a more sensitive and emotional side to him.

#### **2.1.1.5.Tone:**

Tone is the general attitude that the author or narrator has toward the tale and its characters, as expressed through language and other literary elements. It may be communicated through the narrator's word choice, the character and scene descriptions, and

the tone of the story as a whole. As James Phelan notes in his book "Narrative as Rhetoric": "Tone...refers to the expressive quality of a text, as conveyed through elements such as diction, syntax, imagery, and rhythm, among others" (1996, p. 110).

The tone of *The Last Wish* is typically gloomy and melancholy, reflecting the terrible reality of Geralt's world. The following passage from *The Lesser Evil* serves as an example of this tenor: "Geralt sighed, then reached for his sword. 'All right, let's go,' he said gloomily. 'And let's hope we don't make any mistakes.' " (P. 59). In contrast, *Sword of Destiny* has a more diverse tone that better captures the many attitudes and ideas of each tale. For instance, the romantic and emotional tone of the tale *A Little Sacrifice* is exemplified by the following quotation: "Geralt stood before her, looking into her eyes. They were gray, clear, and serious, but there was something else in them as well. Something gentle and tender. He stroked her cheek with his fingers. She leaned into his hand and closed her eyes. He drew her to him and kissed her." (P. 152).

#### **2.1.1.6.Style:**

Style in narratology refers to the language, syntax, and other literary elements an author uses to portray their tale. As said by Mieke Bal, "Style is the way in which an author manipulates language in order to achieve certain effects, be they of a purely linguistic, referential or pragmatic nature." (1997, p. 88). In addition to the author's choice of narrative voice and perspective, style can also include the author's use of certain literary devices like metaphor, simile, and symbolism. David Herman clarifies, "Style is not just a matter of verbal pyrotechnics but of the distinctive verbal texture created by the deployment of specific narrative techniques, including point of view, focalization, and repetition." (2007, pp. 157-172).



The distinctive blending of realism and fantasy in *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny* by Sapkowski, as well as his use of vivid and detailed language, define the style in these works. To paint vivid pictures and bring his world to life, he frequently employs colourful metaphors and similes. He calls a character's smile in *The Last Wish*, for instance, "the smile of a cat who had just eaten a particularly tasty canary." This use of metaphorical language gives the story depth and complexity and contributes to the development of a recognizable voice and style.

In addition to his use of metaphorical language, Sapkowski also writes in a straightforward, uncomplicated manner that highlights the authenticity of his characters and their situations. This is especially clear in the language, which frequently reflects the grim, hard-edged world that Geralt lives in by being direct and to-the-point.

Overall, *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny* author Sapkowski's style is distinguished by a unique fusion of fantasy and realism, vivid and detailed language, and a no-nonsense approach to character and interaction.

### **2.1.2. Character analysis:**

#### **2.1.2.1.Characterization:**

Characterization in narratology refers to the process of conceiving and growing a fictional character. By their actions, conversation, thoughts, and relationships with other characters, a character's personality, appearance, background, and intentions are revealed. It is a vital component of storytelling and is essential for holding the audience's attention and advancing the storyline. Many tactics, including direct exposition, speech, actions, and descriptions, can be used to create characters. A multi-dimensional, credible, and emotionally engaging figure has the ability to provoke a reaction from the viewer. For a better explanation here is a quote from the book "The Art of Fiction" by David Lodge, "Characterization is the sum of the

distinctive traits or qualities of a fictional character, whether those traits are conveyed explicitly, by description and analysis, or implicitly, by the character's actions, dialogue, and interaction with other characters." (The Art of Fiction. Penguin Books, 1992, p. 89.)

Sapkowski skillfully employs characterization in each of his collections of short stories to create a vast and diverse cast of characters that capture the complexity of his imagined universe. The primary characters, such as Geralt, Yennefer, and Dandelion, are particularly well-developed, showcasing a range of motives and personality traits. Geralt, for example, is portrayed as a solemn and solitary figure who grapples with the moral complexities of his role as a monster hunter. Yennefer, a powerful sorceress, initially appears cold and calculating but gradually reveals a sympathetic and tender side. Geralt's bard companion, Dandelion, is a charismatic and cunning rogue who skillfully wields his talent for storytelling to entertain and manipulate those around him.

In addition to these main characters, Sapkowski employs characterization to provide depth to his supporting cast. For instance, in *The Last Wish*, the cursed aristocrat Nivellen is portrayed as a nuanced and captivating character who longs for human connection despite his grotesque appearance. Similarly, Essi Daven, a teenage singer who falls in love with Geralt in *Sword of Destiny*, is depicted as both innocent and courageous, driven by a strong desire to achieve her ambitions.

Taken as a whole, Sapkowski's adept use of characterization in *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny* serves as a vital component of his narrative, allowing him to construct a rich and immersive universe filled with lovable and multi-dimensional individuals.

#### **2.1.2.2.Character arcs:**

Character arcs describe how a character changes and grows throughout the course of a narrative. It is the process through which a character develops and evolves during the course

of a novel, typically as a result of the incidents and experiences they go through.

Understanding character arcs is crucial for comprehending how a character's journey affects the story's overarching plot. Character arcs are frequently examined in narratology in terms of the character's objectives, drives, and conflicts. The barriers or trials the character faces as they advance through the narrative may make them realize their own limitations or flaws. Character arcs are all about this journey of self-awareness and development.

In order to better understand character arcs, consider the following excerpt from David Herman "Character arcs are typically understood as transformations that occur over the course of a narrative, involving shifts in a character's beliefs, desires, or values. As characters encounter new challenges and opportunities, they may find themselves reconsidering their goals or revising their understanding of the world around them. These changes can be gradual or sudden, and they may be driven by a variety of factors, including the actions of other characters, new information or experiences, or unexpected events." (Herman, 2012, p. 78)

In *The Last Wish*, Geralt undergoes significant character development as he confronts the limitations of his neutrality and grapples with the complexities of the world. Initially portrayed as a heartless and detached individual who sees everything in black and white, Geralt's journey forces him to confront the moral intricacies and contradictions of his surroundings. In the story *The Lesser Evil*, for example, Geralt is faced with a choice between two evils and ultimately selects the lesser of the two. This decision leads him to question not only his own morality but also his belief in a clear distinction between good and evil. By the story's conclusion, Geralt's character has transformed, and he emerges as a different person from the one he was at the outset.

Similarly, in *Sword of Destiny*, Geralt's character development centers around his realization of the value of relationships and emotional connections in his life. Initially

depicted as a solitary figure who highly values his individuality, Geralt is compelled to confront the emotional void in his existence and recognize the significance of human bonds as the tales unfold. For instance, in the story *A Little Sacrifice*, Geralt discovers the importance of emotional connection through his love for a singer. This newfound understanding triggers a period of personal growth, leading Geralt to appreciate the value of relationships and emotional ties.

In both *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*, several supporting characters, apart from Geralt, also experience their own character arcs. As Geralt learns about the events that caused his curse, the character Nivellen in *The Last Wish* undergoes a transformation from a terrifying figure to a compassionate one. Likewise, Essi Daven's character in *Sword of Destiny* evolves from a lovelorn musician to a self-assured and strong individual, discovering that her worth is not defined by her relationship with a man.

These character arcs, woven throughout *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*, contribute to the depth and complexity of the narrative, showcasing the growth and development of not only Geralt but also the supporting characters within the enchanting world created by Sapkowski.

### **2.1.2.3.Relationships:**

In narratology, relationships relate to the connections and interactions that occur between the characters in a narrative. Family ties, friendships, romances, rivalries, and disputes can all be present in these interactions. They are essential to the development of the characters and the narrative.

Relationships are a big part of *The Last Wish* since Geralt has to figure out how to communicate with all the different personalities. For instance, the plot revolves around his relationship with the sorceress Yennefer. They were formerly in love and were reunited due

to a series of events. In order to remove a curse that threatens to ruin a kingdom, they must cooperate, and their tumultuous connection serves as a driving factor behind the story. Relationships have a similar but distinct role in the plot of *Sword of Destiny*. The connection between Geralt and the musician Essi Daven, and how their brief romance affects both of them, is the main subject of the story *A Little Sacrifice*. The narrative address's themes of love, sorrow, and regret while demonstrating how the connections we make may have an influence on our lives for years to come.

#### **2.1.2.4.Motivations:**

The motives of characters in a tale are referred to as their causes in narratology. These motives may be overt or covert, and they may be influenced by the character's personality, life history, current situation, social milieu, and cultural standards. To analyse characters' behaviours and gain a better grasp of the story's themes and messages, it is crucial to comprehend their motives.

Analysing the character motives in a narratological study can shed light on the narrative structure as well as reveal the deeper importance and meaning of the story. as stated by Miek Bal, "Motivation is a term used to indicate the reason(s) for the actions of characters in a story. It is a cause, a stimulus, a reason that leads to a certain course of action. Motivations may be external or internal to the character, and they may be explicit or implicit. Motivations are an important element of narrative structure because they provide a rationale for the events and actions that take place in the story." (Bal, 2009, p. 34)

In the scenario of *The Last Wish*, the primary character Geralt's objectives revolve around his job as a Witcher, a hired monster hunter. At the beginning, he seems to be only interested in making money, but as the plot develops, it becomes apparent that he also has a strong sense of responsibility and morality. He frequently decides to assist those in need even

though it is not required of him by his work. While in *Sword of Destiny*, Geralt is still motivated by his work, he also develops a stronger emotional connection with the individuals he assists. He seeks for the sorceress Yennefer, for instance, and grows close to Ciri, a little child he is charged with guarding. In both stories, Geralt has complicated, multifaceted objectives that are influenced by a combination of moral, emotional, and financial considerations.

#### **2.1.2.5. Symbolism:**

In the simplest terms possible, symbolism refers to the use of tangible items or behaviours to symbolize intangible ideas, themes, or concepts. This method can offer levels of interpretation for readers and enrich the meaning of a tale.

Symbols are essentially utilized to communicate deeper information that may not be explicitly mentioned in the language. The following is a definition of symbolism in narrative theory taken from Miek Bal's book *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* "Symbolism is a phenomenon that produces a meaning beyond its literal or factual meaning. A sign or symbol is something that stands for or represents something else, but it is not necessarily a direct reference to the represented object or concept. It is rather a culturally and historically determined convention, a general and abstract formula that has to be filled with specific contents in each instance." (p. 110, 1978.)

