

Playing with Shakespeare in *Silent Hill* and *Manhunt 2*: From Reverence to Rejection

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Abstract

This article analyses the manner in which two survival horror video games, *Silent Hill 3* and *Manhunt 2*, remediate Shakespeare in their attempts to gain the legitimacy of art in the former case or reject the association between video games and art in the latter case. Despite the radically different purposes behind the use of Shakespeare, the design of both games pays homage to a high-low culture distinction whereby Shakespeare's status as a symbol of elite British culture is confirmed. Not only is Shakespeare's canonical status reinforced, but the bard also benefits from these remediations by becoming accessible to a new audience, namely that of video game players. Because knowledge of Shakespeare can lead to a superior ludic or narrative experience of the games, familiarity with the plays is normalized. In this sense, *Silent Hill 3* and *Manhunt 2* serve the pedagogical function of "teaching" Shakespeare to their players. In spite of these similarities, the two remediations feature a series of traits that undermine their opposing goals. *Silent Hill 3*'s remediation of Shakespeare is a materialist one that defies the Kantian aesthetics characterizing traditional artistic adaptations of Shakespeare. On the other hand, *Manhunt 2*, which strives to reassert its opposition to art, features a more traditional use of Shakespeare that employs *The Tempest* as a hypotext for its storyworld.

Introduction

The extent to which video games can be considered a form of art is a thorny issue that polarizes not only academia, but also producers and players as well.¹ While some games in the past years have strived to imitate established art forms and have been acknowledged as art by scholars, practitioners, and fans, others have rejected the association for fear of a "highbrow cultural appropriation that will spoil the simple fun of gaming" (Tavinor 2013, 565). This article looks into the role that Shakespeare plays in the debate concerning the artistic value of games and investigates how he is used by two games representative of the two above-mentioned parties: *Silent Hill 3* (Konami 2003) and *Manhunt 2* (Rockstar 2007).

In his discussion of the presence of Shakespeare in digital media at the beginning of the third millennium, Richard Burt coins the term "Schlockspeare" to designate a series of usually visual products that defy the norms of conservative cultural criticism and can be described as "trash, kitsch, obsolete, trivial, obscure, unknown, forgotten, unarchived, beyond the usual academic purview" (2002, 8). While instances of Schlockspeare can be traced back

to the nineteenth century in the form of citing purple passages contrary to performing the entire plays (Burt 2002, 13), the internet, Web 2.0, and new entertainment technologies have provided these marginalized practices of Shakespeare with a global stage. Contrary to more conventional adaptations of Shakespeare that entertain a “dialogical and hermeneutic” (Burt 2002, 12) relation to the plays, Schlockspeare products fail to live up to the Kantian notions of disinterestedness and purposiveness without purpose and are geared toward consumerist goals that use Shakespeare as a commodity (Burt 2002, 25). Kant’s theory of aesthetic judgement (2007) has been influential in separating art from other forms of entertainment. The German philosopher claims that aesthetic judgements are disinterested (one finds an object of art beautiful because one rationally evaluates it as such, not because of the pleasure which that object affects), universal, necessary (since beauty is inherent to the work of art, universal human reason should be able to acknowledge it), and, finally, purposive without purpose. This final trait entails that what differentiates art objects from other objects is that, in the case of the former, one cannot infer the rational transcendental concept or purpose that “causes” the work of art (Dalton 2015, 7).

By evoking Kant’s purposiveness without purpose, Burt stresses the idea that Schlockspeare defies this fourth and final trait of art because in the case of Schlockspeare the purpose of using Shakespeare is an obviously consumerist one. In light of this, Schlockspeare is considered illegitimate by conservative cultural critics. Shakespeare’s adaptive value (Corrigan 2015, 53) in the digital age seems no longer to be related to his allegedly stable meaning and aesthetic superiority, but rather to his portability to suit the goals of individual users (Fazel and Geddes 2017, 3-4) which utilize Shakespeare as a symbol of elite culture (Lanier 2006, 232).

