

Transmedia Storytelling in the Warcraft Universe: the Role of Intermediality in Shaping the Warcraft Lore

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Summary

This paper examines the popular franchise known as Warcraft, applying the theory of intermediality to the different mediums that contribute to it, analyzing each of their roles and how intermediality manifests across all platforms. The three established forms of intermediality, that of medial transposition, media combination and intermedial references are used, as well as the concept of transmedia storytelling, considered a fourth type. These categories are first introduced and defined, along with the vast network of media artifacts that contribute to the Warcraft lore. Each consecutive chapter focuses on one form of intermediality, applying it to a few representative works from the Warcraft franchise. The complete lists of these works, along with the categories of intermediality, forms of media and other relevant information are detailed in tables for a summarized understanding of each individual artifact that could not be analyzed in detail. The primary medium of video games is investigated along with its supporting mediums of literature, cinema and tabletop games from two major points of views. The first one is that of narrative progression, taking into consideration how each example utilizes its media-specific modalities to further the plot and expand the fictional universe. It was observed that most works complement each other rather than repeat the same content, thus contributing to the concept of worldbuilding. The second point of view that is applied is that of user identification and/or immersion, where applicable. Fans of the franchise interact differently with each form of media, being able to become part of the fictional world of Warcraft through different methods and characters. The artifacts that they choose to consume determines their knowledge, level of immersion and the sum of their experiences regarding the Warcraft universe. Further research can entail a survey among fans of the franchise to determine their preference and habits of using the various media standing at their disposal, and the roles they fulfill in the players' understanding of the Warcraft lore.

Table of Contents

Index of Tables.....	1
Table of Figures.....	2
List of Abbreviations.....	4
Chapter 1 – Introduction.....	5
1.1 Introduction to Intermediality.....	5
1.2 Introduction to Warcraft.....	7
Chapter 2 – Medial Transposition.....	10
2.1 Adaptation.....	10
2.2 Remediation.....	16
Chapter 3 – Media Combination.....	20
3.1 The <i>Warcraft</i> RTS Games.....	20
3.2 The MMORPG <i>World of Warcraft</i>	24
Chapter 4 – Intermedial References.....	29
4.1 Cinematics, Cut-Scenes and Scenarios.....	29
4.2 Photography and Literature.....	33
4.3 Pop Culture References and Easter Eggs.....	36
Chapter 5 – Transmedia Storytelling.....	42
5.1 User Identification.....	42
5.2 Narratives Across the Literary Medium.....	47
5.3 User-Generated Content.....	54
Chapter 6 – Conclusion.....	56
Bibliography.....	59
Warcraft Bibliography.....	66
Warcraft Ludography.....	67
Filmography.....	68
Appendices.....	69
Appendix A.....	69
Table 1.....	69
Table 2.....	73
Appendix B.....	76

Index of Tables

Table 3.1: Works from the Warcraft franchise that display methods of medial transposition	11
Table 3.2: Works from the Warcraft franchise that are part of the media combination category	29
Table 3.3: Summary of the intermedial reference results based on the four proposed categories	37
Table 3.4: In-game festivals inspired by real life holidays	41
Table 3.5: Works from the Warcraft franchise that contribute to transmedia storytelling	50

Table of Figures

Figure 1: <i>Warcraft</i> logo	8
Figure 2: Screenshot from <i>Warcraft I</i> Horde campaign gameplay	13
Figure 3: Still from <i>Warcraft</i>	14
Figure 4: Orcs in the <i>Warcraft I</i> RTS cut-scene (left) vs. Orcs in the <i>Warcraft</i> film (right)	17
Figure 5: <i>Warcraft: The Board Game</i>	19
Figure 6: <i>World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game</i> (top) and the map of Outland (bottom left) along with the map of Lordaeron (bottom right) in comparison, as seen in the MMORPG	20
Figure 7: Side-by-side comparison of graphics as seen in <i>Warcraft I</i> (top left), <i>Warcraft II</i> (top right), <i>Warcraft III</i> (bottom left), and <i>World of Warcraft</i> (bottom right)	22
Figure 8: Example of a page from the <i>Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal</i> game manual	25
Figure 9: Thrall (left) and Arthas (right), as portrayed in <i>Warcraft III</i> and its expansion	26
Figure 10: Still frame from the <i>World of Warcraft</i> cinematic trailer (2004, left) and the <i>World of Warcraft: Shadowlands</i> expansion cinematic trailer (2020, right)	32
Figure 11: Still frame from the <i>Fall of the Lich King</i> cinematic in the <i>WotLK</i> expansion (2009, left) and from the <i>Jaina Proudmoore in Kul Tiras</i> cinematic in the <i>Battle for Azeroth (BfA)</i> expansion (2018, right)	34
Figure 12: Screenshot from the <i>Battered Hilt Quest Chain</i> in the <i>WotLK</i> expansion with hidden UI (left), and from the <i>Dagger in the Dark</i> scenario in the <i>Mists of Pandaria (MoP)</i> expansion with the UI displayed (right)	36
Figure 13: Scenic screenshot with hidden UI in the <i>Legion</i> expansion (2017, left), and screenshot taken with the S.E.L.F.I.E. Camera in the <i>WoD</i> expansion (2015, right)	38
Figure 14: Screenshot taken in the <i>WotLK</i> expansion of the <i>Mount Hyjal and Illidan's Gift</i> in-game book closed (left) and opened (right), found in the Barrens in the Ratchet Inn	39
Figure 15: <i>World of Warcraft Trading Card Game</i> gameplay (left) and <i>Hearthstone</i> gameplay (right)	50
Figure 16: Tyrande Whisperwind, leader of the Night Elves as depicted in the <i>Warcraft III</i> RTS (left), the <i>War of the Ancients</i> book cover (middle), and in <i>World of Warcraft: The Comic</i> (right)	51
Figure 17: Character selection screen as seen in the <i>WotLK</i> expansion	53

Figure 18: Thassarian the Death Knight in the *Death Knight* manga (left) and in the *WotLK* expansion (right)57

Figure 19: *Warcraft III* World Editor (left) and *WoW* Machinima (right)60

List of Abbreviations

BfA	Battle for Azeroth
DotA	Defense of the Ancients
MMORPG	Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game
MOBA	Multiplayer Online Battle Arena
MoP	Mists of Pandaria
NPC	Non-Player Character
OCCG	Online Collectible Card Game
PC	Personal Computer
PvE	Player versus Environment
PvP	Player versus Player
retcon	retroactive continuity
RTS	Real-Time Strategy
TCG	Trading Card Game
UI	User Interface
UX	User Experience
WoD	Warlords of Draenor
WotLK	Wrath of the Lich King
WoW	World of Warcraft

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Intermediality

Intermediality is a relatively new term which emerged due to the need to refer to the modern phenomenon where various forms of media take elements from each other, make references to different media channels, and build upon each other in presenting a world, or a story that thus gains a multidimensional aspect. Before the existence of audiovisual electronic media, such as television, cinema or video games, such interconnection could mostly be found and studied in literary works under the term ‘intertextuality’, which referred to the shaping of a text’s meaning by another text (WordDisk n.d.). While intertextuality can exist outside of literature, such as in theater and other performance arts (Gadavanij 2002), the rapid emergence of newer forms of media, especially digital ones required a better suited term to express these newly formed relationships.

The concept of intermediality can also be tied back to the term “intermedia” by Dick Higgins in his 1966 essay of the same title, in which he remarks that “Much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media”. This was an initial attempt to categorize the new emerging forms of art such as performance art or visual poetry, each combining elements of more than one medium, and to find a more appropriate method of acknowledging and analyzing them as hybrids. It also sets the groundwork for differentiating between intermedia and multimedia, as the media channels in the former are fused, while they are placed next to one another in the latter (Vos 1997).

A further distinction between intermediality, intramediality and transmediality is necessary, as Irina Rajewsky states in her research *Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality* (2005):

[In this sense,] intermediality may serve foremost as a generic term for all those phenomena that (as indicated by the prefix inter) in some way take place between media. “Intermedial” therefore designates those configurations which have to do with a crossing of borders between media, and which thereby can be differentiated from intramedial phenomena as well as from transmedial phenomena (i.e., the appearance of a certain motif, aesthetic, or discourse across a variety of different media).

It is important to establish the concepts of intermediality that will be applied in this paper, and to define in what sense or context they will be used. Irina Rajewsky's theory of three subcategories of intermediality will be taken as the principal example, namely *medial transposition*, *media combination* and *intermedial references*. Additionally, transmedia storytelling as demonstrated by Henry Jenkins (2006) will be separately addressed as an individual, fourth category.

Medial transposition can be further broken down into two sections, adaptation and remediation, and it refers to the same content being transposed from one form of medium to another (e.g. film adaptation of a literary text, a film adapted into a video game, or vice versa); here the existence of the adapted or remediated work is heavily reliant on both the original source and the intermedial transformation process through which it came into existence (Rajewsky 2005). While adaptations focus on the content adapted from one medium to the other, remediation, according to Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) is the "representation of one medium in another", while also claiming that "all mediation is remediation," understanding "remediation" as a particular kind of intermedial relationship (Rippl 2015).

Media combination includes multimedia, mixed media and intermedia, and it manifests in combining at least two forms of distinct media into one. Examples include opera, film, theater, performances and comic books (Rajewsky 2005). Video games in this sense can be studied as a form of media combination, merging digital, narrative and interactive elements into one. As Alan Kay noted in *Computer Software* (1984), "[video games] can dynamically simulate the details of any other medium, including media that cannot exist physically". The key concept is creating an entirely new form of medium through the combination of several already existing media, while the challenge is analyzing this in relation to, but also regardless of the original elements, acknowledging it as a standalone piece.

Intermedial references evoke one form of media in another through thematizing either techniques specific to the referenced media, or elements of a specific genre; this reference can target a medium in general, or a specific example from a different medium. Here the referencing medium is materially present, as opposed to the referenced work, and it uses its own media-specific means to present the referenced material (Rajewsky 2005). This can manifest in cinematic cut-scenes in a video game, or the physical existence of books in the game world that players can read. So called Easter eggs or pop culture references may also be included in this category, as it will be demonstrated later.

Finally, transmedia storytelling is an emerging concept which was first introduced by Henry

Jenkins (2006) as the phenomena of a narrative spawning across two or more forms of media, being told through each one of their media-specific approaches instead of being contained in only one medium. This also implies the concept of world creating instead of story or character creating, bringing a whole world or universe into existence which has endless characters, stories and locations which can be manifested by anyone, everyone and using any platform available (Jenkins 2006). While “worldbuilding” can be tied back as far as J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle Earth (Wolf 2014), it is only recently that it has found its grounding in popular media, and that scholars have started studying it as an intermedial phenomena.

In the following, this paper will apply the above established concepts of intermediality to the Warcraft universe and investigate how each one of them individually contribute to the world as a whole. Two major perspectives will be utilized, that of the narrative and user interaction, as these two elements contribute the most to what results in the user experience of the players interacting with the different media platforms they are presented with. While the two aspects are quite different, they both play a significant role in shaping the Warcraft universe and the experience of its users ultimately builds on the symbiosis of the two.

1.2 Introduction to Warcraft

Warcraft is a franchise of video games, novels, and other media created by Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. (see **Figure 1**). First introduced in 1994 as the real-time strategy (RTS) computer game *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans*, it quickly gained popularity with two more installments, *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness* and *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* and their expansion packs, while the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) *World of Warcraft (WoW)*, released in 2004 and chronologically set after the events of *Warcraft III* easily became the most successful MMORPG of all time. The fifth core game, an online collectible card game (OCCG) titled *Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft* joined the ranks in 2014, and while Blizzard continuously released expansions for *WoW* over the years (seven in number, with the eighth planned for release later in 2020, putting the average number of expansions at one per two years), it also made sure to expand its ever-growing universe across different media platforms.



Figure 1: Warcraft logo. Source: https://wow.gamepedia.com/Warcraft_universe, viewed 29 May 2020.

Thirty novels, ten comic books, six mangas, five tabletop games, one trading card game (TCG), five issues of a magazine, one film adaptation and a multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) game, *Heroes of the Storm* were released over the span of twenty years (Wowpedia 2020a). **Table 1** from **Appendix A** shows the timeline of all releases over the years in chronological order, different media platforms being marked with distinctive colors. This is to help visualize in what order the Warcraft universe, different story elements and characters were built on one another, and how each specific medium influenced the ones that followed. While not all works will be discussed in depth or even included in the analysis, it is important to have a clear view of all of the artworks and media that contributed to the Warcraft universe.

Warcraft is set in the fictional world of Azeroth, which has a rich origin story and history, detailed in some of the novels. Azeroth is made up of several continents, all home to various humanoid races, flora and fauna. In the Warcraft universe, there are countless habitable planets aside from Azeroth, however only a few of them are mentioned aside from the main planet where most events unfold, and even fewer can be visited by players, such as Draenor, the planet of origin of the Orcs¹, or Argus, where the Draenei came from. Many lore elements of Warcraft have been inspired by mythology, especially races or creatures such as Elves and Orcs (as they came to be known in Tolkien's tales); the Old Gods bear similarity to creatures from Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, while Tauren and Satyrs are inspired by Minotaur and Satyrs from Greek mythology, to name just a few examples (Wowpedia, 2019a).