Let's examine some of the literature to better understand symbolism in the context of *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*. In the first quotation, we encounter the description of an apple tree in a garden, where Geralt encounters the enigmatic woman. The woman's offer of an apple foreshadows the complexity of Geralt's relationship with Yennefer, who is also associated with an apple-like scent. The apples on the tree serve as a metaphor for temptation,

reinforcing the symbolic connection and highlighting the significance of Geralt's friendship with Yennefer.

Moving on to the next quotation, it provides valuable insights into the use of symbolism in these short stories. Geralt awakens in a room to find a pale rose in a vase. The rose, almost white with a faint red tinge, becomes a recurring symbol throughout the narrative. Geralt gazes at the flower for a significant period, smiling at it before lying back down. Later, when Geralt meets Essi, she offers him the rose, and Geralt encourages her to keep it. The rose symbolizes the dangers that Geralt faces as a witcher. It serves as a reminder that danger can lurk even in seemingly beautiful and serene environments. Additionally, Essi compares their relationship to the thorns of a rose, acknowledging that while love can be beautiful, it can also be perilous. Sapkowski utilizes the rose motif to emphasize the risks inherent in Geralt's profession and the intricate nature of interpersonal relationships.

By employing these symbolic elements, such as the apple and the rose, Sapkowski enriches the storytelling and deepens the thematic layers of "The Last Wish" and "Sword of Destiny." Symbolism adds depth and complexity to the narrative, inviting readers to explore the multifaceted themes of temptation, danger, and the complexities of love and relationships within the context of Geralt's adventures.

### **2.1.3. Theme analysis:**

#### **2.1.3.1. The Nature of Evil:**

In contrast to the basic ideas of good and evil that are frequently found in fairy tales and fantasy literature, *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny* stories provide a sophisticated and nuanced investigation of the concept of evil. Sapkowski grapples with issues surrounding the nature of evil, the reasons behind people who perform bad deeds, and the prospect of redemption via the experiences of the protagonist Geralt of Rivia.

What we meant by that is that in both *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*, the author, Andrzej Sapkowski, uses the experiences of the main character, Geralt of Rivia, to examine the issue of the nature of evil. The narratives explore the reasons behind the wicked deeds of the protagonists and explore the viability of redemption. Sapkowski explores the depth of evil and poses difficult moral dilemmas by using Geralt's interactions with numerous creatures and villains.

As opposed to being straightforward tales of heroic individuals and evil villains, the stories might be seen in this sense as philosophical explorations into the nature of good and evil. In *Sword of Destiny*, the theme of the nature of evil is explored through the character of the bard Dandelion, who is accused of being in league with a demon. When Geralt looks into the allegations against Dandelion, he learns that human behaviour, rather than magical forces, is where the genuine evil exists. The peasants who accuse Dandelion are motivated by superstition and fear, and they are prepared to hurt an innocent person to defend themselves. The story leaves open the question of whether justice has actually been done even though Geralt is ultimately able to reveal the truth and clear Dandelion's name.

Andrzej Sapkowski explores the subject of the nature of evil in depth and complexity in his works *The Last Wish* and *Sword of Destiny*. He confronts dogmatic ideas of good and evil and depicts a world in which the distinction between the two is sometimes ambiguous via the experiences of his characters. By doing so, he challenges readers to think about the reasons behind individuals who carry out cruel deeds and to wonder whether there is any hope for redemption in a society that is frequently depressing and forgiving.

### **2.1.3.2. The Complexity of Morality:**

*The Last Wish* delves into the moral complexities of its characters within a society that defies simplistic judgments. Queen Calanthe initially embodies righteousness and care



for her subjects, but her execution of her daughter's suitor challenges the reader's perception of her character. This act raises unsettling questions about the lengths rulers would go to maintain their authority. Similarly, the sorcerer Stregobor justifies killing young girls with magical abilities, highlighting the blurred line between ethically repugnant actions and the potential danger of untamed magic. This forces readers to grapple with evaluating acts carried out in the name of protecting others.

Further exploring the intricacy of morality, the story examines Geralt's personal code, which forbids him from killing monsters unless they pose a threat to humanity. Although his actions are generally viewed as acceptable, there are instances, like when he chooses to slay the striga instead of attempting to break the curse, that raise moral dilemmas.

In *Sword of Destiny*, the complexities of morality manifest through Borch Three Jackdaws, initially depicted as a self-interested dragon. However, it is later revealed that he uses his wealth to support a slave rebellion, challenging Geralt's preconceived notions and urging him to reconsider his moral compass. Additionally, Essi Daven, a young singer who falls for Geralt, confronts morally challenging decisions as she navigates a world that prioritizes beauty over merit. Her actions, such as stealing and lying, serve as reflections of the morally ambiguous society she inhabits.

### **2.1.3.3.Identity:**

Geralt, the main character in "The Last Wish," battles with his own identity as a witcher. Because of his mutations and his career of murdering monsters, he is frequently considered as a monster by people around him, but he also suffers with his own sense of morality and what it is to be human. His connection with the sorceress Yennefer, who questions his ideas and sense of self, exemplifies this conflict. Yennefer herself, a strong sorceress who has experienced several physical and emotional alterations in her pursuit of

power, also struggles with concerns of identity. She is conflicted about her own self-worth and the sacrifices she has made to become who she is.

Geralt continues to struggle with his identity in "Sword of Destiny," particularly in respect to his career as a witcher and his interactions with others. Through his contacts with the dragon Borch and the teenage musician Essi, he is forced to confront his own preconceptions and prejudices. Essi is also grappling with her own identity as a musician who is sometimes neglected and devalued by others around her. She aspires to find her position in the world and be acknowledged for her abilities, but she confronts various challenges in doing so. Finally, the topic of identity pervades both "The Last Wish" and "Sword of Destiny," illustrating the intricacies and difficulty of uncovering one's genuine sense of self in an often merciless and unpredictable environment.

## **2.2. The Novels:**

For a brief glance at the timeline of the novels, *The Witcher* novels chronicle the ongoing exploits of Geralt, Ciri, his adoptive daughter, and their friends Yennefer and other witchers. A number of complicated political and social concerns, including racism, nationalism, and war, are explored in-depth in the novels. The main struggle in the books is around Ciri, who is being sought after by a number of strong factions who want to use her as a tool to further their own agendas. While battling their own inner demons and peril, Geralt and his allies must make their way through this hostile environment. By introducing new characters, creatures, and magical components, the novels help deepen the lore of *the Witcher* world.

Even if both short stories and novels take place in the same universe, the short stories are more episodic and self-contained, while the novels offer a more expansive and nuanced story. The novels also dive more into the political and social dynamics of the world,

examining topics like power, prejudice, and racial issues. The addition of additional characters and groups is another significant distinction. Many new characters, including mages and other supernatural beings, as well as kings and queens of numerous kingdoms, are introduced throughout the novels. These characters each have their own goals and objectives, which add to the plot's already complex complexity.

### **2.2.1. Narrative Structure:**

#### **2.2.1.1. Framing device:**

In contrary to short stories, the framing mechanism used in *the Witcher* novels is different. The books have a more conventional novel format, with a continuous narrative divided into different parts or chapters, in contrast to the short stories, which are framed as individual occurrences in Geralt's life. The framing device in the novels also differs in that it tells the stories of other significant characters, including Ciri and Yennefer, in addition to Geralt's. The main characters on both sides of the war are highlighted in the novels, along with the larger fight between Nilfgaard and the Northern Realms. The idea of fate and the part that prophesy plays in the plot is another framing technique used in the novels. Characters are motivated by their individual fates and the greater destiny of the world around them, which is woven throughout the story to emphasize the theme of destiny.

"Your songs mention no names, but we know the witcher you sing of is no other than the famous Geralt of Rivia, and the enchantress for whom he burns with love is the equally famous Yennefer. And the Child Surprise, destined for the witcher and sworn to him from birth, is Cirilla, the unfortunate Princess of Cintra, the town destroyed by the Invaders."

*(Blood of Elves. Chapter 1, Page 5)*

The characters in this particular quote state that although the names of the people being referenced are not stated in their songs, they are aware of them. It is revealed that

Geralt of Rivia, who is renowned for his exceptional skills and experiences, is the renowned witcher being sang about. He is rumoured to be in love with Yennefer, a formidable sorceress who is similarly well-known and with whom Geralt has a close bond.

The quotation also introduces the idea of the "Child Surprise," a key component of the Witcher universe. Cirilla, the unlucky Princess of Cintra, who is destined for Geralt and wed to him from birth, is identified as the Child Surprise. This discovery emphasises the interconnectivity of the characters and their fates by introducing a sense of destiny and inevitability to the narrative.

By using this framing technique of indirect reference, the novels evoke mystery and suspense. The main characters in the novel are aware of the main characters' fates, but readers must put the pieces together to understand the complexities of the connections and events being hinted at. In addition to giving the story more depth and complexity, this strategy encourages readers to engage in a process of discovery by helping them to figure out the characters' hidden motivations and the connections between their disparate stories.

#### **2.2.1.2.Narrative voice:**

*The Witcher* novels exhibit a distinct narrative voice that sets them apart from the short stories. Unlike the predominantly Geralt-centric perspective found in the short stories, the novels employ multiple viewpoints and perspectives, including those of significant characters like Ciri, Yennefer, and Triss Merigold. This narrative approach offers readers a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations, behaviors, and their interactions with the vividly depicted world around them.

For instance, in *Blood of Elves*, the narrative voice alternates between the perspectives of Ciri, Yennefer, and Geralt, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the unfolding events and their individual impacts on each character. This multifaceted narrative

voice enhances the reader's immersion in the story and enables a richer exploration of the complexities of the characters' thoughts and emotions.

An illustrative example can be found in the following quote: "Now that she was closer to the mountain chain she had to take greater care. The land around Kaer Morhen was famous for its wildness and inaccessibility, and the gap in the granite wall that was a vital landmark was not easy for an inexperienced eye to find..." This quote showcases the narrative voice's role in conveying information beyond the immediate actions and dialogue. The narrator provides insight into Ciri's thoughts and perspective, drawing attention to the challenges and dangers she faces. Through this narrative voice, readers gain a more intimate understanding of Ciri's experience, allowing for a deeper connection to her character and the world she navigates.

#### **2.2.1.3. Time and sequence:**

Time and sequence are far more clearly defined in novels than they are in short stories. The novels' events are presented in a more conventional chronological order, making it possible for the reader to follow a precise timetable. The significance of specific incidents and their effects on the wider plot are highlighted by this framework. The novels also frequently have flashbacks and references to earlier events, but these are presented in a clear and ordered way that doesn't interfere with the story's flow.