In fact, the user as a concept becomes pivotal in understanding the appropriation practices that are encouraged by digital media since it embodies both the creative agency offered by digital media and the consumerist tendencies that underpin the user’s manipulation of Shakespeare. The user may be “a gamer, a programmer, an online shopper, an Instagrammer, a patron, a student, a self-proclaimed fan, a corporation, a search engine, or a software program; users and uses expand in response to new, emerging platforms” (Fazel and Geddes 2017, 4). While the concept of user is generally employed to refer to the new reader who is no longer passive, but actively involved in making a Shakespeare of their own, Fazel and Geddes’ use of the concept further widens its scope to include non-grassroots producers of digital content that are nevertheless not part of the cultural elite and feature a similar materialist use of Shakespeare.

This broad application of the concept of user is well showcased by the two survival horror video games, *Silent Hill 3* and *Manhunt 2*, which, as users in and of themselves, fit into the appropriative logic characteristic of digital media interested in the immaterial capital that can be gained from Shakespeare. In particular, this article shows that while *Silent Hill 3*'s use of Shakespeare in the form of remediation—the process whereby one medium imitates the representational affordances of another (Bolter and Grusin 2000)—complies with the norms of conservative cultural criticism in an attempt to attain the status of art, *Manhunt 2* rejects Shakespeare as a symbol of high culture so as to be considered a contested form of low entertainment, or Schlockspeare. On the other hand, this article reveals how Shakespeare, too, benefits from these remediations by attaining the “street credibility, broad intelligibility, and celebrity” (Lanier 2010, 104) of video games, thereby becoming accessible to yet another niche market, the videogame players.

At the same time, I am aware that rankings such as high culture and low culture, with which traditional adaptations and recent digital appropriations have been respectively associated, are artificial discursive formations (Foucault 1972/2002) which privilege some forms of content to the detriment of others. In tackling Kant's approach to aesthetics, Pierre Bourdieu refutes the universality of the notion of disinterestedness required to engage with high art and, instead, regards it as a result of learning and one's social position. High art, then, is not essentially high, but rather it is a social construct by means of which superior social classes maintain the status quo (Fisher 2013, 477).

Not only, then, are these discursive formations in and of themselves fluid and historically contingent, but also, the digital revolution has further highlighted their instability. Note, however, that despite their contestation in academia, the discursive formations of high and low culture are still at work in the production of video games. Most mainstream video games, such as the ones discussed in this article, are designed in accordance with the high-low culture binary opposition. Since mainstream video games have been historically stigmatized as a low, controversial form of pop culture with a bad influence on its players, they will attempt to integrate Shakespeare, alongside other authors or works associated with high art, in order to legitimize themselves (Nae 2019).

Nonetheless, the strategies of exclusion discriminating between legitimate adaptations of Shakespeare and illegitimate textual practices, or Schlockspeare, have become less effective in the context of the proliferation of Shakespeare across digital media since “the Internet has decentered academic authority insofar as non-academic Shakespeare sites have as much authority as academic ones and academic ones are not located on university and

college campuses” and since “Shakespeare critics (and humanities faculty in general) are rapidly shrinking in number as universities and colleges have become, cinematically speaking, the equivalent of Academics in the Mist, game preserves for the endangered species of the humanities professor” (Burt 2002, 16).² Digital culture strongly challenges the line between high and low culture and substitutes it with a liminal space that is representative for a growing number of Shakespeare productions. In spite of this, the AAA gaming industry in general and Konami and Rockstar specifically continue to pay tribute to conservative notions of high and low culture and design their games in accordance with this binary opposition. Consequently, my second goal is to investigate how the high art-low entertainment binary informs the manner in which the two games use Shakespeare and, additionally, to highlight the tensions and contradictions that mark the games’ efforts to position themselves at opposing ends on the ladder of cultural prestige.