The real-time strategy games focus around the conflict between the Human and Orc races which

¹ All races from the Warcraft franchise will be capitalized in this paper to avoid discrepancies.

begins when the Orcs become corrupted by Demons and leave their shattered home Draenor, that comes to be known as Outland, seeking a new place they can conquer and call their home, which happens to be the Humans' home planet, Azeroth. Players can choose to partake in the Orc or Human campaigns, experiencing the story from both points of view. The world is expanded as more continents and zones are discovered, and various races join the Horde or Alliance in their conflict. The evil that the players have to fight gains different dimensions as it shifts from Orcs to Demons to Undead to Titans and Old Gods. *World of Warcraft* picks up where *Warcraft III* left off, offering a lot more freedom in choosing which parts of the story the player wishes to get involved with (Wowpedia, 2020b).

While the real-time strategy games and the MMORPG laid the groundwork for the Warcraft lore, *Hearthstone* and *Heroes of the Storm* merely borrowed elements (characters, mostly) from the already existing world, without furthering the universe itself. In *Hearthstone*, players can build decks made up of the heroes they came to know from the previous games (Wowpedia, 2020c), while in *Heroes of the Storm* Blizzard's various franchises meet to pit characters based on Warcraft, Diablo, StarCraft and Overwatch against each other in epic battlegrounds (Wowpedia, 2019b). In both cases these characters are taken out of context, and out of their original environments, and are often played on the same side with their enemies, or forced to fight against their allies.

While many of the novels provide the backstory or history of the Warcraft universe, others are adaptations of the existing storylines in the *Warcraft* games. For example, the story of the Orcs going against the Humans was started in medias res, and the events preceding it were detailed in novels later on. But as the development of the lore was continued chronologically through the *World of Warcraft* expansions, so did the novels catch up to the story as well, instead providing details to upcoming events from the game, and being released shortly before or after the expansions themselves. Similarly the comics and manga that have been released over the years often detailed story elements taking place between in-game events that the players had no access to otherwise. Finally, the 2016 cinematic adaptation *Warcraft* was mainly based on the novel *Warcraft: The Last Guardian* (Jeff Grubb, 2002), which in turn involves the events of the First War in *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans*, all three pieces covering the same events but focusing on different details and points of view.

The Warcraft universe spans across multiple media, and while not all forms of media contribute equally to the franchise, they each play their unique roles based on their media-specific characteristics.

Similarly, not all types of intermediality are present in each medium, either; most works relate only to a few distinct channels through one or two intermedial frames, and this mostly derives from the attributes of the interrelated media. In the following chapters, each form of intermediality will be individually discussed in relation to the media artifacts to which they apply. As stated by Gaudreault and Marion (2002), “a good understanding of a medium [...] entails understanding its relationship to other media: it is through intermediality, through a concern with the intermedial, that a medium is understood.”

Chapter 2 – Medial Transposition

2.1 Adaptation

Interestingly, not many adaptations can be uncovered in the Warcraft lore. Works from across various forms of media complement, rather than imitate or replicate one another’s content. *Table 3.1* below contains all works that belong in this category of intermediality, and upon examining it, it becomes evident that these represent a small percentage of the works contributing to the Warcraft universe. The most obvious example would be the 2016 film adaptation *Warcraft*, which is the result of several layers of adaptations. In order to better understand the relation between the individual works, their history of release will be briefly examined.

Title	From medium	To medium	Method/Purpose
Warcraft	Novel	Film (film universe)	Adaptation (film universe)
Warcraft: The Official Novelization	Film script (film universe)	Novel (film universe)	Adaptation (film universe)
World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Tides of Darkness	Video Game (RTS)	Novel	Adaptation
Warcraft: Lord of the Clans	Video Game (Adventure) (unreleased)	Novel	Adaptation
Warcraft: The Board Game	Video Game (RTS)	Board Game	Based on; Remediation

Warcraft: The Roleplaying Game	Video Game (RTS)	Board Game	Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft Trading Card Game	Video Game (MMORPG)	TCG	Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game	Video Game (MMORPG)	Board Game	Based on; Remediation
Warcraft: Legends	Multiple	Manga	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: The World of Warcraft: The Magazine	Multiple	Magazine	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: Wolfheart	Video game (MMORPG)	Novel	Based on; Adaptation
Hearthstone	TCG	OCCG	Based on; Remediation
Heroes of the Storm	Video game (MMORPG)	MOBA	Based on; Remediation

Table 3.1: Works from the Warcraft franchise that display methods of medial transposition (Wowpedia, 2020a).

The First War between Orcs and Humans was first introduced in *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans* in 1994. The story in the real-time strategy game was reduced to Horde and Alliance campaigns; players could take upon the roles of Orgrim Doomhammer (who until *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness* was merely a nameless Orc), while the Human character is a nameless Regent appointed by King Llane Wrynn. While these characters are meant to represent the players in-game, they are not physically present in the game world. They also do not leave much room for imagination, as the players cannot customize them, choose from different features or rename their avatars. While they could still identify with their characters despite of this, the fact that they have a top-down perspective of the map, and they actively control units and place buildings on the map, gives off more of an omnipresent, omnipotent feeling, placing the intended role of the player closer to a god-like figure, than an active participant (see *Figure 2*). While most of the backstory presented during the first RTS game remained canon,

discrepancies between the two campaigns were inevitable; the player finishing the Alliance campaign would win the war and become king, and although some details presented from this point of view were accurate, the first war canonically ended with the Alliance's defeat. Due to the known and accepted format of RTS games this could not be presented as such; while games that increase their difficulty endlessly instead of the player reaching a set of goals and ending the game with victory are not unheard of, this approach would have made *Warcraft I* extremely one-sided and biased against the Alliance, and players would have no motivation to explore the Alliance campaign if the only way to victory was to play on the Horde side.



Figure 2: Screenshot from *Warcraft I* Horde campaign gameplay. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ahIzcJS7n4>, viewed 21 May 2020.

Thus the events of the First War are further explored in the novel *Warcraft: The Last Guardian*, although the book should not be considered a de facto adaptation of the RTS game, rather an extension of certain events occurring during the same period of time. The story centers around the powerful Human mage Medivh and his gradual corruption which led to him playing a major role in bringing about the First War. Although Medivh's story is exposed, this is done through the eyes of his young apprentice, Khadgar. Other major characters are Garona, a Half-Orc spy, King Llane Wrynn, the Human leader, and Anduin Lothar, Human champion (Wowpedia, 2019c). It is important to note that

the point of view the novel utilizes is a newly introduced one, as all other major characters have appeared in *Warcraft I*, only Khadgar's character is new. Still, the narrative techniques of the novel allow a much deeper insight into the characters' personalities, background stories and motivations, as well as the events leading up to the outbreak of the First War as seen in *Warcraft I*. The readers cannot control the events as they unfold, but they can still participate through the actions and standpoint of Khadgar, witnessing the occurrences in truthfulness.

Blizzard started planning the production of the film adaptation of *Warcraft* as early as 2006, yet it took ten years for the final product, *Warcraft* to be released in 2016 (see **Figure 3**). During this time a handful of directors and writers had worked on its concept, which shifted from *Warcraft I* to the MMORPG, reasoning that it was in fact *World of Warcraft* that made the franchise popular and beloved, and not the real-time strategy games; then finally coming full circle with *Warcraft I*, finding it a good point of introduction for the part of the audience who were not previously familiar with the *Warcraft* universe.



Figure 3: Still from *Warcraft*. Source: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/warcraft-2016>, 21 May 2020.

A number of concept art pieces, depicting both characters and locations emerged that never made it to the film. Another decisive aspect was focusing on the characters of Durotan (not previously present in *Warcraft I* or *Warcraft: The Last Guardian*) and Anduin Lothar, both representing champions of the

Horde and Alliance factions. This meant that the audience was offered the possibility of identifying with either or both sides, maintaining the neutral standpoint towards both factions. It was also made clear, however, that alterations would be made to the original story in the favor of properly translating the source material into cinema, and this would mean that the story presented in the film exists in an alternate, film version of the Warcraft universe (Wowpedia 2019d).

Duncan Jones, the director of *Warcraft* explained that most of the changes they decided to make to the narrative were in order to make it work in the new medium to which it was transposed (Wowpedia 2019d). In this sense, it can be said that the film diverges from its model's plot, not because it is unfaithful, but because it is eurhythmic to do so (Wallin 2007). The film focuses on only one narrative out of many, due to the time constraints of a two-hour movie, and its plot seems to be based on the story of the first war as it is presented in *Warcraft: The Last Guardian*. This technically establishes *Warcraft* as the film adaptation of a literary work, and not that of a video game. Yet the novel is directly based on the RTS, which creates the multiple layers of adaptation as mentioned above. This can be considered a unique situation of video game to film adaptation, especially in relation to other film adaptations such as *Mortal Kombat* (1995) or the *Resident Evil* (2002-2016) series. Video game to film adaptations usually try to employ game elements or cinematic features as seen in their origin material, however this is often executed poorly and met with dissatisfaction from the game fans (Lay 2007). The medium of video games followed that of the cinema and was heavily influenced by it, and video game to film adaptations are still a new, experimental form of intermediality.

Films provide ready-made characters and narrative resonance that can carry over and play into the experience of a spin-off game, even where the dimension of character and narrative are not greatly elaborated in the game itself. This is an effect that is harder to achieve in reverse [...] (King & Krzywinska 2002).

Instead of trying to implement game-like features in its cinematography, *Warcraft* rather focused on presenting the fictional world and developing the story. This approach contributes to the transmedial aspect of the franchise, as the film adaptation relies more on storytelling and world creating, as opposed to aiming at transferring the gaming medium to another. This was further reinforced by the release of two novels, *Warcraft: Durotan – The Official Film Prequel* (2016) and

Warcraft: The Official Novelization (2016), both written by Christie Golden as tie-ins set in the film universe and released shortly before and after the movie release, expanding the alternate, film universe of the Warcraft franchise and increasing its authenticity. *Warcraft* also contributed to opening the Warcraft universe for the audience that previously had no access to it due to the media-specific channel of video games, and the vast lore spanning across various literary works.

Undoubtedly, players of a video game are offered a more imaginatively immersive experience, as defined by Laura Ermi and Frans Mäyrä in their study *Fundamental Components of the Gameplay Experience: Analysing Immersion* (2005), than the audience of a film or the readers of a book covering the same story, simply due to the fact that they actively participate in the story, often making decisions that end up shaping the narrative, instead of merely identifying with the hero on the screen or on the pages of the book. Yet in this specific example, the novel and film adaptations of the real-time strategy game had more success in creating a personal experience for their audiences. Although the player's character is established in the game story, they are not physically present nor well developed, and they lack motivation just like the events lack a proper explanation or backstory (see *Figure 4*, left). Compared to this, the characters in the novel and film have detailed and distinctive personalities, and their actions are well reasoned within the setting and in relation to one another, making it easier for the audience to empathize and identify with them (see *Figure 4*, right).



Figure 4: Orcs in the *Warcraft I* RTS cut-scene (left) vs. Orcs in the *Warcraft* film (right). Sources: https://www.theregister.co.uk/2014/11/25/antique_code_show_wow_orcs_and_humans_1994_and_warlord_of_draenor_2014/, <https://www.cinemablend.com/news/2477206/what-the-warcraft-trilogy-would-have-been-about-according-to-the-director>, viewed 21 May 2020.

While players' presence in-game becomes much more distinctive and pronounced in *World of Warcraft*, and even the later *Warcraft* games, this was not yet the case in *Warcraft I*.

Another important note is how humane and rational the Orcs are portrayed in the novel and especially the film; for a long time, the notion about them was that they are the villains, while the Humans are the righteous heroes. This stigma was not only enforced in *Warcraft I*, but in lore and mythology from before, such as the Orc and Human races in Tolkien's Middle Earth. Further development of the lore across different forms of media, however, was able to present the narrative from both points of views, proving that there are always more sides to the same story, and it is never as simple as "good" versus "evil". Considering all of these aspects, it can be said that both the novel *Warcraft: The Last Guardian* and the film *Warcraft* give a new narrative dimension to *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans* (Hepburn 2010), emphasizing on the limitations of the video game medium, more specifically that of the RTS genre.

2.2 Remediation

Remediation is present in the Warcraft universe in an interesting form: five tabletop games have been released based on the *Warcraft* and *World of Warcraft* games; more information about them can be found in **Table 1** from **Appendix A**. In these examples, the universe and lore of Warcraft is not only remediated from one form of medium to another – video games, a digital medium to tabletop games, which is an analogue platform – but more importantly one video game genre is remediated into another, tabletop game genre. The real-time strategy format inevitably becomes turn-based in the board game environment, while *World of Warcraft* is remediated into the adventure game setting of board games, which, unlike the MMORPG, are limited to a small number of participants who can play together simultaneously. The form of remediation that occurs in this case is categorized as retrograde remediation by Bolter and Grusin in *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (1999), meaning that "challenged by the appearance of new, more efficient media, older media also adopt features of more recent media to survive in a changed media environment".

Warcraft: The Board Game stayed true to both lore elements and game mechanics (see **Figure 5**). Players can choose one of four races, Humans, Orcs, Night Elves or Undead, and their turn consists

of four phases, move, harvest, deploy and spend. Resources like gold and lumber can be collected, much like in *Warcraft III*. Players fight against each other and can be eliminated; last man standing wins, or the person who was able to collect 15 victory points first (BoardGameGeek n.d. B). While this version of remediated content is true to its original source, it does not come without limitations: despite the setting and environment being that of *Warcraft III*, the narrative itself is not developed, nor is it advancing from the beginning to the end of one game session. The Horde and Alliance factions or races will fight against each other over and over, with each of them taking turns at suffering defeats and earning victories. In this sense, the narrative is enclosed within an endless loop of battles, comparable to custom *Warcraft III* campaigns, or the later battlegrounds in *World of Warcraft*. Similarly, player identification is non-existent, due to players controlling entire races, and not individual heroes or characters. Clearly their role is that of the commander or leader of their race, however this is in no form represented within the game. The iconic characters that players came to know and love from *Warcraft III*, such as Arthas, Thrall or Tyrande are also missing, reducing the familiarity and immersion for the participants.