This is demonstrated in "Blood of Elves," when the story alternates between current affairs and flashbacks to Geralt and Ciri's earlier years. The flashbacks are skilfully woven into the narrative and aid in giving the reader crucial background information without detracting from the narrative's general framework. Another illustration can be seen in "Baptism of Fire," where the story follows Geralt and his friends as they move through

several locales in a straightforward and sequential order. The way the story is organized emphasizes both the journey and the different challenges the characters face along the way.

I'll also explain it this way for clarity: The plot of The Novels alternates between several stories, including Geralt's search for Ciri, the intrigues of the several lords of the northern regions, and the viewpoint of the sorceress Philippa Eilhart. As the individuals manage the constantly shifting political scene and the looming threat of the Nilfgaardian Empire, the interweaving of various narratives provides a feeling of intricacy and urgency.

The novels are presented through this narrative framework in a more conventional linear narrative format, where events take place in a more chronological manner. The novels also employ flashbacks and foreshadowing less frequently, which contributes to the narrative's simpler organization. As a result, the storytelling process may be made more seamless and simplified, and the reader can easily follow the plot's development. With the use of this narrative format, Sapkowski is able to examine a variety of aspects of his make-believe universe and give his readers a rich and varied reading experience.

#### **2.2.1.4. Settings:**

In the Witcher novels, Andrzej Sapkowski demonstrates his skill in describing settings with vivid and evocative language. One notable example can be found in the quote you provided, which beautifully captures the essence of a particular location:

"In front of them, as far as the woods allowed them to see, rose smoothly hewn blocks of granite and marble with blunt corners, worn away by the winds, decorated with patterns long leached out by the rains, cracked and shattered by frost, split by tree roots. Amongst the trunks' broken columns flashed white arcades, the remains of ornamental friezes entwined with ivy, and wrapped in a thick layer of green moss." (*Blood of Elves*, p 134)

This quote showcases Sapkowski's ability to transport readers into the world of the Witcher, with its ancient and weathered landscapes. The detailed descriptions of worn surfaces, cracked stone, and intertwining nature create a vivid visual experience. It paints a picture of an enchanting and decaying environment, where the remnants of ornamental architecture stand amidst the embrace of nature's growth.

While describing the city of Nilfgaard, Sapkowski conveys an air of majesty and grandeur. A stunning scenario is envisioned as the sun sets and casts its golden rays on Nilfgaard's spires and roofs. The fact that Nilfgaard is referred to as the City of Golden Towers heightens the city's attraction by making a suggestion about its wealth and importance in the Witcher universe.

"Assire var Anahid rose and went to the window; she stared out at the setting sun glistening on the roofs and towers of Nilfgaard, the capital of the Empire, called the City of Golden Towers."(*Baptism of Fire*, p 170)

Through this vivid description, Sapkowski transports readers to the heart of Nilfgaard, capturing the beauty and grandeur of the capital city. providing a glimpse into the architecture and ambiance, offering a sense of the city's splendor and cultural significance.

#### **2.2.1.5.Tone:**

Even if both the short stories and the novels have a grim and dark tone, the novels are typically considerably darker and more sombre. In the novels, the stakes are higher since entire kingdoms are at stake, and the protagonists must make decisions that are harder to justify morally. The moral uncertainty is there in the short stories as well, but there are also lighthearted and humorous passages that help to break up the gloom. The tone of the novels, on the other hand, is much more solemn and severe, with fewer humorous moments. The language and images employed in the works demonstrate this. For instance, the description of

a battle early on in *Baptism of Fire* establishes the mood: "Grey clouds hung low over the battlefield, and the air was thick with smoke and the stench of death. The ground was slick with blood and gore, and the screams of the dying could be heard all around." The detailed depiction of the battlefield and the sense of impending disaster in this section create a very gloomy and menacing tone.

Similar to this, *The Tower of Swallows'* depictions of the protagonists' tribulations convey a sense of despondency and hopelessness: "Every step was agony, but he forced himself to keep moving. The pain was a small price to pay for the chance to save his daughter, to make things right. But deep down, he knew that it was all for nothing. The world was broken beyond repair, and there was no hope left for any of them." The language is quite depressing and negative, and the narrative is permeated with a sense of dread. In comparison to the short tales, the novels are generally significantly darker and more serious, with a storyline that is permeated with gloom and melancholy.

#### **2.2.1.6.Style:**

The novels and the short stories differ from one another in a few significant ways in terms of style. To clarify this assertion, we will review this quotation "The sorceress Fringilla Vigo came awake in Beauclair Castle, as did the priestess Sigdrifa of the temple of the goddess Freyja on the island of Hindarsfjall. Daniel Etcheverry, Count of Garramone, awoke in the besieged fortress of Maribor. Zyvik, decurion of the Dun Banner, in Ban Gleann fort. Dominik Bombastus Houvenaghel, a merchant, in the town of Claremont. And many, many others." (*The Tower of Swallows*, p 08)

First of all, the narrative voice alternates between different characters and locations, giving glimpses into their awakening. Readers are given the opportunity to observe a variety of people awakening in varied contexts because to the prose's concision and fragmentation.



This stylistic decision enriches the narrative by weaving together a tapestry of experiences and viewpoints.

Secondly, the brief and evocative approach is aided by the use of short, straightforward words as well as the listing of people and their various settings. This strategy generates a quick pacing and grabs the reader's interest, carrying them along through the story. A sense of anticipation is also engendered by the sudden changes in the characters and settings, enticing readers to finish solving the story's bigger puzzle.

Finally, the phrase "And many, many others" that follows the quote emphasises the immensity and extent of the world depicted in the Witcher books. It suggests that the novel spans a large number of individuals and their intertwined journeys and alluded to the size of the narrative landscape.

## **2.2.2. Character analysis:**

### **2.2.2.1.Characterization:**

In terms of character development, novels offer a more thorough examination of people than short stories. The novels feature a larger cast of people, each with their own backstory and objectives, but the short stories frequently center on Geralt and others in his close vicinity. These characters frequently have more depth and complexity, as well as their own unique opinions and voices. For examples; Renfri is generally portrayed as a wicked figure who poses a threat to Geralt and the locals in the short story "The Lesser Evil." Renfri, however, is examined in greater detail as a tragic figure with a traumatic history that has influenced her behaviour in the book Blood of Elves. The viewer will have a more interesting and gratifying reading experience because to Renfri's character's increased depth and nuance.

The novels employ many points of view to narrate the plot, enabling the reader to witness events from the perspectives of other people. This gives the characters and their motivations a richer, more complex representation. Additionally, the novels also make use of flashbacks and dreams to shed light on the motivations and histories of people, enabling a deeper investigation of their character development. This contrasts with short stories, which frequently concentrate on a specific occasion or period of time without providing much context for the characters.

#### **2.2.2.2.Character arcs:**

In terms of character arcs, the Witcher novels showcase a shift towards more expansive and intricate storytelling compared to the short stories. With the novels' greater length and scope, there is ample room for the development of larger character arcs, allowing readers to witness significant transformations in key characters' lives.

One of the most compelling character arcs in the Witcher series is that of Geralt himself. Throughout the novels, Geralt undergoes a profound evolution, moving from a solitary monster hunter to a more connected and emotionally open individual. As the story progresses, Geralt forms deep and meaningful bonds with other characters, particularly Ciri, who becomes like a daughter to him. This relationship plays a pivotal role in shaping Geralt's character arc and serves as a driving force for his growth and personal development.

The later books, such as "Baptism of Fire" and "The Tower of Swallows," are particularly notable for showcasing the evolution of Geralt's personality. These novels delve deeper into Geralt's emotional journey, exploring his vulnerabilities, conflicts, and internal struggles. Through these experiences, Geralt becomes a more complex and multi-dimensional character, grappling with his own beliefs, morals, and the weight of his responsibilities.

Finally, many other prominent characters in the Witcher series go through significant character arcs. For instance, Ciri evolves from a helpless and little girl to a strong and independent person throughout the route, coming to terms with her own identity and fate. As she faces her own inner demons and negotiates challenging relationships, Yennefer, another key character, grows and transforms.

### **2.2.2.3.Relationships:**

In contrast to short tales, character interactions in novels are given greater depth and complexity. The larger length of the novels gives more time and room to study character dynamics, which frequently results in more complex and deep relationships. For instance, in *Blood of Elves*, we observe how Geralt and Ciri's relationship changes as they get to know each other better and start to feel like family. This is demonstrated in this dialogue:"

Who is this child, Wolf? Who is this girl?'

'She's my...!' Geralt suddenly stammered. She felt his strong, hard

hands on her shoulders. And suddenly the fear disappeared, vanished

without a trace. The roaring red fire gave out warmth. Only warmth. The

black silhouettes were the silhouettes of friends. Carers. Their glistening

eyes expressed curiosity. Concern. And unease...

Geralt's hands clenched over her shoulders.

'She's our destiny.'" (*Blood of Elves*, p 38)

another example is the romance between Yennefer and Geralt, which is more fully developed throughout the novels. Although their relationship is complicated and frequently

tense, there are times when they show each other tenderness and affection. Yennefer confesses to Geralt in *The Lady of the Lake*: "

‘Oh my, oh my,’ said Yennefer, tilting her head back so that her hair, damp from the steam, spread over the edge like little black vipers. ‘Oh my ... oh.’

‘I love you, Yen.’

‘I love you, Geralt.’" (p. 384).

The novels also explore the interactions between characters from various factions and nations, notably as the complicated bond between the Nilfgaardian Empire and the Northern Realms. This adds another level of intricacy to the story because political and historical circumstances frequently influence these interactions.

#### **2.2.2.4.Motivations:**

Characters' motivations in *The Witcher* novels have several facets and are frequently impacted by a variety of emotional, political, and personal circumstances. This gives the story more depth and complexity and gives readers a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations.

Yennefer is one character whose intentions best represent this complexity. Her decisions and actions are influenced by her personal feelings for Geralt, her sense of duty as a sorceress, and her intense desire to save and defend Ciri. Due to Yennefer's complex motivations, a fascinating picture of a person caught between close relationships and the greater good emerges.

Similarly, Geralt's reasons for protecting Ciri are discussed in further depth in "Baptism of Fire." He expresses his desire to defend her, admitting that she is his destiny and deserving of his steadfast protection. This declaration demonstrates Geralt's strong sense of

responsibility and willingness to put his own life in danger to protect Ciri. It illustrates the nuanced nature of his goals, which are fueled by a strong feeling of destiny as well as a strong emotional connection to Ciri.

Character motivations are deeply intertwined throughout the plot of *The Witcher* novels, influencing the choices and deeds of the characters. The characters become more empathetic and interesting as a result of their varied reasons. The novels enable readers to gain a greater comprehension of the characters' problems, conundrums, and personal development by probing the nuances of their motivations.