Silent Hill 3 and Textual Envy

Silent Hill 3 picks up the story of the first instalment, *Silent Hill* (Konami 1999), whose canonical ending features Harry Mason escaping the town Silent Hill with his adoptive daughter, Cheryl.³ The game begins many years after the events of *Silent Hill*, with Cheryl now a young adult who adopts the name Heather. Throughout the game, she is pursued by the followers of a religious cult of Silent Hill (the Order), who need Heather in order to determine the second coming of God. As the game unfolds, the player learns that Heather is, in fact, pregnant with God, which means that, besides defeating the Order, Heather must also find a way to abort. The game ends with Heather’s successful abortion and the killing of Claudia, the main antagonist of the game and the leader of the Order.

As Ewan Kirkland (2010) points out, the entire *Silent Hill* series makes use of a suite of game design choices and paratexts in order to market the games as high art. *Silent Hill 3* is no different from other instalments in the franchise and engages in a series of remediations and quotations of established authors, works, and media. One such author is William Shakespeare, who is featured in one of the games’ puzzles located in the Central Square Shopping Center. In order to proceed from the bookstore onwards, the player must pick up a five-volume anthology of Shakespeare’s plays scattered on the floor and place the volumes in correct order on one of the shelves. Each of the five volumes contains one play and a number. The player’s task is to arrange them according to a memo pinned to one of the walls. Once the correct order of the volumes has been established, the numbers scribbled on the covers

will provide the digit code required to open the “employees only” door that leads out of the bookstore.

The complexity of the puzzle depends on the difficulty level selected by the player at the beginning of the game. On “easy,” the puzzle features no memo, and the player must arrange the volumes in consecutive order. On “normal,” the puzzle becomes a bit more complicated, since now there is a memorandum that reads “Fair is foul, and foul is fair. / Put these books out of order.” The player must arrange the volumes not in a consecutive order, but by making sure that the four-digit number hand-written on the four book spines is legible. Finally, on “hard mode,” the memo contains a riddle in the form of a poem whose solution signals out the correct order of the volumes. The riddle is:

In here is a tragedy—
art thou player or audience?
Be as it may, the end doth remain:
all go on only toward death.

The first words at thy left hand:
a false lunacy, a madly dancing man.
Hearing unhearable words, drawn
to a beloved’s grave—and there,
mayhap, true madness at last.

As did this one, playing at death,
find true death at the last.
Killing a nameless lover, she
pierced a heart rent by sorrow.

Doth lie invite truth?
Doth verity but wear the
mask of falsehood?
Ah, thou pitiful, thou
miserable ones!

Still amidst lies, though the end cometh not,
wherefore yearn for death?

Wilt thou attend to thy beloved?
 Truth and lies, life and death:
 a game of turning white to black
 and black to white.

Is not a silence brimming with
 love more precious than flattery?
 A peaceful slumber preferred to
 a throne besmirched with blood?

One vengeful man
 spilled blood for two;
 Two youths shed tears for three;
 Three witches disappeared thusly;
 And only the four keys remain.

Ah, but verily. . .
 In here is a tragedy—
 art thou player or audience?
 There is nothing which cannot
 become a puppet of fate or an
 onlooker, peering into the cage.

The stanzas indicate the position of each volume, but instead of naming the plays, they mention some of their most prominent themes, motifs, and events, which the player must recognize. As explained on a fan-run *Silent Hill Wiki* page titled “Shakespeare Anthology Puzzle”, the second stanza alludes to Hamlet’s feigned madness (“a false lunacy”), the words uttered by his father’s ghost (“unbearable words”), Ophelia’s funeral, and the fight between Hamlet and Laertes (“true madness at last”). The next stanza refers to Juliet from *Romeo and Juliet* who feigned her own death (“playing at death”), but eventually died by killing herself (“find[s] true death at last. [. . .] she / pierced a heart rent by sorrow”). The fourth stanza, invoking both the opposition between and also the transition from truth to lie or honesty to deceit, is ambiguous, since it can refer to two tragedies where deceit plays an important role in the plot, namely *Macbeth* and *Othello*. The player must closely inspect the next stanza which disambiguates the reference by bringing up the racial tensions of *Othello* (“a game of

turning white to black / and black to white”). Finally, the sixth stanza references *King Lear*, in which Cordelia, one of Lear’s daughters, sincerely loves her father but does not express it in the same overt manner as her insincere sisters do (“Is not a silence brimming with / love more precious than flattery?”). The next stanza reveals the algorithm the player must use to obtain the digit code required to open the “employees only” door.