Figure 5: *Warcraft: The Board Game*. Source: <https://boardgamegeek.com/image/1299559/warcraft-board-game>, viewed 21 May 2020.

Simulating an MMORPG in an analogue setting is not only difficult, but outright impossible due to its lack of the *massively* multiplayer aspect – tabletop games usually only allow a few people to play together at the same time. What the adventure remediations of the MMORPG, *World of Warcraft*:

The Board Game and *World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game* managed to simulate well from their source material, however, is the authentic sensation of leveling up through questing and customizing the characters through talent builds, stats and itemization. Players are able to create an avatar similar to their character from *World of Warcraft*; they can spend the talent points to build already familiar talent trees and can use the same spells and abilities. They move across the board through familiar zones, towns and dungeons, completing quests, slaying the same mobs² that appear in *World of Warcraft* as well, and what's more, these mobs even drop the same loot as their MMORPG counterparts do (BoardGameGeek n.d. A). As seen in **Figure 6**, the zones in *World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game* stayed true to the in-game maps in *World of Warcraft* down to the last detail, while the cards, items and other extra elements that are necessary for gameplay are laid out in a fashion that is reminiscent of the video game UI, further enforcing the board game's existence as a derivative or imitation of its source material.

Although these details ensure that the players get the original leveling experience they came to know and love from *World of Warcraft*, it does not come without restrictions. The play style of MMORPGs presumes an open world that exists whether or not the player is logged in (Krzywinska, 2008). MMORPGs do not have a beginning and an end, as there are endless tasks to perform in the game, and if one person stops playing, there are many others that keep it going. This structure cannot be maintained in a tabletop setting, but game sessions in both cases can take up to several hours, which is not necessarily user- or beginner-friendly. Additionally, the accuracy of the remediations to the original material causes them to target *WoW*-fans specifically, as anyone without prior knowledge of the franchise might have a hard time learning about the different mechanics and might not fully appreciate *WoW*-related details.

Aside from establishing the above discussed process as retrograde remediation, it can also be included in Bolter and Grusin's fourth category of remediation (1999), according to which the remediating medium attempts to absorb the remediated medium entirely – in this case, the “new” medium being that of the tabletop games which seek to imitate the medium of the video games through remediation. This method creates a very distinctive product which targets two audience types specifically: the hardcore Warcraft fans that deliberately seek out every possible medium through

² A **mob**, short for mobile, also known as an enemy or mook, is a computer-controlled non-player character (NPC) in a computer game such as an MMORPG or MUD. (Bartle, Richard (2003). *Designing Virtual Worlds. New Riders. p. 102.*)

which they can interact with the franchise, and the dedicated fans of the tabletop genre, who seek out new and challenging board games they can add to their collections and improve their skills at. Unfortunately this leaves out the biggest group of consumers who only casually relate to the products and would not be willing to spend the time and energy required for the tabletop experience.



Figure 6: World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game (top) and the map of Outland (bottom left) along with the map of Lordaeron (bottom right) in comparison, as seen in the MMORPG. Sources: <https://tabletop.kelsam.net/blog/world-of-warcraft-the-board-game-fully-cooperative/>, <https://www.mmo-champion.com/threads/1388370-A-comparison-of-map-of-Draenor-and-the-Outland>, [https://the-lions-call.fandom.com/wiki/Lordaeron_\(Subcontinent\)](https://the-lions-call.fandom.com/wiki/Lordaeron_(Subcontinent)), viewed 21 May 2020.

While these were only a few specific examples of adaptation and remediation present in the Warcraft universe, this form of intermediality is not the dominant one, nor does it contribute largely to the franchise as a whole. As it can be observed in *Table 3.1* from the beginning of the chapter, most medial transposition occurs between different genres and platforms of games, with only a few exceptions of novels and the distinctive case of the film adaptation. This results in various interactive experiences with the Warcraft universe in the form of RTS, MMORPG, tabletop, TCG, OCCG and MOBA genres, which offers a wide range of options for every type of player or fan of the franchise. The reduced amount of adaptation and remediation across the franchise also minimizes content repetition in regards of the history and main and sub-plots of the Warcraft universe. Adaptations and remediations are often derivatives and inferior to the originals by default (Moore 2010), and in this case, they do not return almost anything to what they took from. Still, their qualities, innovative aspects and often creative methods of medial transposition should be applauded, but their role is clearly dwarfed by the other forms of intermediality present in the Warcraft universe.

Chapter 3 – Media Combination

3.1 The *Warcraft* RTS Games

The Warcraft franchise is largely built on the medium of video games, with most other sources completing the lore and events presented in the games. Although storytelling is limited by different aspects in video games, the intermedial nature of this channel creates a unique experience for the players nonetheless. Moreover, each video game genre employs its specific characteristics in building the lore further. Video games were the result of the combination of multiple media in the first place, being largely influenced by cinema and television, and they manage to pay homage to each individual media they borrowed from, while also introducing new and imaginative ways to present a story or a specific user experience for the players.

The *Warcraft* series not only introduced the Warcraft franchise, but it was also a pioneer of real-time strategy, and contributed to the format of the genre as it is known today. In RTS games, players build structures on the map, collect resources and create units that they use to fight against their

opponents. Back in 1994 visually this was represented by a two-dimensional map of the world, and small pixelated assets representing the buildings and units. Despite of the technological limitations of that time, Blizzard established the visual style of this new fictional world early on. With additional releases the graphics improved, *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* (2002) being the first Blizzard game to deploy a full 3D environment. Animated 3D portraits of the clicked units and characters were also introduced, along with cut-scenes to assist in moving the story forward, replacing the previously used mission briefings. As more races and locations were introduced, the visual style of Azeroth was further influenced by *Dungeons and Dragons* and *Lord of the Rings*, maintaining a comic book style (which was later on applied to *World of Warcraft* as well, despite of the potential of video game graphics constantly reaching new heights), instead of striving for more realistic visuals (Remo, 2009) (see *Figure 7*).



Figure 7: Side-by-side comparison of graphics as seen in *Warcraft I* (top left), *Warcraft II* (top right), *Warcraft III* (bottom left), and *World of Warcraft* (bottom right). Sources: <https://www.blizzard.com/en-us/games/legacy/>, <http://randomacc.net/system/reviews/warcraft2.shtml>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHQI3UV6IUg>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjgDgJ_1Wi0, viewed 21 May 2020.

This allowed both the RTSs and later on the MMORPG along with its expansions to be more easily accessible by a wider audience due to their lower system requirements.

From a narrative standpoint, as discussed in Chapter 1, real-time strategy games were quite limited in presenting a well developed setting with rich history, deep character personalities and well-motivated events. An improvement could be observed in later releases such as the introduction of cinematic cut-scenes, and the possibility for players to identify with better defined heroes. But both graphic and narrative aspects of the games were greatly supported by the game manuals that came with them, lending another independent, both visual and literary medium to the already plurimedial product (see *Figure 8*).

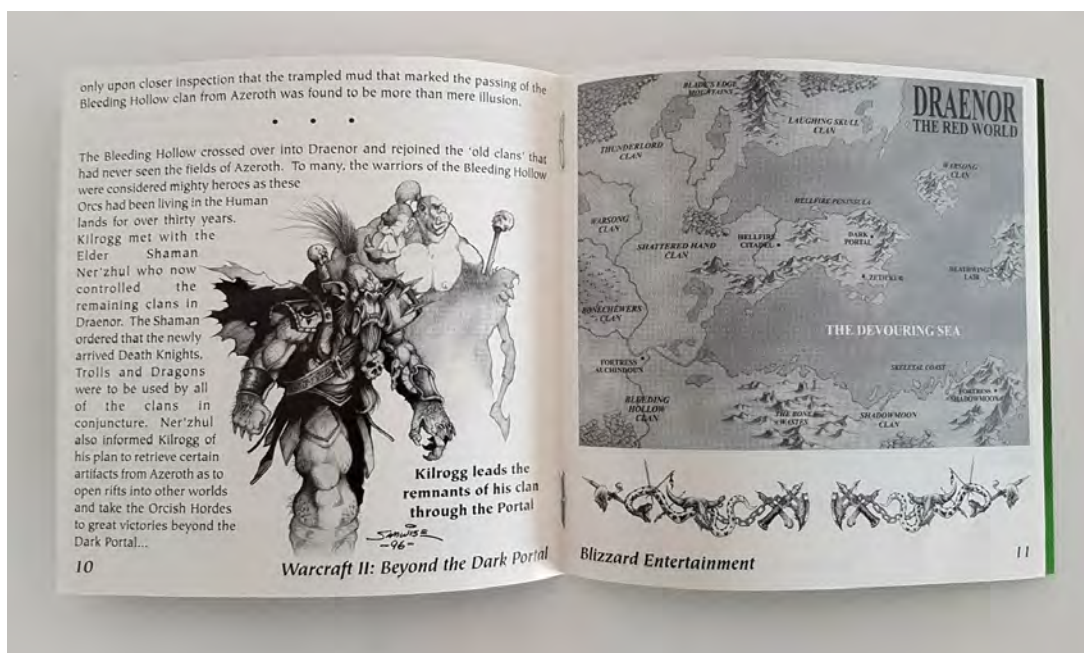


Figure 8: Example of a page from the *Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal* game manual. Source: <https://picclick.com/WarCraft-Orcs-Humans-II-2-Beyond-the-182730628698.html#&gid=1&pid=6>, viewed 21 May 2020.

The game manuals contained written history or backstory for the games' settings, detailed information about creatures, buildings, units and spells, and other relevant information that was not possible, or not as optimal to be included in the games themselves. Information regarding both factions was provided and written by a renowned member of each race, such as Anduin Lothar, Garona, Aegwyn or Gul'dan,

once again ensuring that both points of views would be equally explored. Written text was accompanied by various illustrations of characters, races, buildings, creatures, banners and different assets that enrich the visual image of the world and its denizens, on such a level that artwork from the RTS games was not able to reach on its own. The information found in these manuals also greatly contributed to in-game books scattered around in *World of Warcraft*, but more importantly, they formed the basis of many novels written to cover various parts of the lore before, after or during the events of the games.

The Warcraft series employed various methods to include the players in the story. In *Warcraft I* and *II*, they play as unnamed heroes on both factions (campaigns), taking on the role of an Orc commander on Horde side, or a Human Regent in the Alliance, as discussed in Chapter 2. *Warcraft III* came with many innovations compared to its predecessors, among them the representation of the players. Here, they can play as the main heroes of each faction – Thrall, Warchief of the Orcish Horde; Arthas, crown prince of the Human kingdom of Lordaeron (see **Figure 9**); and Tyrande, leader of the Night Elves – with complex personalities, backstories and powers. These characters are also present in the game world, being controlled by the player just like the units.



Figure 9: Thrall (left) and Arthas (right), as portrayed in *Warcraft III* and its expansion. Sources: [https://wow.gamepedia.com/Thrall_\(Warcraft_III\)](https://wow.gamepedia.com/Thrall_(Warcraft_III)), [https://wow.gamepedia.com/Arthas_\(Warcraft_III\)](https://wow.gamepedia.com/Arthas_(Warcraft_III)), viewed 21 May 2020.

Thus, players can better identify with a clearly established avatar, however the fact that they are predefined heroes and not custom picked, customizable representations of the players means that a certain level of dissociation would always be present.

3.2 The MMORPG *World of Warcraft*

After the *Warcraft* RTS game trilogy, Blizzard shifted their focus to the MMORPG, *World of Warcraft*, and its subsequent expansions. This meant a whole new dimension of media combinations, and various new ways for the fan base to experience and interact with the story. *WoW* built on the groundwork that *Warcraft* has laid out before it, continuing the narrative where it was left off. It centralized the sub-zones and continents of Azeroth into one big open world, gradually revealing them through expansions as the story progression dictated. Although a multiplayer option was available to players in *Warcraft I* (two players), *Warcraft II* (up to eight players) and *Warcraft III* (online matchmaking through battle.net), the massively multiplayer setting meant hundreds, if not thousands of players would exist simultaneously in the same world. This also meant, as Tanya Krzywinska expressed it in her essay *World Creation and Lore: World of Warcraft as Rich Text* (2008), that “unlike stand-alone games, World of Warcraft offers a persistent world in temporal terms that exists whether or not an individual player is playing”, further enforcing the notion of world creation instead of story creation.

In *WoW*, players are part of not one narrative, but a world made up of many simultaneous and intertwined stories, some of which are predetermined, others created by the players themselves; players can participate in some stories, or even become part of someone else’s story. This approach results in several specific characteristics of the MMORPG experience that no other medium can offer. Narrative plot is transformed, at least partially, into geographical space (Wallin 2007). Characters become the vehicles of the players through which they interact with the narrative (Hepburn 2010). In world creating, fans can imagine being part of the world, their characters becoming their own embodiments, instead of just identifying with the protagonist(s) (Jenkins 2006). Similarly, the narrative of the player’s avatar is different than that of the hero they previously identified with (Thrall, or Arthas); these figures now become non-player characters (NPCs) that the players can interact with, but depending on the play

style and actions of the person, they might not even intersect with the lives and stories of some of the fictional heroes in the Warcraft universe. In many cases, their actions do not even influence the outcome of the story, instead they can choose to be part of one story or another within the given settings.

