THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

USAGE OF HUMOR AS AN ELEMENT OF GAME DESIGN: "ISTANBUL EFSANELERI: LALE SAVASCILARI" AS A CASE STUDY

Master's Thesis

ORHAN EFE ÖZENÇ

İSTANBUL, 2017

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"Man is free while he is alive..."
"Until death, you shall be alive for the time being"

Orhan Efe Özenç

İstanbul, 2017

ABSTRACT

THE USAGE OF HUMOR AS AN ELEMENT OF GAME DESIGN: "ISTANBUL EFSANELERI: LALE SAVASCILARI" AS A CASE STUDY

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Humor is eligible for being utilized both as a supplementary unit and a general tone determining element in games. This study examines humor as a design element in video games. Within this scope, the humor concept is held in relationship with video games and analyzed via selected sample games in connection with formal and dramatic elements related with game design, besides the theoretical elements exclusive for game course. The humor types and six fundamental functions of humor that eases the user experience are defined in such chosen samples and a framework in which humor is evaluated as an element of game design is executed. As one of the prominent examples of digital games produced and developed in Turkey, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları (1994, Siliconworx) is evaluated within this framework and the role of humor as an element of game design has been discussed accordingly, with several results are set forth regarding the contribution of humor to the gaming experience. The said six fundamental functions of humor and the humor types are listed in the appendix as a table to serve as a template.

.

Keywords: Humor, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları, game design, world building

ÖZET

MİZAHIN OYUN TASARIMINDA BİR UNSUR OLARAK KULLAMI: VAKA İNCELEMESİ OLARAK "İSTANBUL EFSANELERİ: LALE SAVAŞÇILARI"

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Mizah, oyunlarda hem bir tamamlayıcı birim hem de genel üslup belirleyici unsur olarak kullanılmaya elverişlidir. Bu çalışma mizahı video oyunlarda bir tasarım unsuru olarak incelemektedir. Bu kapsamda, mizah kavramı, video oyunları ile ilişkili olarak ele alınmış, oyun alanına özgü kavramsal unsurların yanı sıra, oyun tasarımına ilişkin formel ve dramatik öğelerle bağlantılı olarak seçili örnekler üzerinden incelenmiştir. Mizah türleri ve mizahın oyuncu deneyimini kolaylaştıran altı temel işlevi seçili örneklerde tanımlanmış, mizahın oyun tasarım unsuru olarak değerlendirildiği bir çerçeve ortaya konulmuştur. Türkiye'de üretilen dijital oyunların önemli örneklerinden biri olarak İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları (1994, Siliconworx) oyunu bu çerçeve içerisinde değerlendirilmiş ve bir tasarım öğesi olarak mizahın video oyunlardaki rolü tartışılmış, mizahın oyun deneyimine katkısına ilişkin sonuçlar ortaya konulmuştur. Bahsi geçen mizahın altı temel işlevi ve seçili oyunlarda örneklenen mizah türleri, şablon amaçlı bir tablo olarak ekte ayrıca listelenmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mizah, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları, oyun tasarımı, dünya yaratımı

CONTENTS

FIGURES.....ix

ABBREVIATIONS.....xvi

1. INTRODUCTION.....1

2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....7

2.1 HUMOR.....7

2.1.1 Magic Circle.....7

2.1.2 Definition of Humor.....10

2.1.2.1 Humor and fun.....11

2.1.2.2 Language and culture in humor.....12

2.1.3 Humor in Video Games.....15

2.1.3.1 Effects of humor on the gamers.....16

2.1.3.2 Effects of humor on the games.....18

2.2 WORLD-BUILDING AND GAME DESIGN.....19

2.2.1 Game Design.....20

2.2.1.1 Humor as a tone in game design.....20

2.2.1.2 Humor in the formal elements of game design.....22

2.2.1.2.1 *Player – magic circle loop*.....23

2.2.1.2.2 *Rules, objectives and procedures*.....24

2.2.1.2.3 *Boundaries and resources*.....26

2.2.1.2.4 *Conflict and outcome*.....28

2.2.2 World-Building.....32

2.2.2.1 Humor in the dramatic elements of game design.....34

2.2.2.1.1 *Story, setting and narration*.....34

2.2.2.1.2 *Dialogues*.....38

2.2.2.1.3 *Characters and dramatic act*.....40

2.2.2.2 Aesthetics.....42

2.3 CONCLUSION.....43

3. DATA AND METHOD.....44

3.1 TYPES OF HUMOR USED IN VIDEO GAMES.....44

3.1.1 Raunchy Humor and Misunderstanding: "Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!".....45
3.1.2 Sarcasm, Cheesy Humor, Puns and Punchline: "Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition".....48
3.1.3 Cliché and Mimicry: "Freedom Force".....54
3.1.4 Satire and Surprise Humor: "Grim Fandango Remastered"...58
3.1.5 Sardonic, Slapstick, Caricature and Invective Humor: "South Park: The Stick of Truth".....62
3.1.6 Violent Humor: "Worms 2".....69
3.2 CONCLUSION.....72
4. FINDINGS – CASE STUDY FOR THE USAGE OF HUMOR AS AN ELEMENT OF GAME DESIGN: "İSTANBUL EFSANELERİ: LALE SAVAŞÇILARI".....75
4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE GAME.....75
4.2 GAME DESIGN AND WORLD-BUILDING IN İELS.....77
4.2.1 General Tone of İELS.....77
4.2.2 Culture and Language in İELS.....82
4.2.2.1 References to local culture.....82
4.2.2.2 References to foreign culture.....87
4.2.2.3 Language in İELS.....91
4.2.3 Formal Elements of İELS.....92
4.2.3.1 Game mechanics.....93
4.2.3.1.1 *Rules*.....93
4.2.3.1.2 *Magical combat system*.....95
4.2.3.1.3 *Weaponry and useful items*.....98
4.2.3.2 Objectives and procedures.....99
4.2.3.3 Boundaries.....104
4.2.3.4 Resources.....106
4.2.3.5 Conflict and outcome.....107
4.2.4 Dramatic Elements of İELS.....109
4.2.4.1 World-building.....109
4.2.4.2 Setting, storyline and narration of İELS.....111

4.2.4.2.1 *Setting*.....112
4.2.4.2.2 *Storyline*.....112
4.2.4.2.3 *Narration*.....119
4.2.4.3 Dialogues.....121
4.2.4.4 Characters.....125
4.2.4.5 Dramatic act.....128
4.2.4.6 Aesthetics.....130
4.3 TYPES OF HUMOR IN İELS.....132
4.3.1 Punchline.....132
4.3.2 Raunchy Humor.....134
4.3.3 Satire.....136
4.3.4 Sarcasm.....136
4.3.5 Sardonic Humor.....137
4.3.6 Invective Humor.....138
4.3.7 Slapstick Humor.....139
4.3.8 Violent Humor.....139
4.3.9 Cheesy Humor.....140
4.3.10 Puns.....141
4.3.11 Cliché Humor.....141
4.3.12 Caricature Humor.....142
4.3.13 Mimicry.....143
4.3.14 Misunderstanding Humor.....144
4.3.15 Surprise Humor.....144
4.4 CONCLUSION.....146
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....147
5.1 DISCUSSION OF DATA.....147
5.2 CONCLUSION.....150
REFERENCES.....152
APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Humor Characteristics of a Game.....164
CURRICULUM VITAE.....165

FIGURES

Figure 2.1: A scheme of Huizinga's Magic Circle.....8
Figure 2.2: "Mouthwash? We don't need no stinking mouthwash!" phrase in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition.....14
Figure 2.3: The utilization of the famous quote from The Treasure Island of the Sierra Madre film in Leisure Suit Larry 6.....14
Figure 2.4: Icewind Dale II presents the undead creatures with their form designated in Dungeons and Dragons universe of RPG genre, and makes players fight against them with realistic, lethal weaponry.....21
Figure 2.5: South Park: The Stick of Truth adopts the Dungeons and Dragons universe as a humorous RGP game by converting the undead creatures to Nazi Zombies and prefers a less-lethal, caricaturized weaponry in battles.....22
Figure 2.6: Where in the games that are devoid of a humorous nature, like Quake, violence can be an issue for criticism, Worms series abolish that violence with humor and lightens the effects of battle.....24
Figure 2.7: The original puzzle chart scheme of Grim Fandango made by the designers in game design phase. Branches and 'bushiness' can be seen clearly.....26
Figure 2.8: The arrival of parents to the players that are lost in the Lost Woods.....27
Figure 2.9: The social media friends list implemented in the South Park: The Stick of Truth – reaching a certain number of friends unlocks a slot for new abilities to the player.....28
Figure 2.10: The Game Flow Chart by Csikszentmihalyi.....29
Figure 2.11: The infamous Demolition Man mission from GTA Vice City.....30
Figure 2.12: The difficulty of performing all kinds of farts duly and accurately and in a row is immense in the Canada chapter of South Park: The Stick of Truth.....31
Figure 2.13: The end game dialogues, where Guybrush and his brother are in their childhood.....32

Figure 2.14: The Dinky Island phone-call incident, with hosting many humorous dialogues in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge.....37
Figure 2.15: The dead protagonist Manny Calavera is disguising as the Grim Reaper when welcoming new clients in Grim Fandango.....38
Figure 2.16: Larry comes onto a beautiful woman in a raunchy-humorous manner in Leisure Suit Larry 6.....39
Figure 2.17: Everyone can act against the rules of the Stick's owner without getting punished, even though it seems impossible in South Park: The Stick of Truth.....41
Figure 2.18: One of the NPCs in the Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge complains on his over-hearing of the story about Guybrush's victory over LeChuck in the previous game, while Guybrush is also present in the scene.....41
Figure 2.19: A bombing incident in Airline Tycoon doesn't seem so horrifying with such cartoonish graphics.....43
Figure 3.1: Larry never misses the opportunity of striking up a sexual conversation.....46
Figure 3.2: None of the women in the game cares about saying Larry's name correctly.....46
Figure 3.3: The misunderstanding humor with referencing David Letterman.....47
Figure 3.4: The misunderstanding humor with referencing David Letterman.....47
Figure 3.5: The humorous cartoonish graphics smoothed the raunchy humor in the game.....47
Figure 3.6: Larry always gets hurt in pursuit of sex.....48
Figure 3.7: Pirates – the Men of Low Moral Fiber.....51
Figure 3.8: The harsh, yet pretty humorous answer of the pirates: another example for sarcasm.....51
Figure 3.9: The 'pretty please?' sequence with the pirates, an example for cheesy humor.....52
Figure 3.10: The laundering joke of Mad Marty is an example of puns in the game.....53

Figure 3.11: The answer creates a punchline with a sarcastic implication in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition.....53
Figure 3.12: The oath of Minuteman, no more than a second after his transformation to a superhero.....56
Figure 3.13: The very first issue of Freedom Force comic book, 2005.....56
Figure 3.14: The resemblance of Captain America and Minuteman.....57
Figure 3.15: A caricature criticizes the dependency of the youth on technological devices instead of old-school toys with a satiric manner.....58
Figure 3.16: The definition of 'good life' and class distinction in Grim Fandango..59
Figure 3.17: The annual family photo of the travel agency under the name of 'Grim Fandango Cast' refers to the tradition of taking collective photos of company employees in big companies.....60
Figure 3.18: A sample of surprise humor: Fall of Glottis.....61
Figure 3.19: The 'Ginger' incident in the game.....65
Figure 3.20: The art of 'farting' in the game, during a battle.....66
Figure 3.21: The tutor of the farting move harshly makes invective fun of the victim of the fart in tutorial phase.....67
Figure 3.22: On the right side, Special Agents can be seen in their suffering from burn damage, using extensive body language.....68
Figure 3.23: The caricaturized personality of Al Gore, including his global warming obsession and giving himself a high credit for being 'Super Cereal'.....68
Figure 3.24: The collective arsenal of Worms 2 and Worms Armageddon.....71
Figure 3.25: The famous Kamikaze attack in Worms 2, referencing to the Japanese suicidal kamikaze culture by all the means and aspects.....72
Figure 4.1: Cover image of the Amiga version of İELS.....76
Figure 4.2: Cover image of the PC version of İELS.....76
Figure 4.3: The description of Officer class from the game manual.....80
Figure 4.4: Facing Dragon Celal in Topkapı Palace gates.....81
Figure 4.5: Enraged Gardeners attack the player with a funny speech.....81
Figure 4.6: Silikon Baba's related speech of anti-heroism.....83
Figure 4.7: "En Kahraman Rıdvan" Comic Book.....85
Figure 4.8: Rıdvan in the İELS world.....85

Figure 4.9: Manny Calavera's (Grim Fandango) portrait can be seen in the upper left side of the screen, nearby the stairs of the Phatt Island's Mayor's Mansion in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition.....85
Figure 4.10: Gerekli Şeyler shop in the game is a reference to the namesake shop in the real İstanbul.....86
Figure 4.11: The last speech of Barbaros that contains a reference to Turkish National Anthem.....86
Figure 4.12: The Phantom of the Otopark.....87
Figure 4.13: Lord Soth's cameo appearance.....88
Figure 4.14: The adaptation of King Arthur's Excalibur Sword in İELS, 'Kılıçartıbeş'.....88
Figure 4.15: The Siliconian race in character creation/part build phase as a metaphor of Heavy Metal fan in real world.....89
Figure 4.16: Yobaz Bolonez (top left), Ograten (top right), Beşamel (bottom left) and Napoliten (bottom right), respectively.....90
Figure 4.17: The speech regarding the 'Even More Than Carpenter' book.....90
Figure 4.18: Guybrush can give 221B Baker Street as his residence address, which is also the address of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective novel character Sherlock Holmes.....91
Figure 4.19: Battle screen of İELS (left) and gameplay screen of İELS (right).....93
Figure 4.20: The character creation screen in İELS.....94
Figure 4.21: A fictional advertisement of a Swear and Apothegm shop in Beyazıt as an NPC, inserted in the game manual of İELS. This image is another sign of comedic tone of İELS.....96
Figure 4.22: A drunkard Swear and Apothegm tutor in Mecidiyeköy. All types of tutors present the player a randomized pool of Swears and Apothegms each time.....97
Figure 4.23: The Weapons and Equipment section from game manual.....99
Figure 4.24: The other side of the Medallion.....100
Figure 4.25: The complaint against the shoe.....101
Figure 4.26: The aftermath of such complaint.....101
Figure 4.27: Oath of being a "Kımıl Zararlısı".....101

Figure 4.28: Aftermath of Barbie's speech of despair and underrate.....102
Figure 4.29: The old mad-man and the images of the producers as they meddle in.....103
Figure 4.30: The old mad-man and the images of the producers as they meddle in.....103
Figure 4.31: Havalı Mehtap's appearance.....103
Figure 4.32: The reaction of party member after being served by Havalı Mehtap in exchange for a 'reasonable' price.....104
Figure 4.33: The famous 'Çanak Çömlek Patlar' nightmare in Eminönü district...105
Figure 4.34: The Yimmekçi NPC in İELS, where the player can get fed.....107
Figure 4.35: The final words before the final battle of the game; 'nicely' telling Şeyh Cehalet to shut up.....108
Figure 4.36: The map of İstanbul in İELS, with the location of each district is marked with names and red circles.....110
Figure 4.37: Şeyh Cehalet (Sheikh Ignoramus) is fleeing from the scene.....114
Figure 4.38: The wrath of Enraged Students, a.k.a Dellenmiş Öğrenciler.....115
Figure 4.39: The moment where Kılıçartıbeş is retrieved.....117
Figure 4.40: When Şeyh Cehalet is over.....118
Figure 4.41: When Şeyh Cehalet is over.....118
Figure 4.42: Cellars of Beşiktaş Municipality Building.....119
Figure 4.43: The famous note full of 'good' advices.....120
Figure 4.44: Two of the Freedom Force hero squad with different backgrounds promise to fight for good.....120
Figure 4.45: Two of the Freedom Force hero squad with different backgrounds promise to fight for good.....120
Figure 4.46: It's all ridiculous in Ortaköy.....122
Figure 4.47: The fraud attempt shall be successful.....122
Figure 4.48: The unholy encounter with the ghosts of Ortaköy.....122
Figure 4.49: The unholy encounter with the ghosts of Ortaköy.....122
Figure 4.50: Bad words to the Mayor.....124
Figure 4.51: Eminönü welcomes the player with open arms.....124

Figure 4.52: The game mocks the sociological and cultural background of the races by referring to the lexical meaning of their names.....126
Figure 4.53: Figure 4.53 Male İrospa can be seen on the left, where the utilization of different gender's avatar can be seen on the right, within the red circles respectively.....127
Figure 4.54: Each image trilogy from left to right reflects the dim-wittedness of Tulip Warriors.....128
Figure 4.55: A Napoliten Yobaz can understand the difference between a Karafatma and the player.....128
Figure 4.56: The portrayal of Evliya Cevdet – not the exact image of Evliya notion in local culture.....129
Figure 4.57: The UI in Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession game (1994), similar to the UI in İELS.....130
Figure 4.58: Rector Vector, the rector of İstanbul University, with comedic and cartoonish artwork.....131
Figure 4.59: The motto and premise of İELS.....133
Figure 4.60: The 1992 movie Lawnmower Man, also mentioned in İELS for humorous purposes.....135
Figure 4.61: The reference to a real movie.....135
Figure 4.62: The love of a man and his lawnmower.....135
Figure 4.63: Celal is portrayed as a 'Quicksilver' creature when compared to the municipal transportation system in İstanbul.....136
Figure 4.64: The sarcastic self-criticism of the game.....137
Figure 4.65: The Leş Kargası race, portrayed as servants of Sheikh Ignoramus, and thus, ignorance.....138
Figure 4.66: Balgam (phlegm) race is an example of invective humor in the game.....138
Figure 4.67: A party member hits his head and cries out loud (left) and Vesile uses comedic words for guiding the party's movement (right) for creating an invective humor.....139

Figure 4.68: Player does not buy the threats of Celal and insults him in order to trigger a battle, and thus, a comedic violence, all by his/her own actions.....140
Figure 4.69: The ‘Come to your papa’s lap!’ speech of Haşmet Maap boss character as a sample of cheesy humor.....141
Figure 4.70: From left to right, Kilerik (Cleric), Faytır (Fighter) and Meycik Yuzır (Magic User) races.....142
Figure 4.71: The portrayal of ill-tempered exam supervisor in İELS.....143
Figure 4.72: The King of the Birds and the shift of player’s party to lawful goodness.....144

ABBREVIATIONS

Etc.	:	Etcetra
İELS	:	İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları
i.e	:	That is
p.	:	Page
pp	:	Pages (plural of p.)
RPG	:	Role-playing Game

1. INTRODUCTION

Humor is a wide and efficient concept in not only the actual world, but also for the gaming world itself. Main goal of the existence and reason of being played of any game is shaped and focused around an intention of giving fun and entertainment to the audience, and creating a player experience accordingly. The possible increase in the number of audience is a targeted beneficial factor for every game, and pursuant to such target, every element that can advance the narrative immersion[1], iterative playability or player experience of a game shall be welcomed by the game design process. In any media other than the games, the users are expected to be receptive and passive audiences; games however give the opportunity of participating in the flow of the event and modifying, evolving and (sometimes) even altering the content given to them to the audience, the gamers, with its interactive nature (Vorderer, Steen & Chan, 2006 p.3). As per the interactive nature of the games (*'game' term shall be referring to video games hereinafter for the purposes of this thesis*) differed the game medium from other non-interactive media (such as movies, radio, books, etc.), a fun-boosting element named 'humor' had also become an important practice in games for reaching the audience and including their participation in the creation, perception or reflection of humor to be emerged or pre-given in the games.

As a brief history (Dillon, 2011 pp.99-148), throughout the breakthrough of the gaming business, more than several games are produced with shining humorous structures; where some of them were primarily comedic games (*the very early editions of which are the Monkey Island series, Dragon's Lair, Maniac Mansion, Day of the Tentacle, Full Throttle and King's Quest, with adding Grim Fandango, Portal and Sam & Max*

[1] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/130255/book_excerpt_and_review__game_.php?print=1 [accessed 1 February 2017]

series as later installments) that have used humor as a tone of game design, and others had distributed humor to several elements of game design in a large variety in order to boost the fun in gameplay (*like the initiator of humor in video games, the Pac-Man; also Mario franchise, Team Fortress 2, Bully, Cannon Fodder, The Sims series, Fallout series, Hooligans: Storm over Europe, Serious Sam, Black & White, Octodad, Psychonauts, and the initial first-person shooter game to implement humor, Duke Nukem*) (Gonzalez, 2004). All of such games had shared a common intention of procuring a communication between their narration and the player experience with conveying the messages (about any concept such as politics, absurdity, art, etc.) and outcome of the game via humor (Dormann and Biddle, 2009). Therefore, humor had gained a seat in innovative implementation of video game narration and gameplay.

Furthermore, as the 'joy' had spread to the game types other than adventure genre, the designers had generated another area of use for humor and lightened the weight of explicit content via humor in the games (Mackey, 2009)[2], such as the Grand Theft Auto series or morbid Mortal Kombat series (which is primarily infamous with its triggering effect on the creation of *ESRB* and *PEGI* criteria). Moreover, as done in İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları (*Legends of İstanbul: Tulip Warriors*) game, humor became a major tool for accomplishing all of such mentioned objectives together, as well as transcribing the humor hidden in the local cultural feats of a country and its language to the general specialties of a game's genre as an adaptation manner.

Humor in games, and especially in video games (which is also the subject of this thesis), therefore is an important element to be held and handled with care with proper analysis in details, as it can become a deliberate choice of design element for any game to implement and improve, in the mission of reaching and attracting more audience; increasing player experience; immersing the audience into the game's imaginary world by establishing a better communication between the gamers and the game elements (Dormann and Biddle, 2009).; make an irrationality, a nonsense or inconsistency deem as acceptable on behalf of the gamers; as well as mitigating any explicit content in the

[2] Mackey, B., 2009. No Laughing Matter: Making Humor Work in Games [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/132586/no_laughing_matter_making_humor_.php [accessed 10 January 2017]

games. Accordingly, for such purpose, humor also can be either a major part of a game's design (like a game's tone or mood decider), or a minor contributor (like a side-kick factor) of fun in a game; which gives many possibilities to the designers for utilizing humor in video games.

Nowadays, the enhanced gaming industry is deviating from the reason of games for emerging in human lives, and bringing the definition of games to a point where 'fun' is not deemed an essential point anymore and replaced with 'amusement' sense in general (Juul, 2003 pp.30-45), which gives humor the chance to be not a factor that makes the gamers laugh or smile, but bemuse them with entertainment and eases the implementation of humor in games (Grönroos, 2013 p.9). Additionally, apart from the general theory of fun, according to the journalism, humor itself, which also aims the amusement and entertainment of the audience and thus generally overlaps with the aim of the games, is not congruently recognized as a fixed, main or major, formal or dramatic element of game design methodology and is still underestimated as a factor of entertainment for game media. Hence, this thesis has an aim to show and examine the function of humor upon games, and its contribution to achieve iterative attention on game and a more qualified gaming experience as a feedback in return.

Pursuant to such aim, the research question of this thesis shall be as following: *"With its multi-dimensional function on games, can humor constitute a key feature and an element of game design?"* Academically, there are many works done including, involving and regarding humor as a reference in several other subjects (primarily within the concept of fun); however, conducting a research on humor in the video games (apart from the general 'fun' itself) as a concept or subject on its own, independently, has yet to become popular and weighty. Several other thesis works (such as Grönroos, 2013) have studied the humor in video games and humor and genre relationship, but the idea of considering humor as an element of game design is still remaining as uncharted territory. This thesis has an intention to initiate the gravity of humor and ignite the torch of considering humor as a major and 'serious' element of treatment in video games, without neglecting it or considering it as an exclusive subject for comedies that are not relevant to games, or pure comedic games.

Another purpose of this thesis has its regards to the Turkish gaming history, which had several roots going back to the 1980s. Turkish gaming industry is somehow developing annually, but it is failed to become a pioneer keystone in local economy or universal gaming business as of date. Accordingly, the case study of this thesis, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları *(Legends of İstanbul: Tulip Warriors, Siliconworx, 1994*) game is one of the earliest Turkish game editions ever produced, and the very first piece of Turkish digital RPG gaming genre, but it was unable to bring equivalent accolades due to several factors, including but not limited to the economical and demographic conditions of Turkey and rudimentary presence of its gaming sector at that time. As another and more important fact, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları (shall be referred as 'İELS' hereinafter) was also the first installment of purely comedic game design in Turkish gaming industry and involved humor in every aspect and element of its game design, using humor as a tool and element of setting up a better communication among the game mechanics and the players, with including deep political and social criticism in its gameplay and narration. Therefore, this case study has a full capacity of examining the methods of humor utilization in game design and as the importance of archiving and record keeping grows in this communication and informatics age, it is crucial to add this game to the Turkish gaming chronicles duly, and this thesis has a goal of also covering up that deficiency.

The flow of this thesis can be collected in three main categories: a) examining the literature regarding humor, its definition and general types, as well as its usage and importance in video games, b) analysis and review of several games that match the categories of humor and c) studying İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları game as a case of humorous games within these scopes, and determining its method of utilizing humor by comparing and contrasting its features with the said prominent humorous games and humor categories examined priorly in a wide spectrum.

As per such methods, Literature Review shall be a chapter for explaining and defining humor and its types. There, the usage of humor in digital games, within the frame of world-building in game design ('world-building' and its elements shall be referred also

briefly) shall also be examined. Accordingly, in order to acknowledge that humor is a catalyst element of fun in digital games, humor shall be upheld from the perspective of being used in narration, tone, dialogues, storyline, gameplay, visuals, features and several other elements in the artificial world of a game, and as a communication tool between the game elements and the player in the words of gameplay experience, together with the reasoning behind such utilization, by also giving examples of how humor is used in that game with in-game screenshots or similar images.

Thirdly, within the Data and Methods chapter, there shall be several samples of games that overlap with the categories of humor with their study and analysis in a qualitative method, and this shall serve the purpose of determining the different humor types used in video games as well. The in-game screenshots per each game again shall constitute the majority of figures to be used in this chapter, and the PEGI and ESRB criterion shall also be utilized for several games in order to explain the effect of humor to the game design. Such arguments shall be cumulated in order to prove the six stipulated functions of humor in game design and gameplay; which are basically a) creating a more immersive magic circle for the players, b) setting up a better communication for the game mechanics to the players for easing and smoothing their adaptation to gameplay, c) serve for the comedic tone of the game, if any, and hence avoid the risk of unexplored emergent or hidden humor in gameplay, d) mitigate the explicit content, such as violence and maturity, if any; e) bring a common sense to all the ridiculous and surreal tools used in narration or mechanics, and f) enhance the audience demographics by addressing local or foreign/universal cultural features and increase the game's appeal accordingly. All of such functions will nevertheless end totally in an advanced gaming experience for the players, and eventually reflect to the location of the game in gaming history.