If video games, like games in general, are about “attaining a goal using the ‘less efficient means’ available” (Suits 1978, quoted in Juul 2014, 189), then the bookstore puzzle serves this function very well by delaying and complicating the fulfilling of the objective to leave the bookstore. However, there is more to the bookstore puzzle than merely increasing the ludic experience of traversing the shop. By using Shakespeare to frame the puzzle diegetically, *Silent Hill 3* overtly brings into discussion the cultural hierarchies within which it is enmeshed.

The manner in which *Silent Hill 3* remediates Shakespeare is tributary to a high-low culture binary opposition in which Shakespeare is at the higher end while games are placed at the lower end of the divide. The game’s use of Shakespeare is an attempt to move up the ladder of prestige by borrowing some of the Bard’s cultural capital. The remediation itself, however, indicates an alleged incompatibility between the literary canon and video games, one that associates Shakespeare “with a regressive notion of cultural capital” (Albanese 2010, 99). The plays are not seamlessly integrated in the game’s digital world, but rather they are represented in the form of hard-cover volumes that single out the fact that Shakespeare is not digital and that he belongs to the printed text. *Silent Hill 3* seems to evince a form of textual envy whereby the digital game acknowledges its derivative use of Shakespeare and localizes the essential Shakespeare in the text. (In proposing the term “textual envy,” I draw on Henry Jenkins, who uses the term “cinema envy” [2004, 120] to highlight the manner in which mainstream games of the late nineties and early two-thousands were struggling with their own medium specificity and were keen on looking as cinematic as possible.)

The intermedial tension between Shakespeare, who is traditionally associated with the text and the stage, and the game, a digital medium, is not new and can be traced to the opposing drives principally guiding high culture and popular culture/entertainment: the Kantian notion of purposiveness without purpose *versus* the focus on gross revenue. *Silent Hill 3*’s use of the Bard mirrors similar employments featured in most emerging media in the twentieth century that were seeking legitimation. Mass media such as radio, silent film, television, and modern cinema all used Shakespeare in their emerging phases in an attempt to gain social validation (Burt 2002, 2-3).

But while in the case of the aforementioned media similar expressions of textual envy were to be found—for example, in the refusal of the film *Hamlet* (Branagh 1996) to make any commercial compromise and its insistence on faithfully replicating the text on the play (Albanese 2010, 99)—in their remediation of Shakespeare, digital media “not only move vertically, placing the present on top of the past, but also [branch] out geographically, technologically, cross-culturally“ (Fazel and Geddes 2010, 10). This deterritorialized Shakespeare in flux unbound by hierarchy or origin leads Maurizio Calbi to the conclusion that Shakespeare on the (digital) screen is spectral or “hauntological“ (2013, 4). Digital Shakespeare is not a replica of a “real” textual Shakespeare, but a post-textual Shakespeare (Lanier 2010, 106) whose textual signified is always already deferred.

In contradiction with its digital counterparts, *Silent Hill 3*'s use of Shakespeare is a reactionary one that seeks to reterritorialize the Bard into his historical early modern English context represented by the text of the plays. This yearning for a stable textual Shakespeare is coupled with digital media's needs to compensate for their lack of physicality (Kirkland 2008, 115), a need which itself taps into a nostalgia for a real past (Niemeyer 2014, 2). To this purpose, *Silent Hill 3* remediates the volumes which are not only part of the background but are also interactive objects which the player must place in the right spot on the bookshelf. This further highlights the physicality of the volume and strengthens the Bard's association with the text.