Video games as media combination have an audiovisual and narrative basis with the added element of interaction, which means that unlike watching a film or reading a novel from beginning to end, players will have a different experience every time they interact with the video game content (Wolf 2001). In the Warcraft series they can explore the narrative from the point of view of both factions, and come up with different and new strategies each time. In *World of Warcraft*, the narratives are endless, and instead of starting the game from the beginning, players can experience different parts of the lore through several characters, and the story they interact with depends on where in the game world they start out, and the places they choose to visit. In cinema and television, mediums that heavily influenced video games, the narrative content and its order is dictated by the creators of the product (Wolf 2001); compared to this, in the MMORPG players choose their own stories and the content they wish to interact with. It is not only the same player that experiences the same video game in different ways, but each player within the world of Warcraft will also have a different experience compared to their peers, not only depending on the content they interact with, but also on the other players they come across while playing, that will shape their image of the Warcraft universe.

While the narrative in *WoW* is presented in a linear format, new content (zones, dungeons, raids, events) being released in a chronologically sensible order, and each expansion building on the previous one or even backstories from other media in motivating the upcoming events, players inevitably experience it through repetition. The actions of one player cannot permanently alter the world and environment of thousands of other players, because they in turn still have to perform the same actions that would result in those changes; cases like Realm Firsts³ still exist that are an exclusive reward for those who managed to complete the task first, but in most cases, the same mobs or bosses will be killed by thousands of players (even multiple times or on a weekly basis by the same players); the same items will be collected by everyone, and the same NPCs will be rescued or escorted over and over. This results in a loop that is further enforced by the unchanging seasons of various zones (Krzywinska 2008), or the old content remaining more or less the same even after the release of a new expansion. In

3 **Realm First** is an Achievement that is received exclusively by the player who completed its requirements first.

a sense, narratives end up running in parallel to each other, and while players are still restricted from some of the content by the level of their characters, they can switch between narratives as they please.

Much video game theory shares a close connection with other media, since many of its basic concepts and thoughts came principally from film and television studies (Wolf 2001). From an economic point of view, the video game industry maintains a partnership and a rivalry with these media as well (Picard 2008).

This extreme outer pole of media combinations concerns phenomena in which individual media or their material manifestations—such as word and image—become inextricably bound to, or even “merged” with, one another, and as such “are simultaneously and oscillatingly present” (Rajewsky 2005).

But the medium of video games was also impacted by computer technology and differs from its predecessors in significant ways because of this. The computer itself becomes an active participant in the players’ experience, functioning not only as a referee but an active opponent that players interact with and compete against (Wolf 2001). The cinematic perspective in *World of Warcraft* allows the players to create their own moving images, almost like being given a movie camera that they can play around and experiment with, zoom in and out, move around and point it where they want, and even record or take screenshots to immortalize a moment. Video games in the process of media combination borrow elements from the mediums that contribute to them, and turn them interactive.

Media Combination as a form of intermediality plays an important role in the Warcraft franchise, which is mainly built around the video games. Each title reinvented its genre with new and creative ways of narration and user immersion. Although each platform has its own constraints in expressing certain story elements or integrating the player into the fictional world, they work well in complementing each other’s shortcomings and build on previously established lore elements to enrich the presented world. As demonstrated in **Table 3.2** below, combined media mostly deals with original content from the Warcraft franchise. The video games focus on continuing the main plot chronologically, while the rest of the media that take part in this form of intermediality, such as comic books and manga deal with expanding the universe with side-stories or connecting main events on occasion. Due to this phenomena, video games can be considered the main media channel of the

franchise, while the rest of the contributing media have a secondary, supporting role. The parts that still remain incomplete are filled by the rest of supporting material such as novels, comics and manga, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Title	From medium	To medium	Method/Purpose
Warcraft Saga Issue I	Game Manuals; In-game books in WoW	Comics	Information gathering
Warcraft: Bonds of Brotherhood	Original	Comics (film universe)	Prequel
Warcraft: Orcs & Humans	Original	Video Game (RTS)	-
Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness	Original	Video Game (RTS)	Sequel to Orcs & Humans
Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal	Original	Video Game (RTS)	Sequel to Tides of Darkness
Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos	Original	Video Game (RTS)	Sequel to Beyond the Dark Portal
World of Warcraft: Ashbringer	Original	Comics	Expand universe; Connect events
World of Warcraft: Death Knight	Original	Manga	Expand universe
Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne	Original	Video Game (RTS)	Sequel to Reign of Chaos
Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy	Original	Manga	Expand universe; Connect events
World of Warcraft	Original	Video Game (MMORPG)	Sequel to The Frozen Throne
World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to World of Warcraft
World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing Duology	Original	Manga	Sequel to The Sunwell Trilogy; Expand universe
World of Warcraft	Original	Comics	Expand universe; Retcon; Connect events

World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to The Burning Crusade
World of Warcraft: Mage	Original	Manga	Expand universe
Warcraft: Legends	Multiple	Manga	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: Dark Riders	Original	Comics	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Shaman	Original	Manga	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Cataclysm	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Wrath of the Lich King
World of Warcraft: Bloodsworn	Original	Comics	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Curse of the Worgen	Original	Comics	Info gathering; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Cataclysm
Hearthstone	TCG	OCCG	Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor	Original	Comics	Connect events; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Mists of Pandaria
Heroes of the Storm	Video Game (MMORPG)	MOBA	Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: Legion	Original	Comics	Connect events; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Legion	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Warlords of Draenor
World of Warcraft: Battle for Azeroth	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Legion

World of Warcraft Classic	Video Game (MMORPG)	Video Game (MMORPG)	Re-release
Warcraft III: Reforged	Video Game (RTS)	Video Game (RTS)	Re-release
Shadowlands	Original	Video Game (MMORPG); Expansion	Sequel (expansion) to Battle for Azeroth

Table 3.2: Works from the *Warcraft* franchise that are part of the media combination category of intermediality (Wowpedia, 2020a).

Chapter 4 – Intermedial References

4.1 Cinematics, Cut-Scenes and Scenarios

World of Warcraft in its position as a pioneer of the MMORPG genre builds heavily on other video game styles but also different media channels. One dominant reference would be in the form of cinematics evoking the visual style of films or animations. Cinematic trailers already accompanied the earlier *Warcraft* installments, resembling in style and editing those of film trailers. Their artwork would be much more advanced than that of the games themselves, as such graphics could not yet be used in interactive environments. By the time the cinematic trailer of *World of Warcraft* was released in 2004, its visuals have long surpassed the graphical limitations of that time. Blizzard’s cinematics have become a sort of staple with high production value. They can be considered an essential element of the game, offering its fan base a solid foundation of what the fictional world of *Warcraft* would actually look like. Their visual quality has greatly improved over the years, and the character design of important heroes from the *Warcraft* lore is both based on their looks as presented in other media, while also establishing some essential details that would later on be implemented in the games as well (see *Figure 10*).

However, the *World of Warcraft* cinematics could only be part of the MMORPG as standalone pieces, without being integrated in the natural flow of the game. Cut-scenes – also called in-game cinematics – on the other hand became a more organic part of gameplay, maintaining the visual style of

the game (see *Figure 11*) and following certain actions or introducing events, acting like bridges that connect the actions of players with the predefined course of events.

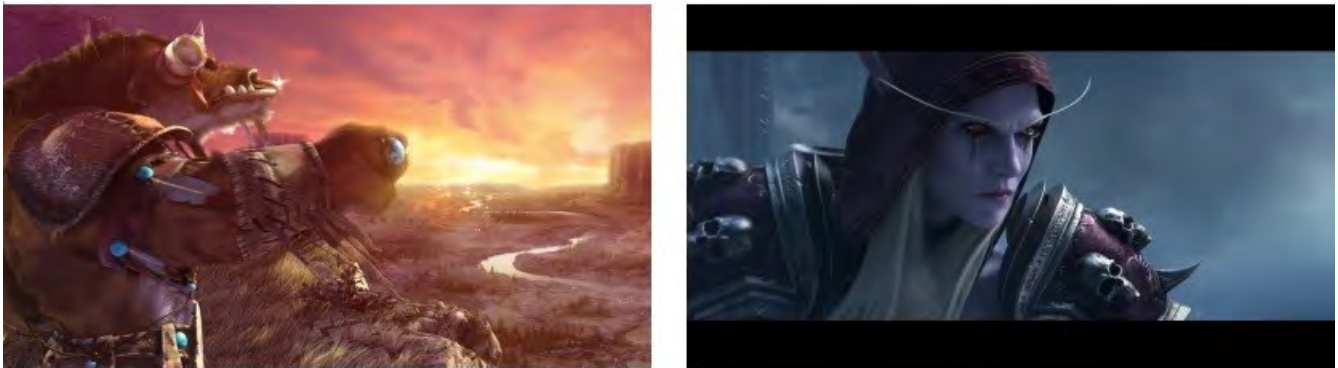


Figure 10: Still frame from the *World of Warcraft* cinematic trailer (2004, left) and the *World of Warcraft: Shadowlands* expansion cinematic trailer (2020, right). Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIVSJ0AvZe0>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7L_3J6R19Q, viewed 28 May 2020.

These could manifest in the introductory cut-scene when a new character enters the game world for the first time; their starting zone is presented in beautiful bird’s eye views, imitating the cinematic style of crane shots, while a voice narrates the backstory of the respective race in the background. Other examples include important lore events such as the *Fall of the Lich King*, which is triggered when the final boss of the Icecrown Citadel raid, the Lich King reaches 0% health by the hand of the “adventurers” (players), and it depicts the death of Arthas, and Bolvar Fordragon becoming the new Lich King to keep the Undead Scourge at bay. Such in-game cinematics increased in number with each new expansion, *The Burning Crusade* and *The Wrath of the Lich King (WotLK)* only having two cut-scenes each, while the next expansion, *Cataclysm* jumping to forty-three (Wowpedia 2019e).

The usage of these cinematic elements borrowed from the film industry served to better present the events upon which the narrative of the game is constructed, at the risk of interrupting the game flow experienced by the players. While certain dialogues might include the presence and participation of the players’ characters in these events – “You and these brave heroes have your own destinies to fulfill”: Bolvar addressing Tyrion and referring to the members of the raid – the idea that players should be better represented in these cut-scenes (they are completely absent from the platform during the *Fall of the Lich King* cinematic, for example), and that they should receive more credit for defeating raid

bosses and furthering the narrative plot, has emerged over the years. Yet their roles and the validity of their actions is further complicated by certain retcons that occurred through other media, such as the death of Onyxia being attributed to King Varian Wrynn and his allies at the end of *The Burning Crusade* events in the *World of Warcraft: The Comic*, instead of the adventurers during *World of Warcraft Classic* (Wowpedia 2020d).

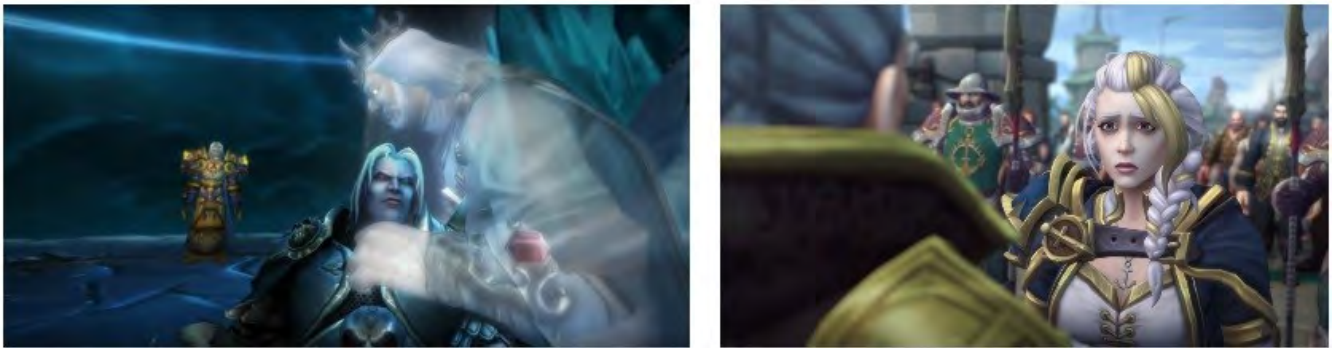


Figure 11: Still frame from the *Fall of the Lich King* cinematic in the *WotLK* expansion (2009, left) and from the *Jaina Proudmoore in Kul Tiras* cinematic in the *Battle for Azeroth (BfA)* expansion (2018, right). Sources: <https://warcraft.blizzplanet.com/blog/comments/theorycrafting-the-return-of-lost-world-of-warcraft-heroes/death-of-arthas>, https://www.reddit.com/r/wow/comments/974tzk/i_have_to_admit_blizzard_has_done_an_outstanding/, viewed 28 May 2020.