#### **2.2.2.5. Theme analysis:**

Andrzej Sapkowski's *The Witcher* novels explore a variety of subjects, displaying the breadth and complexity of the story. The idea of identity is a key issue that the novels extensively examine. Characters like Ciri and Geralt struggle with issues of purpose and belonging as they negotiate their responsibilities in a society that frequently views them as outsiders. While Ciri sets off on a journey of self-discovery, fighting to define herself in the middle of her predestined path, Geralt, the disfigured monster hunter, is constantly dealing with his own identity.

The themes of discrimination and prejudice occur frequently in *The Witcher* series. The persecution suffered by wizards and other social outcasts, as well as biases and prejudices towards non-human races like elves and dwarves, are all addressed in Sapkowski's novels. These stories mirror current events and encourage readers to think about the negative effects of discrimination as well as the difficulties of inclusion and acceptance.

The narrative in *The Witcher* universe is heavily influenced by politics and power. Both on a global level between nations and factions and on a micro level within the plans of monarchs and their advisors, the novels explore complex power relations. The political

climate in the series is turbulent; allegiances are formed and broken, and the quest for power leads to disputes and deceit.

Another major issue in *The Witcher* novels is the idea of fate vs free will. Characters become embroiled in the age-old argument as they struggle with their predetermined positions and the freedom to choose their own paths. The struggle is most exemplified in Ciri's story, where she must face the enormous consequences of being a figure of prophesy on her decisions and deeds.

War and violence loom large in *The Witcher* series, with the backdrop of the story being the war between the Northern Realms and the Nilfgaardian Empire. The novels examine the terrible effects of war and highlight the ugliness and inhumanity that accompany such battles. The portrayal of war by Sapkowski serves as a sobering reminder of the costs and repercussions of warfare, inspiring reflection on the nature of power and its capacity for destruction.

In summary, *The Witcher* novels cover a wide range of important subjects, including politics, destiny, the horrors of war, and identity and discrimination. The novels give readers provocative insights into the complexities of human experiences and the moral quandaries that arise in a turbulent world through the characters' travels and the deftly constructed plots.

**Chapter Three: Exploring Interactive  
Storytelling; Gameplay Mechanics,  
Player Agency, and Cognitive Impact in  
*The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt***

## **Introduction.**

In recent years, video games have gained popularity as a powerful storytelling medium. Interactive storytelling is a popular method for developing interesting storylines which offer players with a more immersive and psychologically resonant experience. However, the area of interactive storytelling is vast and varied, embracing both traditional narrative techniques of literature and film as well as unique game mechanics that take advantage of video games' interactive nature.

We investigate the relationship between ludology and interactive storytelling in the case of *The Witcher* Trilogy, a popular video game series praised for its engaging tale and immersive game-play. We seek to shed light on the distinct ways in which ludology may be used to produce emotionally compelling narratives in video games by examining the gameplay mechanics of *The Witcher* Trilogy and their influence on the reader's/player's experience of the story. Furthermore, we seek to offer insights into how video games might be used to produce more meaningful and impactful storytelling experiences by investigating the effects of interactive storytelling on the reader's or player's cognitive and emotional processes.

### **3.1. Definitions.**



### **3.1.1. Interactive Storytelling:**

An organized sequence of events or acts, frequently with a distinct beginning, middle, and finish, makes up a narrative framework. This form enables the growth of ideas, characters, and settings and can be employed to elicit strong feelings from the audience. As David Herman, an expert in narrative theory, pointed out "stories are not simply strings of events but are also a matter of how those events are organized and presented" (Herman, 2013, p. 6).

In academic disciplines like literature, cinema studies, and communication studies, narrative storytelling has received substantial study. Plot, character, and place are only a few of the components that make up a narrative framework. Narrative theorists have also researched how these components interact to produce meaning. Mieke Bal, a literary theorist, has said, for instance, "the story world is the product of the interaction of narrative elements, such as character, setting, and plot, which come together to create a coherent narrative experience" (Bal, 2009, p. 22).

Since game creators have realized the value of storytelling in capturing players' attention and generating immersive experiences, narrative storytelling has also grown in importance in video games. As highlighted by digital media expert Marie-Laure Ryan, "games with strong narratives can elicit emotions in the player that are similar to those evoked by literature or film" (Ryan, 2014, p. 54).

### **3.1.2. Ludology and Storytelling.**

The study of games and gameplay known as ludology focuses on the systems, rules, and mechanics that make up a game. Gonzalo Frasca, a scholar and game designer, invented the phrase in the late 1990s. Instead of seeing games as merely narratives or representations, ludology sees them as systems having formal structures and operations that enable players to engage with and manipulate them.

On the other side, interactive storytelling refers to the use of digital technologies to develop immersive and captivating narratives that let the user or player engage in the story and shape its conclusion. Traditional storytelling methods are combined with interactive aspects like user input, branching storylines, and real-time feedback to create interactive narrative, which offers a distinctive story experience.

Interactive storytelling and ludology have a complicated and nuanced interaction. Interactive storytelling aims to develop compelling narratives inside the formal structures and mechanics of games, while ludology gives a framework for studying these elements. Janet Murray, a game designer and professional, "the heart of interactive narrative design is the creation of a rule-based system that is compelling in itself, whether or not the player gets deeply involved with the story" (Murray, 2012).

*The Witcher* Trilogy's narrative experience is significantly impacted by ludology. The mechanics and features of the game provide the player the ability to make decisions that affect how the story turns out, giving them a sense of agency and ownership over the story. *The Witcher* Trilogy's open-world layout, character development, and fighting mechanisms all help the player become immersed in the narrative and the environment. Jesper Juul, a game designer and academic, points out "the combination of an engaging story and an interactive system makes for a powerful experience that is unique to games" (Juul, 2005).

Ludology and interactive storytelling are two complementing methods for comprehending and developing video games and digital narratives, in conclusion. Ludology offers a structured framework for game analysis, and interactive storytelling aims to develop compelling and immersive stories within these frameworks. *The Witcher* Trilogy is a great illustration of how these strategies may be put together to produce a potent and compelling narrative experience that is exclusive to video games.

### 3.2. *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt* Digital Storytelling:

The narrative of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, an action role-playing game, starts out with Geralt having amnesia, a recurring element in the series. He must journey to a number of different locations as he seeks for Ciri, each of which has its own special difficulties and perils.

Geralt must negotiate intricate political and social dynamics, face terrifying monsters, and deal with the repercussions of his decisions as he travels from the Velen wetlands to the Skellige Isles. Geralt meets a variety of intriguing people along his quest, both old friends and new, like Yennefer, Triss Merigold, the poet Dandelion, and the sorceress Keira Metz. These individuals play a significant part in Geralt's quest either assisting him or posing fresh difficulties and problems for him to overcome.

Geralt confronts a variety of dangerous beasts as he travels through the wide and diverse world of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, each with their own distinct skills and weaknesses. Geralt must use all of his witcher skills to battle these beasts and continue his search for Ciri, from the towering and lethal griffin to the aquatic horrors of the drowned dead.

As Geralt gazes deeper into the secrets surrounding Ciri's disappearance, he must navigate complicated political manoeuvres, face powerful magical forces, and finally confront his own past and the decisions that have brought him to this point. *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is an exciting and immersive digital narrative that mixes compelling gameplay with riveting storytelling and a rich and detailed world full of monsters, magic, and intrigue.

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt's* rich and deep plot, paired with its intriguing gameplay and wide-open environment, creates a wonderfully captivating experience for players. The emphasis on player decision and consequence, as well as the game's complex and morally ambiguous characters, provide players with a sense of agency and ownership over the plot.

The realm of political intrigue, frightening beasts, and potent magic awaits as players join Geralt on his search for Ciri. It's simple to become lost in this world and grow attached to Geralt's adventure thanks to the game's meticulous attention to detail and realistic environments. Each character and monster the player encounters feel distinct and distinctive, and the decisions they make have a big influence on the plot and how things turn out. Additionally, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is a fully realized digital narrative that presents a story that is as captivating and sophisticated as any book or movie, not just a game.

Video games are the only medium where traditional storytelling components can coexist with interactive gameplay and player choice to produce such a singular and potent experience. In summary, lovers of open-world RPGs and digital storytelling alike are likely to love *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* because of its captivating plot, complex characters, and captivating setting.

### **3.3. The Gameplay Mechanics of *The Witcher*.**

Gameplay mechanics are the rules and structures that affect how players interact with video games. they consist of the core actions and reactions that shape the gameplay experience, such as movement, battle, discovery, puzzle-solving, and other activities. These mechanics establish a set of expectations for how the game will operate and serve as the game's foundation. Gameplay mechanics are essential because they influence the player's experience and involvement with the game.

They determine how the user interacts with the game world and other players if the game has a multiplayer component, as well as the basis for the game's challenges, rewards, and objectives. a game with well-crafted gameplay mechanics can be more entertaining, engaging, and satisfying to play, whereas a game with badly designed mechanics might be irritating, perplexing, or dull.

Gameplay mechanics are also important in distinguishing a game from its competitors. In a competitive market, unique and intriguing mechanisms can help a game stand out, whereas derivative or unoriginal mechanics can make a game feel generic and uninspired. In short, gaming mechanics are an essential component of video game design and development, and they play an important part in determining a game's success and popularity.

### **3.3.1. the role of game mechanics in the player's experience:**

One of the most important aspects of game design is how the game mechanics affect the player's experience. The fundamental guidelines, procedures, and interactions that control how a player engages with a game are known as game mechanics. These gameplay elements have a significant impact on a player's experience, both favourably and unfavourably.

Game mechanics can shape a player's experience via offering them a sense of authority and command, allowing them to interact with the game in meaningful ways. According to Jesper Juul, a game scholar, "games are rule-based systems, which players engage in through voluntary effort in order to experience an aesthetic pleasure" (Juul, 2005). The capacity to explore and interact with the game world, as well as test and master the game mechanics, provides this enjoyment.

Additionally, game mechanisms can convey a sense of difficulty and advancement, which can be quite motivating for players. The game designer and academic Jane McGonigal asserts that "games are designed to provide a series of challenges that players can overcome through effort, skill, and strategy" (McGonigal, 2011). When a player succeeds, this sense of struggle can produce a sense of success and satisfaction.

Moreover, the characters and game world can be made to emotionally engage players using gaming mechanics. A game's handling of moral decisions, for instance, can inspire a

sense of obligation and commitment to the storyline. Miguel Sicart, a game scholar, asserts "moral choices in games are not only about making decisions that affect the game world, but also about the construction of player identity" (Sicart, 2014). Choices made by the player can influence how they view themselves in relation to the game world and reflect their personal values and views.