The gamification of Shakespeare is also beneficial for the playwright who, in his canonical form, the book, becomes accessible to an audience who might otherwise regard him as elitist, boring, or complicated. In this sense, *Silent Hill 3*'s remediation of Shakespeare embodies Douglas Lanier's understanding of digital Shakespeare as “rhizomatic“ (2010, 104-5). Shakespeare and *Silent Hill 3* remain autonomous, but each evolves in the direction of the other: Shakespeare descends from his high culture status to lower forms of popular culture and entertainment while the game's mobility is directed upwards to the sphere of high art.

In discussing the presence of Shakespeare in *Silent Hill 3*, one should also consider the American market that the game primarily targets and the inflections of the local American notion of high art that is intertwined with the idea of “access to higher education“ (Albanese 2010, 98). Like the film adaptations of nineties and early two-thousands, *Silent Hill 3*'s use of Shakespeare is also pedagogical. *Silent Hill 3* differs from most adventure and action-adventure games in the sense that on hard mode solving the bookstore puzzle demands a high level of textual literacy (players must decode a poem written in an archaic English) and knowledge of some of the most important Shakespearean tragedies. The fact that knowledge

of the plays becomes a condition for solving the puzzle is not coincidental but is indicative of the game's acknowledgement that Shakespeare is a universal figure that must be taught to everyone, including diehard players of video games.

Conversely, the presence of the riddle only on "hard" mode suggests that Shakespeare's text is complicated and cannot be understood by all potential players of the game. As a result, all players of *Silent Hill 3* have access to the hardcover Shakespeare volumes, but only the most proficient players get to interact with the content of the plays. The bookstore puzzle literally tests its most proficient players' knowledge of Shakespeare and coerces those players who want to enjoy the game on hard mode to familiarize themselves with the plays, ideally by reading them as suggested by the remediation of the hardcover volumes forming the anthology.

Silent Hill 3's textual envy, manifested primarily in the bookstore puzzle, redefines proficiency in gaming by demanding that its players show not only conventional gameplay skills such as good hand-eye coordination, resource management, and logical thinking, but also literary knowledge and textual literacy. The fact that solving the puzzle requires reading comprehension dovetails with a "denial of the ludic" (Kirkland 2010, 320-322) that undergirds *Silent Hill 3*, as well as other instalments in the series. If video games are lowbrow products (a condition admitted by *Silent Hill 3*) and Shakespeare is a representative of high culture, then the specific medial traits of video games are suspended when Shakespeare makes his presence. This is made evident in the riddle which questions the ludicity of the game by asking the player "art thou player or audience?" and therefore suggests that playtime is over. By means of this game design choice the game submits to the conservative critique that the interactivity of video games is incompatible with art because it precludes a disinterested reception (Tavinor 2013, 567).

Despite the reverence with which *Silent Hill 3* remediates Shakespeare in an attempt to borrow the Bard's cultural capital and be legitimized as a form of art, the game does not elevate itself from Schlockspeare. The reason does not necessarily lie in the sensationalist over-the-top violence of some game levels, but rather in the game's failure to entertain a dialogic and hermeneutic relation to the plays. In other words, the content of the plays does not inform, mould, or structure the storyworld of *Silent Hill 3* in any way. Rather, the game's storyworld is based on another canonic work of art, Roman Polanski's film *Rosemary's Baby*. The game uses Shakespeare as a symbolic, canonical figure of Western culture. What ensues, therefore, is a tension between the game's textual envy and its incapacity, or unwillingness,

to meaningfully employ (in a diegetic sense) the Shakespearean text. A similar tension, but of a different polarity, can be found in another survival horror game, *Manhunt 2*.