A final category of cinematic cut-scenes that's worth mentioning are the scripted scenarios that players themselves participate in. These mostly play out while completing quests, and can be compared to a theatrical, rather than cinematic performance. The time and space of the player are not interrupted by the scene, instead it is integrated within. The player's character is both physically part of the scene while also taking up the role of spectator. They cannot intervene in the events, however they are free to move around, look anywhere they want, or even walk away from the role-play. The event itself seems staged, as the movement and actions of the NPCs are reminiscent that of in-game characters, as opposed to their animated counterparts in the cinematics. Their dialogues are played out with basic emotes that can be used by the players themselves, such as */speak* or */laugh*. Their lines are displayed in dialogue bubbles above their heads, as well as dialogue lines in the player's chat interface. In some cases, certain dialogues also use voice-overs, but others do not. Actions taken by these NPCs usually

follow one another, instead of overlapping or occurring simultaneously. While this approach enforces the player's presence and participation, or even triggering of these events, their setup is a constant reminder that the player is still just completing quests in the game environment. The way they decide to perceive these occurrences determines their experience; some of them skip the role-play entirely, leaving before it plays out, and complete quests without reading the narrative details; others might try to enhance the immersion by interacting with the NPCs via emotes (even if this does not change the NPCs' behavior), and have the possibility of hiding their UI and zooming into first person view for the duration of the event, temporarily taking the place of their avatars (see *Figure 12*).



Figure 12: Screenshot from the *Battered Hilt* Quest Chain in the *WotLK* expansion with hidden UI (left), and from the *Dagger in the Dark* scenario in the *Mists of Pandaria* (*MoP*) expansion with the UI displayed (right). Sources: <https://www.wowdb.com/quests/24454-return-to-caladis-brightspear>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoPL7dHS5L0>, viewed 28 May 2020.

Intermedial references, then, can be distinguished from intramedial (and thus intertextual) ones by the fact that a given media product cannot use or genuinely reproduce elements or structures of a different medial system through its own media-specific means; it can only evoke or imitate them (Rajewsky 2005).

As Rajewsky pointed out, it can be concluded that video games merely imitate the cinematic structure through the cinematic cut-scenes, while the scripted scenarios, although most likely attempting to reach the same effect, end up instead evoking theatrical performances. Such narrative methods employed in

video games are usually considered disruptive of the game mechanics and user immersion, however one might argue that in the case of *WoW*, players are not the main protagonists of the game narrative; their actions do not change the course of events, they are merely active participants of the predefined narrative of the game world. From this point of view, their participation in the cinematic cut-scenes or scripted scenarios barely differs from their participation in other events or actions within the game, providing a narrative depth through its media-specific characteristics of cinema, without reducing the gaming experience in turn.

4.2 Photography and Literature

The medium of photography is evoked in an interactive way, allowing the players to take screenshots to immortalize moments important to them during play. Examples of screenshots range from a standard print screen with the UI displayed and a fully zoomed out character, to aesthetically composed images where the character is fully zoomed in, and the UI is hidden. This artistic freedom enables players to get creative with their “photos”, and the in-game features of 360° angle of view paired with the possibility of reaching virtually any spot through facilities such as flying mounts results in a lot more liberty than using a real-life camera. Although lacking realistic graphics, *WoW* displays a lot of beautiful scenery throughout its world that players can explore and photograph (see **Figure 13**, left). Another option is to pose their characters for photos, turning them to face the virtual camera, or even perform some kind of emote for the picture. While this presents certain limitations, the vanity item S.E.L.F.I.E. Camera which was introduced in the *Warlords of Draenor (WoD)* expansion serves the players to take better photos (selfies) of their characters, as the name suggests (see **Figure 13**, right). This item does not only take the representation of the photographic medium to another level, but at the same time it also maintains a link between the game world and real-life trends such as the selfie craze. The item comes with upgrades, filters, backgrounds and different facial expressions the players’ character can make while snapping the photo (perculia 2015). The in-game selfie feature increases user immersion and identification with their characters by performing the same action their real-life selves do. Although an item that works with digital technology might seem out of place in the game world at first glance, Goblin and Gnomish Engineering are canonically accepted technologies in the Warcraft

lore, through which marvels such as flying gyrocopters or choppers can be created. However immersion is inevitably reduced by the fact that selfies, much like regular screenshots taken within the game can only be accessed in the Screenshots sub-folder within the *WoW* folder on one's PC. The "selfies" and "photos" taken within the game world do not exist as photos in the Warcraft universe, only as screenshots in real life.



Figure 13: Scenic screenshot with hidden UI in the Legion expansion (2017, left), and screenshot taken with the S.E.L.F.I.E. Camera in the WoD expansion (2015, right). Sources: <https://geekgirlspwn.wordpress.com/2015/04/01/the-wow-girl-and-the-s-e-l-f-i-e/>, https://aminoapps.com/c/wow/page/blog/argus-screenshots/8Bkh_mujd4JINlIWKWWwGrmaqk32wD7, viewed 28 May 2020.

Another important intermedial reference that can be found in *World of Warcraft* are the books scattered around the world that players can read. These books are the short summaries of some of the major events in the Warcraft lore that have already occurred in the past, before the current events in *World of Warcraft*. These can go thousands of years back in the past, covering the creation of Azeroth as its denizens came to believe, mostly based on mythology rather than facts, as well as more recent events, such as the Orcish invasion or the rise of the Lich King. Interestingly these books serve a double purpose – both that of enriching the player's knowledge about the lore of the game they are currently playing, while also representing authentic in-game items in the form of "history books" that the player's avatar, who exists in the Warcraft universe, can read to enrich their own knowledge of the world they live in. Although the books are scattered around, encouraging the players to explore the world while searching for them, most of their locations make sense for books to be found at, such as

inns and dungeons, often next to book shelves, or even libraries, increasing the authenticity of their existence in the game world instead of treating them like intermedial objects with a clearly defined source from outside the game medium. The books cannot be taken; thus players have to take their time standing next to them until flipping through their pages and reading their content. While they are represented in the form of a closed book placed on some surface, upon being clicked, the interface that appears for the players resembles the interface when receiving a quest from an NPC, with only one page displayed and arrows allowing the player to switch back and forth between pages (see *Figure 14*).



Figure 14: Screenshot taken in the WotLK expansion of the Mount Hyjal and Illidan's Gift in-game book closed (left) and opened (right), found in the Barrens in the Ratchet Inn.

The background of the page resembles the texture of parchment paper, and the text is written with the *WoW*-specific font, Friz Quadrata. The text of these books was mostly inspired by, or completely taken from the *Warcraft III* manual (Wowpedia 2019f), while some of the information has been retconned to match the details presented in other media as well. Many real-life novels that were written based on the *Warcraft* lore and universe were inspired by the stories as told in these in-game books. To encourage the players to seek out the books and read them, there's an achievement they can obtain by reading all forty-two of them, "Well Read", awarding ten achievement points, although the achievement will be received even if books are just flipped through, and without the player actually taking the time to read

the text. This form of intermedial reference bears a duality that was not yet able to transcend the boundaries between mediums. On one hand the books exist in the game world as objects, being part of the video game medium, but on the other hand they are not visually held and flipped by the character of the player, instead they are part of the UI which deviates from the representation of the literary medium, but also from the element of realism and immersion.

4.3 Pop Culture References and Easter Eggs

Intermedial references also manifest themselves in *Warcraft* and *World of Warcraft* in the form of various pop culture references and Easter eggs, invoking many different forms of media within the MMORPG, or even paying homage to other video game genres. It would be futile to attempt enlisting all such references, especially considering that many of them might not have even been found yet; in order to better understand the forms and variations they appear in, and to draw conclusions based on the existing information, the references found across all three *Warcraft* games and throughout the *WoW* expansions have been counted and separated into categories as seen in **Table 4** from **Appendix B** (Wowpedia 2019a)⁴. The two major points of views these should be considered from are the source of the reference, and the resulting reference. The source is further separated into the referenced media, such as video games, cinema or literature, and within these categories, the “format” of the source is considered, which can be the title of the referenced work, a quote, the name of a character or place, etc. The resulting reference is also further broken down into two categories, that of the expansion or game they appear in, and similarly to the source format, the form in which the references manifest themselves, such as items, quotes, names of characters, quests or achievements, etc. The following conclusions are drawn based on the above mentioned categorization, and the summarized results in **Table 3** below.

4 Examples of the discussed forms of intermedial references could not be included in this paper due to their sheer amount and the paper’s restrictions in length; these can be found at the following source:
https://wow.gamepedia.com/List_of_pop_culture_references_in_Warcraft.

Source			
Source media	References per source media	Source format	References per source format
Movies	309	Quote	312
Television	184	Name	287
Music	150	Title	105
Literature	130	NPC/Creature	90
Games	129	Events/Quests	90
Other	61	Item	84
People	39	Character animation	25
Comics	22	Location	19
Sports	8	Spell/Mechanic	19
Result			
Expansion	References per expansion	Resulting format	References per resulting format
Classic	410	Name	426
TBC	185	Quote	241
WotLK	176	Item	123
Cataclysm	95	NPC/Creature	76
Warcraft III	81	Event/Quest	53
MoP	34	Character animation/ Ability/Buf	40
WoD	19	Location/Environment	31
Legion	16	Object	23
BfA	10	Mechanic	13
Warcraft II	4	Pet/Mount	6
Warcraft I	2		

Table 3.3: Summary of the intermedial reference results based on the four proposed categories.

Intermedial references were already present in all three *Warcraft* games, however their number exponentially increased with the MMORPG release. This could simply be attributed to the significantly

broader content of the MMORPG genre compared to the RTS games, however it can also be considered a signature characteristic that Blizzard established for their game. A gradual decline can be observed with each consequent expansion, which could just mean that fewer references have been found and recorded by the players within the content which has been released more recently. Regarding the mediums referenced within the video games, cinema leads by a wide margin, followed by television, reinforcing the undeniable connection between the two forms of media, and the influence of cinema on the emergence of video games. Three specifics were also observed in regards of these two media sources: most referenced works belong to the fantasy and science fiction genres, fitting well into the Warcraft universe which is an interesting combination of both. Well known titles have countless references of all forms within the game, while more obscure works are only referenced once. Finally, an abundance of references from old films and television series as far back as from the 1960s can be found in the original release of *WoW*, while more recent expansions are also inspired by newer releases, relying on the interests and knowledge of a younger audience. Music is an interesting third category to be referenced, manifesting itself in creative forms that will be discussed below. Literature follows closely, based on the sheer amount of material that can be referenced from hundreds of years of history, compared to the more recent case of cinema, for instance. The final category that is worth mentioning is of course the medium of video games, which can potentially be considered intramedial instead of intermedial, due to the source and result of the references sharing the same medium. However, if the forms that these references take are considered, it can be observed that the genre of the referenced video game is often integrated within the MMORPG genre, arguably maintaining their intermedial status.

It is interesting to consider the source and the result format of the intermedial references concurrently, as they seem to share similar traits. Names and quotes are the most popular form of reference, the latter mostly in the form of quotes from film or television, or parts of lyrics from songs, most often transformed into in-game quotes by NPCs or even the playable characters themselves. Names are mainly taken from fictional characters, locations or in some cases real life people, and transposed to NPC, quest or achievement names predominantly. The association between characters or creatures from the game and their counterparts from other media sources is often taken to the next level, through matching design, clothing, behavior and even specific actions repeating in the game. The number of references decreases, the more complex the form of the reference becomes. Names and

quotes, or in some cases the title of some works are easily transformed slightly to match the setting of the game, however it is much more work to present entire plot elements from films or literature that players participate in, or to integrate specific mechanics into the MMORPG belonging to other video game genres. It is also a common trait among the references to keep their format from one medium to the other, however it can also be observed that some references interchange their formats in often creative ways – names or titles being represented in the form of obtainable items, for instance. The most common occurrence however is the splitting of the same object of reference into multiple forms of representation, making them quite difficult to categorize into clear groups.

Many references are inspired by real life, instead of another artistic medium. The most prominent example of this would be the festivals that take place in the game and mirror those occurring in real life around the same time of the year, while maintaining the passage of time within the game world as opposed to other elements that enforce the temporary or repetitive aspect of the narrative, as discussed before (Krzywinska 2008). Many of these events have detailed history within the lore that players can explore through quests and other event-related activities while the festival lasts. Elements are taken from the real life holidays and transformed into their in-game counterparts that can assimilate into the game world without disrupting its authenticity. A full list of these festivals, their real life inspirations and their characteristics can be found in *Table 3.4* below.

Holiday	Date	Real-life Holiday	Notes
New Year	December 31 st – January 1 st	New Year’s Eve/ Day	- Denizens of Azeroth celebrate the coming of the new year with alcohol and fireworks, just like the real-life counterpart of the Holiday.
Lunar Festival	January 24 th – February 7 th (2020)	Chinese New Year	- Date of the event is adjusted each year to the real-life Chinese New Year’s date; - Fireworks, dresses, red envelopes and Omen’s legend tie this event to the real-life Holiday; - In the Warcraft Lore, the Lunar Festival is the celebration of the defeat of the Burning Legion 10.000 years ago.
Love is in the Air	February 8 th – 21 st (2020)	Valentine’s Day	- Pink decorations, chocolate, flowers and hearts tie this event to Valentine’s Day; - While the in-game event does not have a historical background within the lore, the commercial aspect of the real-life holiday is parodized by the greediness

			of Goblins, and the “love” in the air humorously turns out to be a cloud of mind-affecting chemicals released by Undead Apothecaries.
Noble-garden	April 13 th – 19 th (2020)	Easter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Date of the event is adjusted each year to the real-life Easter date; - Hidden colorful eggs, chocolate and bunnies tie this event to Easter; - In the Warcraft lore, the nobles and lords of each race hide coins, chocolate and treasures in colorfully painted eggs that are scattered around major cities for citizens to find.
Children’s Week	May 1 st – 7 th (2020)	Children’s Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During Children’s Week, players have the opportunity to look after an orphan child for a week, performing various fun activities with them; - In the Warcraft lore, Children’s Week is dedicated to the many orphan children who have lost their parents during the wars.
Midsummer Fire Festival	June 21 st – July 5 th (2020)	Midsummer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bonfires and Maypole dancing tie this event to the Midsummer celebrations from different countries and cultures; - In the Warcraft lore, the Midsummer Fire Festival focuses around bonfires to rekindle peoples’ spirits and ward off ancient evils; - Players are encouraged to try extinguishing the opposing faction’s flames, and to guard their own.
Pirates’ Day	September 19 th – 20 th	International Talk Like a Pirate Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As pirates play an important part in the Warcraft lore, it was only natural that the real-life international holiday that started as a parody would be honored by its in-game counterpart; - Players can turn into a pirate for twelve hours by sharing a drink with a pirate captain NPC who only appears once a year in Booty Bay.
Brewfest	September 20 th – October 6 th (2020)	Oktoberfest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Costumes, barrel tapping, traditional food and of course lots of brew ties this event to the Oktoberfest; - In the Warcraft lore, various breweries from different races compete during the festival with their ales; - The origin of Brewfest is told in the graphic novel <i>Pearl of Pandaria</i>.