As a last chapter before conclusion, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları and its elements and items shall be explained in detail. By doing so, the technique and procedure of İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları in adapting, adopting and assimilating the peaks and humor types of those sample 'humorous' and/or 'comedic' games within the claimed functions and game design elements shall be examined, and the cultural

affections of the humor to those peaks in its constructed game world shall also be explained.

As a Discussion and Conclusion chapter, all of the determinations in this thesis shall annotate İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları game in both domestic and international gaming history with its method of utilizing humor, and the importance of humor in game design conceptuality as an element, together with the stipulated functions of it in the gameplay experience, shall be displayed and discussed in details. The framework of such qualitative research method shall be further given as a an appendix in Appendix 1.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HUMOR

Humans naturally and instinctually tend to play all kinds of games throughout their lifespan, as if it was a primary formative element (Huizinga, 1949 p.1). In conjunction with this, every game, regardless of its platform (analog, digital, board, card, etc.), or genre (role playing, strategy, adventure, action, etc.) aims, or used to aim (Juul, 2003 pp.30-45), a single and simple target by its essence and reason for existence: being a source of fun and enjoyment for the players (Vorderer & Bryant, 2009 p.3, Gee, 2007 p.43, Huizinga, 1949 p.3). As per such aim and sensual motive (Bostan, 2009), a human being desires to play a game for satisfying its need of joy and fun, and voluntarily sinks into the imaginary, exponential world of that game for neglecting the truth of the real world, in order to become derived of any belonging and thought that is possessed in the real world, within the 'magic circle' of that game for an uncertain, yet limited, time period[3] (Vorderer & Bryant, 2009 p.2, Huizinga, 1949 p.10).

2.1.1 Magic Circle

As described by Adams and Rollings (2009, p.8), magic circle idea was just a specific term of Huizinga in his book *Homo Ludens,* but it became a generic name and concept for describing the illusion of an artificial world which was created by a game by its rules and atmosphere, where the players give consent to go in, participate and play the game, obey its rules and act accordingly altogether.[4] According to Huizinga (1949, p.77), the imaginary magic circle is quite like a real physical playground "where ... differences ... are temporarily abolished". Also, Huizinga (1949, p.20) states that even a sheer play becomes like a sacred purpose within the space of such magic circle. Similar

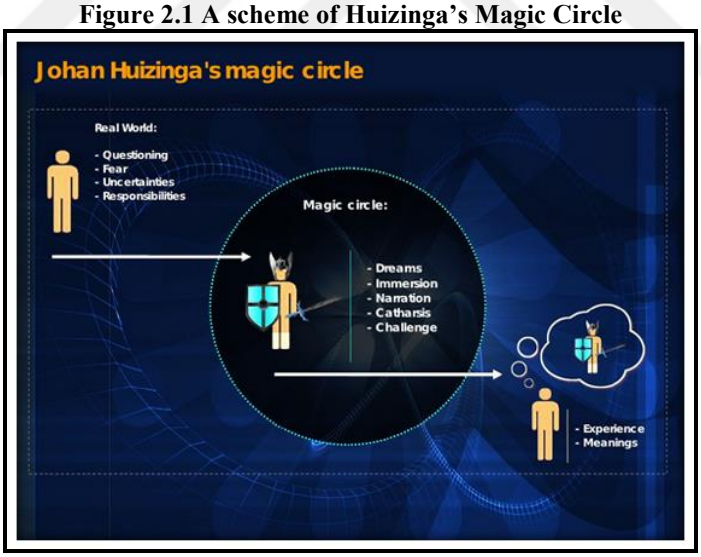
[3] *Gaming Conceptz*. 2012. http://gamingconceptz.blogspot.com.tr/2012/10/huizingas-magic-circle.html [date of retrieval: 1 March 2017]

[4] *Gaming Conceptz*. 2012.

to such stipulation, Caillois (2011, pp.3-10) presumed that games are played voluntarily and make the players believe in its imaginary, artificial world, and also, as agreed by Salen and Zimmerman (2003, p.96) and Suits (1978, p.34), games should be governed by rules for achieving the game's entertainment, and those rules should be accepted by all players voluntarily, due to the fact that such rules make the game possible as an activity separate from the ordinary life in real world.

As per such perspective regarding the magic circle, Adams and Rollings (2009, p.8) claim that the real-world events have special meanings inside the magic circle. For example, in the real world, kicking a ball into a net shall mean nothing than the action itself, but in the magic circle of a game, such action will be deemed as scoring a goal. As another important fact, although the world of a game is surely and purely imaginary, when the players come out of its magic circle by any means, they bring new experiences and knowledge derived from the gameplay of that game, like a user experience or gaming experience, back to the real, ordinary world (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 A scheme of Huizinga's Magic Circle



Source: *Gaming Conceptz*. 2012. http://gamingconceptz.blogspot.com.tr/2012/10/huizingas-magic-circle.html [date of retrieval: 1 March 2017]

The duration of visiting and staying in that magic circle differs, or to be more precise, alters basically in accordance with the amount and type of fun which that game presents, and also many other factors shall be determinative, such as the quality of that

fun, or the features of the game, and the rules and/or complexity of such game[5]. However, not every game is crafted within the same manner by its designers and developers, just like the fact that none of the human beings or perspectives are identical with each other. Some elements or aspects of a game can feature in a more dominant manner thereunder, like the world-building, genre, tone, narration, setting, storyline, scripts and dialogues, visuals (i.e. animations, graphics and/or images), audio, gameplay, game mechanics, UI designs and the play-span of the game, in order to make that game more preferable, favorable or desirable in the game selection phase of the audience (Fullerton, 2008 p.42, 49). Therefore, every game is in a deliberately or unconsciously need to find its identity within the aspects of such features and present itself on a broader and effective scale to the most possible audience available[6].

Pursuant to the aim of fun and the presence and necessity of a differentiating factor (*which becomes thus eligible to be referred as 'identity'*), besides formal and dramatic elements (Fullerton, 2008 p.49, 86), humor can be implemented within the games for such purposes (Dormann and Biddle, 2009 pp.802-811). In such direction, a game can highlight its humor as a primary property, and even function socially or cognitively as a contributor regarding the player satisfaction and game's quality, within the frame of 'game design' (Dormann and Biddle, 2009, p.812), which can lead to the forging of humor in several different types and areas of a game, such as world building, narration, general tone, setting, dialogues, storyline, gameplay, mechanics, character design, implementation and adoption of cultural features, adaptation of the specifics of game genre to the subject-matter of the game, user interface, visuals, audio. Additionally, by installing a better communication among the game elements and the player with the utilization of further fun and amusement, humor can ease the involvement of the players in the imaginary world of the game and smoothing their gameplay, in which the players shall be immersed more into the magic circle of the game (Dormann and Biddle (2009, p.803). Hence, as the reason behind the conduction of this thesis work claims, it can be

[5] Zimmerman, E., 2012. Jerked Around by the Magic Circle – Clearing the Air Ten Years Later [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/135063/jerked_around_by_the_magic_circle_.php?page=2 [date of retrieval 1 March 2017]

[6] Zimmerman, E., 2012. Jerked Around by the Magic Circle – Clearing the Air Ten Years Later [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/135063/jerked_around_by_the_magic_circle_.php?page=3 [date of retrieval 1 March 2017]

said that, humor can also become a major and principal (optional) tool for catalyzing the fun and desirability in a game, and it can be embroidered and embodied in many variables of game design concept.

As per such point of view, in the general flow of this thesis work, the humor concept and its several branches and types shall be described and after such definition, humor's impacts on elements of a game's design shall be examined in details.

2.1.2 Definition of Humor

In accordance with the Oxford online dictionary, humor is depicted as "The quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech"[7]; where the Cambridge online dictionary divides humor into active and passive branches such as ability of finding things as funny, a way to deem things as funny, or the quality of being funny.[8] Within this context, the concepts of comic, absurd, fun, incongruous[9] and amusement are more than common for the majority of lexical humor definitions, but as per the aspects of academic research purposes, humor's scope can be widened further to verbal or non-verbal activity, just like in the semantic theory of verbal humor stipulated by Raskin (1985). Additionally, the factor of eliciting a positive cognitive or affective response from listeners will be added to the framework duly, and humor is harnessed to a connection to the context of the subject for an enhanced fun (Jonas, 2012). Within this broader scale, humor might (and most likely, will) include and emerge as/from "spoken word, jokes, puns, silly exercises, handouts, overheads, unusual or physical activities, stories, or even pithy sayings" (Jonas, 2012).

However, such wide scope might bring one to the point that humor itself is indefinable on general sense, as no one can mutually agree upon a common definition of humor, and similarly, Attardo (1994, p.3) states that it is impossible to define 'a priori' category of humor, and it shall be more accurate to provide detailed sub-divisions. Still, in spite

[7] Oxford Living Dictionaries (English). https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/humour [accessed 1 March 2017]
[8] Cambridge Web Dictionary. http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humour [accessed 1 March 2017]
[9] Dictionary.com http://www.dictionary.com/browse/humor [accessed 1 March 2007]

of such pessimistic detections, for insisting on unifying comic, ridiculous and humor concepts within the same manner, Goldstein, Suls and Anthony (1972, p.16, 189), agree upon the validity of categorizing and sub-divisions of humor such as sarcasm, whimsy-clowning, cheesy, parody, puns (based on word plays generated out of pronunciation and spelling) (Taylor & Mazlack, 2004), banter, mimicry, wit, cynicism, invective, caricature, burlesque, raunchy, satire, irony and/or sardonic. Moreover, Buijzen and Valkenburg (2004, Abstract) determined the emerge of seven humor categories; "slapstick, clownish humor, surprise, misunderstanding, irony, satire, and parody".

Within the light of all approaches, definitions and categorizations mentioned above, following the purpose of categorizing and positioning humor academically, humor shall be handled broader scale in order to include verbal and non-verbal acts, the lexical content of ridicule, comic and amusement concepts, and from this point of view, fifteen types/categories of humor can be deemed as mutually agreed upon regarding the research method purposes of this thesis; Satire (including dark humor, cynicism and burlesque), Sarcasm (including irony), Raunchy, Cheesy (including banter), Mimicry (including parody), Sardonic, Cliché, Slapstick (including clownish), Surprise, Puns, Punchline, Misunderstanding, Invective (including offensive and aggressive), Violent and Caricature.

2.1.2.1 Humor and fun

As Koster (2013, p.40) states, within the scope of general fun theory in game design, fun concept has a description of "a source of enjoyment". This definition is supported by lexical perspectives, as they respectively mention enjoyment and add "amusement or light-hearted pleasure"[10], and "pleasure or entertainment"[11]. As per the aforementioned descriptions of humor, such definitions simulate and interlace humor and fun, as they all include 'enjoyment', and circle around the terms 'amusement', 'mirth' and 'entertainment'. However, humor and fun are not essentially or exactly two identical

[10] Oxford Living Dictionaries (English). https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fun [accessed 1 March 2017]

[11] Cambridge Web Dictionary. http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fun [accessed 1 March 2017]

concepts, where several academic sources also utilize these two terms together but still, respectively; for instance, Podilchak (1992, pp.375-396) sets forth that humor is, like laughter, a fun variant, and both humor and laughter are also for fun, so they serve the purpose of fun. This statement clarifies that it is possible for a concept to be both fun and humorous at the same time, and this carries fun to a more superior point like a super-scope that also contains the humor concept within its borders.

Additionally, as stated in the previous section above, the definition of humor also stipulates that humor's purpose also takes shape around the ability of being funny, making fun of something or perceiving things as funny[12], and humor serves for an enhanced fun (Jonas, 2012); in accordance with such determinations, it can be said that though humor and fun are similar concepts, fun is a more superior concept that also includes humor and its derivatives. Similarly, Fleming (2005, pp.285-303) uses fun and humor together, yet as separate terms with different capacities and functions. Therefore, by the means of differentiating humor and fun, humor can be held as a sub-branch and/or specialized kind and catalyst of fun.

2.1.2.2 Language and culture in humor

Aside from the mimicry or visual branches (Samson & Hegenloh, 2009 pp.438-447) of the humor, massive portion of the humor branches rely on linguistic preferences, and thus, the language itself (Taylor & Mazlack, 2004). Every human being (and thus, every game that a human being designs), is born with a capacity of humor, and as Fry Jr. (2013, p.82) predicts, humor is a universally available concept. In this way, humor becomes eligible for each and every language and also, for the cultures connected to such language and its linguistic characteristics (which stands a great field of research discipline for humor) (Veatch, 1998). Therefore, every type of humor deemed as funny in a cultural area shall evidently be strictly attached and adhered to that culture, and regarding the verbal humor, it shall preserve a deep, essential, indispensible relationship with the language in which its generated and pronounced in, inevitably.

[12] Cambridge Web Dictionary. http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humour [accessed 1 March 2017]

According to Keough (1998, p.133), Walker (1998, p.58) and Inge (1998, p.191), a culture's humor mirrors its real values and preoccupations, and comics and humor states a legitimate cultural feat. As another fact, as per Walker and Dresner's point of view (1998, pp. 171-175), in the late 20th century, humor has served even as act of rebellion and protest of women against the dominancy of men in the American culture where women had their own unique humor understanding and this breakthrough had a major effect on American culture. Moreover, Mintz (1998, p.202) studies American culture as a case for understanding the relationship of humor, culture and language; where he states that the comedy types in American humor confronts the important aspects of the country's culture and expresses shared beliefs and behaviors, and also, affects the social roles and their shifts in time. Also, Keough (1998, p.133) compares the common elements of different countries' humor structures with examples and proves that different cultures bring different humor ingredients and perceptions.

As an instance of the culture-humor relationship, the Freedom Force video game (developed by Irrational Games, 2002) is a complete reflection of American comic books and superhero (i.e. Superman and X-Men) culture, where the players set up and control a team of super-powered beings among a hero pool and stand against the evil, just like the comic books and 'superhero' culture does; but the game has a humorous tone where it mocks with the clichés of such cultures mainly and enjoys the players[13].

Furthermore, Walker (1998, p. 10) and Inge (1998, p.70, 188) stipulate that language and literature of a culture has profound impacts and influences on its humor in an interplay manner. On such subject, Rubin Jr. (1998, p.117) claims that humor contributes to the language in which it emerged and formed its roots, and in time, these two concepts mutually feed each other . Within this regard, Collis (1996, p.viii) proves the strong relationship of a culture's and/or country's language and its humor as he studies the language-based humor consisted of American-English riddles. In such scope, from the most basic cheesy humor or 'knock-knock' jokes to the most complex word games and puns, the relationship between a language and its verbal humor reveals itself,

[13] *Freedom Force Game Review - IGN*. 2002. http://www.ign.com/articles/2002/03/26/freedom-force [date of retrieval: 1 February 2017]

with avoidance of any doubts. As an example for such relationship in video games, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge game includes many famous quotes, references and paraphrases from the American culture and literature, such as Star Wars series and The Treasure of the Sierra Madre movie (1948):

> *"Guybrush: I'm a game warden. I'll have to confiscate your pole.*
> *Fisherman: Let's see your badge.*
> *Guybrush: You don't need to see no stinking Badge."*

Another utilization of such famous quote of The Treasure of Sierra Madre can be seen in Figure 2.2 and 2.3 as an edited word-game paraphrase:

Figure 2.2 "Mouthwash? We don't need no stinking mouthwash!" phrase in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition

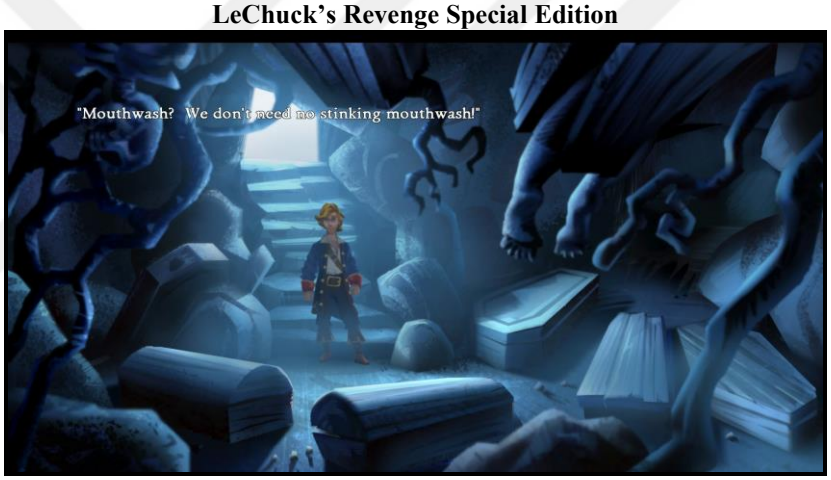
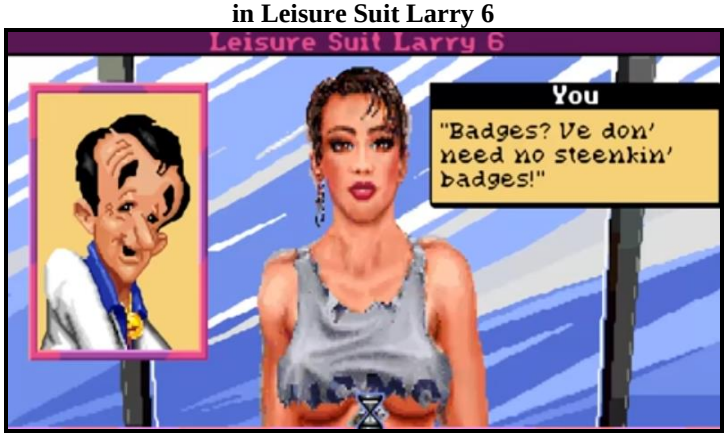


Figure 2.3 The utilization of the famous quote from The Treasure Island of the Sierra Madre film in Leisure Suit Larry 6



However, a side effect of such strong connection between language and culture is the risk of limiting the humor to one specific culture and alienating the audience from

different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In such circumstance, the audience of such game shall eventually narrow down by the means of age, gender, culture, ethnicity, language, class and other social and demographical aspects, as the function of humor might diminish for the alienated audience and even reverse the impacts of desired intention for using humor as a functional communication tool between game elements and gamers, or for easing the gameplay for them, immersing them into the magic circle of the game, covering up the ridicule in the storyline and thus, a more qualified entertainment and gamer experience (Code, 2016). Evidently under this scope, it can be claimed that using a universal perspective without specifying the humor to a single dimension, culture or language (by adding multi-language supports or preferences in game mechanics, or choosing the most common language in universe such as English) holds a critical, even essential importance for a better functioning humor, gameplay and gaming experience (Brown, 2015 p.78, Pitkanen, 2015 p.121, Eklund, 2015 p.135).

To sum up, it can be claimed that culture and language have a deep, strong impact and influence on and are impacted and influenced by that culture's and language's humor; where humor reflects the social aspects of such culture and language and therefore, different languages and cultures have different types of humor or humorous approaches. Though it may not be quite possible to appeal all different cultures, the games shall determine their target audiences by calculating the side effects of using cultural or linguistic feats in implementing humor, in order for properly boosting up its communication function to the player through the game mechanics, mitigating effect to explicit content and catalyzing the entertainment in gameplay with a more immersive magic circle.

2.1.3 Humor in Video Games

As nearly all social concepts in the universe, humor is also a relativistic notion that may alter in quality for each interlocutor (Porter, 2015). Therefore, it is not an easy task to decide and create video games based on or containing humor, as if our own humorous sensibilities do not match those of a particular character, the game may not be funny to us in the way the designers intended (Gonzalez, 2004). Thus, humor can wreck or

develop the game all by itself on behalf of each and every player, and has to be crafted with care. However, humor can still be deemed as an element of game design with its multi-functional engagement and relationship with other aspects of a game design, as well as its impacts on interactive communication with the players and reflection of this to the player experience. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the impacts of humor on the games and gamers in order to match the expectations of player experience and usefulness of humor as a tool of communicating the game mechanics to the players.

2.1.3.1 Effects of humor on the gamers

According to Tim Schafer, the designer of several comedic games of prominent humor such as Grim Fandango (LucasArts, 1998) and Monkey Island series, the key point of catching the successful humorous approach for games can be perceived and accomplished by anticipating a player's moves, motivation, and emotional state, and by doing so, a developer can do his or her best to make the game react in a way that is satisfying to the player. As per Schafer, a designer shall act and react in the same attitude of the game player, like setting the tone of ridicule in accordance with the actions of players towards the game in gameplay (Gonzalez, 2004).

Though this might be a precise attempt for the designer of a humorous game, according to Matt Soell, a writer for Wideload Games, there shall be a limit to such reaction mechanism to players' actions, as does not believe it is possible, as a game designer, to anticipate every possible way a player can approach a situation and come up with a perfect response for each, and such struggle can make a designer reluctant to choose humor and increase the difficulty of procedure for creating a game, and also, deal with the subjectivity of the humor (Gonzalez, 2004). As another fact, the general paths for 'presenting' humor to the gamers in video games seems to be rather infertile (Porter, 2015), as if the humor is not exhibited in cutscenes or splattered wisely, discovering such humor in the game might become totally dependent on the gamers' actions; though the increase in cutscene amount will convert a game into a small movie, unwisely and non-linear emplacing of humorous items may also lead those humor to be skipped by

player (intentionally or unintentionally), and all of such exertion to make the game humorous might conclude in vain (Porter, 2015):

> *"So if the main purpose of your game is to be funny, you have to either write your jokes and put them in a cutscene, or you let the player discover them themselves, which runs the risk of them not seeing them at all. The cutscene is the obvious choice, of course, but at that point your audience might as well be watching a movie. Alternatively, you could try and be clever about it by having subtle jokes written here and there, or simply a funny concept."*

Another contrary side of using humor as an element or tool for such purposes is limiting the jokes to specifically cultural or linguistic concepts and narrowing the audience of such humor dramatically (Veatch, 1998), thus even reversing the function or intention of employing humor, which results in disrupted communication of game mechanics or narration and deteriorated gameplay experience for the players coming from different cultural background. As video games tend to give fun to the players and sell as many copies in return (Porter, 2015), (hence, concerning about their profits), from the aspects and perspectives of the gamers, humor therefore can be a tricky[14] concept that requires delicate and decent craftsmanship regarding the art of making a fun thing even more funny, or add another, yet different type of fun to the game. But in several instances such as Monkey Island, Grim Fandango and Leisure Suit Larry, where humor is dealt with care, talent and wisdom on universal perspective, scale and basis, it can be said that humor had enhanced the fun in the gaming experiences of the gamers by communicating the game mechanics to the players both as a part and apart from the narration itself, which resulted in smoother and better functioning gameplay. For this reason, such instances shall constitute an exemplar, object lesson and specimen to the game designers for overcoming the subjectivity of humor, miscommunication of game elements to the players and lack of anticipation regarding the humor approach of the players.

Furthermore, as a side factor, humor was claimed to have a catalyzing function for the quality of human life (Rieger, 2004), as it is listed as a method to enhance the entertainment in human behavior psychology (Thompson, 2012) and as a mature coping

[14] Mackey, B., 2009. No Laughing Matter: Making Humor Work in Games

mechanism available to humans for successfully dealing with disadvantageous circumstances, with even giving reflections to human physiology (Fry Jr., 2013 p.82). This choice shall make additions to the quality of fun, gaming experience and joy of the game players as well. As per such frame, many games had utilized humor by engaging it with several aspects and elements of game design, ever since the breakthrough of the video games (as mentioned in the *Introduction* section), and made the gamers achieve more enjoyment and entertainment, in the words of fun.

2.1.3.2 Effects of humor on the games

As a more specialized condition, the true effect of humor on the video games (rather than the audience directly) shall be upheld in order to reveal the enrichment which humor can bring to the game. In spite of all the difficulties mentioned above from the gamers' point of view, as Dormann and Biddle (2009, p.803) claim, "Humor can support the design of computer games by smoothing and sustaining the game mechanics. Besides, using humor can make games richer, more engaging, as well as fun", as regardless of its background theory, definition or category, it is a reflection of human nature and contributes to the moral satisfaction of humans as well. This way, humor can also improve the gameplay, immersive nature of magic circle and possibility of repetitive playability to a serious or dull game in connection with its genre, mechanics or narration, as if it was a true element of game design (*see further below for game design elements*). Accordingly, it can be claimed that, for a gamer who is fond of both RPG genre and comedic games, South Park: The Stick of Truth game shall have more increased odds of being played numerous times again and be more favorable, compared to Icewind Dale II, which is a game that merely utilizes humor, as it has no comedy purpose in its gameplay. Within such regards, humor shall add a distinction to a game against the non-humorous examples of similar genre.

Correspondingly, to the degree that humor is deemed as a very wide concept with many categories, video game designers have also equal amount of possibility in the words of crafting humor into the video game with a unique style. Therefore, humor can be implemented in many different ways to a game as an important tool by game designers,

as Dormann and Biddle suggests (2009, p.807). For example, *Sam & Max Hit The Road* (1993) game used emergent humor that can be altered or determined in accordance with the playing style and actions of the gamers[15]. As humor is an interactive and social concept of a game in which the players of such medium (gamers) engage with that game's structure (Vorderer & Bryant, 2009 p.2), it can be said that, humor rebounds to the world-building aspect of any game more than any other course or element of such game, where it defines and becomes a part of that game's very own world like a form of communication with the audience (Rieger, 2004 p.202).

In order to add more precision to this argument, it can be said that humor both emerges or catalyzes the fun, amusement, enjoyment and entertainment in a game (like Monkey Island, Freedom Force and Grim Fandango), smoothens the gameplay by setting up a better communication between the game elements and the player and thus increasing the immersion of game's magic circle, and also mitigates the sharp, violent and/or harmful content in a video game to a bearable standard by delicately caricaturizing the subjects or explicit content, whereafter that game can be accepted as fun rather than harmful (Yao, Mahood & Linz, 2010). The main branches for the latter shall be the mature contents (like Leisure Suit Larry and South Park: The Stick of Truth), racism and/or discrimination (like South Park: The Stick of Truth) or violence (like Mortal Kombat: Komplete Edition, Worms: Armageddon and Airline Tycoon). This point shall be examined further in the "*Humor as a tone in game design*" section, and the examination section of Humorous Games below.

2.2 WORLD-BUILDING AND GAME DESIGN

In order to perceive the area of effect of humor in video games, it is more than a necessity to describe the nature of game design, and one of its very fixed assets, world-building, together with the formal and dramatic elements of game design, as well as the aesthetics in the games.