In summary, game mechanics are extremely important in determining the player's experience in video games. They provide difficulty and advancement, a sense of agency and control, and the potential for emotional connection to the game's universe and its characters. Game designers can make more interesting and meaningful games if they understand how the mechanics of the game affect the player experience.

### **3.3.2. Gameplay Mechanics in *The Witcher Wild Hunt*:**

In this section, we'll discuss what I consider to be essential gameplay mechanics in the game, and I'll try to explain what each mechanism contributes to and how they immersed the experience of playing the game.

#### **3.3.2.1. Open-World:**

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt's* game environment is meticulously built, with each section of the world diligently planned to create a distinct feel and sense of place. Each region has its own distinct aesthetic style, architecture, and scenery, ranging from the swamps of Velen to the snow-covered mountains of Skellige. To create a gaming world that feels both natural and handmade, the game designers used a blend of handcrafted scenery and procedural creation.

In addition to the graphics of the setting, the NPCs in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* add to the sense of immersion and life in the game world. The NPCs have their own personalities,

routines, and schedules, and they react to the player's actions and choices. They'll also have their own stories and tasks to provide, giving the gaming world a feeling of interconnectivity and depth. Traveling throughout the game environment is also a big component of the open world experience. The user can ride their faithful steed, Roach, to explore the game world at their leisure. Roach can be summoned at any time, making travel more seamless and immersive. The player can also fast travel to previously visited locales, which makes navigating the enormous game world easier.

Finally, the game's merchants bring a new dimension to the open world experience. They provide a diverse range of goods and services, such as weapons, armour, and crafting materials. The player can bargain with merchants to get the best deals, giving realism and immersion to the game environment. As a whole, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt's* open world is meticulously built, with an emphasis on creating an immersive and genuine game world. The game world feels alive and dynamic because to the combination of aesthetically appealing locations, well-designed NPCs, frictionless transit, and genuine merchant interactions.

### **3.3.2.2. Resources, Crafting and Inventory:**

Resources are essential for creating and upgrading numerous equipment in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, and are especially critical for players who want to play a specific build or playstyle. For example, the Chemist build focuses on using potions and concoctions to improve Geralt's combat skills. The ingredients for making these potions and concoctions, as well as those required to make the unique mutagens that improve Geralt's skills, must be gathered by players that are interested in this build. The Chemist construct is impossible without these materials.

Resources, in addition to potions and decoctions, are required for creating and upgrading weapons and armour. Players can acquire the resources needed to build and improve swords and armour with specific bonuses, such as boosted damage against specific sorts of foes or increased resistance to specific types of harm. These advantages can be critical for certain playstyles or builds, such as tanking or dealing fire damage. As players can create food and drink items that restore health and have other positive effects, resources are crucial for healing up during battle. Furthermore, resources are also required to pursue some status effects, such as greater fire damage or poison tolerance.

In conclusion, the mechanisms of the game's resource collection, inventory managing, and crafting provide players a sense of agency and control over their gameplay. Players are empowered to approach obstacles in their own special way and feel like they are progressing when they are able to gather resources and make items that fit their particular playstyle or build. The ability to produce food and drink items that improve health and have other beneficial effects adds another layer of strategy to the game and can be the difference between victory and defeat in a difficult battle. Overall, these gaming elements provide a very fascinating and pleasurable experience and let players fully immerse themselves in The Game's expansive and intricate environment.

### **3.3.2.3. The Skills Tree:**

The game's skill tree is a system that allows players to allocate the points they acquire by levelling up into a variety of skill categories, such as combat, magic, alchemy, and general skills. Through the use of ability points, each category offers a unique set of skills that may be unlocked and improved. Players can adapt their gameplay to their particular playstyle by



altering and upgrading Geralt's abilities using the skill tree, which provides a wide range of alternatives.

Players find the skill tree mechanic to be incredibly rewarding and fascinating. A satisfying sense of growth and achievement is provided by the opportunity to distribute points into several categories of skills and unlock new and more potent abilities as players go through the game.

Additionally, players can play the game in a way that seems very personal to them by honing their alchemical or sign-casting skills or specializing in particular combat methods, offering a highly customized gameplay experience. Therefore, the skills tree system, taken as a whole, considerably enhances the immersion and fun of the game. The skill tree offers players to thoroughly immerse themselves in the game's universe and feel as though they are actually playing the part of Geralt by offering them a high degree of customisation and control over their gameplay experience.

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is a very intriguing and gratifying game to play since players may customize their skills to fit their unique playstyles, adding a further layer of depth and strategy to the gameplay.

#### **3.3.2.4. Combat system:**

The *Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*'s combat system is a fast-paced, difficult action-RPG combination that necessitates tactical decision-making, timing, and positioning. In real-time combat, players take control of Geralt of Rivia as he engages a range of adversaries, from bandits to monsters. Players must switch between the two swords depending on the enemy they are facing since each has a different purpose: the steel sword is used for human and non-magical enemies, while the silver one is used for monsters and supernatural entities.

A health-point system is also included in the game to indicate Geralt's health during battle. Since Geralt dies and the player must continue from the last save point if his health points fall to zero, this gives combat an added sense of urgency and risk.

In addition, the game employs a levelling system, with opponents scaling to Geralt's level. The fighting system becomes more challenging as a result of higher-level adversaries being harder to defeat. The game's combat system can be both thrilling and frustrating from the player's point of view. The level of difficulty in some encounters can be intimidating, even while the quick-paced action and strategic decision-making necessary to prevail can be very entertaining. But mastering the battle system and disposing of difficult adversaries is incredibly satisfying.

The levelling system is another tool used by the designers to keep players from sticking to the primary quest line. The open environment of the game invites players to explore it and finish side tasks to earn experience points and gear that can be useful in battle. This enhances the immersion of the game by giving players the impression that they are residing in a dynamic environment where there is constantly something new to learn.

In conclusion, The Game's combat system offers a difficult and engrossing gameplay experience that necessitates tactical judgment, deft execution, and a desire to explore the game's open world. While the health-point and levelling systems offer a sense of struggle and advancement, the usage of two swords and magical signs deepens the gameplay. Players who are willing to put in the time and effort to learn the fighting system will find it to be quite rewarding.

#### **3.3.2.5. Point Of View:**

As a third-person action-RPG, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* allows players to see the game world from a position that is somewhat above and behind their chosen character. The ability to observe the area around the character and any potential opponents or barriers gives players a greater understanding of their surroundings. The developers purposefully chose to adopt a third-person perspective because it enables players to be more aware of their surroundings and respond to dangers more rapidly.

The third-person perspective also aids in the game's emphasis on ducking and rolling to evade attacks by enabling players to see enemy movement patterns and adjust their strategy accordingly. While a first-person perspective might have made the game more immersive, it might have also made fighting more challenging, especially when facing off against animals with strange movements. It would be considerably more difficult to anticipate attacks and act fast in a first-person perspective, which would make battle much more irritating for players.

In conclusion, the developers purposefully chose the third-person perspective to give players a better understanding of their surroundings and to make combat more fluid and dynamic. A first-person perspective might have been more immersive, but it would have made combat considerably more challenging, which would have diminished the game's overall appeal.

#### **3.3.2.6. Technical Limitations:**

Technical limitations in video games are constraints or obstacles that game developers must overcome when designing and implementing different game aspects, such as visuals, sound, gameplay mechanics, and interactivity. Hardware or software limits, such as constrained processing speed, memory size, or storage space, may be the root of these restrictions.

Technical limitations can actually hinder immersion in video games if they are not properly addressed. For instance, poor graphics or a lack of user interaction with the game environment can reduce immersion and make it more difficult for players to participate completely in the game world. On the other hand, overcoming these technical constraints may produce better game immersion.

For instance, improvements in graphics technology, AI behaviour, NPC's animations... can make environments and people more lifelike, enhancing players' immersion in the gaming world. Similar to this, advancements in artificial intelligence and game physics can increase interaction and give players the impression that the game environment is more responsive to their choices.

There are two main types of technical limitations: hardware limitations and software limitations. The limitations imposed by a gaming system's physical parts, such as the Central Processing Unit (CPU) speed, memory capacity, graphics card, and other hardware components, are referred to as hardware limitations. These restrictions may have an impact on a game's playability, aesthetic appeal, and overall performance. For instance, gamers with lower-end graphics cards may see lag, low framerates, or other performance concerns if a game necessitates a high-end graphics card to function smoothly.

While contrarily, restrictions brought about by the software used to produce and execute games are referred to as software limits. These restrictions may be caused by the game engines, programming languages, or other software elements utilized in game production. The intricacy and level of detail of gaming environments may be affected, for instance, by a game engine's restrictions on the number of objects that can be displayed on the screen at once. Technical limitations are not necessarily negative; in fact, they can inspire new ideas and advances in game design.

One of the most famous video games in history, Super Mario Bros., was made possible by the original Nintendo Entertainment System's constrained hardware capabilities. Technical constraints can also motivate programmers to think creatively and come up with fresh approaches to push the bounds of what is feasible given such constraints.

Video game technical limitations can have a substantial effect on both the developers and the consumers. Limitations may prevent game producers from achieving the desired vision and experience in their works. Technology development can, however, open up new doors for creativity and innovation. Ray tracing technology, for instance, has allowed game creators more control over how to alter light and shadows in their games, creating worlds that are more realistic and immersive.

Similar to this, photorealistic engines like Unreal Engine 5 or Unity 2022 give developers new ways to make more intricate and lifelike textures, leading to more aesthetically attractive games. However, for consumers, technical constraints might affect how enjoyable a game is overall. Slow framerates, lag, and other problems might reduce the enjoyment of the game due to insufficient optimization or old hardware. Additionally, due to possible device or software requirements, technological restrictions may reduce the accessibility of games.

The medium of video games can be significantly improved by overcoming technical constraints. For instance, developments in virtual reality technology have made it possible for new kinds of gaming to be enjoyed by players, increasing their sense of immersion and interaction. Artificial Intelligence (AI) may also help create game worlds that are more dynamic and realistic, with non-player characters behaving and making decisions in ways that are more sophisticated. The videogame industry has reached new heights thanks to the

quick development of technology, which has allowed game designers to produce very lifelike and engaging experiences for gamers.

For instance, the new game "Unrecord" has garnered attention for its cutting-edge promo, which has been mistaken for actual video. This demonstrates how far the gaming industry has advanced. Though it's exciting to see the potential of these developments, it may also be a little frightening to consider what the future may hold.