Harvest Festival	September 29 th – October 6 th (2020)	Harvest Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Great buffets are set up in front of Ironforge and Orgrimmar for players to sample from; - In the Warcraft lore, the Horde and the Alliance honor the heroes for their sacrifices during this celebration.
Hallow's End	October 18 th – November 1 st (2020)	Halloween	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trick or Treating, candy, costumes and masks, Jack-o'-Lanterns and more abstract elements such as the Headless Horseman and the burning of the wickerman tie this event to Halloween; - In the Warcraft lore, the Humans of Lordaeron celebrated Hallow's End by burning the wickerman in preparation for the quiet, inactive winter time; - Hallow's End and the burning of the wickerman became a symbol of freedom for the Forsaken of Lordaeron and marks the day they broke free from the Lich King's dominance.
Day of the Dead	November 1 st – 3 rd (2019)	Day of the Dead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although many countries and cultures honor their departed on the Day of the Dead, elements such as sombreros, dancing and marionettes tie this event to the Mexican real life holiday; - Players can turn into skeletons for twelve hours by dancing with the NPC Catrina, and can cook event-specific food.
Pilgrim's Bounty	November 23 rd – November 30 th (2020)	Thanksgiving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooking, eating and sharing food, food fights and turkey hunting tie this event to Thanksgiving; - The event centers around cooking traditional food; - Pilgrim's Bounty is not historically established in the Warcraft lore.
Feast of Winter Veil	December 16 th , 2019 – January 2 nd , 2020	Christmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decorated pine trees and other festive decorations, reindeer, the Greench, Greatfather Winter and presents tie this event to the Christmas celebrations; - In the Warcraft lore, Dwarves consider Greatfather Winter the personification of a Titan, their creators, and hold celebrations in his honor; - These customs were further taken up by other Alliance races, while the Horde counterpart of the Holiday is more druidical through the Tauren.

Table 3.4: In-game festivals inspired by real life holidays (Wowpedia, 2019a).

As demonstrated, many intermedial references can be found both in the Warcraft series but especially in *World of Warcraft*, ranging from small hints to entire plot elements or mechanics. Intermedial references are exclusive to the medium of video games within the Warcraft franchise, most likely due to the nature of this medium being able to evoke all other forms of media one way or another, implementing them in often creative or humorous ways. While one might argue that these cross-references might disrupt the sense of the game world as internally consistent, thus reducing immersion (Krzywinska 2008), these elements can very well be considered an integral part of the lore, existing canonically in the parallel universe called Warcraft, instead of representing links to the real life world. Additionally, players might enjoy discovering hidden clues or the fact that they understand obscure associations, feeling like they're "in on the joke". The creators at Blizzard are very much paying homage to the source materials through these references, often creating cross-references between their own franchises. At the same time it needs to be pointed out that this form of intermediality once again does not contribute largely to the narrative as a whole, and only slightly to the user interaction aspect, instead serving as a vast network of widely known representatives of every media gathered and interconnected in one place, being part of what makes the Warcraft universe unique.

Chapter 5 – Transmedia Storytelling

5.1 User Identification

Transmedia storytelling is quite evident in the Warcraft lore, which takes advantage of multiple media forms to contribute to the narrative and user interaction/immersion, as established in Chapter 2, on different levels. Each media channel utilizes its own media-specific methods to reveal narrative details that the other media cannot express equally well. As Jenkins (2002) aptly pointed out,

Such works do not so much tell self-contained stories as draw upon our previously existing narrative competencies. They can paint their worlds in fairly broad outlines and count on the visitor/player to do the rest.

Individual works within the Warcraft universe mostly reveal enough that the user is able to enjoy them as standalone pieces, however their familiarity of the content of other mediums is often expected and offers a new depth of user experience. World creating becomes even more evident in the context of transmedia storytelling, the fictional world spanning across all forms of media that contribute to it.

In the MMORPG *World of Warcraft*, for instance, narrative plot is transformed, at least partially, into geographical space (Wallin 2007). Thus the fictional world of Azeroth, along with the other planets, contain many singular narratives that interact with each other or with the players. As mentioned before, players can choose to be part of one narrative or another, with certain limitations; these depend on their faction, race and class that they are playing, as well as their level progression, as certain content becomes available only after reaching a certain level or after buying the latest released expansion. Although the quest formats are often similar for each zone, only the object(s) of the quest being adapted to fit their environment, players might experience the game differently based on their choice. This is greatly influenced by their previous experience, as well; a fan of the franchise who played through all Warcraft games and is well versed in the lore presented so far will choose their character setup based on their previous knowledge and preference, while someone who is new to the Warcraft universe might have to experiment and fail a few times before they reach an enjoyable setup. It is quite common and possible however, to be introduced to the Warcraft universe through the MMORPG first, and then become interested and involved with the lore that leads to exploring other, even previously released media that offer more information and backstory to the current events of *WoW*.

Another important feature of transmedia storytelling that is evident across the Warcraft universe, but even within *World of Warcraft* itself, is the many viewpoints and character identifications through which the fans can experience the different narratives. The avatars through which they interact with the story have previously been discussed on an individual basis, but this leads to a fractured view of the lore; only when bringing all modalities together, that players get the full experience. In various instances, fans of the lore are expected to identify with known characters from the lore, either while controlling their actions in a game, reading a novel or a comic book from their perspective, or following their actions on the big screen. In other cases, they “play” as themselves, with various levels of customizability, representation and immersion; and in rare cases, their real-life roles and positions are clearly defined, placing them outside of the fictional world itself. While each version of the user’s

representation offers a distinctive experience, none of them can be called an ideal method of UX. It is through the combination of all of these roles that players switch in-between, that they reach the highest level of immersion and familiarity with the lore. Still, each players' experience will differ from one another, based on their choices and involvement with the lore across mediums. In the following, three levels of user identification will be distinguished and explored within the Warcraft universe.

The lowest level of this could be considered the lack of a clear avatar to represent the user in the Warcraft universe. This can be observed for example in the OCGG *Hearthstone*, or even its analogue predecessor, the *World of Warcraft Trading Card Game*, where the player only exists as their real life selves, who utilize the cards representing characters or creatures from the Warcraft lore, against their flesh and blood real life opponents (see **Figure 15**). Even the hero cards that the decks are built around merely serve as tools like the other cards for the player to make use of, instead of an avatar for them to identify with. The situation is slightly similar in *Warcraft I* and *II* as discussed before, where, although the player is considered an “unnamed hero” of their respective factions, their avatars are not represented in-game, placing their roles closer to a god-like figure who exists outside the boundaries of the game world. In these cases, emphasis is placed on gameplay and user interaction with the game mechanics, rather than user identification and immersion into the narrative.

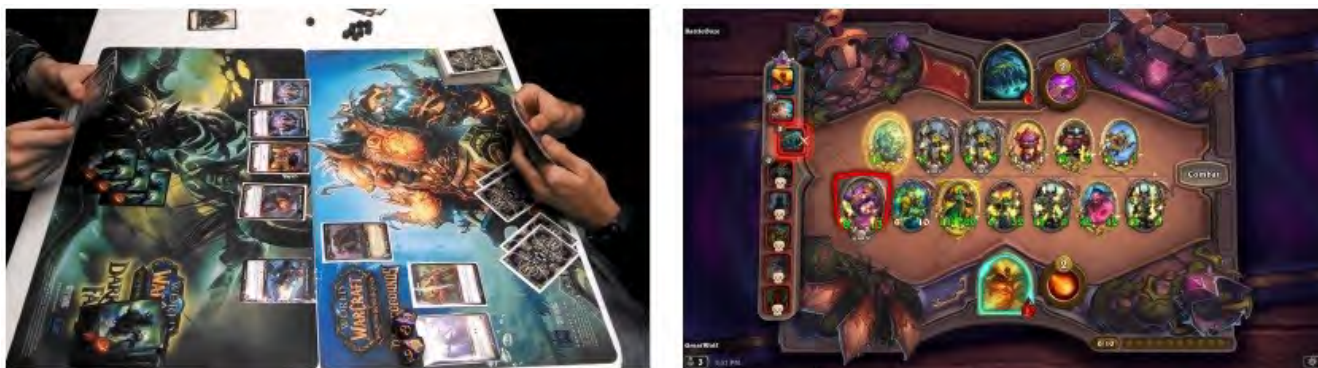


Figure 15: *World of Warcraft Trading Card Game* gameplay (left) and *Hearthstone* gameplay (right).
Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ9fD9iLv14>, <https://www.pcgamer.com/hearthstone-battlegrounds-open-beta-has-begun-with-free-packs-for-playing/>, viewed 21 May 2020.

The next level would be identifying with already existing heroes from the lore, but even this is can manifest at different extents, depending on the media channels. In *Warcraft III*, players take on the

roles of predefined heroes that are visually represented in the game, and while their stories are better explored through cinematic cut-scenes, their character development remains limited by the RTS genre (see **Figure 16**, left). In the novels, readers explore narratives often through more than one point of view, identifying with both the protagonists and antagonists of the presented story (see **Figure 16**, center). In this media channel, the visual aspect is left to the readers to fill out, using instead literary methods to describe and explore characters, settings and events. Once again, the prior knowledge of the Warcraft lore helps fill the visual gaps that novels cannot fulfill, while the text-based description serves to establish and explore character traits, emotions and motivations on a deeper level, such that in the media of RTS games cannot be expressed. The characters depicted in the media channels of comic books and mangas once again take immersion to the next level, presenting the heroes both from a visual and text-based standpoint, only lacking in the interactivity that games can offer. Yet in these forms of representation, there is more emphasis on action and visuals, rather than narrative complexity, which derives from the limited text in form of chat or thought bubbles and minimal third person narration.



Figure 16: Tyrande Whisperwind, leader of the Night Elves as depicted in the Warcraft III RTS (left), the War of the Ancients book cover (middle), and in World of Warcraft: The Comic (right). Sources: https://wow.gamepedia.com/Tyrande_Whisperwind, https://wow.gamepedia.com/War_of_the_Ancients_Triology, viewed 21 May 2020.

Comic books and mangas have a distinctive visual style, different from that of the games (see *Figure 16*, right), that they utilize to explore events occurring outside of the game narratives, or often parallel with them in the same timeline but in a different location, involving different characters. The film adaptation *Warcraft* (2016) should also be mentioned here, as a successful example of portraying credible, complex and identifiable characters through the actors who take on their roles, but once again lacking interactivity. This category focuses on better establishing NPCs, their roles and personalities within the lore, on a deeper level than the video games would normally allow. Users can also better identify with such characters and immerse themselves in the fictional world, however this also does not establish their presence in the *Warcraft* universe as individuals.

The third and final level of user identification is also the most immersive one, allowing the players to create their own avatars who act as their extensions or representatives in the fictional world. This also occurs on multiple layers, and depends on each player's preference how they want to interact with their avatars and the in-game world through them. They can focus on Player versus Player (PvP) action, which highlights the conflict part of the narrative between the two factions; choose to explore the Player versus Environment (PvE) content which is more narrative-oriented, allowing them to progress and evolve along with the unwinding story. They can act with their characters in-game as they would in real life, lending their personalities to their fictional representatives, or they can role-play as their character's race and class, eliminating any real-life elements and becoming fully immersed in the game world.

Moreover, the player's presence in the MMORPG is not reduced to a single avatar; on the same *WoW* account, they have room for up to ten characters, meaning they can have ten race, class, gender and physical appearance combinations that allow them to gain different images or personalities in the game, and relive the same story from different points of views, or experience new stories that previous characters could not (see *Figure 17*). This form of user identification allows players to project themselves within the game world, and through that, within the fictional world of *Warcraft*, giving them the feeling that they are part of it. The combination of all three levels of user identification might provide the users with the ultimate experience, however it could also have the opposite effect: due to the users identifying with so many different characters and personalities across various media channels, each emphasizing different aspects of storytelling or worldbuilding, this might prove to be distracting rather than immersive, and the users could potentially experience a fractured dissociation instead of a

well-balanced participation.



Figure 17: Character selection screen as seen in the WotLK expansion.