[15]Parkin, S., 2014. Can Video Games Ever Be Funny? [online] http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20140320-are-these-video-games-funny [accessed 10 March 2017]

2.2.1 Game Design

Game design can be named as "the very origin of a game", and indirect generation of player experience (Zimmerman, 2013). Without a design, a game cannot obtain its other elements, and will be sentenced to stay as a theory, or mere play (Zimmerman and Salen, 2004 pp.302-304). Game design therefore stipulates the game as a whole in the big picture, and it can be claimed that, designing phase is the core of every game, as it includes from game mechanics and level design to the storytelling and general flow of the game, including but not limited with those mentioned (Vorderer and Bryant, 2009 p.11). Correspondingly, if the several game features are not compatible with each other (such as nice mechanics but low profile story and visuals, or vice versa), the gamer experience shall be negatively affected; consequently, in order for inserting the formal and dramatic elements of general game design in a complete harmony and create a game duly in full, it is crucial to have a decent foresight and manner of consistency (Fullerton, 2008 p. 368, 400).

2.2.1.1 Humor as a tone in game design

Where determining the structure of the elements of game design in a harmony can be deemed as difficult task to overcome (Porter, 2015), implementing humor in such game design might either increase the difficulty from 'hard' to 'hardest', or, if humor is set as the tone of the game design (not just the elements of the game, like only the story, mechanics, aesthetics, or so), implementing humor can manage and compose the pieces together as a whole, rake, dominate and direct everything beneath it in a neat, well groomed framework and make a game completely comedic[16] ('*comedic' term thereby refers to being a game based upon humor or primarily having humor as a domain of game design*). Within opting for the latter, the risk of unexplored or emergent humor shall also be prevented majorly. As Perry (2009, p.107) stipulates, for such purpose, humor shall be spread to everywhere and every aspect in the game design as a principle

[16] Mackey, B., 2009. No Laughing Matter: Making Humor Work in Games

and thereby, this utilization will prevent the risk of undiscovered humor in the game (Porter, 2015).

For example, in order to spice up and add color to the gameplay or the story, more serious games like Icewind Dale II (Black Isle Studios, 2002) from RPG genre may insert little bits of humor in its story or dialogues in very few places of the 'game' (*like the gnome Oswald Fiddlebender character with its loony and annoying presence, who is also uncle of the main storyteller of the game*); where a comedic RGP game sample, South Park: The Stick of Truth (Obsidian Entertainment, 2014), distributes humor equally to all the atmosphere, storyline and the environment of the game world and game design in countless amount of feat for every element of game design (i.e. the game mechanics, battle system, dialogues, storyline, character design and build, etc.). With such preference of these two games, although both of them uses humor in some levels, Icewind Dale becomes very less likely to be known or addressed as a humorous or comedic game (Grönroos, 2013), where South Park: The Stick of Truth shall remain as a decent specimen of comedic games as it utilizes humor in the most superior tone level of the game design (Figure 2.4 and 2.5).

Figure 2.4 Icewind Dale II presents the undead creatures with their form designated in Dungeons and Dragons universe of RPG genre, and makes players fight against them with realistic, lethal weaponry

Figure 2.5 South Park: The Stick of Truth adopts the Dungeons and Dragons universe as a humorous RGP game by converting the undead creatures to Nazi Zombies and prefers a less-lethal, caricaturized weaponry in battles.

Therefore, it can be claimed that, using humor as a tone of the game design will serve the purpose of creating a humorous or comedic game by raising the odds of the discoverability and detectability of that games humor by the players, when compared to engraving humor in only one or more other elements of a game. Eventually, this brings us to the point that, when recruited as the tone of a game design, humor becomes an elemental function of game design which determines the setting, theme and gameplay with procuring the majority of the other game design elements to become humorous and comedic (inevitably and without the risk of the humor being skipped, missed or avoided by the player) as a result.

2.2.1.2 Humor in the formal elements of game design

As Fullerton (2008, p.49) ascribes, formal elements of a game define the main structure of that game, just like the basic and rough construction of a building. These elements include the player within the aspect of magic circle (*as defined above*), objective, procedures, rules, resources, conflict, boundaries, and outcome of a game, and their interrelationships.

2.2.1.2.1 Player – magic circle loop

The 'player' is an external formal element for game design purposes, where a game needs to bind the player to the game's content with the concept of fun and enjoyment. As per Fullerton, the player does not act in the game world in accordance with his/her real world (2008, p. 50):

> *"Bound by the rules of play, we perform actions that we would never otherwise consider—shooting, killing, and betrayal are some. But we also perform actions we would like to think ourselves capable of and have never had the chance to face—courage in the face of untenable odds, sacrifice, and difficult decision making. Somehow, through a strange and wonderful paradox, those restrictive and binding statements that are game rules, when put into motion within the safety of the magic circle, mysteriously create the opportunity for play"*

If humor is implemented to a game's magic circle, the game shall have the identification of "humorous game" or "comedic game" and become unofficially prominent with its humor before any other gaming elements or means. Thereby, that game shall be distinguished by its prominent humor even before its genre; and than it can be claimed that adaptation of the players to the gaming world shall be quickened, eased, smoothed and lightened (Helford, 2002 p.23), in the words of the actions to be performed in the game and their reflections to the gaming experience which the players carry out from the gaming world with them when they stop playing.

As an instance, Worms series of Team 17 are artillery-strategy video games that became prominent with their humorous nature. In actual, battling the opponent with realistic weapons is entreated within Worms games and although the game had received 'watch out with children under seven' and 'violence' (non-realistic looking violence towards fantasy characters) classification from PEGI[17], due to its humorous construction, (it make the players select little sweet worms as controllable battalions for fighting, give reference to real world's events in its weaponry such as Mad Cow, etc.), Worms series

[17] *Kijkwiezer PEGI classification*. 2010. http://www.kijkwijzer.nl/worms-2-armageddon/page45-0-147360.html [accessed 10 March 2017]

is not criticized (Lane, 2015) for or accused to have a disturbing violent[18] content (Figure 2.6) by the game critics[19] – on the contrary, its appealing structure of the players' destructive, inner-childish side is indeed appreciated[20]. Accordingly, the humorous game nature lightened and smoothed the phasing of the players to the game world and the brutal actions to be fulfilled by the players within the game did not cause any controversies or mental disturbance to the audience – again, contrarily, it generated more attraction, brought much more audience and maintained iterative gameplay and a more immersive magic circle[21].

Figure 2.6 Where in the games that are devoid of a humorous nature, like Quake, violence can be an issue for criticism, Worms series abolish that violence with humor and lightens the effects of battle

2.2.1.2.2 Rules, objectives and procedures

As per Fullerton (2008, p.68), rules define a game, its objects and the allowable actions of the players; where objectives (2008, p.60) are governed and formed by those rules and they are essential to set what the players shall accomplish and strive for during the

[18] *Worms Retrospective.* 2010 http://www.ign.com/articles/2008/02/25/worms-retrospective?page=2 [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

[19] *Worms 2 Armageddon Review*. 2009. http://www.metacritic.com/game/xbox-360/worms-2-armageddon/critic-reviews [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

[20] *Worms 2 Review*. 1998 http://www.gamespot.com/reviews/worms-2-review/1900-2531877/ [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

[21] Zimmerman, C., 2009. Preview: Worms 2: Armageddon [online] https://www.destructoid.com/preview-worms-2-armageddon-126552.phtml [accessed 5 February 2017]

gameplay of a game – thus, objectives vaccinate a meaning for the existence of that game. Moreover, Fullerton (2008, p.68) agrees that the objective(s) of a game can define the game's tone, as the purpose of playing that particular game shall be determined by the player in accordance with his/her approach and perception of that game's objectives. In parallel with the said, procedures (2008, p.66), deeply connected with the mechanics, determine the methods of play and show the way of acting to achieve the objectives of the game, and they are also bound by the pattern of the rules.

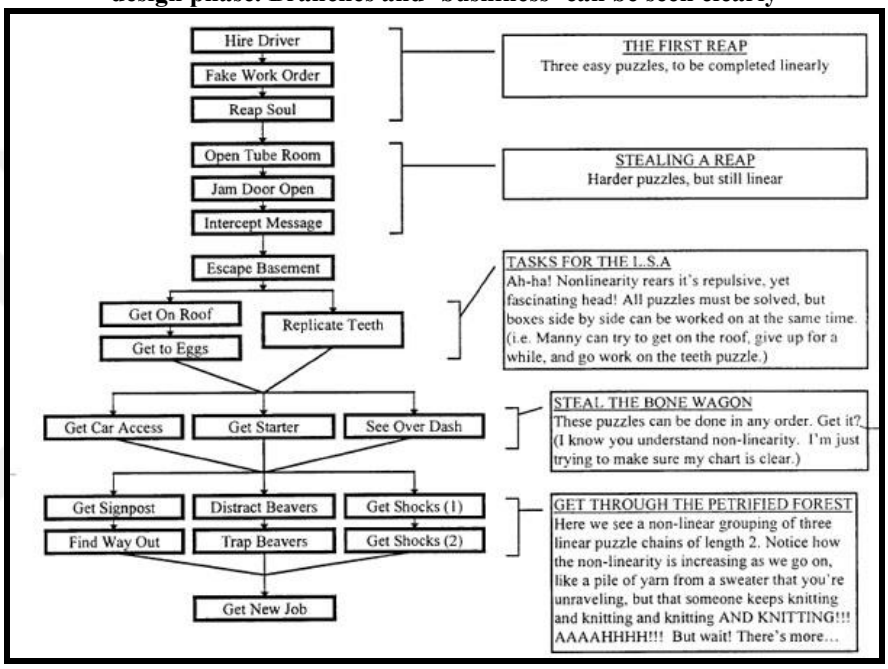
Such formal elements of the game directly influence the determination phase of a player in the words of whether they will choose to play that game, because if the rules, objectives or procedures are set to be too difficult, disturbing, vicious (for developing solution strategies) or nonsense for the player, the fun that will be derived from the game will lower dramatically and he/she might not choose to perform for the game, and thus, does not opt in to play the game (Fullerton, 2008 p.68).

If humor touches to the rules, objective and procedures of a game however, even the most negative situation described above can be shifted for the benefit of the game. Even in an adventure game, there is no distinctive fun in just moving, talking and performing several (yet limited) actions by using the keyboard and mouse throughout the storyline. Rules may narrow down the action scale of players, and thus, the interactivity of the game, where if objectives and procedures are also shaped around a manner of plain "go there, do that", the audience will simply lose the interest in the game. Therefore, mainly every game applies to the dramatic elements to 'dress the game up', but humor can do the same task properly (Zarzecki, 2015).

For example to such argument, Grim Fandango by LucasArts (1998) is an adventure game, where the objectives, rules and procedures are far from being thrilling in themselves plainly. However, the humorous walking, talking and action mechanism improves the fun in the rules, where the objectives end in humorous consequences (i.e. exploding stuff on another character's face, etc.) and boost the fun. Procedures, like solving puzzles (though they are just formed of locks and keys actually), are usually adorned with non-linearity with the humorous touch of the designers, which enable

them to both create enjoying puzzles and avoid of getting stuck or frustrated in a phase of the gameplay when a puzzle cannot be solved immediately. This way, the game avoids boredom and frustration accordingly (Figure 2.7). This utilization is also confessed by Noah Falstein, one of the designers of the game: "Make your branches 'bushy' by allowing players to work on simultaneous tasks, so that they don't get easily frustrated".[22]

Figure 2.7 The original puzzle chart scheme of Grim Fandango made by the designers in game design phase. Branches and 'bushiness' can be seen clearly



Source: Gamasutra, 2013. http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/189266/The_technique_LucasArts_used_to_design_its_classic_adventure_games.php [date of retrieval: 1 February 2017]

2.2.1.2.3 Boundaries and resources

Fullerton (2008, p.72) asserts that, the resources of a game constitutes the assets usable by the players for accomplishing the objectives of a game. Boundaries, which are constructed in accordance with the rules, set the limit of such resources, with caging the world of the game by the rules and setting the ceiling of player interaction in the game (Fullerton, 2008 p.78). Resources concept can be exemplified with the currency, weapons, lives, units, health, save slots, checkpoints, rewards, boosters, tools or other

[22] Cifaldi, F. 2013. The Technique LucasArts Used to Design Its Classic Adventure Games [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/189266/The_technique_LucasArts_used_to_design_its_classic_adventure_games.php [accessed 2 January 2017]

utilities and consumables used in the game that are not unlimited, but still available in the sufficient amounts for enabling the player to proceed through the objectives in the game (Fullerton, 2008, pp.72-74). Boundaries can be explained with the number and level of actions that a player can do at most in a game, thus, prevent the players from being omnipotent (Fullerton, 2008 p.79).

As these elements vary per every game, it can be claimed that, when compared to the plain status of boundaries and resources, the game design can enhance the player experience and fun (Fullerton, 2008 p.79) by choosing humor as a crafting manner for the designation of such elements. As an example for the humorous boundaries, in South Park: The Stick of Truth, when the player attempts to go beyond the latitude allowed by the game before unlocking the necessary feat, a pile of rats prevent them to move further into that direction; and when the player (as their avatars are in their childhood) gets lost in the huge forest and wanders in the wrong way for a long amount of duration, his/her mother and father figures arrive suddenly to the scene and safely escort the player to their home in a tempered and scolding manner[23] (thus, acting like a true parent figure of real life) and these make the boundaries achieve a level of fun (Figure 2.8).

Figure 2.8 The arrival of parents to the players that are lost in the Lost Woods

As per the same game, the resources are crafted with humor and improve the fun further; for instance, the game unlocks the very useful and essential perks and feats by the method of collecting friends in (close circuit and offline) social media structure of the game (*Facebook in particular*), which can be done by talking to the living beings in

[23] *South Park: The Stick of Truth – Lost Forest*. 2014. http://www.ign.com/wikis/south-park-the-stick-of-truth/Lost_Forest [date of retrieval: 10 February 2017]

the game sometimes, or completing some quests for such purpose (Figure 2.9). As referencing to the social and contemporary trend in the real world, it can be said that South Park: The Stick of Truth adapts the general resource gathering and consuming method of role-playing games for character build and utilization purposes with a humorous approach and advances the fun in the gameplay accordingly.

Figure 2.9 The social media friends list implemented in the South Park: The Stick of Truth – reaching a certain number of friends unlocks a slot for new abilities to the player.

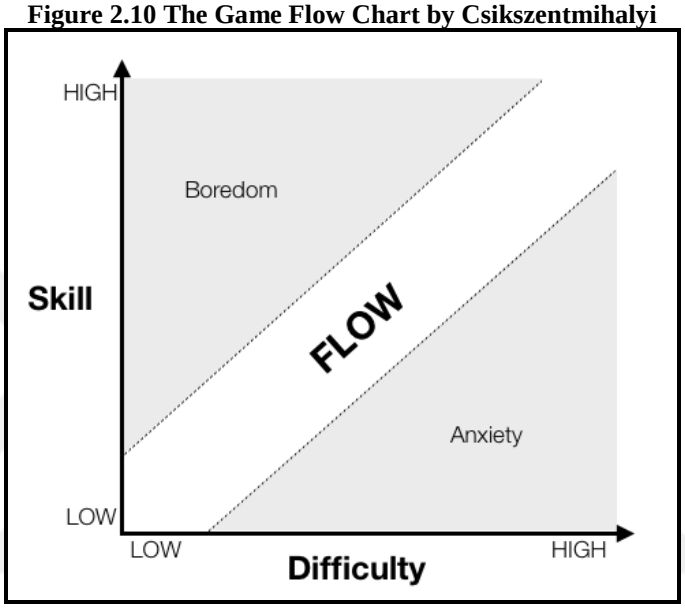
2.2.1.2.4 Conflict and outcome

Fullerton (2008, p.77) describes conflict as the attempt of the players regarding the completion of the objectives in a game, within its rules and boundaries. Therefore, conflict emerges in accordance with the rules and boundaries, as well as the objectives and procedure of the game itself. As the objectives become harder to achieve, the conflict will be raised in difficulty. Conflict therefore generates a challenge to the players by forcing them to employ a particular skill or range of skills in order to get past the obstacles and complete objectives..The difficulty level of conflict shall be arranged in balance in order to make the player gain ultimate satisfaction for a game achievement (Fullerton, 2008 p.77).

As per Csikszentmihalyi (1990), a game maintains and continues its play flow by sustaining a balance between the skills of the player and the difficulty of the challenge in the game (Figure 2.10). Accordingly, if a game loses its balance towards the difficulty of challenge against the player, the player falls into anxiety and becomes

frustrated, and therefore, may lose the interest in playing the game totally. Within such scope, it can be claimed that humor is eligible to be implemented to sustain the game flow and make a difficult task deemed as easy and worth to play by the player, regardless of the amount of iterative attempts required to beat such challenge[24]. By doing so, the player can be kept in the magic circle of the game and shall be channeled to try more and harder, even if it means pushing his/her limits.

Figure 2.10 The Game Flow Chart by Csikszentmihalyi



Source: Gamasutra, 2017. http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/166972/cognitive_flow_the_psychology_of_.php?print=1 [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

As an example for such claim, one of the most frustrating conflicts in gaming literature is the mandatory 'Demolition Man' mission of building destruction in GTA Vice City (2002, Rockstar). For such mission, the player must guide a mini helicopter many times in the construction yard of a building and place the explosives to the necessary target locations and return for repeating the same for other targets within a very limited amount of time, while killing or evading the workers in the construction site at the same time (Figure 2.11). Where navigating the helicopter and aiming the bombs to the targets are difficult challenges on their own, this mission's collective challenge had created

[24] Baron, S., 2017. Cognitive Flow: The Psychology of Great Game Design [online] http://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/166972/cognitive_flow_the_psychology_of_.php?print=1 [accessed 10 March 2017]

many controversies and bad reception from the majority opinion among gamers[25]. As the game didn't have a humorous outlook in general, these kind of challenges made many players quit playing for a while due to frustration, instead of staying in the thrilling action loop of the game. However, in South Park: The Stick of Truth, an equally difficult task, which is aiming and timing the fart attacks (especially when entering into Taco Bell facility or presenting your talents to Terrance and Phillip in Canada) outside the battle scene may cause many iteration attempts for the player, but unlike in GTA Vice City, they do not tend to quit challenging, because the game and the task is full of humorous structure (which is 'farting' to the masters of fart), and they keep trying until the very end. This factor keeps the players in the game flow and prevents any frustration to be emerged from such a difficult challenge (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.11 The infamous Demolition Man mission from GTA Vice City

Source: Rockstar Games, 2013. http://www.rockstargames.com/newswire/article/48431/rockstar-game-tips-smooth-sailing-and-steering-and-shooting-in-v.html [date of retrieval: 1 March 2017]

[25] *Rockstar Game Tips: Smooth Sailing (and Steering and Shooting..) in Vice City*. 2013. http://www.rockstargames.com/newswire/article/48431/rockstar-game-tips-smooth-sailing-and-steering-and-shooting-in-v.html [date of retrieval: 1 March 2017]

Figure 2.12 The difficulty of performing all kinds of farts duly and accurately and in a row is immense in the Canada chapter of South Park: The Stick of Truth

Outcome, in the traditional manner, is the end state of a game which is uncertain and mysterious[26] to the player previously (Fullerton, 2008 p.80). A measurable outcome has a responsibility of satisfying the player, who had put his/her labor, skills and time in order to "beat" the challenge or "complete" the game objectives for the sake of reaching the end state and obtaining the outcome (Fullerton, 2008 p.80). Though not every game has to have a certain or fixed end state (like massive online multiplayer games, simulation, tycoon or open-ended games such as The Sims), the outcome nevertheless manifests itself in some different approaches, such as rankings, reaching a level or state, etc (Adams, 2009). Regardless of the tension of challenges or tone of the game throughout the gameplay, it can be claimed that, if an outcome contains humor, it can prevent disappointments, dissatisfactions or controversies that might occur on the players about the outcome's quality or worth and deter the fun or entertainment, as humor is a version of entertainment in itself.

As a matter of example, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge has a fixed and certain end state, where the player finds out that the main antagonist of the game, LeChuck, (ambiguously as a so-called result of a hex inserted to the mind of Guybrush via his voodoo doll by LeChuck) turns out to be the brother of the main protagonist and everything the player has done throughout the gameplay ends in vain, as it all becomes a part of an imagination and dream of Guybrush in real world. However, such spent effort of player in the game does not pushes him/her to frustration, as the outcome is

[26] Wendig, C., 2013. 25 Things You Should Now About Worldbuilding [online] http://terribleminds.com/ramble/2013/09/17/25-things-you-should-know-about-worldbuilding/ [accessed 23 February 2017]

decorated with humor also: Guybrush and his real older brother (whom inspired the tyrant LeChuck character in the game and tortured Guybrush because Guybrush broke his nice toy truck in real life) get out of a circus tent in order to meet with their parents, little Guybrush claims that he is a mighty and fearless pirate still, but both brothers were treated as a child by their parents and decide to leave the amusement park in order to go home. Therefore, a game full of humor and absurdity also ends in humor and absurdity, where the players find out that they had played a role in a little boy's imagination and do not feel parted from the entertainment (Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13 The end game dialogues, where Guybrush and his brother are in their childhood

2.2.2 World-Building

As a general concept, world-building is "the revelation of your storyworld and its details through the story itself. It's easy to think this means 'setting', but that's way too simple – worldbuilding covers everything and anything inside that world."[27] Accordingly, game world is "an artificial universe, an imaginary place in which the events of the game occur" (Adams, 2009). Therefore, all the dramatic elements, including the story, shall be consistent with the world-building, and all the formal elements and mechanics of the game shall take world-building into account while determining their contents (Fullerton, 2008 p.102). World building is the deep and intricate design of a fictional world (Fullerton, 2008, p.102) and thus, if game design is

[27] Wendig, C., 2013. 25 Things You Should Now About Worldbuilding

the basic and essential core of a game, then world-building phase can be named and deemed as the landscaping process for that core's infrastructure[28]. Such landscaping is also necessary in order to redound the game a magic circle loop (Adams, 2009), as all games are set upon an imaginary factor of artificial sub-world idea (*pursuant to the aforementioned general theories in Introduction and 2.1 Humor sections above*).

Where a new side-world or sub-world has to be furnished, the world-building concept steps in somehow to a variable extent. It can be claimed that such variability[29] mainly depends on the genre and tone of the game, as well as its general platform; if an analog casual game (like hopscotch) is played, then, the game shall take place in the real world and there shall be lesser world-building work (Fullerton, 2008 p.102). At the opposite juncture, where the video games is at stake, the game world stands with utmost importance (Adams, 2009), and so does the world-building activities.

World-building therefore includes many aspects such as the actors, figures, tools, resource types, language, reality, physics, probabilities, moral values, beings and creatures, politics, ecosystem, time and day arrangement, measurements, customs and traditions, definitive social and scientific norms, maps, races, feats, skills, geography, currency, historical background, character creation, etc.; and has deep relations with objectives, conflict, rules, challenge balance (Schell, 2015 p.201) and magic circle; where all of the said shall be in consistency for creating a sensible environment in game world (Adams, 2009). If this consistency can be maintained, the game world shall become an edifice (Schell, 2015 p.519).

Accordingly, several elements of world-building and dramatic elements of game design shall be also examined for a better view on humor's place and role in games.

[28] Anders, C. J., 2013. 7 Deadly Sins of Worldbuilding [online] http://io9.gizmodo.com/7-deadly-sins-of-worldbuilding-998817537 [accessed 10 February 2017]

[29] Wendig, C., 2013. 25 Things You Should Now About Worldbuilding

2.2.2.1 Humor in the dramatic elements of game design

As per Fullerton (2008, p.86) dramatic elements are the "elements that engage the players emotionally with the game experience and invest them in its outcome". Fullerton further claims that the dramatic elements give context to gameplay, overlaying and integrating the formal elements of the system into a meaningful experience. Therefore, they constitute a big portion of the play experience of gamers and can be pretty determining on a game's popularity, playability and iterative playability, as well as the fun factor of a game. Within such perspective, humor can be used as a supplementary external factor to the dramatic elements of a game.

2.2.2.1.1 Story, setting and narration

Schell (2015, p.50) points out four basic elements of game design (in the creation of player experience) as mechanics, aesthetics, technology and story. Accordingly, where technology is less visible and aesthetics are more visible to the gamers in gameplay, story and mechanics have equal visibility with each other and all of those basic elements share equal importance in game design (Schell 2015, pp.51-52). While mechanics stand as the rules and procedures and also the conflict and objectives, aesthetics covers all visuals, audio and presentation of game world physically, technology means all the materials and interactions that make the game playable in its medium/platform and story contains sequence of events that unfold in the game (Schell, 2015 p.52).

In basic definition, story of a game is the flow of the game that can be separated from the game mechanics and retold as a narrative[30] and within such perspective, the story stands as a true asset for many video games, depending on their genre and mechanics, and it can be told or shown to the player by the narration, or more generally, narrative tools (Perry and DeMaria, 2009 p.133). Again in this context, setting can be described as the defining factor of the world that the action of the game takes place in, including

[30] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

character races, languages, laws of physics and metaphysics, and everything else necessary to define the game world[31], and setting shall be presented to the gamer via the narrative tools of the game. According to Dansky and Kane (2006), narration's purpose thereby becomes as:

> *"stringing together the events of the game, providing a framework and what can alternately be called a justification, a reason, or an excuse for the gameplay encounters. At its best, narrative pulls the player forward through the experience, creating the desire to achieve the hero's goals and, more importantly, see what happens next. At its worst, narrative merely sets up the situation and turns the players loose to do as they see fit."*[32]

From this point of view, it can be said that narrative tools of a game will not only contribute to the storytelling of a game[33], but also shall take a major role in the display of game design and the created fictional world in accordance to the world-building of such game design, and also the premise, population and events of that world to take place in the storyline (Schell, 2015 p.3, Rogers, 2010 p.37, Fullerton, 2008 p.93).

Several genres, such as adventure games (Wolf, 2001), are strictly related with the dramatic elements of the world-building procedure (Zarzecki, 2015). In such games, mechanical and aesthetical elements including arts, visuals and/or core mechanics, become insufficient in the words of satisfying the player in gameplay alone on their own (Rogers, 2010 p.3, Perry and DeMaria, 2009 pp.37-39). These games become majorly dependant on storytelling and narration in order to guide the players through the objectives. Thus, many of the successful adventure games had implemented a humor perception, in which they had crafted different humor types in order to branch the linear storyline and add entertainment to the banal gameplay of adventure genre[34], where the player needs to go, look and search everywhere, interact with many objects and people and make correct combinations to overcome the puzzles and proceed to further chapters

[31] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

[32] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

[33] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

[34] Mackey, B., 2009. No Laughing Matter: Making Humor Work in Games

– quite a progress which can become frustrating according to the flow chart of Csikszentmihalyi.