### **3.4. Interactive Storytelling and Emotional Processes**

The narrative in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is complex and branching, giving players a variety of options and routes to take. The game's main plot is split up into a number of quests, each with its own distinct narrative arc and decision-making opportunities. These quests are scripted utilizing a combination of in-game dialogue options and previously produced cutscenes. Additionally, the game has a dynamic dialogue system that lets players influence the plot and their relationships with characters through the dialogue choices they make. Each selection in the dialogue system leads to a different result and set of dialogue possibilities, which is built on a branching tree structure.

As a result of the player's decisions made during the game, *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt's* story has numerous possible endings. These judgements have a considerable impact on the course of the story and the lives of its characters and can produce a variety of results, from favourable to unfavourable. The game not only includes a deep main plot but also a tonne of side quests and activities, giving players plenty of chances to explore the game's environment and engage with its people. The results of these side missions can have an

impact on both the game's ultimate resolution and the characters involved. *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*'s deep and branching narrative demonstrates the value of interactive storytelling in the world of video games.

According to Jesper Juul, a prominent ludologist, “interactive storytelling goes beyond mere combinations of storytelling and interactivity; it represents a distinct form of expression unique to games” (Juul, 2001). The game's utilization of scripted quests, dynamic conversations, and multiple endings contributes to the creation of a complex and immersive world that responds to the player's decisions and actions.

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*'s developers at CD Projekt Red purposefully adopted a participatory, non-linear story. Lead quest designer Mateusz Tomaszkiwicz revealed their goal was to create a sense of a live environment that continues even without the player's presence in an interview with Polygon. This choice was chosen to create a strong sense of immersion in the gaming world, where the player's choices matter and have real effects.

The appropriateness of this decision ultimately depends on the player's preferences and what they seek in a game. The non-linear, interactive storytelling in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* offers a high degree of player agency and immersion, enabling players to shape the world and narrative in a manner that feels unique to their playthrough. This can foster a strong emotional connection to the story and characters, as players witness the consequences of their choices unfold through the multiple alternative endings.

However, some players may prefer a more traditional, linear storytelling approach, in which the narrative is tightly controlled and the player's decisions have minimal impact on the outcome. This approach can deliver a more cinematic and directed experience, but it may lack the sense of agency and immersion found in non-linear games.

# **Chapter 4: Understanding Information Transmission between Two Mediums Using Dual Coding**



## **Introduction:**

Information transfer from one medium to another has seen considerable changes in the domain of storytelling over time. The written word had the potential to capture readers and transport them into vivid fictional worlds, hence traditional narratives were primarily found in books.

The chapter explores how information is transferred between various storytelling forms, with a focus on books and video games. To comprehend how information is efficiently communicated in multiple channels, it focuses on the use of Dual Coding Theory, a cognitive paradigm. With an emphasis on its use in examining the information transfer between books and video games, the Dual Coding Theory is introduced. The Witcher series is used as a case study to look at how interactive features and textual and visual aspects interact to improve information transmission.

The Witcher series' book and video game versions are contrasted to determine how well each media conveys information. In order to improve information encoding and retrieval, the advantages of video games are examined. These advantages include graphics, interactivity, and immersive experiences. However, taking into account individual differences, player agency, and cognitive load in the processing and retention of information during video game experiences, the chapter also addresses potential disparities in perceiving and understanding narrative aspects between books and video games.

### **4.1.Theoretical Framework: Dual Coding Theory:**

The dual coding theory offers an in-depth structure for comprehending how data are processed and represented in the human mind. The essential ideas and definitions of dual coding theory, such as the separation between verbal and nonverbal information processing and the cognitive processes involved, were introduced in Chapter one. Language is used to

encode and represent information during verbal information processing, for as when reading or listening to words.

To convey meaning and understanding, it depends on the semantic and syntactic components of language. Verbal codes are made up of words, sentences, and textual representations, and they are largely processed by the brain's language centres. But in nonverbal information processing, information is encoded and represented via visual and spatial representations. This comprises pictures, charts, and other non-linguistic symbols like diagrams. Different cognitive processes from those utilized in verbal processing are used to process nonverbal codes through visual and perceptual systems.

According to the dual coding theory, both verbal and nonverbal codes are used in cognitive processing and can interact and reinforce one another to improve comprehension and memory. According to the hypothesis, the mind develops a richer and more detailed representation of the information when it is provided in other modalities, such as text and graphics. According to the dual coding theory, independent and interactive processing are both involved in dual coding. Independent processing is the distinct encoding and storage of verbal and nonverbal data, whereas interactive processing is the combining and interacting of these two codes to produce a single mental image.

According to the hypothesis, using dual coding can improve understanding, learning, and memory. It promotes redundant and complementary sources of information by involving many sensory modalities, which improves the encoding, retrieval, and transfer of knowledge. The information transmission process between the novels and video games in the Witcher series will be examined using these theories and concepts in the parts that follow. We may study how dual coding theory can help us understand the effectiveness of information

transmission and the cognitive impact on the audience by understanding the roles of verbal and nonverbal processing in different mediums.

#### **4.2.Application of Dual Coding Theory to The Witcher Series:**

In this section, we'll examine the use of dual coding theory to examine how information is transmitted between The Witcher novels and video games. By using the dual coding theoretical framework, we may learn a lot about how these media use various codes to inform and captivate their audiences. The Witcher series, which consists of both novelized stories and video game adaptations, offers a fantastic setting for investigating the use of dual coding theory. The books, written by Andrzej Sapkowski, use words to depict a world that is incredibly complex and compelling. On the other hand, CD Projekt Red's video game adaptations use interactive, audio, and visual aspects to make the story come to life. Dual coding theory allows us to compare these mediums and analyse the various information-transmission techniques they use as well as how they affect the cognitive processes of the audience.

The dual coding hypothesis postulates that mixing verbal and nonverbal codes can improve information encoding, retrieval, and transfer. In the case of The Witcher series, the novels mostly rely on verbal codes, using literary devices like descriptive language to generate imagery and draw readers into the story. In order to mentally represent the characters, surroundings, and events portrayed in the book, readers must use their cognitive processes during reading. On the other hand, The Witcher video game adaptations make use of both verbal and nonverbal cues. Players are exposed to both text-based information as well as graphically drawn characters, backdrops, and interactive features.

Players can use both verbal and nonverbal cognitive processes when using this multimodal method, creating a more engaging and vivid experience. Players can create a more thorough mental image of the tale world because to the visual representations in the games, such as character designs, environmental elements, and cinematic cutscenes, which add to the verbal narrative.

We can learn more about how different media affect cognition and how well they convey information by carefully analysing and comparing them. We can better grasp how the interaction of textual and visual aspects affects the audience's cognitive processes and may affect how they perceive, comprehend, and enjoy the story by studying how verbal and nonverbal cues are used in *The Witcher* series.

To demonstrate the use of dual coding theory, we will examine particular examples from *The Witcher* series in the next sections of this chapter, both in its literary and video game versions. We want to elucidate the cognitive mechanisms at work and shed light on how the dual coding technique contributes to the audience's experience of *The Witcher*'s rich storytelling universe by dissecting the information transmission process in these media.

#### **4.2.1. The role of visual representations, textual cues, and interactive elements in facilitating the transmission of information:**

Within *The Witcher* series, interactive components, verbal clues, and visual representations all play significant roles in information transmission. Each of these elements helps the audience comprehend and engage with the narrative while also adding to the overall immersive experience.

Visual representations, such as character designs, scenery, and environmental details, are essential for informing the viewer and engrossing them in the story's universe. They provide a visual context for the story's setting, which helps the spectator comprehend it

better. By offering a nonverbal representation that may be linked with the verbal codes, visual imagery improves memory and understanding, according to Paivio's dual coding theory (Paivio, 1986). Visually generated scenes are used in *The Witcher* series video game adaptations to bring the story to life and provide a multimodal experience that helps the audience comprehend the fictional universe.

Players are able to experience and explore the environment in ways that go beyond what can be adequately expressed by written word thanks to these visual representations, such as realistic in-game landscapes like Novigrad or Velen's forests, which are full of intricate nuances. The places and characters in the video game adaptations' artistically depicted surroundings and lifelike character designs help create a more tangible and vivid mental impression.

As players rely on visual cues to traverse the game world and create mental representations of the narrative elements, research by Richard E. Mayer (2009) supports the idea that visually rich environments can assist the encoding and retrieval of information. These visual representations make a substantial contribution to the overall understanding and pleasure of the story by offering visual context and immersive experiences.

Textual cues act as guiding features that communicate crucial information and promote comprehension in both the novels and video games of *The Witcher* series. Descriptive language, dialogue, narrative explanation, and on-screen prompts are all used to convey these cues. Deeper processing of textual material improves retention and memory, according to the levels of processing theory (Fergus I.M. Craik and Robert S. Lockhart, 1972). The textual clues aid in the audience's comprehension of the narrative by getting them to process the text in a meaningful way.

In the books, descriptive language and narrative explanation are the main ways that textual clues are communicated. These hints aid readers in picturing the characters' looks, actions, and feelings as well as in comprehending the sequence of events in the novel. They serve as hints to aid the reader's comprehension and imagination. The same is true for video games, where textual clues are crucial for directing players through the plot and supplying crucial information. They appear in the form of on-screen prompts, conversation, and object descriptions. These signals not only help players comprehend the goals, character interactions, and game mechanics but also act as compass points that guide them in understanding the story and selecting the right options in the virtual environment.

Daneman and Carpenter. (1980) conducted research that demonstrates the importance of textual information in triggering cognitive functions related to language comprehension and semantic encoding, which facilitates the efficient transfer of information in textual formats. The Witcher novels and video games both increase the reader's interest in, understanding of, and enjoyment of the story through making use of textual cues.

The interactive components in the video games help the players feel more engaged and in control of the experience. The narrative experience is made more interactive by allowing players to direct the protagonist, make decisions, and engage with the gaming environment. Through this interactivity, players can take an active role in the narrative and have an impact on how it develops and what happens. Players actively participate in the creation of the story by taking on missions, finishing puzzles, and making choices. As a result, they not only gain knowledge but also actively contribute to it. Video games' interactive features offer a certain level of engagement that cannot be obtained solely through textual clues.

Video games' interactive features, which are unique to the medium, offer a lively and interesting experience that greatly affects the audience's understanding and involvement. The cognitive theory of multimedia learning put forward by Mayer (Mayer, 2009) is in line with these interactive aspects in terms of the concepts of active learning and engagement. Players get a sense of agency and immersion in the narrative thanks to interactive gameplay that allows them to make choices, work out riddles, and influence the story.