5.2 Narratives Across the Literary Medium

Similarly to the users' representations across different media, the narrative is also explored through the media-specific methods of each platform, the pieces of the lore complementing each other rather than repeating the same content. The best example of this would be the numerous novels written alongside the games, each fulfilling different roles but each ultimately serving to expand and enrich the already existing lore. As seen in **Table 3.5** below, novels represent the biggest category of transmedia storytelling, and the most important roles they fulfill is to expand the lore along with connecting events occurring in other media (mostly the video games). Regarding their source, it can be observed that they mostly deal with original content, or often they gather information scattered across multiple channels into one place. Four prominent categories will be explored in the following, however a common trait they share is that they tend to fulfill more than one role, as demonstrated in the table, so for this purpose only their most important characteristics will be taken into consideration.

The work	From medium	To medium	Method/Purpose
Warcraft: War of the Ancients Trilogy	Game Manuals; In-game books from WoW	Novel	Information gathering; Retcon
World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Rise of the Horde	Game Manuals	Novel	Information gathering; Retcon
Warcraft: Durotan – The Official Film Prequel	Novel	Novel (film universe)	Retcon (film universe)
World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volumes I-III	Multiple	Novel	Information gathering; Retcon
Warcraft: The Last Guardian	Video Game (RTS)	Novel	Based on; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Arthas: Rise of the Lich King	Multiple	Novel	Information gathering; Expand universe
Warcraft: Day of the Dragon	Original	Novel	Connect events
Warcraft: Of Blood and Honor	Original	Novel	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Illidan	Multiple	Novel	Information gathering; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Ashbringer	Original	Comics	Expand universe Connect events
World of Warcraft: Death Knight	Original	Manga	Expand universe
Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy	Original	Manga	Expand universe Connect events
World of Warcraft: Cycle of Hatred	Original	Novel	Connect events
World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing Duology	Original	Manga	Sequel to The Sunwell Trilogy; Expand universe
World of Warcraft	Original	Comics	Expand universe; Retcon
World of Warcraft: Night of the Dragon	Original	Novel	Connect events
World of Warcraft: Mage	Original	Manga	Expand universe
Warcraft: Legends	Multiple	Manga	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on; Remediation

World of Warcraft: The Magazine	Multiple	Magazine	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on
World of Warcraft: Stormrage	Original	Novel	Expand universe; Connect events
World of Warcraft: Dark Riders	Original	Comics	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Shaman	Original	Manga	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Pearl of Pandaria	Original	Novel	Expand universe; Connect events
World of Warcraft: The Shattering: Prelude to Cataclysm	Original	Novel	Connect events
World of Warcraft: Bloodsworn	Original	Comics	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Traveler Series	Original	Novel	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Thrall: Twilight of the Aspects	Original	Novel	Sequel to The Shattering: Prelude to Cataclysm; Connect events
World of Warcraft: Dawn of the Aspects Parts I-V	Original	Novel	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War	Original	Novel	Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Destination: Pandaria	Original	Novel	Connect events; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Vol'jin: Shadows of the Horde	Original	Novel	Connect events
World of Warcraft: Paragons	Multiple	Novel	Information gathering; Expand universe; Based on
World of Warcraft: War Crimes	Original	Novel	Connect events
World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor	Original	Comics	Connect events; Expand universe
Heroes of the Storm	Video game (MMORPG)	MOBA	Based on; Remediation
World of Warcraft: Legion	Original	Comics	Connect events; Expand universe
World of Warcraft: Before the Storm	Original	Novel	Connect events

Table 3.5: Works from the Warcraft franchise that contribute to transmedia storytelling (Wowpedia 2020a).

The smallest category entailing only two works serves to explore the ancient history of Warcraft, events occurring so long ago that they could not be included in the natural flow of the game narrative. *The War of the Ancients Trilogy* (Richard A. Knaak, 2004-2005) explores the Night Elf civilization and the first invasion of Azeroth by the Demons ten thousand years ago, which set the premises of the First War in *Warcraft I*. While the events are briefly touched upon in the *Warcraft* manuals, as well as a few in-game books from *World of Warcraft*, the novel expands the participants of these events into flesh and blood characters with complex personalities that move on to participate in the events of other media in the form of playable characters, NPCs, raid bosses, etc. These characters gain new dimensions through the literary medium of the novel, that could not be achieved through any other individual medium. Establishing the history of the lore that players interact with also increases its authenticity and helps user immersion into a more complex fictional world.

Most works that are enlisted in the second category belong to the manga, comic book or short story genres, which is quite fitting considering their characteristics. These examples serve to expand the Warcraft universe rather than focus on the main events or provide continuity to the narratives. They mostly center around minor characters that play inconsequential roles in other media, or are left out of other works altogether. The stories they tell are rather short, and rarely influence the grand scheme of things or the subsequent plot lines that chronologically follow them in other media. What they share with the rest of the lore is that they often occur during other, major events and in geographical places familiar to the fans. The short, on point format of their medium is ideal in presenting side-stories that do not require a continuation or further explanation. For instance, the manga *Death Knight* (Dan Jolley, 2009) tells the story of how the Human Thassarian became a death knight during the events of *Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne*; he does not participate in the RTS game, and players come to know him as a quest giver NPC on the Alliance gunship The Skybreaker patrolling Icecrown in the *Wrath of the Lich King* expansion. No other information or backstory is disclosed about him in the game, thus the manga reveals events that provide more depth into the life of a minor character, without reflecting on the major events of the *WotLK* expansion (see **Figure 18**).

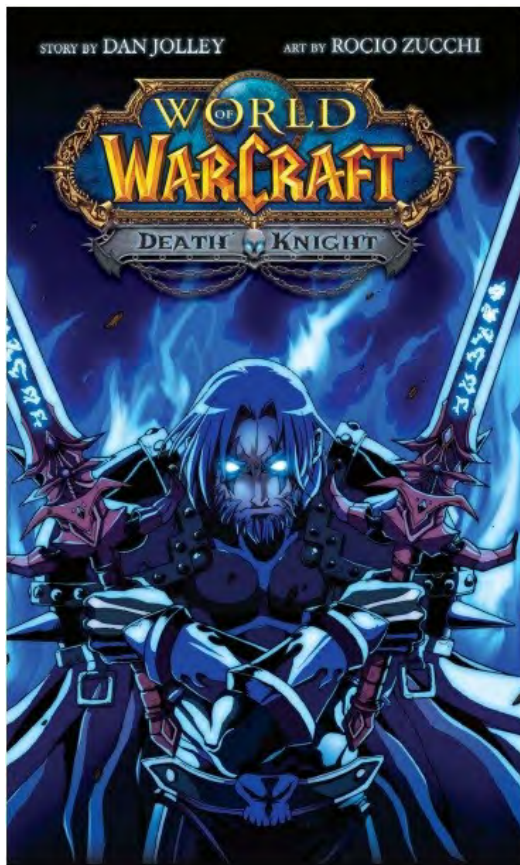


Figure 18: *Thassarian the Death Knight in the Death Knight manga (left) and in the WotLK expansion (right). Sources: [https://wow.gamepedia.com/Death_Knight_\(manga\)](https://wow.gamepedia.com/Death_Knight_(manga)), <https://wow.gamepedia.com/Thassarian>, viewed 21 May 2020.*

Examples such as the *Mage* manga or the *Traveler* novels follow the adventures of protagonists who are not present in the MMORPG at all, while they occasionally come into contact with major characters in supporting roles, and more or less establish the timeline among the other events, once again contributing to expand the Warcraft universe. This enforces the aspect of world creating and the existence of the Warcraft franchise as narrative space, establishing the fact that many individual narratives and stories take place in the geographical space called Azeroth, that may not always interact with each other nor impact the role of the player's character in the game world.

The second most important category would be the literary adaptation of events presented in other media, however it is more accurate to consider these transmedia storytelling than medial

transposition (adaptation), due to the fact that they present events in much greater detail, introduce previously unknown or unexplored characters, and deploy new points of views compared to the original media channel. They often expand beyond the mere plot of the source material, delving deeper into the events occurring before or after it; thus they make the most of their media-specific methods to present the events players previously lived through, offering them a different experience. Examples such as *Warcraft: The Last Guardian*, or *World of Warcraft: Tides of Darkness* (Aaron Rosenberg, 2007) are based on the events of the first and second wars as presented in *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans* and *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness*, respectively. These novels serve to complement the weak narrative competencies of the RTS games, as discussed before. *Arthas: Rise of the Lich King* (Christie Golden, 2009) in turn borrows information from various media sources and gathers them up into one place and one medium, focusing on the events as the protagonist, Arthas lived through them, and fills out the missing pieces of the narrative where needed. Thus while Arthas briefly appears in other novels as a child, plays an important role in *Warcraft III*, and eventually becomes the final boss of the Icecrown Citadel raid that players have to defeat in the *WotLK* expansion, his life story and gradual descent into madness, eventually turning into the Lich King is explored in detail in the novel dedicated to him. It is also interesting to consider how users contribute to playing out these narratives, first assisting in Arthas' corruption through controlling his choices in the Human campaign of *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos*; then committing the atrocities in the Undead and Scourge campaigns of *Warcraft III* and its expansion while identifying with the corrupted Arthas, leading up to him become the new Lich King; and finally putting an end to his reign in *WotLK* as playable characters, almost like correcting their previous "mistakes" and making things right again. Although these choices do not change the narrative as a whole, they help shape it through active participation. Players' actions might not influence the outcome, however they are necessary in moving the predefined narrative forward.

The final category of novels is also the most prominent one, and it serves to connect events occurring in other media, most often the storylines experienced by the players in the Warcraft series and across the *WoW* expansions. While in-game narratives attempt to maintain a fair level of continuity, certain events are harder to include in an interactive or cinematic setting. In these cases, novels act as a bridge to fill out the narrative gaps, explaining or introducing upcoming events, especially easing the transition from one expansion to the next in the MMORPG. *Cycle of Hatred* (Keith R.A. DeCandido, 2006) plays an important role in making the transition from the RTS game

series to the MMORPG. As the author himself noted (Wowpedia 2019g):

At the end of *Warcraft III* and *Warcraft 3X*, humans and orcs were allies on the continent of Kalimdor. But in *World of Warcraft*, the two sides are enemies again. My task with the novel *Cycle of Hatred*, was to help explain that change. It takes place during the four-year gap between the two games, and involves the humans on Kalimdor led by Lady Jaina Proudmoore and the orcs on the same continent led by Thrall. [...].

A series of novels followed in this fashion, as it can be viewed in detail in **Table 1** of **Appendix A**. Each novel focused on events occurring between the respective expansions, and all of them were published around the release date of the next expansion, ensuring continuity and relevancy within the franchise.

Other similar novels tell the story of NPCs in between their interactions with players through scripted scenarios; players are tasked with protecting the Troll leader Vol'jin during the assassination attempt on his life in the *MoP* expansion (*Dagger in the Dark* scenario), however he will be absent from the in-game events until his eventual return in another scripted event that players can participate in, the *Darkspear Rebellion*. The period between these two significant episodes is covered in the novel *Vol'jin: Shadows of the Horde* (Michael A. Stackpole, 2013), which depicts Vol'jin's recovery, his loss and regaining of his shadow hunter powers, as well as his eventual resolution for rebellion. In some cases, parts of the narrative present in novels overlap with the events that players participate in in-game, such as the destruction of the Human settlement Theramore which is a scripted scenario at the beginning of the *MoP* expansion (*Theramore's Fall*), however the involvement, character development and actions of the Ruler of Theramore, Jaina Proudmoore are explored in the setting of the novel *Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War* (Christie Golden, 2012) in a much more detailed manner, as well as the events leading to the scenario, along with the aftermath of the city's destruction. This category of novels is the ideal example of transmedia storytelling, perfectly filling the gaps between the main media channel of video games, while also fully utilizing the narrative and character development capabilities of the literary environment.

5.3 User-Generated Content

User-generated content plays a unique and important role in transmedia storytelling in the Warcraft universe, opening the narrative to unlimited possibilities and endlessly expanding the lore. While “fan fiction” cannot, in the broad sense be considered canon, it does not make it any less authentic for their creators and if anything, it broadens the personal narrative of their in-game characters, which is undeniably limited by the constraints of the MMORPG. Fans generate machinima (the combination of the words machine and cinema) (Marino 2004) using in-game graphics, scenes, NPCs and more importantly, their own characters to create original animated stories which fit into the Warcraft universe (see **Figure 19**, right). While this feature came from a third-party source, and Blizzard allowed the noncommercial usage of their content (Hayes 2008), the map editor introduced in *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness* and further developed in *Warcraft III* specifically encouraged the players to create their own maps and stories, being able to include cut-scenes even (see **Figure 19**, left).



Figure 19: *Warcraft III World Editor* (left) and *WoW Machinima* (right). Sources: <https://www.hiveworkshop.com/threads/a-beginners-guide-to-map-making.8204/>, <https://www.warcraftmovies.com/movieview.php?id=247454>, viewed 21 May 2020.

Yet the fan-created content is not limited to these channels only; many players get involved more deeply with the ongoing plot, which gets revealed in installments and often leads to the players coming up with their own theories about what will happen next, or filling out the mysteries and missing

elements with their own concepts. This in turn may act as a guide for Blizzard in shaping the narrative further, as they have often taken the complaints and preferences of the player base into consideration when releasing new content. In this sense, fans themselves become authors, blurring the boundaries between consumer and producer, turning narrative storytelling into endless possibilities across media. This homogenization is not limited to fans becoming world creators, however – it can be observed that many developers and creative producers who work on Warcraft products are *WoW* players or otherwise fans themselves, enjoying the results of their hard work from the other side of the spectrum, mingling with other fans in the game world, coming full circle.