Monkey Island series is one of the most remarkable examples for such utilization and preference of humor in an adventure game, whose gameplay is not only preventing boredom or frustration, but also providing additional iterative and funnier gameplay with their sense of humor (Gonzalez, 2004).

Though narrative tools and story are not essential for other genres, they are also indeed very popular and important among several milestone games of Role-Playing Games (RPG) genre, such as Icewind Dale and Baldur's Gate. In such games, narration and storyline is enhanced to the greatest extent for generating a better play experience to the gamers. For such purpose, the storyline includes several background stories[35], deep dialogues and informative (quasi-essential) literature products, which can be skipped by the player, or studied for further interaction with the game's magic circle and artificial built world (Fullerton, 2008 p.100). The common point behind all such preference of narrative tools is addressing the wisdom, witticism, intelligence and liberal education of the players, as they tend to use logical and creative skills and define their own way and style (Canossa, 2007) of playing that game, instead of only using mechanics of the game or their reflexes (Fullerton, 2008 p.91).

Correspondingly, all the games with a story require a consistency of logic in the game flow in accordance with the natural or supernatural elements (like magic, superpowers, etc.) and their effects on the game world's society[36], as the key point for creating a story is not to have 'cool' units[37], but to connect them to each other duly and wisely. Hence, if the designers have a hard time on deciding the installation of logic in the storyline, such as inserting hints, clues, or novel solutions to the challenges (Schell 2015 p.154), humor can be used as a side factor to cover up all the logical or non-logical sides of a storyline and avoid the removal of fun from the gameplay.

[35] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames
[36] Anders, C. J., 2013. 7 Deadly Sins of Worldbuilding
[37] Wendig, C., 2013. 25 Things You Should Now About Worldbuilding

For instance, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge and Grim Fandango contain absurdity element for covering up the non-logical and inconsistent hints, tips or story flow and such absurdity stands as a reason for deviating from the general self-consistent sense of the game; in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge, which has a medieval pirate theme, in the Dinky Island, player can request hints and tips from LucasArts, the producer company of the game, simply by calling from a call box telephone, a technology that has to be unavailable at that time (Figure 2.14) but the humorous approach of the game and such action covers up the ridiculous nature of absurdity by implying that everything is possible in this game. Grim Fandango on the other hand, all the setting is surreal, as the game presents an afterlife-world, where the dead people are traveling to heaven or hell via the different service packs of a travel agency depending on their possessions and wealth that they had earned when they were alive. Though this setting is not clear for humankind to criticize or confirm, the game uses its advantage of creating its own logic and crafting with humor in order to avoid bad reception and catalyze the player experience (Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.14 The Dinky Island phone-call incident, with hosting many humorous dialogues in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge

Figure 2.15 The dead protagonist Manny Calavera is disguising as the Grim Reaper when welcoming new clients in Grim Fandango

2.2.2.1.2 Dialogues

Subsequent to the aforementioned concepts about the narration, the general aim of all narrative tools can be described as 'to help the player to identify himself/herself with the elements of the game'[38]. One of the most common and popular narrative tool besides the cutscenes or supportive texts is the dialogue. Dialogues include every line that a character in the game speaks, and cultivates the main storyline; thus every dialogue shall be calculated by the designers carefully (Perry, 2009 p.349).

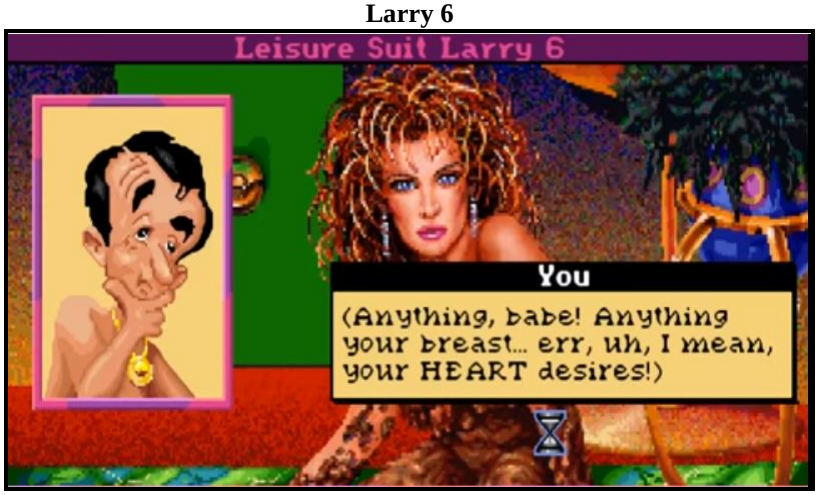
As a narrative tool, dialogues can belong to either playable characters, non-playable characters (*NPCs),* enemies, third-person narration of the game, or all of such, depending on the designer's choice. With such multi-dimensional and multilateral nature, dialogue sequence can add much to the storyline and player experience, as well as the interactivity of a game (if the game implements a system that enables the player to choose among the possible given answers and shape the game flow). Therefore, with such utilization, narrative tools of a game can serve as a part of a complete game design, together with the ludic (gameplay – mechanic) tools (Duncan, 2010).

As Perry (2009, p.108) sets forth, humor in dialogues is quite a common choice for the games that implement narrative tools heavily in their game design and world-building

[38] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

phases (Zarzecki, 2015), due to the risk of losing the interest and focus of players in reading or perceiving too much text from the game screen, instead of experiencing the gameplay smoothly. In order to derive a fun out of dialogues, or 'texts' in general, humor can be and had been regarded as a 'definite purchase' throughout the gaming history since the evolution from arcade games to personal platform gaming (PCs, consoles, etc.), where the gamers didn't have to pay-per-play each time and therefore could focus on a game's story rather than mere gameplay (ludic). Humor can also be used as a tool for novelty, which can become a golden feature for the designers who aim to create a distinctive originality in game story and consecutively, in the dialogues (Schell, 2015 p.154). One of the best examples for both of such circumstances is Leisure Suit Larry series, in which the story features a 'loser' guy with a high aptitude of flirting and hitting on beautiful, yet objectified, women and seek their attention by completing tasks to aid their problems (Yao, Mahood & Linz, 2010). Being a majorly text-based and lower ludic adventure game, Leisure Suit Larry saga depends on the raunchy-humorous dialogues and a criticizing voice-over narration to convince us about the comedy and situation (Figure 2.16). Following such perspective, it can be claimed that this preference of the text-based adventure game design coincides and fits well with the utilization of humor, and suits the general aim of giving fun in player experience (Rogers 2010 p.3).

Figure 2.16 Larry comes onto a beautiful woman in a raunchy-humorous manner in Leisure Suit Larry 6



2.2.2.1.3 Characters and dramatic act

Dramatic elements lays the groundwork for channeling the player to identify himself/herself[39] with the main character or other characters of the game interactively, and thus personalizes the issues that the main character of the game confronts through the storyline. (Vorderer & Bryant, 2009 p.4). Correspondingly, characters do move the narrative forward in conjunction with the events of a game. This means that the characters need to be created with the needs of the narrative in mind[40]. On one level, this comes up to the point of making a protagonist whom the player is willing to inhabit throughout the story; therefore it shall be someone who presents an appealing and interesting persona. Pursuant to such frame, characters need to be designed with their role in the narrative in mind, as creating strong characters will allow the narrative to drive forward[41].

Dramatic act on the other hand, convinces the player about the novelty of the objectives and challenge via using the narrative tools and turns '1+1 = 2' into 'One has a deep passionate revenge instinct towards the killer of his/her family and thus seeks the opportunity to get back at that killer in this game' type of expression and make all the climaxes within the narration appealing and immersive to the players (Fullerton, 2008 p.104). As an example, South Park: The Stick of Truth inserts humor in all kinds of dramatic acts, including all the act formed around a stick, which is deemed as the most powerful relic of the universe that gives omnipotent abilities to every celestial who possesses it. Accordingly, every time the stick has got stolen by the rival factions, it is always an act of cheating and acting contrary to the rules set forth by the previous owner of the stick. Collectively, it appears that the stick just a stick of a tree with no powers, and all the video game is just a fictional game of the town's children (Figure 2.17)

[39] Smith, K. S. 2014. Projecting the Self into a Virtual World: Merging Identities with a Video Game Character [online] https://works.bepress.com/kevin_smith/2/ [accessed 20 December 2016]

[40] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

[41] Dansky, R., Kane, B., 2006. Book Excerpt and Review - Game Writing: Narrative Skills for Videogames

Figure 2.17 Everyone can act against the rules of the Stick's owner without getting punished, even though it seems impossible in South Park: The Stick of Truth

In the games that utilize humor in character creation or dramatic act, the aesthetics also shall play an important role for forging a complete humorous aspect; but nevertheless, as the players have a tendency of concentrating on 'playing' the game rather than reading its story as if it was a book (or like reading the script of a movie instead of watching it), humor can be best presented via and/or forged in the characters of a game that become the primary tool for gameplay in every aspect (Rogers, 2010 p.52, Perry 2009 p.109). Subsequently, a character becomes a decent choice for inserting the fun. As an instance, the main protagonist character of the Monkey Island series, Guybrush Threepwood, is kneaded with humor and comedy in order to reflect the humor in every possible occasion in the series; such as his aptitude for bragging about his victory over the main antagonist in the series, the horrifying ghost pirate LeChuck; and this makes even the NPCs get frustrated about Guybrush's such habit (Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18 One of the NPCs in the Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge complains on his over-hearing of the story about Guybrush's victory over LeChuck in the previous game, while Guybrush is also present in the scene

2.2.2.2 Aesthetics

Schell (2015, p.51) stipulates aesthetics as one of the four major factors of a game design. As per such point of view, the visuals (videos, graphics, images, cutscenes, etc.), audio, sprites or even the user interface (UI) and HUD (heads-up display) can be fluent places for inserting humor, as they address, appeal and try to please the vision of the player and thus, become a major factor in interactivity of the game (Rogers, 2010 p.171). With also representing the general tone and texture of the game itself, aesthetics play a huge role in the presentation of every game design as a forensic material. As mentioned in the above section, if a designer decides to use humor in a game, the aesthetics can ease a nuisance of miscommunication risk and fully interpret the comedy in world-building and narration, and also use the aesthetics as a complementary tool for humorous characters and other elements of game design and world-building.

Humorous designs in aesthetics can differ in accordance with the game genre, setting, game engine and mechanics; but hence having a cartoonish visuals, funny audio, comic sprites and compatible HUD and UI can lighten the general tone of a violent or explicit content, whereas it can also add extra impact of humor for the games (Rogers, 2010 p.171). As an example for the first situation, Airline Tycoon (Spellbound Entertainment, 1998) has cartoonish graphics that are easy on the eye, with funny sprites, colorful HUD and UI that contributes to the player experience and also lightens concept of harming and death, such as the effects of bombing a rival's office, giving sabotage order for a rival's flight or getting electrocuted by accident (Figure 2.19). Examples for both the first and the latter statement can be found in South Park: The Stick of Truth, as living in a cartoonish environment supplements the humor on behalf of the players and help them trifle away from seriousness of real life or the actions and situations to be confronted in the game (Hanley, 2007 p.21). Therefore, it can be said that humor has even more than one function in aesthetics of a game, as it can be a grand complementary factor to the other formal or dramatic elements of game design.

Figure 2.19 A bombing incident in Airline Tycoon doesn't seem so horrifying with such cartoonish graphics

2.3 CONCLUSION

Game design have multiple aspects; world-building, formal elements, dramatic elements and aesthetics are the major determining contributors for a game's completion and location in gaming world. Similarly, humor can be a factor eligible to be crafted within these elements, arrange their volumes and effects in order to create the ideal impact on the designers' minds or intentions. On the other hand, if humor is determined to be the end rather than a justifying mean in the games, or in other words, set as the general tone and mood of a game, humor can also feed from such elements in the words of reflecting to the game's aspects. Therefore, humor does and can have a profound relationship with the other interactive elements of game design, and although it is not necessary to have humor in every game, it nevertheless constitutes a major role in a game when it is implemented and thereby, it can be claimed that humor is also eligible to be deemed as another element of a game.

3. DATA AND METHOD

With regards to the types of humor that are and can be used in the video games, this chapter shall hold the games that correspond and overlap with the humor categories listed in the previous chapter and examine the function of humor and such humor types on the a) immersive nature of magic circle, b) the mitigation of any explicit content in the gameplay, if any, c) bringing a sense to any ridicule and nonsense of the storyline or game mechanics, d) communication of game mechanics with the audience and preparing a smoother transitional phase to magic circle of the game for the player, e) avoiding the risk of overlooking the emergent or non-emergent humor inserted in the game and f) the demographics of the audience, regarding the whether the culture and language is handled universally or limitedly. Conclusion shall confirm these functions of humor out of the data constituted from the qualitative research method.

3.1 TYPES OF HUMOR USED IN VIDEO GAMES

Humorous games, also known as the comedic games, had implemented humor as the tone and mood determiner of the game design and thus, have humorous touches in every aspect of the gameplay, and elicited the humor to the surface in all occasions, as explained in above sections. Non-comedic games also do use the humor with several different purposes, including but not limited to enhancing fun and player experience, giving a sense and logic with its absurdity to the nonsense ridicule and smoothening the explicit contents entreated in a game's narration. The games that will be analyzed herein shall be selected in accordance to their overlapping natures to the fifteen major humor categories set forth in the *section 2.1.2 Definition of Humor*.

Accordingly, the practice of each of those humor categories shall be examined within the study regarding these selected games, in a qualitative methodology. As per such

methodology, a) the types of humor processed in the game shall be mentioned and such humor category shall be defined, respectively, b) comedic or non-comedic status of the game shall be specified, c) if any, how many and which of the purposes of humor listed above were used in that game and its outcome shall be enlisted. The game critic reviews, related reputations and receptions and if any, the academic references shall be the main guide in determining the type of humor in the selected games. It shall be taken into account that many of these games cover up or include more than one type or more than the imputed types of humor in their analysis, but their most prominent humor types will be featured within the purposes of this thesis.

3.1.1 Raunchy Humor and Misunderstanding: "Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!"

Raunchy humor has been referred as the humor with sexual content (Yao, Mahood & Linz, 2010); including nasty, obscene, vulgar and horny behavior with trailing sexually exciting or explicit content. In general, this term is associated with X-rated products and PEGI (Pan European Game Information) evaluation system for the video games classifies raunchy games as 'suitable for the players over age 16, or 18' depending on the amount and quality of sexual content in the game.

Misunderstanding type of humor on the other hand is based upon the misinterpretation or misperception of a word, visual, audio or another concept due to the misleading senses of a human or all kinds of miscommunication and the comedy derived out of the situation or circumstance thereby, merely related with the cultural or personal biases.

The text-based adventure Leisure Suit Larry series by Sierra On-Line is illustrious with its raunchy humor[42] in the gaming world where a nerdy, 'loser' guy named Larry Laffer (also a reference to the famous owner of the Playboy magazine, Hugh Heffner) with a trademark of white leisure suit and gold necklace is pursuing beautiful women and helping them by solving different kinds of puzzles with the expectation of having sexual

[42] Mackey, B., 2009. No Laughing Matter: Making Humor Work in Games

intercourse with them in return, as a thanking manner. Such expectations however are not met in general, until the very ending of the game.

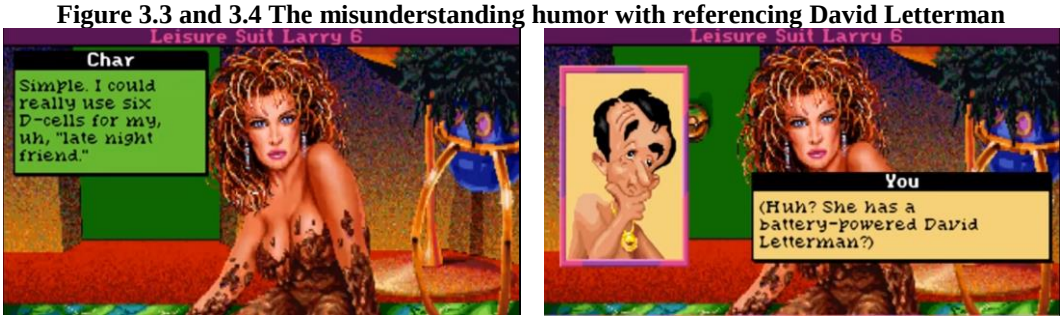
The sixth installment of the series, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out! (1993) also continues the fame of the franchise. The game takes place in La Costa Lotta Hotel – Spa treatment center, for which Larry had competed in a TV show named *Stallions!* and received an all-expenses paid trip as a consolation prize. Throughout the gameplay, story progresses over the raunchy humor, with the elements such as sexual implications and flirty conversations of Larry, obscene and kinky visuals of nine beautiful women and a chase for getting laid in every possible occasion (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Larry never misses the opportunity of striking up a sexual conversation

Several jokes regarding the misunderstanding of dialogues (*such as the mispronunciation of Larry's name or surname by the beautiful women NPCs in every occasion* (Figure 3.2)*, with some of them giving cultural references to United States of America, such as the David Letterman joke in* Figure 3.3 *and* 3.4) also plays a major part in refining the humor in gameplay.

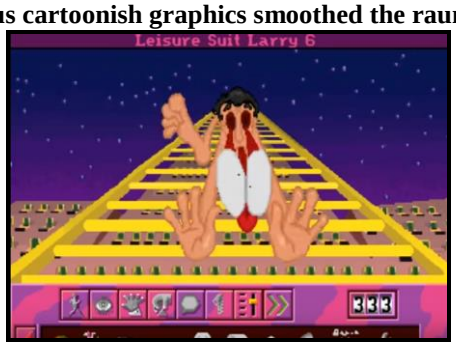
Figure 3.2 None of the women in the game cares about saying Larry's name correctly

Figure 3.3 and 3.4 The misunderstanding humor with referencing David Letterman



As all other installments of the series, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out! had also received a retrospective PEGI critic of 'suitable for the players over age 16'[43], and M (Mature Sexual Themes, Suggestive Themes) rate from ESRB[44] (Entertainment Software Rating Board), marking its X-rated content and also criticisms regarding its objectification of women gender. However, the humorous tone in the game that maintained the fun in piteous, unfortunate and miserable situations which occurred to the nerdy and loser protagonist, as well as caricaturistic graphics (Figure 3.5) and sprites and the misunderstanding jokes had lightened the impact of sexist jokes. Also, this comedic approach brought the perspective of 'the male gets his deserts and grief as a result of neglecting, objectifying or challenging the dignity of womankind', as Larry involves in many accidents while pursuing sexual intercourse and gets hurt (Figure 3.6), also stays in the worst room of the premises and cannot utilize any decent facilities of hotel resort due to his non-paying guest status (Yao, Mahood & Linz, 2010) and this factor had also contributed to the raunchy-but-funny-and-naive image of the game..

Figure 3.5 The humorous cartoonish graphics smoothed the raunchy humor in the game



[43] *PEGI Critic.* 2007. [online] http://www.pegi.info/en/index/global_id/505/?searchString=leisure+suit+larry [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

[44] *ESRB Critic Review*. 1993. http://www.esrb.org/ratings/Synopsis.aspx?Certificate=747&Title=Leisure+Suit+Larry+6 [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

Figure 3.6 Larry always gets hurt in pursuit of sex

As stipulated in the prior chapters of this thesis, for raunchy content in video games, humor can be a smoothing and mitigating factor in the words of procuring acceptance of the content in the eyes of the audience and establishing a good player experience accordingly. Therefore, it can be said that the humor in the tone, dialogues and aesthetics of Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out! suits the raunchy humor of the game well and the together with such elements, misunderstanding concept serves as another function of easing and mitigating the negative effects of the game's content for the sake of the gamers.

3.1.2 Sarcasm, Cheesy Humor, Puns and Punchline: "Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition"

As a major trademark of verbal humor, on a basic scale, sarcasm covers up all the pricks, quips, skits, mocking, teasing, poking, scuffing and irony within a critical and sometimes exaggerated approach towards the theme, circumstances or setting of a scene or event (Goldstein, Suls and Anthony, 1972). Sarcasm has a huge area of application, where it can refer to politics, arts, other real world or fantasy world elements, in-game situations or self-criticism, and thus, sarcasm is treated as a primary type of humor in many games. Sarcasm often includes an implication to the opposite intention of the used words, and appeals to the brains of the audience accordingly, but always aims a humorous, funny and (if consists of cultural or is multi-layered) partially-hidden witticism.

Cheesy humor is the most elementary, simple and banal jokes with a lower quality when compared to the other humor types, and tally unlike the sarcasm, it has a bad reputation

of not appealing to the brains of the audience (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2004). Most of the 'knock-knock' or 'seven ate nine' jokes are deemed as the primary units of this humor category, and accordingly, cheesy humor finds its roots on the culture of the audience and humor.

Just like the cheesy humor, puns, which are formed of wordings and word-games of mind also have a profound relationship with the culture and linguistics of the humor *(see section 2.1.2.2 Language and culture in humor)*. Words with similar pronunciations or similar meanings can be pushed to their limits in order to emerge a humor out of them. Puns also have a strong relationship with misunderstanding humor concept sometimes, where the audience can also find the misunderstanding of the words amusing.

As a part of comedy trend, in order to impose the optimum effect, humor shall include an obscurity in the scene, before revealing itself to the audience. Thus, it generally relies on the "neural tension" (Porter, 2015) of the scene itself mostly. As for punchline, it is crucially important to have such neural tension, as a punchline states the last part[45] or final phrases[46] of a story or a joke where it makes everything funny and provides the humor to the theme (Raskin, 1985). Therefore, as the most striking and flashy element, the epicentrum and the most sensitive point of verbal humor, the concept of punchline (which is eligible for even being deemed as a branch of humor) is also contingent about such obscurity in a game's humor perception (Porter, 2015).

Punchline also serves the incongruity of humor by explaining all the relevant neat or loose details about the aforementioned parts of a dialogue or narration and connects them somewhere or adds the last bit of taste to the humor and carries it to the peak, where made all the bedlam funny, which is taken into account as a necessary situation for the accurate timing of humor (Perlmutter, 2002).

[45] Cambridge Web Dictionary. http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/punchline [accessed 1 March 2017]

[46] Oxford Living Dictionaries (English). https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/punchline [accessed 1 March 2017]

As one of the earliest and most famous text-based adventures and comedic games, the Caribbean pirate journey named Monkey Island series by LucasArts is indeed famous of its humorous structure per each installment; for instance, it had innovated new methods of sword duel in its first game *The Secret of Monkey Island* (1990), which was based upon bandying the rival's puns or insults and winning or losing in accordance with such ability. For example, an insult of "*My handkerchief will wipe up your blood!"* can be answered by a comeback such as *"So you got that job as janitor, after all"* phrase by the players[47].

The Monkey Island games always featured many types of humor; as a matter of fact, the tone of the games is so full of humor that even the name of the protagonist, Guybrush Threepwood, had his name distilled out of "The guy created and drawn in Paintbrush digital software" (Warren, 2003). Whole series is famous for its fine combination of realism and surrealism, seriousness and silliness, medieval age and modernized concepts and morality together with references to the pop culture within the craftsmanship of humor; where humor is treated like the true domain of Monkey Island saga. By implementing sarcasm, puns and even cheesy humor, Monkey Island became one of the best comedic game series ever made.

Pursuant to this fact, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge (1991; re-mastered *Special Edition* in 2010) also picks up where the first game of the series left off; Guybrush, having defeated LeChuck in the previous adventure, now seeks the legendary treasure Big Whoop (the content of the treasure is unknown to everyone, and shall remain that way). In such quest, he must free the Scabb Island from the tyranny of LeChuck's henchmen Largo LaGrande by resorting the voodoo magic, and then collect all four pieces of the sole known map to Big Whoop by wandering from one quest to another between other three islands. To make his quest even more difficult, LeChuck has been brought back to life by a side effect of voodoo campaign and aiming for a retribution on Guybrush.

[47] *The World of Monkey Island – Insults and Comebacks for M1*. 1997. http://www.worldofmi.com/gamehelp/insults/mi1.php [date of retrieval: 1 February 2017]

In such storyline, humorous dialogues dominate a major part of the gameplay and narration; where sarcasm, puns and cheesy humor (along with several other humor types such as misunderstanding and satire) is used mostly, in order for maintaining a non-logical absurdity and covering up the technological and cultural inconsistency in game by bringing a sense of humor to the ridicule. For a sarcastic example, the remnant pirate figures from the first game are labeled as "Men of Low Moral Fiber" (Figure 3.7) and the importance of Guybrush to them is marked in the end phrase of the discussion, as Guybrush says "Hope to see you later", the pirates come back with an answer of "We can scarcely contain our anticipation" (Figure 3.8).