Manhunt 2 and the Destruction of Shakespeare

Like *Silent Hill 3*, the game design of *Manhunt 2* pays tribute to a high art-low popular culture dichotomy. However, unlike Konami's 2003 release, *Manhunt 2* does not wish to attain the legitimacy of art, but insists on its status as part of low popular culture. In order to achieve this, the game adopts a sensationalist lowbrow aesthetic which relies heavily on remediations of "snuff" video and a graphic displays of extreme violence, especially in the game's interactive cut-scenes. Snuff is an exploitation film genre that claims to depict the actual killing of a human being (Kerekes et al. 1996, 7). In order to authenticate the events depicted, snuff films purposefully feature a low production quality, along with VHS filters and effects in order to suggest the fact that the events were unprofessionally filmed by a hand-held VHS camcorder. *Manhunt 2* borrows some elements of snuff film aesthetics in order to convey a similar realism effect and to convince players that they are actually playing an interactive snuff movie.

High art is also remediated in the game, but its use follows coordinates opposite to those of *Silent Hill 3*. In *Manhunt 2*, figures associated with high "Culture," such as Beethoven and Shakespeare, are used as symbols of oppression which must be avoided or, in the case of Shakespeare, even destroyed. The destruction of Shakespeare, therefore, constitutes a materialist use whereby the cultural capital of the Bard is acknowledged and used as a reference point relative to which the game may position itself on a lower rank on the ladder of prestige.

Although the manner in which *Manhunt 2* uses Shakespeare would normally qualify as a form of Schlockspeare, this categorization is undermined by the type of intertextual relation the game entertains with the Bard's plays. As pointed out in the beginning of this article, Schlockspeare does not relate dialogically and hermeneutically to the plays, but rather evokes Shakespeare in a dominantly materialistic way. *Manhunt 2* exceeds materialism by structuring its storyworld in accordance with one of Shakespeare's plays, *The Tempest*, which becomes a hypotext with diegetic relevance for the game (Nae 2017).

Manhunt 2 simulates the story of Daniel Lamb, a scientist working on a military project for the government that is aimed at creating the perfect assassin. The subjects of the project were submitted to a series of experiments that were supposed to determine the creation of an

alter ego that would be activated and controlled by the government only during combat. This limitation would have two advantages: first, the killer alter ego, lacking the moral dilemmas of the soldiers' true selves, would be more efficient and, second, the subjects would not remember what their killer alter ego had done, thus protecting them from post-traumatic stress disorder. The head of the project, Dr. Pickman, successfully employs his methods on Daniel Lamb, who becomes an unstoppable killer. But Dr. Pickman and Lamb lose control of the killer alter ego and Lamb ends up assassinating indiscriminately. Among his victims are his own wife and child.

The game starts with an amnesic Lamb escaping from his sanatorium and fighting his way past numerous foes and through various locations in an attempt to find Dr. Pickman and to remember his past. What appears to be a stock action film plot imported into the video game gains new layers of meaning as the mission, "Origins," unfolds. Once Lamb gets closer to Pickman, the latter recites a quotation from *The Tempest*, "What seest thou else / In the dark backward and abysm of time?" (1.2.60-61), which makes Lamb faint.⁴ After being captured, disarmed, and held under the supervision of a guard in a hospital ward, Lamb manages to escape and recover his weapons, whereupon Dr. Pickman tries to make Lamb faint again by broadcasting the quotation through the speakers found in many of the rooms of the facility. To avoid this, the player must shoot down the speakers before the quotation can be heard completely.

The overt intertextual link to *The Tempest* opens up a re-evaluation of the events preceding the "Origins" mission and recasts Dr. Pickman and Daniel Lamb as a Prospero-Miranda couple, where the former maintains the latter's amnesia through magic/science. In keeping with the source text, the resolution of the plot requires that the instruments of power be destroyed.