Transmedia storytelling manifests itself in many different forms and across all media channels, enriching the Warcraft lore by offering various levels of narratives and user experience that the fans can interact with to expand their view of the Warcraft universe. It allows them to choose between perspectives, narratives to participate in, and different platforms with their media-specific modalities, each offering a unique experience while contributing to the whole. Unlike other forms of intermediality, transmedia storytelling results in all forms of media working together in symbiosis, each lending their distinctive attributes to the Warcraft franchise, instead of borrowing from other media, transforming one media channel into another, or combining more mediums into a new form of expression.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

As demonstrated in each chapter dedicated to a specific form of intermediality, the Warcraft franchise takes full advantage of the features these techniques offer. It has been made evident that the video games are the primary form of medium for the franchise, while the rest of the channels support and complement the games. The timeline in *Table 1* from **Appendix A** reveals that works from other media started being released following the success of the games, and have been supporting these with their content; eventually they became more regular and synced with the release of new games or expansions through their content which supports the expanding narrative presented in the video game medium. Moreover, as the in-game chronological timeline from *Table 2* from **Appendix A** suggests,

supporting works explore elements that cannot be included in the video games, such as the ancient history of the lore, or stories that belong to the film universe, in an attempt to make this more authentic, as well.

Medial transposition, although not very prevalent among the forms of intermediality present, attempts to translate the gaming experience to other media channels. This format opens the world of Warcraft to new players or users through various platforms other than the video games' digital format. Media combination takes advantage of the plurimedial aspect of video games in innovative ways to introduce players into a new fictional world, allowing user immersion, identification and interaction with the lore. Intermedial references increase familiarity with the fictional world, while enriching it and increasing its authenticity with elements from other media and details that establish worldbuilding on deeper levels. Finally, transmedia storytelling entails and connects all intermedial aspects and the different media channels in creating a wholesome experience; it furthers the narrative and character development through methods that would be limited within the constraints of video games. It offers multiple options and experiences to the users, and it allows them to actively participate not only in the fictional world of Warcraft, but also in creating the world and contributing to it in their own creative ways.

Blizzard attempts to offer participation to its players in as many events and important narrative elements as possible, however the medium of video games inevitably limits these possibilities. These limitations are further explored in other media, such as the novels, which can present even the same events (see the case of the *Theramore's Fall* scenario) from different points of view and amplified narrative and character depths. Storytelling in *World of Warcraft* has seen significant improvements in each new released expansion, its creators always experimenting with new ways for the players to interact with the world. However, another example of user immersion can be observed in the case of novels, where players are often mentioned as “heroes” or “adventurers” within the plot, referring to previous events in which they participated. This aspect enforces their overall existence in the Warcraft universe, not being limited only to the MMORPG world. Another important aspect to be mentioned is that narrative participation and user identification is constantly interrupted in the games through the game mechanics, while this is not the case in other media. Putting these pieces together is what constitutes the overall user experience.

It is, for example, generally acknowledged within computer game studies that many contemporary computer games are set in fictional worlds often expanding beyond the games themselves. But while the conventionally distinct media of the novel, the film and the computer game may all present fictional worlds, these worlds differ in significant ways that cannot and should not be reduced to idiosyncrasies of individual texts (Thon 2009).

The words of Chris Metzen (2004) on world creation in *World of Warcraft – Behind the Scenes DVD* aptly describe all forms of media through which the Warcraft franchise manifests:

We're taking the process of building a world seriously and it wasn't just churned out. It had a strong sense of continuity. We've always tried to do that with are ancillary products like the D&D line and our novels. We are kind of painstakingly anal, about making sure all the details add up, that continuity is held to be sacred. So that no matter in what medium you are experiencing Warcraft it all feels like a contiguous experience (Wowpedia 2019h).

The crossover of different works and media channels that was investigated and analyzed in this paper is merely a fragment of all works that contribute to the Warcraft franchise. Future research could take a closer look at less discussed examples such as the comic books and manga, provide a detailed analysis of the many novels, or investigate the role of the two remaining video games, the OCG *Hearthstone*, or the MOBA game *HotS*. An interesting take would be to conduct a survey among the *WoW* players and other fans of the franchise to explore how they interact with the Warcraft universe through different media channels, why they choose to interact with certain platforms but not others, how these media channels affect their user experience and immersion, and other interesting conclusions that could be reached through such a survey. Another unique demographic of players consists of those who choose to remain indefinitely enclosed within a certain time frame of the narrative, namely through the private servers that operate one of the past expansions of *WoW*. Some of these servers maintain a certain level of progression and sometimes even transition from one expansion to the next, however many of them decide to freeze progression at the end of the expansion, its players experiencing the same events, raids and environment over and over. Many players choose to play on such private servers to be able to

experience the content of their favorite expansion, which is no longer available or optimal due to the progression on retail, however it would be interesting to delve deeper into the motivations of these fans, comparing their experience to those who play on retail, and Blizzard's plans with the re-launch of *Classic WoW*, disrupting and repeating the narrative for the sake of satisfying the preference of their fans. As *Classic WoW* now runs parallel to the original progression of retail *WoW*, now approaching its eight expansion, the question emerges: what lies ahead in the future of the Warcraft universe?

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Appendices

Appendix A

Color code for mediums and genre

Written	Film	Games	Video games
Novel		Tabletop	Real-time strategy
Comics		Trading Card	MMORPG
Manga			Online trading card
Magazine			MOBA

Table 1

All pieces of work in the chronological order of their release (Wowpedia 2020a).

Year of release	Medium and genre	Title
1994	Real-time strategy	Warcraft: Orcs & Humans
1995	Real-time strategy	Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness
1996	Real-time strategy	Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal
1999	Real-time strategy	Warcraft II: Battle.net Edition
2000	Novel	Warcraft: Of Blood and Honor
2001	Novel	Warcraft: Day of the Dragon
2001	Novel	Warcraft: Lord of the Clans
2002	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos
2002	Novel	Warcraft: The Last Guardian
2003	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne
2003	Tabletop	Warcraft: The Board Game
2003	Tabletop	Warcraft: The Roleplaying Game
2004	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Well of Eternity
2004	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Demon Soul
2004	MMORPG	World of Warcraft
2005	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Dragon Hunt

2005	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Sundering
2005	Tabletop	World of Warcraft: The Board Game
2006	Novel	World of Warcraft: Cycle of Hatred
2006	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Shadows of Ice
2006	Novel	WarCraft Archive
2006-2013	Trading Card	World of Warcraft Trading Card Game
2006	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Rise of the Horde
2007	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade
2007	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Ghostlands
2007	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Tides of Darkness
2007-2009	Comics	World of Warcraft
2008	Tabletop	World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game
2008	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Beyond the Dark Portal
2008-2009	Manga	Warcraft: Legends
2008-2009	Comics	World of Warcraft: Ashbringer
2008	Tabletop	World of Warcraft Miniatures Game
2008	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King
2008	Novel	World of Warcraft: Night of the Dragon
2009	Novel	World of Warcraft: Arthas: Rise of the Lich King
2009	Manga	World of Warcraft: Death Knight
2010-2011	Magazine	World of Warcraft: The Magazine
2010	Novel	World of Warcraft: Stormrage
2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Mage
2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing – The Dragons of Outland
2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shaman
2010	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Shattering: Prelude to Cataclysm
2010	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Cataclysm
2011	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing – Nexus Point
2011	Novel	World of Warcraft: Thrall: Twilight of the Aspects
2011	Comics	Warcraft Saga Issue 1
2012	Novel	World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War

2012	Comics	World of Warcraft: Pearl of Pandaria
2012	Novel	World of Warcraft: Wolfheart
2012	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria
2012	Comics	World of Warcraft: Curse of the Worgen
2013	Comics	World of Warcraft: Dark Riders
2013	Novel	World of Warcraft: Dawn of the Aspects Parts I-V
2013	Novel	World of Warcraft: Vol'jin: Shadows of the Horde
2013	Comics	World of Warcraft: Bloodsworn
2014	Online trading card	Hearthstone
2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: Paragons
2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: War Crimes
2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: Destination: Pandaria
2014	Comics	World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor
2014	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor
2015	MOBA	Heroes of the Storm
2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 1
2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Illidan
2016	Novel	Warcraft: Durotan - The Official Film Prequel
2016	Film	Warcraft
2016	Comics	Warcraft: Bonds of Brotherhood
2016	Novel	Warcraft: The Official Novelization
2016	Comics	World of Warcraft: Legion
2016	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Legion
2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler
2017	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 2
2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler: The Spiral Path
2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 3
2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Before the Storm
2018	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Battle for Azeroth
2019	MMORPG	World of Warcraft Classic
2019	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler: The Shining Blade

2020	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: Reforged
2020	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Shadowlands

Table 2

All pieces of work in the chronological order of the Warcraft timeline (Wowpedia 2020e).

Warcraft Timeline	Year of release	Medium and genre	Title
Origins	2011	Comics	Warcraft Saga Issue 1
-10000	2004	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Well of Eternity
-10000	2004	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Demon Soul
-10000	2005	Novel	Warcraft: War of the Ancients – The Sundering
-45 to -1	2006	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Rise of the Horde
- 45 to -1 (film universe)	2016	Novel	Warcraft: Durotan - The Official Film Prequel
-20 (film universe)	2016	Comics	Warcraft: Bonds of Brotherhood
vast	2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 1
0	1994	Real-time strategy	Warcraft: Orcs & Humans
0	2002	Novel	Warcraft: The Last Guardian
0 (film universe)	2016	Film	Warcraft
0 (film universe)	2016	Novel	Warcraft: The Official Novelization
3-4	1995	Real-time strategy	Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness
3-4	2007	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Tides of Darkness
3-27	2009	Novel	World of Warcraft: Arthas: Rise of the Lich King
8	1996	Real-time strategy	Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal
8	2008	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Chronicles of War – Beyond the Dark Portal
10	2001	Novel	Warcraft: Day of the Dragon
15-18	2000	Novel	Warcraft: Of Blood and Honor
15-18	2001	Novel	Warcraft: Lord of the Clans
various	2006	Novel	WarCraft Archive
vast	2017	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 2

20	2002	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos
20-22	2020	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: Reforged (re-release)
20-26	2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Illidan
20	2008-2009	Comics	World of Warcraft: Ashbringer
20	2009	Manga	World of Warcraft: Death Knight
22	2003	Real-time strategy	Warcraft III: The Frozen Throne
20-22	2003	Tabletop	Warcraft: The Board Game
?	2003	Tabletop	Warcraft: The Roleplaying Game
23	2005	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Dragon Hunt
23	2006	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Shadows of Ice
23	2007	Manga	Warcraft: The Sunwell Trilogy – Ghostlands
24	2006	Novel	World of Warcraft: Cycle of Hatred
25	2004	MMORPG	World of Warcraft
25	2019	MMORPG	World of Warcraft Classic (re-release)
?	2005	Tabletop	World of Warcraft: The Board Game
?	2006-2013	Trading Card	World of Warcraft Trading Card Game
?	2008	Tabletop	World of Warcraft: The Adventure Game
26	2007	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade
26	2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing – The Dragons of Outland
26	2011	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shadow Wing – Nexus Point
26-27	2007-2009	Comics	World of Warcraft
26/27	2008	Novel	World of Warcraft: Night of the Dragon
27	2008	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King
27	2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Mage
various	2008-2009	Manga	Warcraft: Legends
?	2008	Tabletop	World of Warcraft Miniatures Game
27-28	2010-2011	Magazine	World of Warcraft: The Magazine
27	2010	Novel	World of Warcraft: Stormrage
27	2013	Comics	World of Warcraft: Dark Riders
27	2010	Manga	World of Warcraft: Shaman

27	2012	Comics	World of Warcraft: Pearl of Pandaria
28	2010	Novel	World of Warcraft: The Shattering: Prelude to Cataclysm
28	2010	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Cataclysm
28	2013	Comics	World of Warcraft: Bloodsworn
?-28	2012	Comics	World of Warcraft: Curse of the Worgen
28	2012	Novel	World of Warcraft: Wolfheart
28/29	2016	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler
28/29	2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler: The Spiral Path
28/29	2019	Novel	World of Warcraft: Traveler: The Shining Blade
28	2011	Novel	World of Warcraft: Thrall: Twilight of the Aspects
29/30	2013	Novel	World of Warcraft: Dawn of the Aspects Parts I-V
29/30	2012	Novel	World of Warcraft: Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War
vast	2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Chronicle Volume 3
?-30	2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: Destination: Pandaria
30	2012	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria
30	2013	Novel	World of Warcraft: Vol'jin: Shadows of the Horde
?	2014	Online trading card	Hearthstone
various	2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: Paragons
30/31	2014	Novel	World of Warcraft: War Crimes
31	2014	Comics	World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor
31/ -2 (alternate)	2014	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Warlords of Draenor
?	2015	MOBA	Heroes of the Storm
32	2016	Comics	World of Warcraft: Legion
32	2016	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Legion
33	2018	Novel	World of Warcraft: Before the Storm
33	2018	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Battle for Azeroth
34?	2020	MMORPG	World of Warcraft: Shadowlands

Appendix B

Please see the attached spreadsheet

TCD_IDM_Msc-Dissertation_Eszter-Barabas_19326791_31-05-2020_Appendix-B_Table-4
for **Table 4** from **Appendix B**.