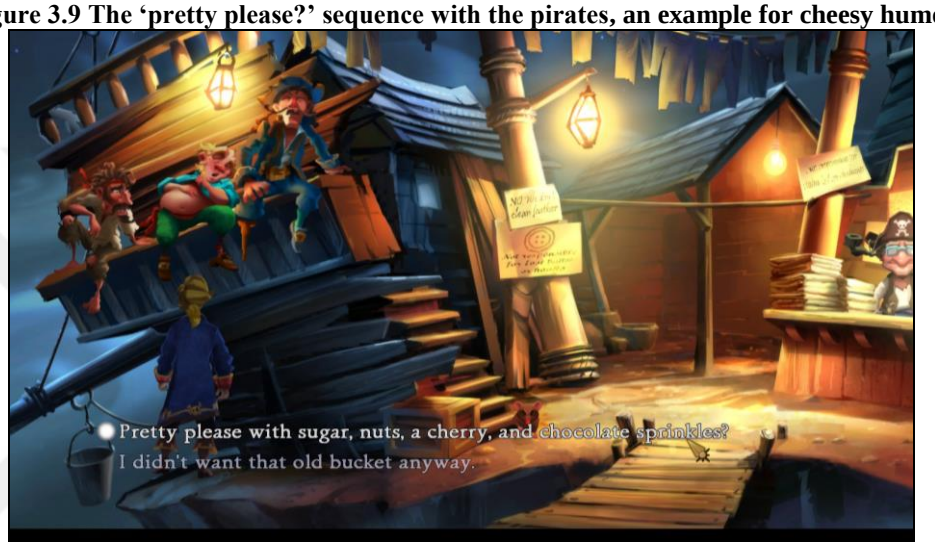
Figure 3.7 Pirates – the Men of Low Moral Fiber

Figure 3.8 The harsh, yet pretty humorous answer of the pirates: another example for sarcasm

For cheesy humor, in the same dialogue scene, Guybrush (thus, the player) has to insist heavily on demanding the bucket from one of the pirates for free, and tries to convince the pirate by adding modifications of "Pretty please?" phrase such as "Pretty please with

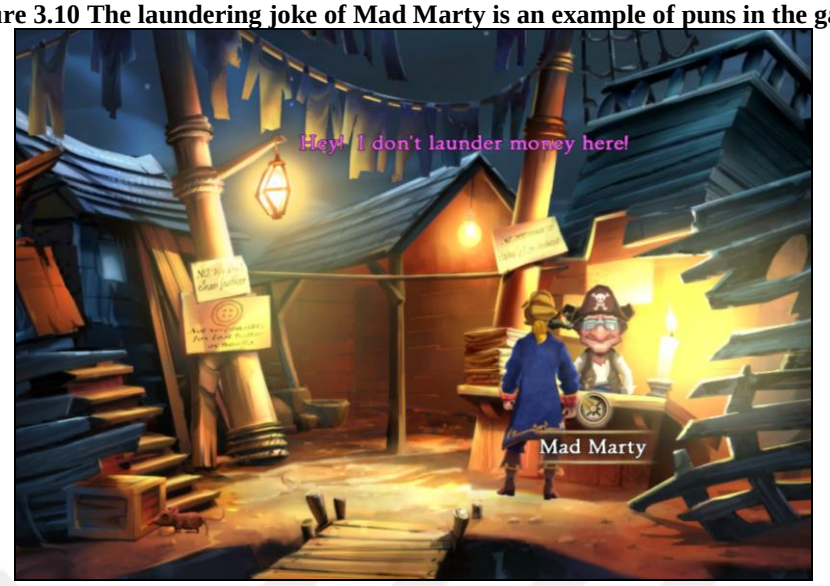
a sugar on top?" for numerous times until the dull pirate accepts to give the bucket. (Figure 3.9). Also, there is a 'woodchuck chuck' rigmarole that takes place between Guybrush and the blacksmith of the Scabb Island, and also between Guybrush and LeChuck (where unlike the blacksmith, LeCbuck cuts the case pretty quickly and relieves the player from boredom of repetitive joking and contributes to the humorous touch of the game, which otherwise could cause the diminishment of humor) (Porter, 2015).

Figure 3.9 The 'pretty please?' sequence with the pirates, an example for cheesy humor



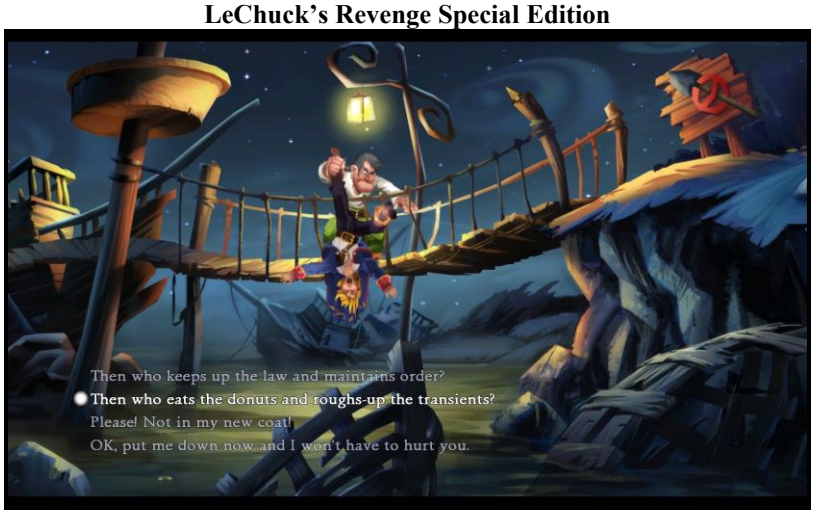
Whereof the puns, the dry cleaner/laundry NPC in Scabb Island, Mad Marty, is a partially deaf and old guy who misunderstands many phrases. Subsequently, when the player tries to act in bribery to convince him, he refers to the illegal money laundering of mafia by telling Guybrush that "Hey! I don't launder money here!" and therefore made a pun joke by comparing the different meanings of the same word (one is real meaning, other one is derived as figurative speech – Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10 The laundering joke of Mad Marty is an example of puns in the game



As an example to the punchline, in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, when Largo LaGrange bullies and beats the main character Guybrush Threepwood in the very first chapter of the game and tells that there is no police in the island, the player is gifted with the opportunity of saying "Then who eats the donuts and roughs-up the transients?" sarcastic punchline as an answer among the options of dialogue and implements the humor, where other options do not state any funny answers (Figure 3.11). In this example, the game refers to the general policeman profile in the real world and identifies and criticizes them as a part of a joke in the imaginary world of the game.

Figure 3.11 The answer creates a punchline with a sarcastic implication in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition



To sum up, due to its structure, it can be said that punchline states an important part of the verbal humor (jokes, etc.) and as video games enable the player with the opportunity of dialogues and narration, where punchline can be chosen and applied, punchline concept becomes an important type of contributor for humor in video games.

It can be said that, all of such humor elements contribute to the funny gaming experience of the players and turns the tenure of gameplay in an adventure game, with limited mechanics and long quests, into a joyful progression.

3.1.3 Cliché and Mimicry: "Freedom Force"

Cliché humor is dealing with the generic phrases or common idioms of the culture and society, as well as arts and other social elements with a mocking and sarcastic manner; such as telling "it is not you, it is me" (who brought an end to a romantic relationship) to someone. It is mainly originated on biases or stereotypic expressions in a culture and deemed to lost its precise meaning due to the immense iteration in usage (Stein, 1958).

Mimicry on the other hand depends on impersonating someone or something like a parody with a humorous approach, using gestures and mimics mostly for the body language part, or imitating or faking the attributes of someone or something using verbal humor (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2004). Copying or imitating an image of a concept thereby constitutes a mimicry humor for the video games as well.

Accordingly, Freedom Force is a squad-strategy based, tactical role-playing game developed by Irrational Games in 2002. The game and its sequel Freedom Force vs. The Third Reich (2005) have adopted the environment of the stereotypical comic book atmosphere of 1960s United States, and employed the cliché humor of such comic book jargon.[48] Players progress the roster through the mission and train them and purchase new features for them with experience points earned in the missions, then select several of them from the hero pool for each mission to play with.

[48] *Freedom Force Game Review – IGN*. 2002. http://www.ign.com/articles/2002/03/26/freedom-force [date of retrieval: 1 February 2017]

The main storyline has a setting of 1962's Liberty City and is based upon the conquest intentions of a cruel extra-terrestrial deity named Lord Dominion. As per his plans of invading the Earth is overheard by a celestial deity called Mentor, who had suffered from Lord Dominion when he destroyed Mentor's planet, this psychic alien releases a mysterious energy called 'Energy X' to the Earth from the canisters held by Lord Dominion. After this incident, many of regular Earth citizens were exposed to the Energy X and transformed into heroes with superpowers designed and emerged in accordance with their temper and characteristics. Step by step, these heroes gather together in Liberty City (a mimicry of New York City) under the leadership of Minuteman and Mentor, in order to fight against Lord Dominion and other dangerous villains.

By the means of storyline, hero roster and narrative elements, the game analogizes many archetypes on comic book business[49] and superhero universes such as Marvel and D.C. Moreover, a lot of cliché humor is implemented in character backgrounds and storyline; as an example, the very first Energy-X superhero in the game, Minuteman, is portrayed as a true patriot of the United States of America, as he also gained his powers from a statue of famous iconic Minuteman soldier, while the statue was exposed to Energy-X. Due to his limitless patriotism and heroic approach (a cliché of the very first comic book installments in between 1940-1980), Frank Styles chooses Minuteman as his alias/codename and swears an oath of using his powers to help his country fight her enemies within and without, immediately after being exposed to the Energy-X and avoided a tragic death (Figure 3.12). Many other 'victims' of Energy-X make a similar oath, without thinking otherwise. The virtuous and fearless character of Minuteman truly resembles of cliché superhero definitions in U.S.A. comic books, as the Freedom Force game had even also published several comic books of its own by Image Comic in 2005 (Figure 3.13).

[49] Allman, M., 2000. Freedom Force – First Look [online] https://web.archive.org/web/20071217232640/http://www.rpgplanet.com:80/features/firstlooks/freedomforce/ [accessed 10 March 2017]

Figure 3.12 The oath of Minuteman, no more than a second after his transformation to a superhero

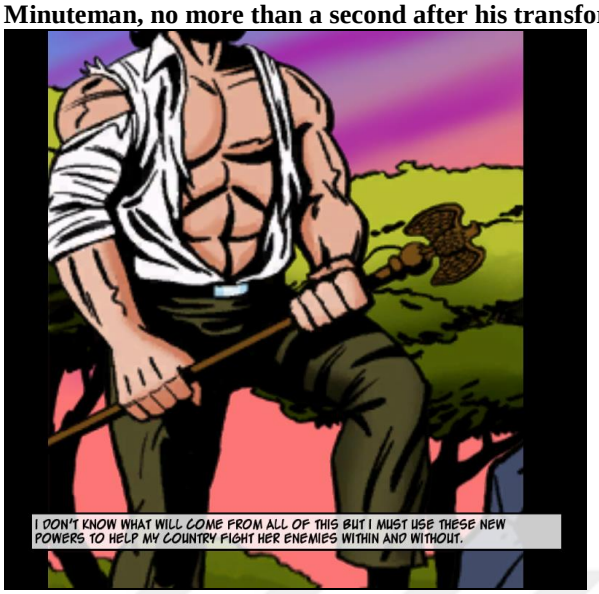
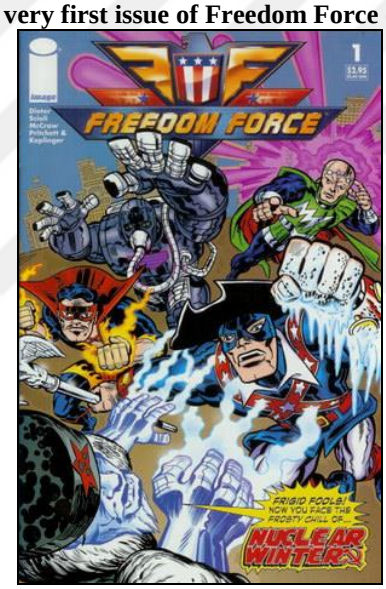


Figure 3.13 The very first issue of Freedom Force comic book, 2005



Source: NBC Daily, 2016. http://www.nbcdaily.com/9-video-game-themed-comics-books-you-should-read/19399/ [date of retrieval: 5 January 2017]

Besides such stereotypical examples, the game also mimics and imitates many other well-known superheroes from Marvel universe such as the resemblance of Minuteman to Captain America (even their uniforms, character backgrounds and manners are very similar)[50], Man-Bot to both Iron Man and Colossus, Alchemiss to Jean Grey/Phoenix (again, their fate and powers are almost identical), Bullet to Quicksilver, Tombstone to the Punisher, El Diablo to Human Torch (with their attitude and temper, alongside of

[50] *Captain America Versus Minuteman*. 2011. https://screamsheet.wordpress.com/2011/01/10/captain-america-versus-minuteman/ [accessed 10 March 2017]

power type), Liberty Lad to Bucky, Microwave to Vision, Ant to the Ant-Man and Mentor to Professor Xavier (Figure 3.14). Also, the whereabouts of the missions in the game widens to a scope of other dimensions, prehistoric ages and mythological figures, just like the comic book universes do. However, by using a humorous approach to show the silliness and cliché in the heroic attitudes of such comic books, Freedom Force creates a distinction from more-serious tone of Marvel or D.C. universes.

Figure 3.14 The resemblance of Captain America and Minuteman

Source: Screamsheet, 2011. https://screamsheet.wordpress.com/2011/01/10/captain-america-versus-minuteman/ [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

Such humor not only refers to the cultural impacts of superhero image in the universal and local (U.S.A) perspective, but also strengthens the magic circle of the game by presenting the clichés as a comedy to the player in a smoother gameplay (*the game play is difficult for the first timers, and the game channels the player to the hints and tips about game mechanics by using such cultural feats and cliché humor*). Such humor's content or approach can be seen as narrow or specific due to its reference to only the American comic book culture, but in fact, it refers to the universal superhero concept and therefore, the cliché humor, mimicry of cultural icons and the setting of the game do not push the audience scale collapse dramatically, but instead, they spread the humor and narration to a worldwide scope and widen the audience to the gamers with different cultural backgrounds. Also, such humor helps the game to explain all superficial plots in the storyline with absurdity and focuses the players into immersive gameplay instead of questioning the rationality of the events in the game (which coincidentally fits the name of the game's developer company).

3.1.4. Satire and Surprise Humor: "Grim Fandango Remastered"

Satire, with including cynicism, burlesque and dark comedy, mainly aims lashing and criticizing the serious subjects (such as politics, religion, sex, poverty, injustice and public order) that have severe defects, and criticizes, teases and mocks them for showing the irony, drama, tragedy or irrationality buried in beneath. (Griffin, 1994 pp.1-20, Goldstein, Suls and Anthony, 1972). Pursuant to such nature, satire bespeaks with a more indirect impact on the hearer, comes in countless amount of forms and requires a logical and analogical thinking, and cultural background regarding the order of the day for a sufficient understanding by the audience (Figure 3.15). As a highly popular humor type, satire has a large area of practice in many media, and video gaming is also one of them.

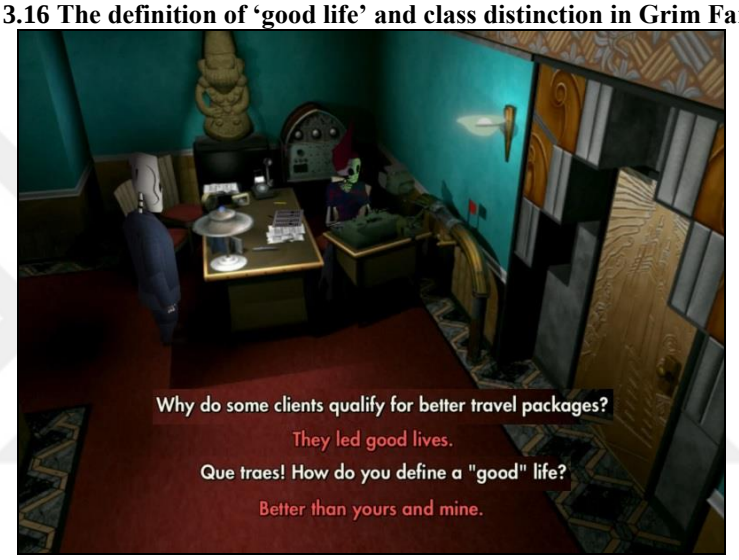
Figure 3.15 A caricature criticizes the dependency of the youth on technological devices instead of old-school toys with a satiric manner

Source: https://www.pinterest.com/cha2sibau/satire/ [date of retrieval: 1 March 2017]

Surprise comedy conversely depends upon sudden, spontaneous and instantaneous actions for shocking the interlocutor of such humor; including but not limited to the unexpected moves from the joker or an outside factor. Video games can implement such mainly-non-verbal humor with aesthetics or game mechanics, especially in action, thrill, or horror genres, as well as in adventure genre by the help of puzzles.

Within this frame, as a text-based adventure game Grim Fandango (LucasArts, 1998; Remastered version in 2010) dominantly uses satire and surprise comedy alongside many other humor types like sarcasm and puns. The main premise of the game antagonizes the mottos “You can’t take it with you when you die!” and “Shrouds have no pockets” by creating a setting in the Land of Dead with serious references to ancient Aztec beliefs regarding the netherrealm and the 4-year journey of the soul to the final home, the ninth underworld, and discriminating the dead people according to their wealth when they die (Brusk & Björk, 2009) (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16 The definition of ‘good life’ and class distinction in Grim Fandango



Accordingly, the main protagonist of the game, Manny Calavera, works as a salesman in a travel agency that arranges the afterlife journey packages per each dead customer; where rich customers can select upscale, fast and comfortable voyages while the poor ones have to complete the journey in much more time, also facing the dangers in the path without any protection. Manny’s own motive for working in such company is also paying off the debts he gained from living a “less-than-perfect” life to be able to continue the journey himself to the ‘final home’. But when he discovers the corruption of office manager Don Copal in the company, everything changes for him.

As satire, Grim Fandango uses many capitalist concepts (even in the Land of Death), such as disqualification of labor by the boss, unpaid rights, salary matters, injustice rivalry in company, not getting along with co-workers (like his boss’ scabby secretary Eva), taking ‘family photo’ of the company (Figure 3.17) and class distinction.

Additionally, the game utilized many satirical jokes about the 'death theme' and combined it with humor regarding a white-collar profession. For example, as one of the satirical self-mocking events, Manny confessed that "As a rule, I never touch anything more sophisticated and delicate than myself". Another example is the conversation between Manny and a rival colleague, Domino, about the escalated rivalry in company, where two counterparts insult each other's talents:

> *Manny: Can I have one of your clients?*
> *Domino: Sure, Cal. Just as soon as I get one I think you could handle...*
> *Manny: I can handle anything you got. Especially if that's your best right jab. Is it hard to kiss up to the boss so much with no lips?*
> *Domino: Hey, I got all the lip I need. I get it from you.*

Figure 3.17 The annual family photo of the travel agency under the name of 'Grim Fandango Cast' refers to the tradition of taking collective photos of company employees in big companies

As another instance, Manny criticizes Domino behind his back, about Domino's self-confidence and bragging manner by referencing the white-collar worker habits in real world with his "He doesn't even HIDE his booze in a file cabinet. What kind of salesman is he?" speech.

As mentioned above, there are also death theme-related satirical humor present in the game, such as the following quotation:

> *Hector: Oh Manny... so cynical... What happened to you, Manny, that caused you to lose your sense of hope, your love of life?*
> *Manny: I died.*

Another example for satire of death is Manny's early-game conversation with Eva (it shall be reminded that both of them are already dead during this speech):

Manny: {to Eva} Any messages for me?
Eva: Yes: "Join or Die!"
Manny: But I'm already--
Eva: Again!

For a simple satirical conversation sample, Manny asks Meche (*Mercedes*) about anything regarding her past that she didn't told him yet, and Meche answers with: "Quite a bit, considering I've told you nothing" phrase[51].

Surprise humor in Grim Fandango is maintained by the in-game puzzles which the player must solve in order to proceed in the storyline. The puzzles include sudden and unexpected actions and movements that turn out to funny scenes and emerge a surprise humor, such as the Tree Farm Puzzle. Accordingly, when Manny asks the help of Glottis, a goofy giant non-human mechanic, for passing through the big mysterious machine that produces a tree farm in the Petrified Forest, Glottis finally climbs to the mushroom-top of the machine but as Manny increases the turning speed of the machine, the gadgets break suddenly, with Glottis falling to the ground in screams and several parts of the machine falls over him (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 A sample of surprise humor: Fall of Glottis

Therefore, considering Grim Fandango's more-than-seven-hours-of-gameplay, it can be said that all of such humor contributes for reversing the dull and lethargic nature of a

[51] *Grim Fandango Network – Dialogue*. 1998. https://www.grimfandango.net/game-info/dialogue/2 [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

point-and-click gameplay in a text-based adventure game by generating additional and exceptional entertainment to player experience, also establishes a better communication of game mechanics with the players accordingly and creates an appeal to sophisticated audience culture (with taking into consideration that the game has both English and Spanish content in its narration).

3.1.5 Sardonic, Slapstick, Caricature and Invective Humor: "South Park: The Stick of Truth"

Sardonic humor is based upon misbehaving, underestimating, underrating or insulting attitude with a bitter, grimly mocking, cynical and scornful-laughter manner directed to a person or a concept, without the necessity of a fair judgment or criticizing[52]. As a result, sardonic approach mostly generates or feeds from stereotypes, classification and discriminative behavior of a culture or society and rises the despising '*this thing is hideous and it sucks!*' and the egoist '*I rule*!' impression in the audience.

Similarly, invective humor is formed of physically or verbally belittling rough, coarse, vulgar, highly critical and rude bully actions against somewhat weaker or vulnerable sufferer/interlocutor and more passive, mostly in an abusive or even harassing level (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2004). Invective humor also harbors stereotypical labeling as well as getting physical in action, generally in the form of harming prank jokes in low levels.

As another physical-kind humor, slapstick lodges the exaggeration and overuse of mimics, gestures and body language, deeming every matter as hyperbolic and acting accordingly in order to emerge a humorous situation. Therefore, slapstick requires deliberately clumsy actions and humorously embarrassing events (even before cultural aspects) as a nutrition and deemed as the oldest and rawest type of comedy found in

[52] Oxford Living Dictionaries (English). https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sardonic [accessed 1 March 2017]

games[53]. If the theme turns into violence and sadism, slapstick can also contain invective humor (Hudson, 2014).

Caricature is another type of humor that involves a picture, description, or imitation of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect (Hudson, 2014). In order to generate a humor, such caricature shall have a ludicrous tone or nature. Many games implement caricaturized visuals or audio for dulcifying the contents of the game, whether it is explicit or not, and create a more appealing and charming gameplay for the eyes of the gamers.

Accordingly, South Park: The Stick of Truth (Obsidian Entertainment, 2014) game belongs to the South Park animated TV series universe and adopts the RPG genre mechanics. The game shares the caricaturized graphics of the animated series, as well as its wide-scale perception of humor, including puns, cheesy humor, mimicry, violent, raunchy, sarcasm, satire, surprise and cliché. Its visual humor however shines the most[54] in gameplay, especially by the means of sardonic and invective approach of the game's general comedic tone and the slapsticks used throughout the storyline. Though this utilization of humor had arisen many controversies similar to the ones of animated series[55] mainly due to game's offensive language and explicit contents *(it received 'suitable for persons aged 18 years and over only' criteria from PEGI[56] and 'M' (mature content) from ESRB[57])* the game nevertheless was regarded highly by the critics in the words of gameplay, in-game references and humor[58].

[53] Parkin, S., 2014. Can Video Games Ever Be Funny?
[54] Porter, M., 2015. Why Is It So Hard to Make a Funny Video Game?
[55] Moses, T., 2014. Why Has The South Park: Stick of Truth Game Been Censored in Europe? [online] https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/mar/05/south-park-stick-of-truth-game-censored-europe [accessed 5 March 2017]
[56] *PEGI Critic*, 2014. [online] http://www.pegi.info/en/index/global_id/505/?searchString=south+park&agecategories=&genre=&organisations=&platforms=&countries=&submit=Search#searchresults [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]
[57] *ESRB Critic Review.* [online] http://www.esrb.org/ratings/Synopsis.aspx?Certificate=33231&Title=South+Park%3a+The+Stick+of+Truth [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]
[58] *South Park: The Stick of Truth – Game Review*, 2014. http://www.metacritic.com/game/pc/south-park-the-stick-of-truth [accessed 10 March 2017]

The storyline of the game begins with the moving in of a new kid (controlled by the player) and his parents to the South Park town. He never talks until the end of the game, impresses everyone with his 'silent charisma' and progresses through the plot, where the plot is a role-playing children's game based upon the Lord of the Rings novels by J.R.R. Tolkien and includes a relic that is empowered to control all the universe (the Stick of Truth, only a simple tree stick in fact) and its possession matters between two fractions of children in town: the Humans (under the leadership of grand wizard Eric Cartman and princess Kenny) and the Elves (gathered around Jew king Kyle Broflovski and warrior Stan Marsh). Accordingly, the player has to choose between two factions after completing several quests for Humans, but the story branches further and other deities like aliens, Mongolians, Nazi Zombies and even Al Gore become a part of the game.

As a comedic game, humor was handled as a general tone of the game is sprinkled in every corner of the gameplay. For sardonic purposes, the game uses many stereotypes such as Jews (which is also a class option for the player to master within as per the rules of role-playing games, together with mage, fighter or thief), Mongolians and ginger hair color with mostly degrading them by their several aspects, while also refers the player's character as 'Douchebag' throughout the game. As an example, Mongolians are portrayed as vile barbarians that have very bad taste of meat), where another example is an Afro-American character's (Token) sympathy to K.K.K. (Humans' Kingdom of the Kupa Keep in the game, however refers to infamous and racist *Ku-Klux-Klan* society by initials).

As mentioned above, another example for sardonic humor is the 'Gingerhead' concept, where the ginger term represents the diabolical Hallway Monitors in South Park elementary school whom the player faces as an enemy in several quests. Pursuant to the evil portrayal of Hallway Monitors (all share the ginger hair color), being a Ginger with speckles is rendered as if it was a disease by Eric Cartman when one of them, Gary Nelson, turns into a Nazi Zombie during the 'Attack the School' quest. Cartman then warns the player to keep himself away from Nelson and says "Don't touch him, he is ginger!" (Figure 3.19). As the whole South Park universe is based upon children's

perspective and the game deems itself as a role-playing, fictional story, such usage of sardonic humor mitigates the disturbing content of similar jokes (when compared to the real life) and can either amuse or agitate and stimulate the audience, with considering cultural and ethnic references and receptions as described above.

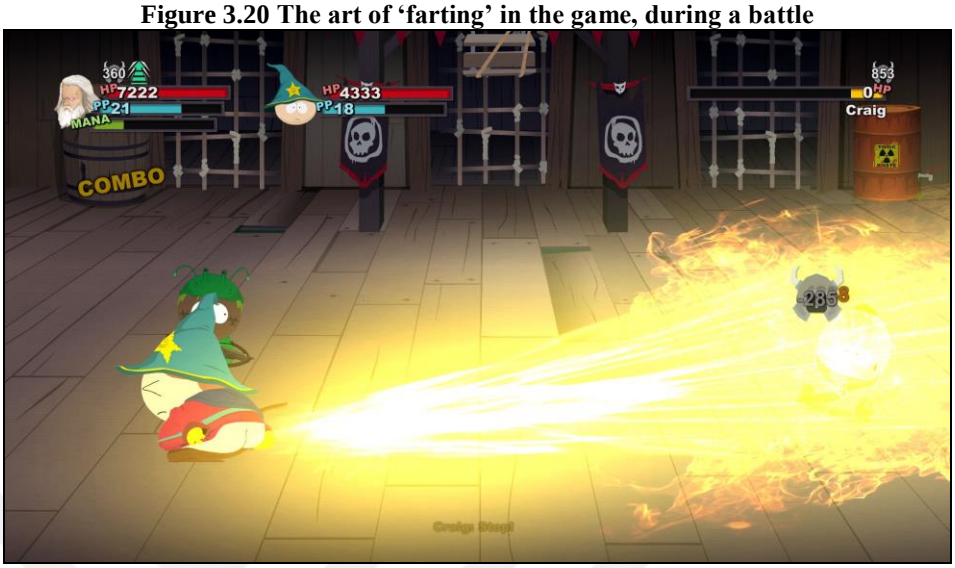
Figure 3.19 The 'Ginger' incident in the game

For invective humor, the game implements many concepts such as the Anal Probe feat and Gross status effect; but hence most importantly, as a primary feature, the game uses farting action as the main 'magic' concept while adopting the general magic notion of role-playing games. Accordingly, the player can (and sometimes must) use several different farting types inside or outside the battle for weakening or harming the interlocutors or destroying the blockage on several paths. Regardless of the player's choice, the current sidekick of player will give reactions full of invective humor to each and every farting (Figure 3.20). Therefore, the game deems farting (whether on people or not) as a mechanism of fun, and even determines its premise as "Do not ever fart on a man's balls!" (referred as a Gentlemen's Code). Moreover, the resource for using these fart attacks in battle is set as 'mana', and mana can only be obtained by drinking mana potions in battle. However, if the player drinks exceeding amounts of mana potion, the protagonist character defecates to his pants and takes some damage to his health points, and such utilization also contributes to the invective type of humor.