I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book. (5.1.63-66)

If in the play Prospero's power lies in his staff, book, and the garment he uses to maintain Miranda's amnesia in the beginning of the play, in *Manhunt 2* the staff, book, and garment comprise Shakespeare's text, which must be destroyed—not by its entitled owner, Dr. Pickman, but, in keeping with the anti-establishment attitude of the game, by Pickman's subject, Daniel Lamb. The play is here remediated in the form of a performance itself mediated by a technology of mass communication, the speakers. On the one hand, the

Shakespeare of *Manhunt 2* is to a certain extent similar to Maurizio Calbi's (2013) spectral Shakespeare who inhabits media without residing in them (4) and whose appearance is always a re-appearance (6). The objective to destroy Shakespeare forces the player to follow the playwright who is constantly deferred across a chain of speakers until the player finally reaches the performer, Dr. Pickman, whom the player eventually kills.

On the other hand, the game's remediation differs from spectral Shakespeare, since spectrality presupposes that the "original" Shakespeare, like Derrida's transcendental signified, does not exist (Derrida 1978/2001, 13). Contrary to this logic of *différance*, in *Manhunt 2* the chain of signification does lead to an original signified that is embodied by the performer. The assumption of the game seems to be that the automatically reproducible Shakespeare of mass media is a derivative, secondary Shakespeare that imitates the original Shakespeare. In order to find this original, players must move beyond the Bard's many mass media instantiations, iterations, or materializations until they reach the performer. What is more, in a manner similar to *Silent Hill 3*, *Manhunt 2*'s remediation of Shakespeare pays homage to the idea that interactivity and art are incompatible. While the speakers are destroyed during gameplay proper, the essential Shakespeare embodied by Dr. Pickman, the performer, is killed in a cut-scene that suspends player input.

If adaptations are "[a]n acknowledged transposition of a recognizable work or works, [a] creative *and* interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, [and] an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work," (Hutcheon 2006, 8) then *Manhunt 2* qualifies as an adaptation of *The Tempest*: the game transposes the bulk of the play's content from its original medium, rewrites the content of the play in order to make it palatable with the norms of the action-adventure genre, and engages in a (critical) dialogue with the source text. Yet one cannot ignore the fact that the result of the adaptation is very different from that of the original. Instead of a historical video game that simulates an early modern world, we are dealing with a fictional USA where the creation of super soldiers is possible. What is more, the rewriting of the play contests its elitist ideology in the sense that, while in the play the authority of the magician is undisputed, the game rebukes the updated magician, namely the scientist (Nae 2017, 373).

The significant changes undergone by the play bring to mind Julie Sanders' concept of appropriation:

[A]ppropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain. This may or may not involve a generic shift, and it may still require the intellectual

juxtaposition of (at least) one text against another that we have suggested is central to the reading and spectating experience of adaptations. But the appropriated text or texts are not always as clearly signalled or acknowledged as in the adaptive process. They may occur in a far less straightforward context than is evident in making a film version of a canonical play (2006, 26).

The distance between the game and the source text encourages us to frame *Manhunt 2* as an appropriation of *The Tempest*. If we take into consideration Linda Hutcheon's claim that narrative pleasure in adaptations comes from identifying "repetition with variation" (2006, 4), then the quotation from Shakespeare provides additional reward to the players who are familiar with the Shakespearean text. In this sense, the game is similar to *Silent Hill 3*. While *Silent Hill 3* offers superior ludic gratification for those players knowledgeable in the plays, *Manhunt 2* rewards players with a superior narrative experience if they are familiar enough with *The Tempest* to be able to recognize the origin of the quotation. Despite the contestation of Shakespeare (and, through him, of the established arts in general), the game's use of the Bard normalizes knowledge of Shakespeare and contributes to his alleged universality. The game implies that there is room for Shakespeare even alongside one of the most contested form of entertainment, namely the snuff video, which further increases the already generous portability, mutability, and compatibility of the early modern English playwright.