According to research by Klimmt and Vorderer from 2003, interactive aspects in video games can improve information transmission and processing by having a positive impact on emotional involvement and engagement. Video games' interactive elements let players feel more involved and in charge of their experience. The narrative experience will be more engaging and dynamic since they may actively control the protagonist, make choices, and interact with the gaming world.

Players actively contribute to the story's development by completing missions, solving puzzles, and making decisions. In doing so, they not only learn new information but also advance the plot. It is impossible to achieve the same level of engagement through text-only cues or idly watching media without this level of participation. The interactive elements in video games provide players a more active part and give them the chance to influence the story's direction and outcomes.

The Witcher series successfully combines imagery, narrative cues, and interactive aspects to help the audience understand what is being conveyed. The dual coding hypothesis, which contends that memory and understanding are improved when verbal and nonverbal codes are simultaneously activated, is consistent with the concepts of this multimodal method (Paivio, 1990).

These components are used in The Witcher series to produce a comprehensive and immersive narrative experience that activates different brain functions and improves information transmission. In accordance with the ideas of dual coding theory, the employment of visual representations, textual clues, and interactive elements enables the simultaneous activation of verbal and nonverbal cognitive processes.

This multimodal approach makes the transmission more effective and engaging for the audience by improving information encoding, retrieval, and retention. The Witcher series makes use of visual cues, literary hints, and interactive elements to enhance the strengths of each media and create a complex narrative experience that combines textual and visual elements. The use of interactive components also promotes engaged audience participation, boosting interest and immersion in the narrative.

#### **4.2.2. The role of different codes in facilitating the transmission of information:**

The integration of visual representations, textual cues, and interactive components improves the audience's cognitive engagement and comprehension of the narrative, as shown by the application of dual coding theory to video games. Video games' rich graphics, dynamic animations, and immersive visual effects create an atmosphere that is aesthetically appealing and encourages the creation of mental images as well as the interpretation and retention of narrative details (Nacke, Lennart E., and Lindley, Craig A. 2008). By grabbing the audience's attention and exciting their perceptual and cognitive processes, the dynamic nature of video game visuals—including the shifting environments and character animations—further improves the audience's engagement and comprehension of the narrative (Witmer, Bob G., and Singer, Michael J. 1998).

In video games, the audio component is just as important as the visual component in terms of developing narrative comprehension. By providing aural clues that direct players'



perception of the narrative events, emotional nuances, and character motivations, the use of background music, sound effects, and voice acting adds dimension to the gaming experience.

In video games, the combination of visual and auditory cues enables multimodal processing of information, allowing players to construct a coherent mental representation of the narrative, which in turn assists in a deeper comprehension and engagement with the narrative.

Additionally, the interactive elements of video games, made possible by player agency and participation, have a big impact on cognitive engagement and comprehension. Players actively control the trajectory of the story by their choices, actions, and decisions, and are engrossed in a unique storytelling experience (Ryan, 2018). By encouraging a sense of presence and involvement, this interactivity promotes increased focus, motivation, and cognitive processing of the story's aspects.

Players actively learn, adjust, and improve their understanding of the narrative within the game's context thanks to the interactive feedback loop, in which they receive immediate consequences or rewards based on their actions.

A more active and engaged type of storytelling is encouraged by the incorporation of visual representations, audio signals, and interactive features in video games. As they move around the game world, decipher narrative signals, and make choices that affect the course of the narrative, players' cognitive functions, such as attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving, are continuously engaged. As players actively construct meaning and forge a personal connection to the tale being told, this cognitive engagement benefits in a greater understanding and recall of the narrative.

The synergistic impacts of visual representations, auditory clues, and interactive components on the audience's cognitive engagement and comprehension of the narrative are

highlighted by the application of dual coding theory to video games. The combination of these components produces a multimodal and interactive storytelling experience that improves the development of mental representations, makes it easier to interpret the tale, and encourages active participation in the narrative universe. Video games provide a distinctive and immersive platform for disseminating information and engrossing players in intricate tales by utilizing the ideas of dual coding theory.

### **4.3.Comparative Analysis: Books vs. Video Games**

#### **4.3.1. Information Representation and Visualization:**

In order to depict the narrative components, such as people, settings, and events, the book format of The Witcher series predominantly uses textual descriptions. As they create mental pictures based on the author's textual signals, readers interact with the story through their imagination. But elements like the reader's past knowledge and capacity for conceptualizing abstract or foreign ideas can have an impact on how well information is conveyed in books. The visual and interactive medium of video games, on the other hand, offers a more tangible and immersive portrayal of the story. Video games provide the viewer with visual cues that more accurately and realistically reflect the story's aspects through complex graphics, character models, and environmental design. Animations, cutscenes, and visual effects all help the viewer better comprehend and interact with the story.

#### **4.3.2. Interactivity and Agency:**

The interactive element of video games, which allows players to actively engage in the narrative and make decisions that affect the story's development, is one of their defining characteristics. Players are given a sense of agency and given the ability to customize their in-game experiences because to this interactivity. Players become active actors in the

storytelling process by making choices, working out riddles, and participating in gameplay mechanics.

In comparison, books provide a more passive reading experience where readers just follow the author's narrative without having any direct control over how it ends. Readers' level of agency is limited to understanding the text and coming up with their own subjective interpretations, even if they can still emotionally and intellectually participate with the story.

#### **4.3.3. Cognitive Engagement and Immersion:**

The audience's cognitive involvement and immersion in the narrative have a significant impact on how well information is transmitted. Video games have the benefit of offering a multi-sensory experience, integrating interactive gameplay, audio, and images to capture the player's attention and promote a deeper level of immersion. In order to advance in the game and complete their goals, players are also encouraged by its interactive nature to actively analyse and memorize knowledge.

Books, in opposition, rely on the reader's imagination and cognitive involvement to help them form a mental image of the story. While this can encourage the reader's imagination and intellectual engagement, it might be harder for them to stay focused and fully engross themselves in the narrative.

#### **4.3.4. Audience Preferences and Accessibility:**

Audience choices and accessibility can also have an impact on how well information is transmitted. Some people may have a predisposition to reading and find that books provide a more immersive and interesting kind of narrative. The engaging and graphically stunning experience provided by video games, however, may be preferred by people who are more visually and kinaesthetically oriented.

Books have the benefit of being widely available in a variety of media, including print and digital editions, making them accessible to a large spectrum of readers in terms of accessibility. The accessibility of video games, on the other hand, may be restricted to those who have the required gaming hardware and software platforms.

We can comprehend information transmission and reception in The Witcher series better by contrasting the advantages and drawbacks of both media. This analysis serves to inform future advancements in storytelling and narrative experiences across various mediums and offers insightful information about the cognitive processes involved. The Witcher series continues to enthrall viewers and show the variety of ways in which information can be efficiently delivered and experienced, whether through the pages of a book or the interactive environment of a video game.

#### **4.4.Limitations and Challenges of Dual Coding in The Witcher Series**

In this section, we'll talk about the drawbacks and difficulties of using dual coding theory to examine the information flow between The Witcher series' books and video games. We will discuss potential differences in how the narrative elements are interpreted and understood between the two media and take into account how player agency, individual differences, and cognitive load may affect how information is processed and retained in video games.

##### **4.4.1. Discrepancies in Interpretation:**

There may be differences in the interpretation and comprehension of the narrative elements, which makes it difficult to compare the efficiency of information transfer between books and video games. The same story is intended to be told in both formats, but because text and pictures use distinct modalities, different people may view and interpret the story differently.

The characters, settings, and events in the novels are left up to the readers' imaginations based on how they perceive the textual descriptions. On the other hand, video games offer visual representations that could sometimes restrict personal perceptions. When opposed to novels, the video game player's perception and comprehension of the story may be influenced by the preset images.

#### **4.4.2. Individual Differences and Player Agency:**

The processing and retention of information in video games can also be impacted by player and reader individual characteristics. Individual differences in cognitive capacities, past knowledge, and personal experiences affect how they interact with and understand the tale. The importance of player agency in video games is crucial. The player's decisions and actions can alter the story's trajectory and provide a variety of results and experiences. This specific agency, nevertheless, can also introduce variation in the way information is processed. Depending on their decisions and level of interest, players may concentrate on various areas of the narrative, investigate various narratives, or overlook specific details.

#### **4.4.3. Cognitive Load and Information Retention:**

Information retention in video games may be impacted by cognitive load, which is the amount of mental work needed to process information. Video games' interactive and immersive features offer new cognitive demands, such as decision-making, problem-solving, and motor abilities, which may have an impact on how information is stored and retrieved.

While the graphics and interaction of video games benefit dual coding, the cognitive effort associated with gameplay components may draw attention away from the story itself. Players' attention may be drawn to gameplay mechanics, quests, or combat, which may hinder their understanding and memory of the material relevant to the plot.

#### **4.4.4. Considerations for Future Research:**

When using dual coding theory to examine the information transmission in The Witcher series, it is critical to be aware of these constraints and difficulties. Future studies might concentrate on investigating methods to close the interpretation gaps between the two media and comprehending how player agency and individual differences affect how information is processed and retained in video games. Additionally, examining the ideal ratio of interactivity to cognitive load in video games might offer guidance on how to create more efficient narrative experiences that put an emphasis on information transmission without taxing players' cognitive capacities.

# **General Conclusion**

The importance of understanding the unique characteristics and potential of diverse storytelling mediums has become clear as a result of our inquiry into these topics. We have revealed the intricate web that weaves together literary and interactive digital experiences through a thorough investigation of the narratology of *The Witcher* book series as well as the narratology and ludology of *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt* video game.

In the realm of *The Witcher* books, we have witnessed the remarkable craftsmanship of Andrzej Sapkowski as he expertly constructs a literary landscape that captivates readers with its narrative complexity. A seamless and engaging reading experience is made possible by the meticulously crafted narrative structures, which include the use of framing strategies and the manipulation of time and chronology. Readers can get inside the heads of the characters thanks to Sapkowski's mastery of the narrative voice, which makes it easier for them to empathize with their hardships and journeys. The richly detailed settings, combined with Sapkowski's artistic mastery, elicit a spectrum of emotions and add to the narrative's overall tone. In-depth character assessments and thematic studies also dig into deep ideas, asking readers to think about the nature of morality, the complexity of identity, and the interaction between good and evil.