With respect to the prevalence of similar farting or defecating jokes in U.S. and universal culture, though the game disables the opportunity of playing as a female and narrows down its audience by gender (Code, 2016), it can be claimed that the usage of invective the humor has soothed and mitigated the nastiness of farting, defecating and

even using shit nuggets (another concept used by the game without distortion) in the game.

Figure 3.20 The art of 'farting' in the game, during a battle



Another impact of such invective 'farting' humor can be observed in the gameplay via the tutorials; accordingly, the game guides the player for each new technique or movement by tutorials, in which the players can learn the correct button/click and timing combination within several repetition opportunity. Each of such tutorials however were designed with invective humor in order to integrate fun to the dull tutorial phases of a game. As per such humorous manner, every new farting technique is initially tried on an ally (like Kenny or Clyde) and the tutor of the move (which is generally Eric Cartman, the most prominent figure of invective humor in South Park universe) laughs on the misery of the interlocutor ally as a result of invective humor choice (Figure 3.21). Within this framework, the game uses invective humor for creating a better and more enjoyable communication environment between the game mechanics and the players, eases the adaptation period to the game controls for the players thereby, (when considering the fact that farting on someone's face is a rude prank joke) forces the player to even act contrarily to his/her actual character in real life in fact, and also contributes to the immersive game play in magic circle of the game.

Figure 3.21 The tutor of the farting move harshly makes invective fun of the victim of the fart in tutorial phase

While the several games such as the Sims series (Maxis, 2000) are known for sparing a large portion for slapstick comedy in their gameplay, as a comedic game, South Park: The Stick of Truth indeed gives a coverage to slapstick humor as well; as a gameplay mechanic, the characters that suffer from a negative effect (debuff or status effect) use extensive amount of body language, hopping, jumping and exclaiming each turn, until they are cured somehow. For instance, if a character is under the affection of fire burn, then he/she/it will rush around and show the pain by gestures (Figure 3.22). Additionally, several characters such as Monks of Farting (Terrance and Phillip) always acts in exaggeration, as a part of slapstick humor. Another example for slapstick is the status of Jimmy Valmer, the disabled and stuttering 'Bard' of the game; Jimmy has a special ability to remove debuffs or add buffs/boosters to his allies by singing some songs (*which contain offensive and inappropriate lyrics, but the game had also absorbed such effect within its ecology full of invective and sardonic humor*). However, as he is stuttering, the player needs to press the right keys for success in singing as a part of slapstick joke. Jimmy also talks with stutter outside of the battle and his stuttering speeches cannot be skipped in some quests, which could frustrate the player, but does the reverse effect due to the humorous background of such ordeal.

Figure 3.22 On the right side, Special Agents can be seen in their suffering from burn damage, using extensive body language

As per the caricature humor, all of the South Park universe is a cartoon and thus every character (real or fictional) in the series is caricaturized in every aspects. For example, Al Gore, the former presidential candidate of United States of America has a large role in the game and he is portrayed as an environmentalist freak that became obsessed with social media and global warming issues and calls himself 'super cereal' (Figure 3.23). Furthermore, after a point in the game, Gore's character impersonates the dangerous Man-Bear-Pig creature just like in the TV series and attacks the player. The game also shows a fake presidential set-up room full of cameras (that resembles the one in the White House) in his secret lair located in a garage and mocks the succession odds of Gore's presidential campaign. Many multi-cultural references and aspects, including Gore, were studied in this manner throughout the gameplay, which revealed the universal scope of game's humor.

Figure 3.23 The caricaturized personality of Al Gore, including his global warming obsession and giving himself a high credit for being 'Super Cereal'

Overall, the usage of such humor types in this comedic game installment of South Park TV series contributes to multiple aspects; a) it ratifies the forging of role-playing logic in a children's game by abolishing the nonsense of ridicule with an absurd atmosphere in storyline and game mechanics, b) helps the game to be seen as an episode of the TV show with its interactive and communicative mechanics through gameplay[59], c) contrary to the vulgarness of some humor types in the game, such humorous tone mitigates the adult content and offensive language[60] and d) by moderating the slang language of the game, creates a promising comedic environment and rises the immersive aspect of magic circle.

3.1.6 Violent Humor: "Worms 2"

Humor and violence are commonly associated and assimilated with each other (Swani, Weinberger & Gulas, 2013), when especially the aggressive side of humor is taken into account (Potter & Warren, 1998). This argument contains both the physical and verbal humor regardless of whether it is being used in comedy shows, daily slang or video games; if something or someone gets hurt by a joke and if it is in the purposes of humor (such as video games, which do not physically harm any living being in real world), it can be deemed as funny. Within this point of view, blasting off the enemies, cutting a living being's head or other limbs, attempting a suicide or any other means of violence can be mitigated to a mild theme by utilizing humor in violence, including but not limited to the caricaturized aesthetics.

In this respect, (as mentioned in *2.2.1.2.1 Player – magic circle loop* section above) Worms series is famous for its cartoonish aesthetics and humorous theme as a turn based artillery-strategy game (Lane, 2015). The second installment of the series, Worms 2 (1997, MicroProse), had a 2D gameplay engine and initiated the 'cute, little, tiny Worms!' image of the series in the first place by replacing the graphics of the first game with more cartoonish images. Like a Laurel and Hardy quarrel, the worms themselves

[59] McElroy, J., 2014. South Park: The Stick of Truth Review: Pen And Paper [online] http://www.polygon.com/2014/3/4/5464996/south-park-the-stick-of-truth-review [accessed 2 March 2017]

[60] Weiss, E., 2014. South Park: The Stick of Truth Review [online] http://dorkshelf.com/2014/03/05/south-park-the-stick-of-truth-review/ [accessed 4 March 2017]

are bug-eyed, squeaky voiced and relentlessly cheerful and acting in a merry mimicry despite the fact that they can be blasted about the map immediately. Their reactions for taking turns, attacking or getting hit was also part of the comedy, as they were saying simple and funny phrases like 'Reinforcements!', 'Fire!', 'Ouch!', 'Incoming!', 'Take Cover!', 'Revenge!', 'First blood...', 'Stupid!' (if the worm damages itself too in its attack), 'Watch this!', 'Missed!', 'Run away!', 'Hop!', 'Hello!', 'Come on, then!', 'Oi Nutter!' (again, when the worms is hurt by friendly fire), 'Bummer!', 'What the...', 'Traitor!', 'You'll regret that!', 'I'll get you!', 'Fatality!' and 'Just you wait!' with adorable, facile voices, including giggles and hues. The timing of such exclamations was also perfect, and they were added in little details at the perfect moment with impeccable sense of timing (Lane, 2015).

Coherently, even at the moment of their demise, the worms turned to camera and uttered like 'Oh dear!', or 'Bye-bye!' before pushing the plunger on their self-destruction explosives, as if it was an episode of famous Looney Tunes cartoon series. This setup was exhibiting quite the opposite of a state of war, a fact which definitely contributed to the 'humorous violence' theme. Moreover, with later installments such as Worms: Armageddon, not only their arsenal had enhanced, but also their sound packages attained large variety with including competitive army-men sounds, accents of other languages, or even artificial audios.

The further utilization of humor has uplinked the realistic artillery with imaginary arsenal of the game; accordingly, the players were enabled to use a large variety of melee or projectile ammunition, including but not limited to Bazooka, Hand Grenades, Mortar Bombs, Airstrikes, Homing Missiles, Baseball Bat, Handgun, Uzi, Blowtorch, Napalm Strike, Mine, Dynamite, Pneumatic Drill and Petrol Bomb as resembling the realistic weaponry of armies; imaginary weapons such as Super Sheep, Old Woman, Holy Grenade, Mail Strike, Mad Cow, Priceless Ming Vase, Homing Bird and Sheep Strike. There were also tools available for enhancing the limited mobility of crawling worms, such as Ninja rope, Girder, Parachute, Teleportation and Bungee Jumping (Figure 3.24). The player has to arrange the aiming and timing when using such tools and weapons in the time limit of his/her turn in the gameplay, where some of them are

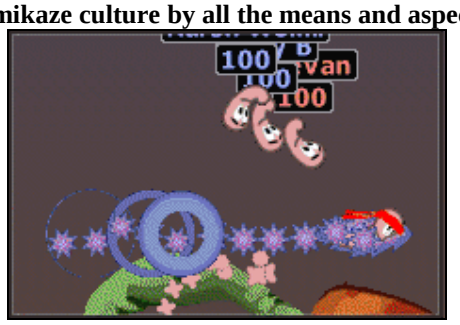
already present in the game in unlimited amount, while several others do require a certain level of progression in the game or have limited ammunition. Although the game had employed such violent, harmful and hazard arms in the game, all of such weapons, including their effects and other related visuals were designed in a fanciful, dainty and pleasant way in order for abolishing the brutal side of a war game.

Figure 3.24 The collective arsenal of Worms 2 and Worms Armageddon

Moreover, the game had referred to many local and global icons and cultural facts. Accordingly, the Mail Strike attack was a representative of famous postal strikes of U.S.A. post office workers in that time; where Mad Cow weapon was a universal reference to the Mad Cow disease of 1990s, Old Woman was a portray of old and murmuring and nagging women stereotype on global basis, gravestones of worms that died during the battle was resembling the Christian graves with stone cross figure on them, 'Kamikaze' attack was surely a reference to Japanese kamikaze culture (Figure 3.25) and Priceless Ming Vase was referring to Chinese culture by design. Several artillery were referring to other games and even movies; for example, the iconic Holy Hand Grenade was derived from the 1975 slapstick comedy film 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail', including the divine 'Hallelujah' sound before its explosion[61], whereas the Banana Bomb was referring to the 1991 video game Gorillas developed by IBM[62]. It can be claimed that such local and global cultural references also saved the game from specific and narrowed humor perspective and therefore, increased the gameplay experience and avoided the alienation of gamers from different cultural backgrounds.

[61] *Worms Retrospective.* 2010.
[62] *Worms Wiki – Banana Bomb.* 2015. [online] http://worms.wikia.com/wiki/Banana_Bomb [date of retrieval: 15 March 2017]

Figure 3.25 The famous Kamikaze attack in Worms 2, referencing to the Japanese suicidal kamikaze culture by all the means and aspects



Worms 2 was deemed as funny from the point of artwork to the animations and other game elements, which were designed in a comical game humor intellection. Pursuant to such fact, the implementation of humor did not actually add too much to the gameplay or communication of game mechanics to the gamers, as the battle mechanism was already simple and yet funny.[63] The real aid of exploiting humor was facilitating and lessening the violence to acceptable, and even favorable levels. As per all the statements above, it can be said that, as a success of using humor as a function of mitigating the violent content, the game had received 'E' (suitable for everyone – animated violence and mild language) criteria from ESRB evaluation[64] instead of 'M' (mature content, suitable for an audience over 16 or 18 years) and deemed as appropriate to play for even children under 12 years old. Furthermore, as such worm battalions are genderless, with the caricaturized, cartoonish graphics and gameplay, it can be said that Worms 2 also widened the universality of its audience by the means of addressing gamers of different gender (Code, 2016).

3.2 CONCLUSION

With the method of explaining each type of main humor categories and determining their utilization functions and places within the video games, it can be seen that, humor can make contribution to the games in several aspects, depending on the requirement of such games. First one is creating a better and more immersive magic circle, which will advance the gameplay and gaming experience of the players and enhance the fun,

[63] *Worms 2 Review*. 1998.

[64] *ESRB Critic Review.* [online] http://www.esrb.org/ratings/Synopsis.aspx?Certificate=3041&Title=Worms+2 [date of retrieval: 20 February 2017]

entertainment and amusement in the atmosphere of humor, which will aid in abolishing the lethargic, dull and long-durational gameplay, if any (like it does in text-based adventure games Grim Fandango Remastered, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out! and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition). Secondly, in relation to the first aspect, it can generate strong bonds of communication between the game elements/mechanics and the audience and easing and smoothing their adaptation to gameplay and game design elements such as rules, game controls, objectives and boundaries thereby (as it does in the tutorial phases of South Park: The Stick of Truth and Freedom Force and in general gameplay of the said adventure games above).

Thirdly, humor can set the mood of the game if it is employed as the general tone of game design, which will result in the development of a pure comedic game (regardless of its genre) and as humor shall surround all the elements of the game, it will minimize the possibility of players in the words of skipping the humor on the surface of, or buried underneath the gameplay, mechanics and narration (as happened in all the selected sample games). As a fourth function, humor can be used as a tool for mitigating the explicit (mature and/or violent) content of a game to mild levels and prevent the over-criticism of game critics and audience; which in deed shall reflect to the span of gamer audience in accordance with shifting of the ESRB of PEGI criteria (like the South Park: Stick of Truth, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out! and Worms 2).

Fifthly, humor can draw attention of the gamers away from the consistency of the game narration or elements and bring the chaotic ridicule of the imaginary, fictional world to a sense with its absurd nature. By doing so, the irrationality and abruptness of a game's storyline or surrealism shall be deemed as acceptable, and even more entertaining; which gives more areas for maneuver to the designers in world-building purposes (just like in surrealistic Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, Worms 2, Grim Fandango Remastered and especially South Park: The Stick of Truth). Lastly, if it is handled from a universal perspective in the words of linguistics and cultural aspects, humor can indeed expand to the universal audience and thus extend such audience by involving the gamers from different cultures and backgrounds, without alienating them

(this can be said for South Park: The Stick of Truth, Grim Fandango Remastered, Worms 2 and Freedom Force).

All of such derived findings shall accordingly be tested in another sample game in the following chapter as a case study, in order for verifying the validity of the methods for analyzing the impact of humor in games and comparing the results with the alleged or asserted functions of humor in second and third chapters. As a result, the applicability of humor as an element of game design pursuant to this case study shall be discussed in Discussion and Conclusion chapter.

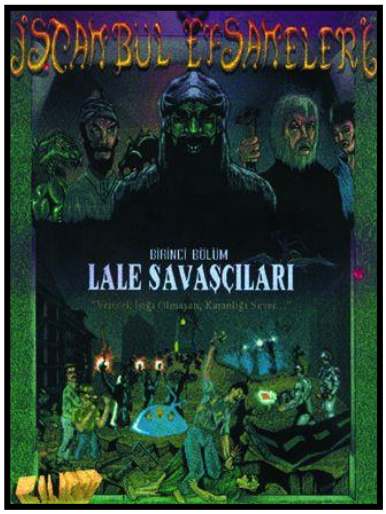
4. FINDINGS – CASE STUDY FOR THE USAGE OF HUMOR AS AN ELEMENT OF GAME DESIGN: "İSTANBUL EFSANELERİ: LALE SAVAŞÇILARI"

4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE GAME

"İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları" (*"Legends of Istanbul: Tulip Warriors"*; shall be referred as "**İELS**" hereinafter) is a digital game that had been designed for Amiga platform in 1994 and PC platform in 1996 by Siliconworx (and for PC version, together with Compuphiliacs) company, located in Turkey (Wolf, 2015 p.567). Its lead designers and programmers Özgür Özol and Özgür Doğu Gürcan were also from Turkish origin, which eventually made the game one of the early pioneers of Turkish gaming world in 1990s. Furthermore, it had belonged to the role-playing game (*RPG*) genre, which was an outsider for Turkish gaming sector until that time; so İELS had also became the first ever Turkish game in the RPG genre, and was governed in Turkish language accordingly (Yilmaz and Cagiltay, 2005 p.5).

Although the game featured some innovative moves for gaming sector, such as delivering the game on the newest technological improvement, the CD-ROM, and being distributed by a professional music company (Raks New Media), due to the primitive conditions of gaming sector and PC-gaming habit in Turkey in those times and its very expensive retail price (35$), it had reached to approximately 47.000 users, with about 45.000 copies of which were distributed as a part of game magazine bundle (Yilmaz and Cagiltay, 2005 pp.5-6). After the Internet breakthrough, in 2005, the designers had adopted the game for fixing the compatibility issues with up-to-date technology and re-distributed the game via Internet, and also created a version for Linux system.

Figure 4.1 & 4.2: Cover images of the Amiga version (Left) and PC version (Right) of İELS



The rudimental developing conditions of the amateur or semi-pro gaming companies for the early Turkish game sector in the 90s can be understood from the description of Tuker, Yilmaz and Cagiltay (2015):

> *The amateur groups that had developed games used ties forged in their high school years to create team spirit. Although no specific gaming company arose and game sales recovered only material expenses, the developers insisted on developing these games in dark basement rooms in the face of adverse conditions, motivated only by their desire to produce local games for Turkish people.*

Contrary to the primitive development and working conditions, and its sale and distribution success, this very first sample of the Turkish RPG genre on digital platform had duly featured a remarkable world for the gamers, in which the cultural characteristics of the cosmopolitan Istanbul metropolis-city were harmonized with the classical RPG environment, rules and game mechanics. Together with the Turkish language and its specialties, like common idioms and uncommon, newly-created ad-hoc wits, this harmonization turned out to be the key factor that made İELS a cult game before the Turkish digital gaming and RPG audience[65]. Therefore, it can be said that the humor of İELS made it prominent among other games in same (typical RPGs) or different genres, as well as the limited number of Turkish games.

[65] Sayın, F., 2015, Bunları Biliyor Muydunuz? Bölüm 9 – İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları Nedir, Ne Değildir? [online], https://kahramangiller.com/bilgisayar-oyunu/bunlari-biliyor-muydunuz-bolum-9/. [accessed 23 February 2017].

In order to compare and contrast the preferences of İELS and its utilization of humor against the aforementioned sample games in Chapter 3 of this thesis in accordance with the claimed list of functions properly, all the formal and dramatic game elements that complement each other within the game design scope, such as the world building, setting, narration, general tone, game flow, aesthetics, characters and character creation phase (including the allies, enemies and non-playable characters), mechanics (such as weaponization, magic and sorcery system, and experience and leveling system), resources (such as currency), setting, theme, dramatic arc and cultural feats shall be analyzed respectively. This study shall also magnify how İELS had adopted and adapted the classical rules and aspects of RPG, and implemented Turkish humor throughout this challenge.

4.2. GAME DESIGN AND WORLD-BUILDING IN 'İELS'

As described in Chapter 2, game design is a concept that covers anything and everything within the imaginary world of a game, and world-building constitutes a huge portion of such storyworld[66]; including but not limited to the theme, setting, story, mood, atmosphere, character design, dialogues, tone and narration. İELS has a comedic aspect of world building matters, as it had combined the several general feats of a common RPG genre game and the local characteristics of Turkish people and language, and their daily lives (together with the facts of the metropolis of Istanbul) in the cauldron of humor.

4.2.1 General Tone of İELS

In order for achieving a comedic status, İELS had set humor as a tool for determining the tone and mood of every element of the game design. Pursuant to such preference, the game presents both emergent and non-emergent (hidden) humor to the players, thus the game evades the danger of undiscovered or unnoticed humor. The main function of

[66] Wendig, C., 2013, 25 Things You Should Know About Worldbuilding.

humor, as per the intentions of the developers[67] is helping the creation of an entertaining and fun game even out of the desperate status of Turkey which is caricaturized in the game. Humor therefore has been used to mitigate the socio-politically tensional content of the game and enhancing the immersive side of magic circle, and humor was spread to nearly every formal and dramatic element of game design and the aesthetics (just like it is made in Grim Fandango Remastered, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition and South Park: The Stick of Truth).

Such choice also wiped out all the inconsistency and ridicule nature (such as the alternative universe concept, originally created races, the irrationality of quests and storyline, supernatural talents, etc.) by the help of the general surreal and absurd tone of the game design. More specifically, humor was mainly inserted in the narrative tools and dramatic act and nearly all of the major humor types were used in such purpose *(all of such elements shall be further explained below in detail).*

For an example of humor in tone, even the game's printed manual is written in comedic manner and all the explanations regarding the game mechanics are also made with humor. Accordingly, game manual starts the introduction by describing the status of Turkey in a literary style, but ends with a humorous and rhetorical question that resembles the globally famous fictionality quote in arts and media: *'The people, events and institutions mentioned hereby has no relations with the real people, events and institutions'*, as it tells the reader that all of such events listed in the introduction part happens not in Turkey, but in a galaxy far far away and very long time ago.[68]

Moreover, the race and class descriptions in the game manual also contain the exact same comedic tone; for instance, description of the Memur (*can be translated as Government Employee or Officer*) class includes such sarcastic, satiric and exaggerated phrases as the following: "They are so brave that they can dare to maintain funds for two children, one grocery store, a butcher that sees red, two auto galleries and four guilds in the thorny paths of the life with a sole officer payroll" (Figure 4.3).

[67] Siliconworx, 1996. İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları – Game Manual
[68] Siliconworx, 1996. İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları – Game Manual

This description in fact defines further the strengths and weaknesses and feats of the race/class with these kind of humorous wordings and eases the learning phase of the player regarding the game mechanics with the following phrases: “As they must earn their livings with a sole officer payroll in this era, they can be deemed as massless from side view” (*Their physical appearance is thus frail – creates a similarity with Gnome race in Dungeons and Dragons RPG culture*), “As they cannot nurture properly either on regular or irregular basis, they are lack of strength .... but their durability is enhanced” (*reference to the race specialties in RPG gaming culture*); “Due to the fact that the officers of today’s İstanbul had got used to all kinds of insulting, relegation, being beaten by police baton, etc, such kind of stuff does not affect them anymore” (reference to the physical, mental and magical resistances and durability of a class in RPG culture), “However, although they struggle to make an impact all day long, nobody does care for them” *(reference to the lack of charisma, which is an important feat for magical offensive power in character building*). All of such humorous and even comedic descriptions are also made for the remaining of the playable characters’ race and class definition. Therefore, such humor maintains a better communication of mechanics to the player.

Figure 4.3 The description of Officer class from the game manual

MEMUR

Bu devirde memur maaşıyla geçinmek zorunda oldukları için, profilden bakınca, pek bir hacimleri yoktur. İki boyutlu olanlarına bile rastlanır. Dengeli veya dengesiz, bir türlü beslenemedikleri için, pek kuvvetli değillerdir. Tüm hayatları boyunca ezildikleri için... Ezilmesinler diye... Yani ezilmemek için... Her neyse, sonuçta ezile ezile dayanıklılıkları çok artmıştır. Günümüz İstanbul'unda memurlar, her türlü hakaret, sürülme, coplanma vs.'ye maruz kaldıklarından dolayı, artık onlara bunlar koymaz olmuştur.

[STANBUL EFSANELERI]

Hayatın dikenli yollarında memur maaşıyla iki çocuk, bir bakkal, gözünü kan bürümüş bir kasap, iki oto galerisi ve dört cemiyet geçindirmeyi göze alacak kadar cesurdurlar. Ama, adamcağızlar bütün gün didindiği halde, millet bunları pek iplemez.

As an example of emergent humor, as a mandatory part of storyline, when the player attempts an exit from the Topkapı Palace in Eminönü (accessible in very late stages of the game) after finding the mighty Kılıçartıbeş sword in the palace *(a weapon that resembles the iconic Excalibur sword; see below for further details)*, Belediye Dragonu Celal (*Celal the Dragon of Municipality*), who aided the player previously, confronts the player near the exit of Palace and demands the sword. When the player chooses not to give the sword, he attacks the player by using local wits such as "Ulan sizin gibi hıyara güvenende hata zaten!" *('It's my fault to trust such idiots like you'*), "Askerliğiniz bitmez artık sizin!" *('Your military service will never end!' – a wide known local wit with referencing the long duration of mandatory military service of men*

in Turkey), "Savulun bre gafiller!" *('Beware, you unwary fools! – 'Bre' word is a reference to the Ottoman Turkish and used as an element of humor, can be a synonym of 'Thou' rhetoric in English language*) (Figure 4.4)

Figure 4.4 Facing Dragon Celal in Topkapı Palace gates

As an example of hidden humor, when the player optionally wanders in the ball pitch in Mecidiyeköy, the 'Dellenmiş Bahçevanlar' *('Enraged Gardeners')* attacks them with using phrases like "Laaayn, çimlere basmayıın!" *('Don't set foot to the grass, bub!')* and "Hınaaaaaar, ne basıyong leyn çümlere!" (*'Hınaar', also used as a part of a spell in the game, represents a local war cry; where the remaining of the speech can be summarized as 'How can you dare to step on the grass!' with a local rural and funny accent)* (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Enraged Gardeners attack the player with a funny speech

Overall, it can be said that, İELS crafts humor in tone of the game for a better playing experience by the means of a) mitigating the possible tension that can arise from the dispute regarding the determination and assignment of good and evil fractions in the game *(see below section on Culture and Language for further information*), b) generating a more immersive magic circle to the player, c) sets up a better communication between game mechanics and the player, d) brings sensible connection and lashing point to the ridiculous and supernatural ecosystem (i.e. between mechanics and narration) of the game e) defines itself in a pure comedic game level. As the general comedic tone of a game gets nurtured from the elements of game design in return, too (*see in Chapter 2*), all of such preferences shall be explained further in detail with other elements of the game design and humor types in order for confirmation of the hypothesis.

4.2.2 Culture and Language in İELS

As a primary characteristic, this game had found its roots in the Turkish culture and tried to reflect the core problematic sides of such culture in a protestor approach[69]. As per the declarations of the developers, the point of origin of developing this game is deeply related with the degeneration and corruption in social, theological and political status of the country and culture, where the classes and moral fibers of the game was also designed within such scope. Therefore, this game also had embraced an aim of criticism regarding the said aspects of Turkish population and social order.

4.2.2.1 References to local culture

In order to add the comedic factor to the game, the developers of İELS had implemented the sarcastic and satiric humor as a point of view regarding the tone, setting, narration, dramatic act and storyline progression of the game and pursued references from local culture for creating an immersive magic circle for the gameplay. This procedure enabled

[69] E.S. ATV, 1994. *Kent Sokakları.* [Video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zb973GcfMIs. [access on 10 January 2017]

them to simplify and rationalize the most ridiculous points and make them get accepted easily by the local audience, as it was comedic and self-criticizing after all.