In addition to this normalization, *Manhunt 2* also presents a pedagogical function by encouraging players to discover Shakespeare. This is not achieved by means of the video game proper, as in the case of *Silent Hill 3*, but with the help of an important paratext, the trailer. In one of the early trailers of the game, after Daniel Lamb introduces himself, Pickman's voice can be heard reciting the quotation, which stands out due to its archaic idiom. Those hardcore players who were encouraged by the distinctiveness of Pickman's lines to investigate their source will have at the same time benefited both from an enriched gameplay experience and from knowledge of Shakespeare. Once again, Lanier's mutually beneficial rhizomic relation between Shakespeare and digital media is confirmed by *Manhunt 2*, despite the game's overt, violent rejection of the Bard.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to highlight how conflicting tendencies in the AAA gaming industry concerning video games' relation to art and high culture are played out in the remediations of Shakespeare featured in the survival horror games *Silent Hill 3* and *Manhunt*

2. I have shown that, despite the stark opposition between the ways the two games view themselves in relation to art, both *Silent Hill 3*'s and *Manhunt 2*'s use of Shakespeare acknowledges the Bard's symbolic capital. *Silent Hill 3* remediates Shakespeare in the form of a multiple-volume anthology and turns knowledge of Shakespeare into a condition for progression in the game. The remediation of Shakespeare brings along a suspension of gameplay, since gameplay is deemed incompatible with the established arts represented by the early modern English playwright. Instead of completing conventional action-adventure tasks, players must now read a poem written in an archaic English and use their knowledge of the plays to solve the puzzle and progress. In doing so, the game replaces digital literacy and gaming skills with textual literacy and reading comprehension skills. *Silent Hill 3* manifests a textual envy made evident by the manner in which it tries to remediate the affordance of the printed text. Furthermore, by remediating Shakespeare's plays, the game tries to borrow some of the playwright's cultural capital and attain the legitimation of art.

Notwithstanding this move towards legitimation, the game fails to confirm the conservative conception of art that it tries to embody. While art is expected to cue a disinterested reception and be purposive without purpose, the plays of Shakespeare do not have diegetic bearing on the storyworld of the game. His use is a consumerist one geared by the game's attempt to profit from Shakespeare's cultural capital. A different approach to using Shakespeare is featured in *Manhunt 2*. Paradoxically, although *Manhunt 2* rejects the idea that games should be accepted as a form of art, the manner in which Shakespeare is remediated in the game resembles traditional artistic adaptations of Shakespeare. On the one hand, the game procedurally coerces the player to destroy the faithful performance of Shakespeare's text in order to show its rejection of high art; on the other hand it employs *The Tempest* as a hypotext that structures the storyworld of the game, turning it into what Julie Sanders calls appropriation.

Finally, the materialistic use of Shakespeare in the games is also beneficial to the Bard. The two games associate Shakespeare with the original text or its performance, thereby acknowledging and reinforcing the position of conservative cultural criticism that localizes Shakespeare in the early modern English text. In addition to this, the games stress the alleged universality of Shakespeare. In order to enjoy a comprehensive experience of the games, players must be familiar with Shakespeare to the extent that they can solve a puzzle that test their knowledge of the plays, or can identify the plays when confronted with an unreferenced quotation.

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² Although Burt is right in pointing out how the authority of traditional cultural and educational institutions is decentred by the internet, one should not ignore that, deterritorialized as it is, the internet also features its own hierarchies buttressed on the allegedly obsolete hierarchies created by the very centres it has now displaced. For example, in her discussion of Romanian digital vernacular productions of Shakespeare on Youtube, Adriana Mihai (2019, 10-11) shows that linguistic barriers determined by the position of English as a global language, as well as the algorithmic barriers characteristic of YouTube, hinder the visibility of local Shakespeare productions and their subsequent legitimation by local agents.

³ *Silent Hill 2* (Konami, 2001) is an indirect sequel to *Silent Hill*. The events are set in the same storyworld, but there are no reoccurring characters.

⁴ Quotations from *The Tempest* come from Barbara Mowat, Paul Werstine, Michael Poston, Rebecca Niles, eds., *Shakespeare’s Plays, Sonnets and Poems* (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), <https://shakespeare.folger.edu> [accessed March 31, 2021] and will henceforth be cited by act, scene, and line parenthetically.

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