Turning our attention to *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt*, we have discovered the transforming potential of interactive storytelling as well as the critical function of gameplay mechanics in determining the player experience. The game's open-world design encourages exploration and player agency, giving them the freedom to choose their own route and have an impact on the story as it develops. The incorporation of resource, crafting, and inventory systems provides a level of realism and depth that allows players to customize the skills of their characters and engage with the game environment physically. Players are drawn deeper into the compelling world of Geralt of Rivia by the dynamic fighting system and the perspective-driven gameplay features, which offer a visceral and immersive



experience. Additionally, the emotional reactions elicited through participatory storytelling have a singular and significant effect, encouraging a feeling of personal investment and attachment to the story's outcomes.

By juxtaposing the narratology of the books and the narratology and ludology of the game, we have uncovered the striking similarities and differences between narrative across both mediums. The books excel in transporting readers through vivid imagery, nuanced character development, and in-depth subject study, whilst the game makes use of player agency, interactivity, and immersive gameplay mechanics to create a singularly engaging experience. Both formats have been successful at engrossing audiences and luring them on remarkable adventures through the world of *The Witcher*.

Our examination of *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt's* gameplay mechanics, or "Ludology," led us to learn how the designers of the game make use of players' prior gaming knowledge and use a variety of strategies to heighten immersion and appeal to both new and experienced players. *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt's* open-world design not only provides players with huge areas to explore, but also acts as a stage for an array of interesting characters and missions. Players are given the opportunity to choose their pathways and make important decisions thanks to the game's design, which encourages them to set out on their own journeys. This strategy gives the player a sense of authorship and active involvement in the storytelling process by recognizing their agency and empowering them to influence the narrative's course and outcomes.

The creators of the game have taken steps to reduce the learning curve and assure accessibility because they are aware of the possible difficulties for new players entering such a rich and complicated universe. Intuitive user interfaces, the provision of tutorials, and the gradual introduction of game elements all aid in acclimating new players to the game's

systems and features. By doing this, the creators fill in the gap between players' earlier gaming experiences and *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt's* unique complexity, enabling both newcomers and experienced players to set out on their excursions with confidence.

The graphics showcase the game developers' meticulous attention to detail, with breathtaking visuals that vividly depict the world of *The Witcher*. Players are submerged in a visually appealing setting thanks to the graphics, which range from magnificent vistas to intricate character models. Players can relate to the characters more deeply thanks to the detailed character design and expressions that further deepen the emotional depth of the narrative.

The immersive sound design and graphics, in addition to the visual components, are extremely important in producing a moody and captivating experience. The realistic environmental sounds, such as the rustle of leaves and the commotion of cities, give the world life and absorb players in its immersive reality. A symphony that resonates with players' emotions and heightens the overall narrative experience is created by the painstakingly composed music, which further amplifies the emotional impact of important moments.

When applying the Dual-Coding Theory to analyse the immersive qualities of the different storytelling mediums, we have found that in terms of fully engrossing the audience in the storytelling process, both the written narrative featured in the books of *The Witcher* series and the interactive gameplay experience of *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt* provide distinctive strengths and encounter certain limitations.

The books stimulate the reader's imagination and enable them to create mental pictures of the tale world through their textual representations, which in turn engage the reader's cognitive processes. The written story contains plenty of information for the reader to

conjure up vivid mental images thanks to the use of descriptive language, character development, and subject exploration. The books provide a highly individualized and intellectually challenging experience that enables intense interaction with the story by drawing on the reader's own cognitive processes.

However, there are drawbacks to relying just on textual clues and mental images. Interpretation becomes arbitrary, and readers may have different perceptions of the narrative's aspects. Readers who fail to fully immerse themselves in text-based storytelling may feel detached in the absence of visual and audio cues. Additionally, the reader's ability to actively construct the tale world or affect its outcomes is limited by the absence of interactivity and agency in the reading experience.

On the other hand, *The Witcher 3 Wild Hunt*'s interactive gameplay experience makes use of the potential of interactive, aural, and visual aspects to fully immerse the player in the narrative. A visually captivating and acoustically rich atmosphere is produced by using realistic animations, immersive sound design, and detailed images. The game's open-world design and important player choices and outcomes give players a sense of agency and give them the ability to direct their own story. A higher level of emotional commitment and engagement may arise from this active involvement in the storytelling process.

The gameplay medium is not without its drawbacks, though. Immersion can be briefly broken by technical restrictions like performance problems or image abnormalities. For novice players, the dependence on game mechanics and the learning curve necessary to master them may provide a barrier and reduce their early immersion. Additionally, the interactive aspects of the gameplay experience sometimes take precedence over the story-related aspects, diluting the focus on storytelling and possibly impairing narrative coherence.

In the end, although individual taste undoubtedly matters, it seems that video games have more theoretical promise than books. Video games have endless potential and don't require as much prior knowledge as books do. In terms of storytelling, books can deliver a satisfying experience up to a point, while video game storytelling is primarily reliant on ability and artistry. With the correct skills, video game creators may transport players into their fantastical worlds without the limitations that books frequently confront. Video games have the ability to break down barriers and let users take an active role in the story, creating unique experiences within the game's world.

Hyphtheses, you should confirm them each in a paragraph + proofs from the study

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# Appendices



## **Biography of Andrzej Sapkowski (*The Witcher Series Author*)**

Andrzej Sapkowski was born on June 21, 1948, in Łódź, Poland. Growing up, he developed a keen interest in literature and fantasy, immersing himself in the works of authors like J.R.R. Tolkien and Robert E. Howard. His personal narrative style was greatly shaped by his early exposure to fantasy and traditional tales.

Sapkowski attended the University of Łódź, where he pursued a degree in economics. He worked as a translator after completing his education before taking a position as business manager for a corporation involved in international trade. Sapkowski was a successful professional, but writing and building his own imaginary worlds were his genuine passions.

Early in the 1980s, Sapkowski began to produce short fiction and submit it to Polish science fiction and fantasy magazines. His works were immediately praised for their unique blending of grim reality, Slavic mythology, and dark fantasy. He stood out from other authors of his era thanks to this distinctive writing style, which caught the interest of both readers and editors.

*The Last Wish*, Sapkowski's debut book, was published in 1990, marking his career breakthrough. His most well-known figure, Geralt of Rivia, a Witcher who makes a living hunting monsters, was first presented to readers in this collection of interconnected tales. Sapkowski became one of Poland's most well-known fantasy writers as a result of the success of "*The Last Wish*" and following volumes in the *Witcher* series.

In addition to his literary accomplishments, Sapkowski is renowned for his resistance to the celebrity and materialism that came with the success of his writings. Despite this, it is impossible to exaggerate his impact on Polish and international fantasy literature. He has a devoted following thanks to his captivating characters, masterful storytelling abilities, and capacity to combine fantasy with social critique.

Today, Andrzej Sapkowski continues to write and contribute to the world of literature. His impact on the genre and his ability to captivate readers with his unique brand of fantasy storytelling have solidified his place as one of the most celebrated contemporary authors in Poland and beyond.

### **Synopsis of *The Witcher Series*:**

The Witcher series is a group of fantasy books that are set in a meticulously described universe featuring magic, monsters, and political intrigue. The series centres on the exploits of Geralt of Rivia, a Witcher—a monster hunter with superhuman talents who has undergone genetic enhancement.

*The Last Wish*, the first book in the series, introduces readers to Geralt of Rivia. The narrative is set up as a series of related short stories that focus on Geralt's past and present. Each story focuses on one or more of Geralt's meetings with various mythical creatures, his complicated relationships with both humans and non-humans, and the moral choices he must make in a world that lacks clear moral standards.

In the series' later books, such as *Sword of Destiny* and *Blood of Elves*, Geralt continues his trip while he negotiates political upheaval, battles, and the complex workings of a world in which humans and monsters coexist. Geralt becomes involved in the affairs of strong sorceresses, cunning kings, and mysterious figures referred to as the *Lodge of Sorceresses*.

With each episode of the series, Sapkowski crafts a more intricate story that examines issues like destiny, prejudice, and the hazy distinction between good and evil. Geralt's connections with important figures, including the princess Ciri and the sorceress Yennefer of Vengerberg, provide the narrative complexity as their destinies entwine and they each go through their own struggles.

The Witcher series also dives into the global social and political landscapes, addressing issues like conflict between kingdoms, racial tensions between humans and non-humans, and the aftereffects of war. The Witcher series, as a whole, is an engrossing and ethically challenging epic saga that delves into the depths of human nature, the cost of decisions, and the repercussions of living in a world where monsters prowl in the shadows. With its intriguing characters, complex storylines, and the moral quandaries that the eponymous Witcher, Geralt of Rivia, faces, it has grown to be a beloved brand.

### **Summary of *The Witcher* video games:**

Based on the novels by Andrzej Sapkowski, CD Projekt Red's highly acclaimed and popular *The Witcher* video game series is an action role-playing game franchise. The video games chronicle the exploits of Geralt of Rivia, a witcher famous for hunting monsters, in a huge and engrossing fantasy universe.

Players are introduced to Geralt in the first game, *The Witcher*, as he travels through a dangerously political world filled with monsters and warfare. Players assume the role of Geralt, making decisions that influence the story and have an impact on the connections he makes with other people. Swordplay, magic, and alchemy are all used in the game's combat system, which lets players alter Geralt's skills to fit their play preferences.

Geralt's journey is continued in the sequel, *The Witcher 2: Assassins of Kings*, which this time finds him caught up in a web of deceit and treachery. Players move through a branching narrative that offers a variety of conclusions and detours, making the game more replayable. Critical praise for the game's upgraded graphics and combat mechanics helped to further boost the popularity of the series.

*The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* is the most expansive and widely acclaimed installment of the series. In this open-world game, Geralt embarks on a personal quest to find his adopted

daughter, Ciri, while contending with the impending invasion of an otherworldly threat known as the Wild Hunt. The game offers a vast and visually stunning world, immersive storytelling, and a myriad of quests and side activities that captivate players for hours on end. Players can make decisions that have far-reaching consequences, shaping the game's world and the fates of its inhabitants.

Throughout the series, Players come across an extensive range of characters, each with their own backstory, goals, and personality. The plots of the games are heavily influenced by Geralt's interactions with important individuals, such as the sorceress Yennefer of Vengerberg and the bard Dandelion, which result in memorable and emotionally impactful events.

The vivid world-building, in-depth storytelling, and challenging moral decisions found in The Witcher video games have won praise from critics. Numerous awards have been bestowed upon the series in recognition of its superb writing, voice acting, and meticulousness. Additionally, it has increased the audience for Sapkowski's books by introducing a new generation of readers to the complex and alluring world of The Witcher.

In the end, the video game franchise The Witcher has established itself as a major force in the gaming world, garnering praise from critics and a devoted following. It exemplifies CD Projekt Red's skill in crafting engaging and life-changing gaming experiences set in the world of Andrzej Sapkowski's novels.