For example, the story teller – bard of the game, Silikon Baba (*Silicon Father*), who explains the game's world, setting, theme and the storyline, was designed by resembling the wide-spread iconic "ak sakallı dede" (*wise old man*) image or Dede Korkut (*Dada Gorgout*) figure in Turkish culture, but it was altered with a rock/heavy metal (the game itself had created a sui-generis class of humans out of this style and referred them as "Siliconians") design for contributing to the comedic tone of the game.

Moreover, according to this NPC (*non-playable character*) Silikon Baba, the party that the player had gathered and is playing with is not unique, though special, as he says "*There are many other heroes waiting for him to tell this story*" (Figure 4.6) to the player in a semi-slang language with also a scolding manner. This quote diminishes the "ultimate hero" and "savor" images in the players' minds while playing the game in order to set the humorous tone in gameplay (just like it is done in Grim Fandango Remastered, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition and Leisure Suit Larry) and makes the game a non-serious RPG specimen. This choice had a purpose of both presenting humor from the beginning to the player and making the player feel as if he/she (and his/her party) was just one of the many common and regular people in the new and alternative İstanbul city.

Figure 4.6 Silikon Baba's related speech of anti-heroism

As an instance of local humor, while the story of the alternate İstanbul *(a.k.a. the İstanbul of İELS)* is being told by Silikon Baba, it can be clearly seen by the player that one of the former heroes of İstanbul was "En Kahraman Rıdvan", a well-known caricature character of famous drawer Bülent Arabacıoğlu from the pseudo-fictional and futurist comic books/magazines published in Turkey in the 1980s *(in the humor magazine 'Gırgır' mainly)* and early 1990s[70] (Figure 4.7 and 4.8). By connecting the fictional universe of the game to the real İstanbul city of 1990s via a popular comic book character, the game had contributed to its comedic tone and style. Moreover, the selected local iconic humor figure, Rıdvan, was known for his attempts to become a hero in the ordinary İstanbul city without any superpowers, and generally failing to save the day or people from really non-lethal threats – as Rıdvan failed due to his clumsiness each time, or got empty-handed, the audience made fun of him regularly. İELS had also made him get killed in the battle against the Gavur İmam's forces, by the betrayal (stabbed by a knife from his back) of his best friend Hüsnü in the battlefield, so continued the real legacy of the comic book character. Tabık Vesile, a fictional ally in the İELS is also designed as Rıdvan's granddaughter. Even Rıdvan's famous war cry "Kukuriiiikuu!!" was present in such background story of İELS.

By such reference, it can be claimed that the player gets warmed up to the idea of becoming a hero, picking up where a fellow, known caricature character had left off in a familiar city, and automatically gets used to a) the fact that this game is based upon humor in the first place and players can find many local references in the game and b) the humorous tone of the game with the help of a local humor figure. Similar thing is also done in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition by adding a picture of Manny Calavera of Grim Fandango Remastered, another game from the same developer studio, to a portrait in the Mayor's Mansion in Phatt Island, as a cameo appearance, devoted for the fans of the game (Figure 4.9). South Park: The Stick of Truth also refers to many local figures of U.S.A. such as Al Gore and Morgan Freeman, while Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Down! refers to several local figures like Susan Sarandon and David Letterman within the purpose of same framework.

[70] Durutuna, G. 15 March 2012, En Kahraman Rıdvan Don Kişot Ruhlu, NTV [online] http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/en-kahraman-ridvan-don-kisot-ruhlu,91XM53uUB0GhZ_6fvr-lVg. [accessed 20 February 2017]

Figure 4.7 "En Kahraman Rıdvan" Comic Book

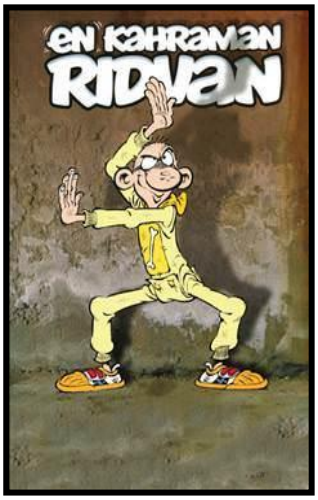


Figure 4.8 Rıdvan in the İELS world

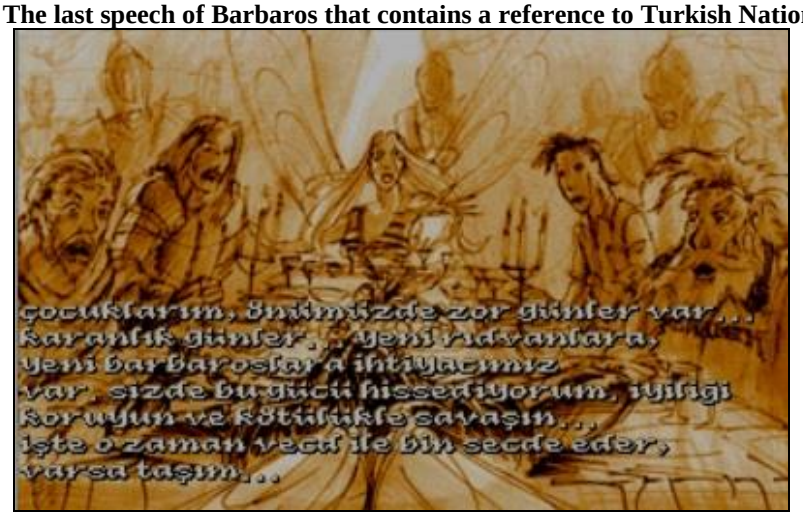
Figure 4.9 Manny Calavera's (Grim Fandango) portrait can be seen in the upper left side of the screen, nearby the stairs of the Phatt Island's Mayor's Mansion in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition

As the local culture of Turkey constitutes the vast majority of the game content, from the character creation and simple game mechanics to the resources and dialogues of the game is under the impact of local humor derived from such local culture. For example, a) one of the common utility NPCs in the game, Gerekli Şeyler shop, is a reference to the (still present) famous comic book shop in İstanbul of that time with the same name (Figure 4.10); b) the characterization of all classes, races and enemies are done in accordance with Turkish phrases or professions with caricaturizing them such as Hırgız (originally Hırsız (*Thief*), but used with its common pronunciation in rural areas of Turkey), Dadaş (a local adjective given to the citizens of Erzurum city in Turkey mainly), Lavuk (Prick) and Maganda (Yahoo – *both of such names are a product of Turkish daily slang language and used as an insult for the insolent wiseacres that favor other cultures, and impolite, imprudent brutes in the society, respectively*), etc.; and c)

even all the weaponry is based upon tools from Turkish culture mainly, such as Fanila (flannel shirt), Çetvel (ruler, with a local funny yet common pronunciation), Terlik (slippers), Tebeşir (chalk), etc. Barbaros the Wasp, who is named after the famous Ottoman admiral Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa (Barbarossa) and occupies a crucial place in the background of the game's storyline, and his speech that includes a verse from Turkish National Anthem "*O zaman vecd ile bin secde eder (varsa) taşım*" can be listed as another important local culture references (Figure 4.11)

Figure 4.10 Gerekli Şeyler shop in the game is a reference to the namesake shop in the real İstanbul

Figure 4.11 The last speech of Barbaros that contains a reference to Turkish National Anthem

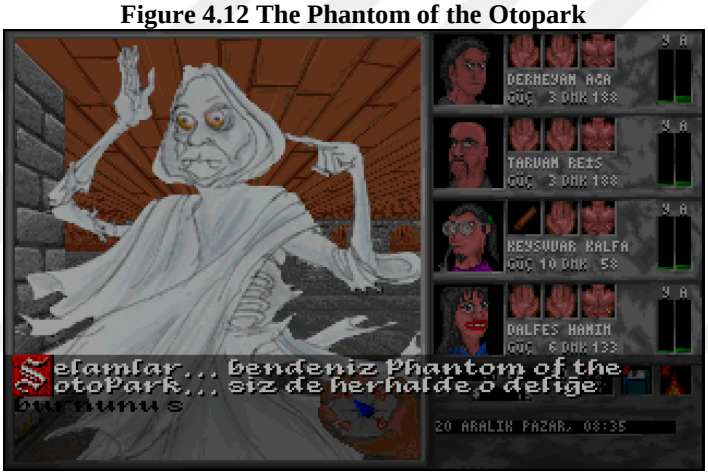


As a result, such favoring of Turkish local culture and İstanbul culture, a) the game become more appealing for to the local audience b) accordingly, this fact creates a more immersive magic circle, c) adapts the common RPG elements with the local humor to the game and removes the irrationality behind the usage of local units and elements in the game, d) contributed to the comedic tone of the game.

4.2.2.2 References to foreign cultures

Although İELS is primarily depending on local culture in the words of procuring humor, it also provides several foreign cultural references within the gameplay, where some of them are emergent and some are hidden. As an example, the game adopts the famous "Phantom of the Opera" artwork with "Phantom of the Otopark" as an early game concept in Mecidiyeköy's Otopark, and such ghost figure mocks the player and also provides the maps of each district in İstanbul in order to let them live a little longer (Figure 4.12). Değirmen-ül-püfür (Windmill of wind) is also a direct reference to Cervantes' famous Don Quixote novel.

Figure 4.12 The Phantom of the Otopark



Another example is the Lord Soth, the cursed Solamnian Knight figure of Ravenloft and Dragonlance RGP novel series. Pursuant to this, Lord Soth leads all the RPG characters Kilerik (Cleric), Meycik Yuzır (Magic User) and Faytır (Fighter) deities (all of them are also referring to the foreign RPG culture) that have conquered Sarıyer district and gives a mandatory quest to the player in the storyline (Figure 4.13). As a part of comedic game design, the player refers to Lord Soth as "Thou Infidel!" and Soth explains that İELS had dispensed with Dragonlance's fame with the "Pabucunu dama atmak" idiom in Turkish and gives a quest in accordance with such idiom, which is returning the fame of Dragonlance by retrieving the pabuç (shoe) back from the dam (roof).

Figure 4.13 Lord Soth's cameo appearance

There are several other key foreign references also present in the game, such as the Kılıçartıbeş (Sword +5), which is the most powerful and enhanced melee weapon in the game and it shall be acquired by pulling it out from a stone that it is stuck within. By its visuals and such retrieving method, it directly resembles the Excalibur sword mentioned in the famous King Arthur myth of Britain (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14 The adaptation of King Arthur's Excalibur Sword in İELS, 'Kılıçartıbeş'

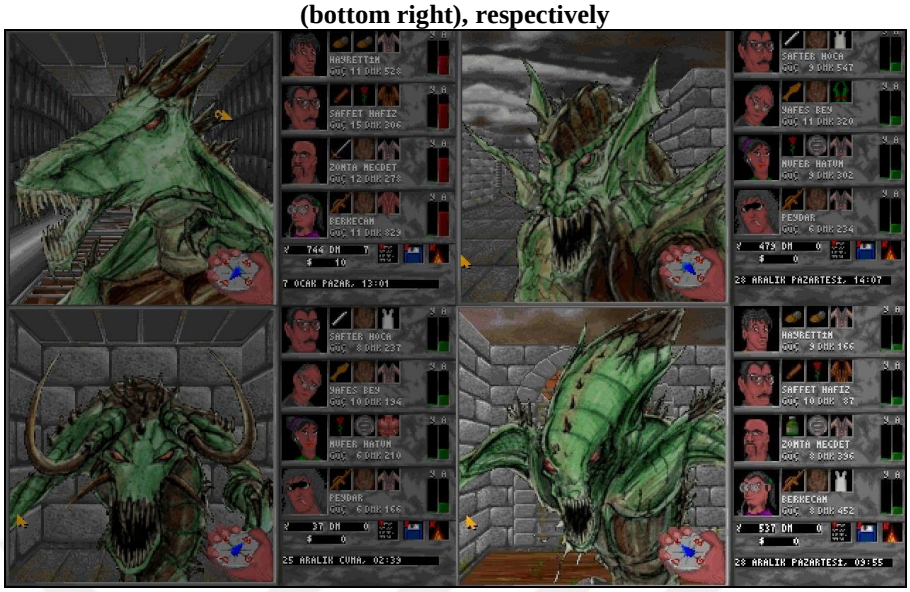
Sui-generis Silicionian race of the game is also a primary foreign culture reference in the game. Accordingly, Silicionians are only designed as playable characters for the game instead of being enemies, allies or NPCs and they are not resembling a true RPG race or class in the game. This character type, with its visuals, sole preferred weapon type (Tüftüf, which also can be used only and exclusively by Siliconians) and their special ability of being the only race that can take additional boost from wearing Megedeath Tişört (A t-shirt that was highly popular among the Turkish and global youth that admire rock and metal-siliconian music and Megadeath music group in the 90s) is a resemblance of the Heavy Metal and Rock music fans in the Turkey at that

time period who are also portrayed as nerdy people (Figure 4.15). The humorous aspect of Siliconians is their tendency for eating Fıstık (Nuts) weapon instead of using it in battles when they are equipped with a Fıstık, as the Silicionians in real world consume salty nuts in immense amounts, as per the game manual.

Figure 4.15 The Siliconian race in character creation/part build phase as a metaphor of Heavy Metal fan in real world

Moreover, one of the most difficult enemy races in the game, Yobazlar (*Zealots*), were divided into four sub-classes and each were named after a universal meal sauce; such as Napoliten (Napolitano), Bolonez (Bolognese), Beşamel (Béchamel) and Ograten (Au Gratin) (Figure 4.16). Yobaz races have no actual direct reference from the RPG culture, and they are a product of İELS originally, and they resemble scary, berserk and mutated semi-humanoid creatures with their aesthetics. But this universal reference to their naming also reverses the dark image of these enemies and their horrifying impacts on the player by the humorous approach, and contributes to the comedic structure of the game. Also from the evil fraction, 'Çembersakal' ('Round-beard') and 'Karafatma' ('Cockroach'; or 'Women in Chador') races have their names derived directly from their clothing and appearance, as such names are commonly used as generic terms to define or refer them in real İstanbul culture.

Figure 4.16 Yobaz Bolonez (top left), Ograten (top right), Beşamel (bottom left) and Napoliten (bottom right), respectively

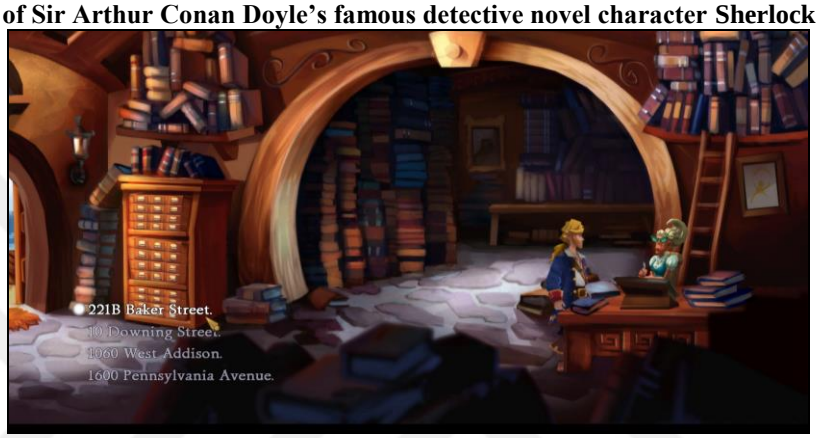


Last but not the least of the prominent foreign culture references, as a hidden humor, the player can have a conversation with a Lavuk piracy book seller in Beyoğlu district that includes a book named "Marangozdan da Öte" ('Even More Than Carpenter'), which is a reference for the famous fantasy novel of Theodore Sturgeon named 'More Than Human'. The book didn't have a Turkish translation at the time of the game and it was a known literal work mostly by the intellectuals that are mainly portrayed as Lavuks in the game (Figure 4.17). As a part of humor, this foreign culture reference is functioning as an Easter Egg, with an attempt of addressing to a more niche intellectual audience, but also mocks such audience with the pedant, snob and breezy response of that Lavuk seller.

Figure 4.17 The speech regarding the 'Even More Than Carpenter' book

From the perspective of humor in foreign culture reference, İELS coincides with Freedom Force (i.e. the game refers to universal Adam and Eve mythology and Pan from Greek mythology), Grim Fandango Remastered (i.e. all the Dead Land is derived from Aztec mythology), Worms 2 (with all authentic arsenal such as Kamikaze, Ninja Rope and Priceless Ming Vase) and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition (gives references to Voodoo, Sherlock Holmes and dinosaurs – Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18 Guybrush can give 221B Baker Street as his residence address, which is also the address of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous detective novel character Sherlock Holmes



To sum up, collectively the foreign culture references of the game as a part of humorous game design contributes to a) a more immersive magic circle, b) a rise in intellectuality level of humor, as well as the widening of audience c) the comedic, surreal and absurd nature of the game, d) creating a mixture of local and universal approach to RPG gaming genre by using common RPG tools and converting them or adapting them to Turkish culture.

4.2.2.3 Language in İELS

As stipulated in Chapter 2, language and culture have a long-established relationship where the humor also affects and is affected from the language just like the culture. İELS employs Turkish language for all the aspects and elements of the game, and therefore breeds the humor from Turkish phrases, idioms and proverbs, with also creating new jargon with puns or similar tools and humor types. This in fact deepens the communication between the game and the gamers, but due to the prevalence and extensity of Turkish language, it addresses to a very narrow portion of possible comedic

and/or RPG genre fans, when compared to the common usage and prevalence of English throughout the world. This factor in fact is a major setback in all kinds of functions of humor in the gameplay, as it alienates anyone that is not familiar with or competent in Turkish language, unlike all the sample games examined in Chapter 3. Consequently, as all the narration and mechanics is in Turkish, any gamer that does not know Turkish can neither make use of any kinds or types of humor in the game, nor even guide his/her way through the game.

This circumstance indeed deteriorates the universality of the game and abolishes the function of being appealing to the audience on a universal scale. If language barrier is neglected, all of the humorous elements can function as in the six stipulated manners in this thesis, but nevertheless, the linguistic aspect of the game reduced the audience demographics of this game to a very narrow perspective which can address to Turkish-cognizant people exclusively.

For summing up, if the linguistics can be neglected, the local and foreign cultural references contribute to the a) creating a more entertaining gameplay experience in a more immersive magic circle of the game, b) achieving the comedic level, c) bringing a sensual connection point and logic to the ridicule of the surreal game elements, d) mitigating the could-be explicit content of the game hugely, e) setting up a better communication of game mechanics and the players and f) widening the audience scale of the game on universal aspect. functions of humor in the game. However, as per the linguistic matters, all of such functions are neutralized, and even reversed, including but not limited to the collapsing of audience demographics by the means of alienating the gamers with different cultural backgrounds or gamers that do not know Turkish language and its characteristics.

4.2.3 Formal Elements of IELS

As the comedic tone of a game reverberates to and feeds from the formal and dramatic elements of game design, such formal elements, including the basic game mechanics, shall be examined in the perspective of the usage of humor.

4.2.3.1 Game mechanics

Game mechanics of İELS are in pursuit of adapting and adopting the general rules of RPG genre and choose thereby the Dungeons and Dragons (shall be referred as 'D&D' hereinafter) rules (such as damage calculation, etc.) as basis. As explained in the previous sections, the local and foreign cultural features have a major impact on the configuration of mechanics and adaptation phase of the basics of RPG genre.

4.2.3.1.1 *Rules*

Similar to the Amiga games of that time period such as Elvira: Mistress of the Dark (1990, Accolade), İELS employs 2D engine for both the general gameplay and battle screens (Figure 4.19) with first person perspective, and utilizes both keyboard keys and a point-and-click control mechanism. Within such scope, the player can move by one square of a place per each movement with using the four arrow keys of keyboards or with clicking to the direction he/she wants to go with mouse. In battle screen, the parties attack to each other in turns (as an example of turn-based battle system), where the turn queue can alter by many variants; hence it does not have a direct or predictable order. In shopping, character/inventory or interaction screens, the keyboard key combinations or mouse controls can be used for interactions with the objects.

Figure 4.19 Battle screen of İELS (left) and gameplay screen of İELS (right)

As a part of the rules, the character creation screen in the beginning of the game introduces several different aspects to the players. Accordingly, the races and classes in RPG culture is combined and issued as a single feat within the playable character types

and player has to create a party of four characters by selecting from a pool of eight different races; Humans, Students, Teachers, Yahoos, Pricks, Harlots, Officers and Siliconians *(see the 'Characters' sub-section under the 'Dramatic Elements of İELS' section below for further details).* Unlike the common character building phases in RPG genre, which uses the adding-subtracting method for each attribute, the character creation in İELS is determined by dice rolling, which randomizes each and every feat per each roll and thus, creates an iterative, non-identical gameplay per each player and round (i.e. when a player begins a new game) (Figure 4.20).

Figure 4.20 The character creation screen in İELS

Each of such feats and attributes resemble a different thing with a special, sporadically comedic and generic name used exclusively in İELS; Boy (height), Kilo (weight), Zeka (Wisdom; affects the accuracy and power of magical attacks and defenses mostly), Vuruş Gücü (Strike Power; represents the physical power in melee attacks), Kelime Dağarcığı (Domain; defines the mana for magical attacks), Güç (Strength; but mainly refers to the Hit Points for the character), Çeviklik (Agility; affects the saving throw when defending melee and ranged attacks and reflexive hits), Dayanıklılık (Endurance; refers to the duration of the character for resisting hunger and tire), Batıl İnanç (Faith; refers to the odds of getting affected by curses/magic with special effects), Yüzsüzlük (Dicacity; refers to the magical defense), İstanbulluluk (Wilderness Lore that affects the amount of randomly spawn enemies while wandering the districts of İstanbul), Cesaret

(Courage; determining in the effectiveness of the user's and enemies' attacks on later stages of a battle), Etkileyicilik (Charisma; affects the rise and effectiveness of domain) and İnanç (Will; refers to the will throws in combat will-checks and determines the magical and melee resistances). Each of such attributes differ for each class in the words of highness and lowness of attribute ceiling per each dice role and thus, each class have several advantages and disadvantages over others (for instance, Teachers make excellent melee fighters, where Yahoos can excel in both melee and magical combat, and Pricks have an expertise in ranged fighting but is weak in Will checks, etc.).

This aspect of İELS mostly resembles Freedom Force and South Park: The Stick of Truth games, as they also had altered and modified the general concepts of their genre within their own world-building phases and created their own game dictionary. As an example, South Park: The Stick of Truth has Gross effect that damages the victim each turn by making him/her vomit, where such specialty resembles the Poison status effect in common RPG culture. Freedom Force also refers Dexterity or Agility attribute of RPG culture as Nimbleness in the gameplay and divides the Poison damage concept into Acid and Radiation categories.

Due to the simplicity of the game mechanics, the humor in the rules of İELS does not contribute to the comedic tone of the game, but hence, as the combat mechanism refers to "Wait your turn!" (*'Sıranı bekle!'*) phrase that is quite common in Turkish daily life and language, such humor a) creates a better communication of game mechanics to the player b) fits with the comedic nature of the game tone, c) connects the local cultural feats to the adaptation and adoption of RPG genre rules and abolishes any inconsistencies and d) makes additions to the immersive nature of the magic circle.

4.2.3.1.2 *Magical combat system*

The magical combat system in İELS is altered from other RPG games, by the means of naming and typing. Accordingly, instead of calling the magic as 'magic' like other RPG games, İELS refers to magic spells as "Küfür" (Swearing, but using slang jargon instead of vulgar insults and curses) and "Vecize" (Apothegm, mainly refers to the special effect swear words), which have different type of range and effect and are quite familiar

for Turkish local culture and therefore boost the immersive magic circle, communication of game mechanics to the audience and help the game to become more appealing to the local audience in the same time (Figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21 A fictional advertisement of a Swear and Apothegm shop in Beyazıt as an NPC, inserted in the game manual of İELS. This image is another sign of comedic tone of İELS

As per the Küfür and Vecize utilization, İELS further names the mana concept used for disbursing a spell in RPG games as "Damak" ('*Palate'*, describes the remaining ability to throw another Küfür or Vecize before exhaustion), and refers to the domain concept in which the spells and scrolls are contained in RPG spellcasters as "Kelime Dağarcığı" ('*Vocabulary'*, defines the capacity and content of a character for memorizing/learning and casting a Swear or Apothegm). As another simplification and communication booster for such alterations, many of the 'spells' used in the game are copied from real curse words or swears from Turkish culture, but they are not largely offensive vituperations. Instead, they tend to increase the gravity of magic circle and generate a funny and easily adaptable mechanic for the gameplay.

For example, Swears include such words as 'Pis' ('*Filth', a weak Magic Missile spell counterpart of RPG culture)*, 'Üzüm' ('*Grape', an original jargon of İELS that states a more powerful, yet mediocre type of Magic Missile*), 'Lale' *('Tulip', a strong substitute for Magic Missile spell),* 'Piştogli' (*'Bastard's son', a common phrase in Turkish culture and states a direct damage spell that only from the adjacent square of the enemy here, thus has very narrow range),* 'De Get!' ('*Get off!', another common Turkish idiom that is also a substitute for Power Word Kill spell of RPG genre)*, 'Zıkkımın

Kökünü Ye!' ('*Choke death!' also a common phrase in local culture and a resemblance of Symbol of Death spell from RPG games*). Apothegms on the other hand have special defensive and offensive effects; for instance, 'Kelle' (*'Nob', represents the Feeblemind spell)*, 'Allah Sizi Bildiği Gibi Yapsın!' ('*I refer you to God's punishment!', a Color Spray spell*), 'Gel Babana' *('Come to papa', a Charm Person spell*) and 'Ben Anlamam' ('*I don't buy it', an Immune to Magic spell*), all of which are common and popular teasing or bullying phrases in Turkish local culture.

Hence, the utilization of common Turkish phrases and idioms in the game as a major game mechanic and a replacement and modification inducement for the rules and characteristics of RPG genre via the humorous approach a) simplifies the game mechanics into familiar and comedic concepts, which boosts the magic circle's effectiveness and b) the communication of mechanics to the players; c) enhances the comedic nature of the game, d) brings sense to the surreal and irrelevant concept implementation by connecting cultural features to the specifics of genre and e) mitigates the effects of Swears and Apothegms when compared to the real life and marks them as inexplicit content. Within such framework, İELS coincides with South Park: The Stick of Truth, as the latter also uses comedic concepts and vocabulary within the magical combat system, like using a refrigerator or fire extinguisher for dealing Cold damage and using a Zippo for inflicting Fire damage, or the slang words used by Cartman as a sign of ultimate concentration, while casting a spell. Also similarly, in Monkey Island series, the game had invented its own method of sword duel, which was bandying the opponent with insulting words.

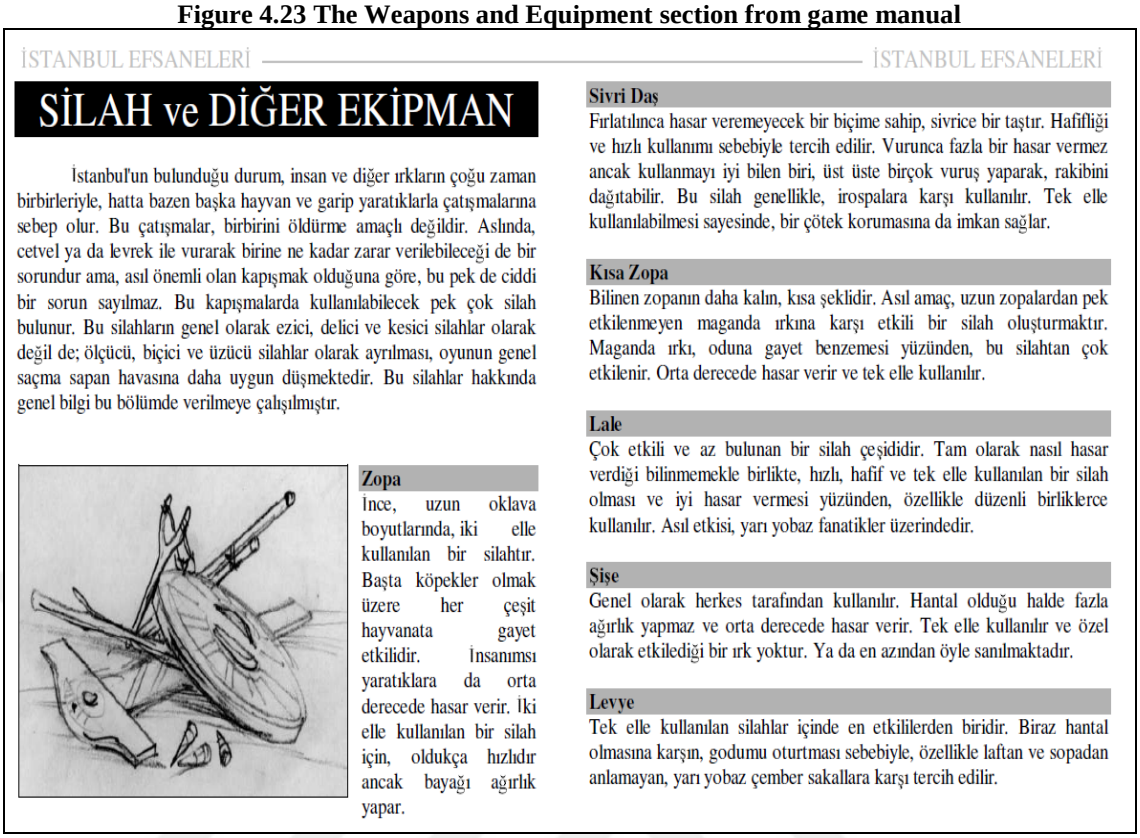
Figure 4.22 A drunkard Swear and Apothegm tutor in Mecidiyeköy. All types of tutors present the player a randomized pool of Swears and Apothegms each time.

4.2.3.1.3 *Weaponry and useful items*

Connately to the magical combat system, melee and ranged combat weaponry is also smeared with humorous tone. Accordingly, as also mentioned in the *4.2.1 General Tone of İELS* section above, all of the weaponry in İELS is gathered from the common, but not lethal or sporadically harmful tools and items in Turkish daily social and economical life. Such arsenal consists weapons like Levrek (Sea bass, a two-handed weapon), İngiliz Anahtarı (Wrench), Zopa (Staff, pronounced with a comedic rural accent), Kısa Sopa (Short Staff), Tüftüf (Blowgun), Kazma (Pickaxe), Sapan (Sling), Tebeşir (Chalk), T-Cetvel (T-squire), Cetvel (Ruler), Daş (Stone with also a comedic rural pronunciation), Tornavida (Screwdriver), Şişe (Bottle), Yün Yelek (Wool Vest) and Kırık Şişe (Broken Bottle) that can be found everywhere in Turkish society and can be used in daily life or brawls commonly. There were also some fictional and non-martial weapons like Çötek (a type of shield, the term is used for defining Trash Can Cap in street jargon of Turkey), French Wrench and Galvanometre (Galvanometer) that boosts the comedic nature of the game. All of such weaponry are sold in Silahçı (Gun shops) in every district or can be found on enemies or in secret places.

Similarly, Gerekli Şeyler shops, several temporary or permanent boosters and enhancers can be purchased by the player, with each having different effects. All of such items were selected from Turkish local nutrition and beverage materials, such as Bira (Beer), Hıyar (Cucumber), Ciklet (Gum), Padişah Macunu (Sultan’s Compound, a mixture for improving sexual energy and capacity), Dondurma (Ice Cream), Zeytinyağı (Olive Oil), Pul Biber (Chili Pepper) and Leblebi Tozu (Roasted Chickpea Powder). This arsenal and ammunition is resembling Worms 2, in which all the weaponry and tool kits were referring to different cultures and caricaturized for mitigating the violent content. Consequently, overall, it can be said that such weaponry system serves for the same functions with magical combat system, and suffers only from not having a universal cultural background, which can alienate a portion of gamers in game demographics.

Figure 4.23 The Weapons and Equipment section from game manual



İSTANBUL EFSANELERİ İSTANBUL EFSANELERİ

SİLAH ve DİĞER EKİPMAN

İstanbul'un bulunduğu durum, insan ve diğer ırkların çoğu zaman birbirleriyle, hatta bazen başka hayvan ve garip yaratıklarla çatışmalarına sebep olur. Bu çatışmalar, birbirini öldürme amaçlı değildir. Aslında, cetvel ya da levrek ile vurarak birine ne kadar zarar verilebileceği de bir sorundur ama, asıl önemli olan kapışmak olduğuna göre, bu pek de ciddi bir sorun sayılmaz. Bu kapışmalarda kullanılabilecek pek çok silah bulunur. Bu silahların genel olarak ezici, delici ve kesici silahlar olarak değil de; ölçücü, biçici ve üzücü silahlar olarak ayrılması, oyunun genel saçma sapan havasına daha uygun düşmektedir. Bu silahlar hakkında genel bilgi bu bölümde verilmeye çalışılmıştır.

Zopa
İnce, uzun oklava boyutlarında, iki elle kullanılan bir silahtır. Başta köpekler olmak üzere her çeşit hayvanata gayet etkilidir. İnsanımsı yaratıklara da orta derecede hasar verir. İki elle kullanılan bir silah için, oldukça hızlıdır ancak bayağı ağırlık yapar.

Sivri Daş
Fırlatılınca hasar veremeyecek bir biçime sahip, sivrice bir taştır. Hafifliği ve hızlı kullanımı sebebiyle tercih edilir. Vurunca fazla bir hasar vermez ancak kullanmayı iyi bilen biri, üst üste birçok vuruş yaparak, rakibini dağıtabilir. Bu silah genellikle, irospalara karşı kullanılır. Tek elle kullanılabilmesi sayesinde, bir çötek korumasına da imkan sağlar.

Kısa Zopa
Bilinen zopanın daha kalın, kısa şeklidir. Asıl amaç, uzun zopalardan pek etkilenmeyen maganda ırkına karşı etkili bir silah oluşturmaktır. Maganda ırkı, oduna gayet benzemesi yüzünden, bu silahtan çok etkilenir. Orta derecede hasar verir ve tek elle kullanılır.

Lale
Çok etkili ve az bulunan bir silah çeşididir. Tam olarak nasıl hasar verdiği bilinmemekle birlikte, hızlı, hafif ve tek elle kullanılan bir silah olması ve iyi hasar vermesi yüzünden, özellikle düzenli birliklerce kullanılır. Asıl etkisi, yarı yobaz fanatikler üzerindedir.

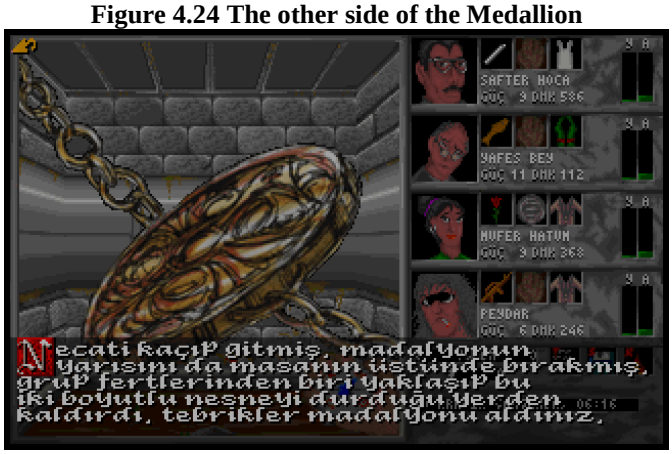
Şişe
Genel olarak herkes tarafından kullanılır. Hantal olduğu halde fazla ağırlık yapmaz ve orta derecede hasar verir. Tek elle kullanılır ve özel olarak etkilediği bir ırk yoktur. Ya da en azından öyle sanılmaktadır.

Levye
Tek elle kullanılan silahlar içinde en etkililerden biridir. Biraz hantal olmasına karşın, godumu oturtması sebebiyle, özellikle laftan ve sopadan anlamayan, yarı yobaz çember sakallara karşı tercih edilir.

4.2.3.2 Objectives and procedures

Objectives, also can be referred as the quests in İELS, are also a product of both emergent and hidden humor. As an example for emergent humor, the player is in a mission for acquiring a medallion as a part of an essential quest for the storyline, but possesses one side of the medallion and actually seeks the "other half of it" for reuniting them, as if it is possible to break a medallion into two halves – this is also a surrealistic attitude for the narration and storyline, and an ascription for the well-known saying "There are two sides of a medallion" (*"Madalyonun iki yüzü vardır"* in Turkish) which is used in telling that there are two opposite perspectives for every situation in life (Figure 4.24).

Figure 4.24 The other side of the Medallion



As another example for the humor in objectives, in Sarıyer, the player has a bounden quest of retrieving "the" shoe from the roof in order to proceed in the storyline (Figure 4.13), and this action is derived from the "*Pabucunu dama atmak*" phrase/idiom in Turkish language. This idiom can be translated in verbatim manner as "*Throwing the shoe of one to the roof*", with an actual meaning of "*Running rings around someone*" or "*put someone's nose out of joint"*. The background of that quest is depending on the speech of Lord Soth, an undead death knight from the famous Dragonlance and Ravenloft RPG novel series (LLC Books, 2010) as aforementioned, who claims that İELS is running rings around Dragonlance, and thus, has thrown the Dragonlance's shoe to the roof, and the player must get that shoe back from the roof (therefore, must stop running rings around Dragonlance) in order to proceed in the storyline. This comparison and reference is impudent but yet funny, and brings sympathy to the game, as it compares the level of quality and sophistication of Dragonlance to İELS and consider them as equals. Furthermore, later on that quest, when the player's party manages to reach the roof, a goofy member of the party suddenly proposes the idea of leaving the shoe there, as it is very smelly (Figure 4.25) and the game refers to the response of such situation with the following punchline: *"While some part of the party is beating the goof that said such thing, one member of the group had indeed retrieved the shoe"* (Figure 4.26).

Figure 4.25 The complaint against the shoe

Figure 4.26 The aftermath of such complaint

Another (surreal) example of humor in objectives is the *Kımıl Zararlıları Derneği* in Kadıköy district, a society which is based upon the "wheat bug" term and such living beings located in plants and sea, chosen for conveying the dirtiness of Kadıköy's shores in real world. The game refers those beings as people, and such term as an insult or swear, but also presents it as a way of honoring the party members and other citizens with a rank (the content and meaning of such rank is not explained for sure). In fact, this rank is supposed to be a major one, as all the party members swear and honored to become a Kımıl Zararlısı and remain so for life, after completing a quest in Kadıköy (Figure 4.27).

Figure 4.27 Oath of being a "Kımıl Zararlısı"

There are also numerous examples of hidden humor in the game. As an instance, as mentioned before, the game uses Barbaros and Barbie in its background as Wasps, who were the leaders of good forces in the previous great war won by the İstanbul citizens. As the name Barbaros refers to the famous chief admiral in Ottoman Navy, Barbarossa,

“Barbie” is also derived as a female name from Barbaros, and both characters are designed as half-human and half-wasp. When the player has a conversation with Barbie in Mecidiyeköy in the beginning of the game, she definitely ignores and underestimates the players with a sense of despair. As an answer, a party member also degrades and insults Barbie by saying “Who cares about this goddamn bee?! Let’s go to Beşiktaş, I’ve just heard something was going on there, I say let’s take a look at the situation!” with using slang vocabulary and rural accent as a part of comedic tone (Figure 4.28).

Figure 4.28 Aftermath of Barbie’s speech of despair and underrate

Also, there is a secret place in Eminönü district where a lunatic and eccentric old man appears in front of the player and asks about a rigmarole which was quite popular back in the 90s in Turkey: “Çayda kahvaltıda yenir, bisküvi denince akla, hemen şey olur.. ne olur?” (*This rigmarole was a product of an advertisement run by Turkish Eti company*). Then, the conversation truly derails from sense as the mad-man reveals the hints about scenario and the images of the producers intervene in the situation and tell the player that they are apologizing for forgetting to erase this mad-man from the game’s software (Figures 4.29 and 4.30). This is also an example for the comedic tone of the game serving even as a game mechanic by giving the hints and tips for the whereabouts of the next quest.

Figure 4.29 & 4.30 The old mad-man and the images of the producers as they meddle in

For procedures, as a part of the comedic tone, several objectives and game mechanics use humor in order to spice the fun up and avoid any boredom or frustration. The most prominent example for humorous procedures is the Havalı Mehtap in Eminönü district. Accordingly, Havalı Mehtap is an NPC character that can resurrect the party members that are not fainted but truly dead as a result of not eating for a very long time or being hit lethally in a battle, as such members will not be revived by doing Kamp (resting). However, as per the visuals and name of Havalı Mehtap (*Dashy Mehtap*), and including the fact that she takes a 'medical visit fee', it can be clearly seen that this NPC is an image of a brothel, and she serves as a different type of medic (Figure 4.31). Another hint for such claim is that, as a result of such service, the related party member (male or female, gender is in fact not important) seems to be relieved of all kinds of trouble as he/she says "Ooolum çok iyi beee!" (*Man, this was something else!* – Figure 4.32) with implying a sexual intercourse. This brothel culture was also pretty common and popular in İstanbul in the 1990s.

Figure 4.31 Havalı Mehtap's appearance

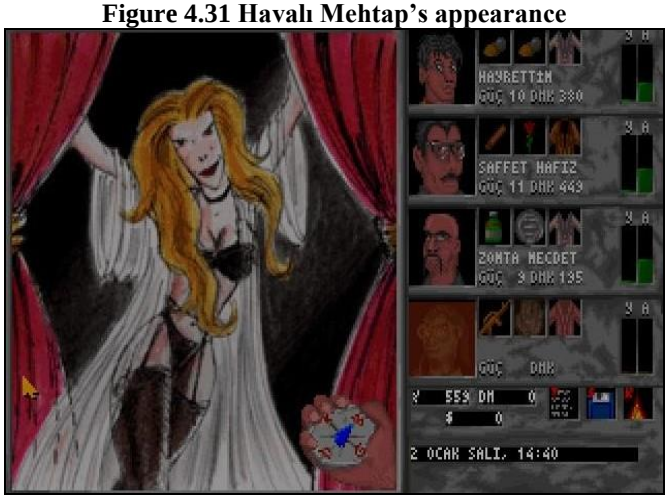


Figure 4.32 The reaction of party member after being served by Havalı Mehtap in exchange for a 'reasonable' price

With regards to such usage of humor in procedures and objectives, İELS is in tune with Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Down!, South Park: The Stick of Truth, Grim Fandango Remastered and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, as all of such games use humor for injecting humor into a long and lethargic gameplay, the significant characteristic of Adventure games; where South Park: The Stick of Truth, another RPG game, adapts the objective and procedure elements as a part of its comedic game design for engaging the genre's specifics and the game's own universe and culture, just like İELS does.

To sun up, by using humor in objectives and procedures, İELS a) creates a more immersive gameplay and magic circle, b) if any, mitigates the mature content, c) sets up a better communication of game mechanics with the players, especially from the local audience, d) shows the sign of a comedic tone e) uses surreal, irrelevant and irrational factors such as local rigmaroles, wits and rural accents in order to explain all the ridicule in the game within a logic.

4.2.3.3 Boundaries

Depending on the rules, mechanics and objectives elements of the game design, İELS also explains several boundaries by forging humor in gameplay. For example, in Eminönü district, after taking the quest from Tabık Vesile, player is warned for not

getting out of the district with the Turkish idiom "*Çanak çömlek patlar*"; which can be converted to English as, *"otherwise, the pots and pans shall explode"* – it is only a superstitious Turkish customary threat to children in order to channel them to do/not do something (this is also a common phrase of children, used while playing hide-and-seek), and means nothing more than a few lines to explain a serious prohibition of leaving the district (Figure 4.33). Another example for humorous boundaries is the famous "Gitmiycem iştee!" (*'I just won't go there!')* phrase said by a party member in Mecidiyeköy, when the player attempts to enter into a totally forbidden area. Lastly, as a humorous boundary, before completing the Beşiktaş quest regarding the Piers, the player cannot proceed to Anatolian side of İstanbul, as Beşiktaş Pier was under the siege of Yobaz race and in conjunction with this fact, the (then) Bosphorus Bridge was not available for pedestrian passage due to the heavy traffic collusion, a reference to the real heavy traffic in the intercontinental bridges of Istanbul in daily life.

Figure 4.33 The famous 'Çanak Çömlek Patlar' nightmare in Eminönü district

Undistinguished from the objectives, procedures and rules, Boundaries of IELS also serves for the same functions of humor, especially for the comedic game tone aspect. With such specialty, İELS shares the same atmosphere with Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition (including the scene where Guybrush denies to climb down a cliff in Phatt Island to grab a piece of map), Grim Fandango Remastered and especially, considering the rat flocks that block the eastern and western paths to the Lost Wood forest until a fart is being used against them, South Park: The Stick of Truth.

4.2.3.4 Resources

İELS employs several resources in the game that have also humorous touch in their craftsmanship. First of all, the game had its own currency, *"*Kıvrık*"* instead of Gold (common currency of RPG genre) or Turkish Lira *(the Kıvrık/Turkish Lira currency is not clarified in the game*), together with US Dollars and Deutschland Marks (*DM – the currency unit of Germany before the common Euro currency was accepted by the European Union. This currency unit was highly in demand in Turkey in the 1980s and 90s period, as Turkish Republic had sent about a million of immigrant workers to Germany in those years*). This is both a reference to the local and foreign cultural elements and also a contribution to the comedic game tone.

Furthermore, the game had implemented a fictional time scale unit, "Billah", but its details were not defined clearly. There was also "İfsar"[71], the weight measure unit of the game, "Dorz" which doesn't really match with anything familiar in real world (*but contains a resemblance of the famous tape cassettes of 1980s and 90s*) and a "Bosfor" term was used to define the famous Bosphorus of İstanbul, also a fictional war in the background story of the alternate İstanbul city. İELS coincides with Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition in the humorous resources aspect, where 'pieces of eight' was the common currency.

Moreover, İELS grants unlimited amount of saving opportunities with more than 20 slots for game state saving; utilizes Kamp (*camping; a counterpart for the common Resting mechanism of RPG genre*) system for regaining health after a battle, including revival of fainted party members; uses Yimmekçi (Restaurant, with a common rural pronunciation that adds to the humorous tone of the game) NPC for nutrition purposes and does not enable the player to load/reload a saved state without exiting the game and re-entering again – a reference to the Turkish culture that reminds the player to consent with his/her fate as far as possible, as he/she shall suffer from a little waste of time for re-loading the better fate again. The Kamp and Yimmekçi feats resemble the in-game

[71] Siliconworx, 1996. İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları – Game Manual

Energy-X canisters of Freedom Force, whereas the save-load system is quite similar to South Park: Stick of Truth.

Figure 4.34 The Yimmekçi NPC in İELS, where the player can get fed

As all of such made-up, modified and fictional terms have phonetically funny pronunciations and their reason for existence is also a factor of comedic game tone. It can therefore be said that, with such references and inventions, İELS had kept the real world (real İstanbul) and the fictional-built world of the game together, and add many humorous elements to the game.

4.2.3.5 Conflict and outcome

The general conflict in İELS is overpowering the Şeyh Cehalet (Sheikh Ignoramus) and his followers in order for saving the alternate İstanbul city. It is not clarified whether the party members could return to their very own real İstanbul after the end of the game (*as it was meant to be followed by a sequel game, which is yet to be published*); therefore the outcome of the game for the players can be summarized briefly as 'defeating the bigotry, ignorance and zealotry with goodness and humor in an alternate İstanbul that majorly resembles the real İstanbul even by the demographic and cultural aspects'. This outcome per each gameplay experience a) increases satisfaction of the enlightened and sophisticated (and mostly secular) fractions in real Turkey, and b) also contributes to the immersive side of magic circle via the humor and comedic tone for an advanced entertainment in gameplay.

The players also have to beat the intellectual, yahoo and several other mini factions in the society that they confront with every single day in real Istanbul, which shall c) mitigate the possible discriminative approach of the game for good and evil fractions by using the comedic function of humor. By such perspective, İELS tallies with South Park: The Stick of Truth, in which the player has to best many small human fractions (Elves, Girls, Kindergartners and junior high students) as well as the symbol of darkness in the game, the aliens and their products, the Nazi Zombies that refers to the Nazism controversially by using a toxic liquid that infects the victim with Nazism disease upon exposure to skin and that character speaks with the real audio records of Adolf Hitler, the Reich of Nazi Germany.

Figure 4.35 The final words before the final battle of the game; 'nicely' telling Şeyh Cehalet to shut up

As a result of humorous approach to the formal elements of the game, a major portion of the game mechanics serve for five of the six stipulated functions of humor in the game; which are a) serving as a complementary tool for the comedic tone of the game, b) mitigating the explicit content, if any, c) creating a more immersive magic circle for the gameplay, d) furnishes a better communication environment in between the game mechanics and the player for smoothing and easing the player's gameplay and e) connecting the irrelevant or irrational substances in game design elements to a common sensible point of view in order to absorb any ridicule as logical absurdity in the game

and maintaining and preserving the focus of the player into gameplay. All of such functions therefore catalyze the quality of gaming experience of the players. With regards to the last stipulated function of humor in the games, the language option of the game strictly limits the audience scale, but other formal elements of the game makes it more conspicuous to the local audience with many references to local or foreign cultures.

4.2.4 Dramatic Elements of İELS

In conjunction with the formal elements of game design, the dramatic elements of İELS are also composed of a humorous approach and therefore they both complement and fit into the general comedic tone of the game. Further sections will examine such dramatic elements of İELS, study the comparisons of İELS and the sample games from Chapter 3 within this scope and list the functions of humor being fulfilled in İELS.

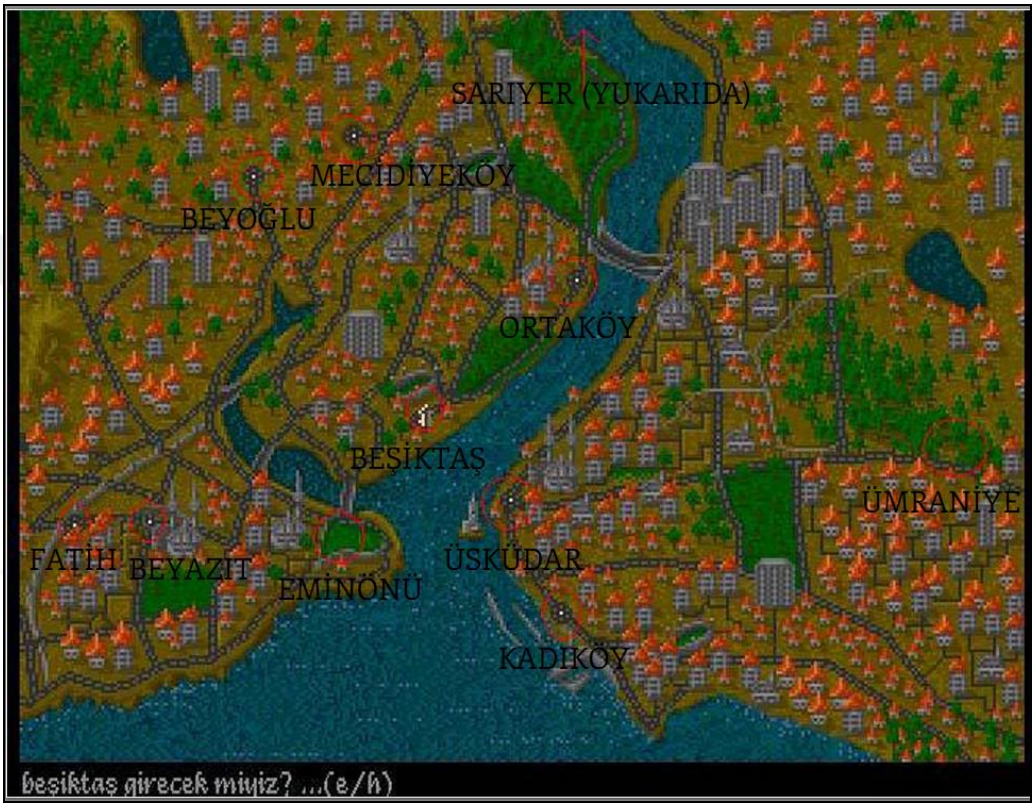
4.2.4.1 World-building

Just like the South Park: The Stick of Truth and Freedom Force games, İELS also predicates the world-building matters upon real life cities. In accordance with the setting of the game, İELS takes place in the alternate version of İstanbul city from Turkish Republic. The map of the city is the exact same of real İstanbul and it consists of twelve districts, with each of them having different and specific roles in the storyline and gameplay. All of such districts are named exactly after the real districts of İstanbul that also fall into the similar locations in the city map. This similarity also contributes to the communication of game mechanics to the player, makes the game more appealing for the local audience and creates a more immersive gameplay for them (Figure 4.36).

Pursuant to the alternate İstanbul city in İELS, each of the twelve districts serve for a different purpose, where the narration describes the characteristics of each in accuracy with the real versions of such districts. They can be sub-categorized by the volume of the enemy population (which reflects directly to the amount of the odds for confronting randomly spawn enemies) and by the enemy profile. As per the first sub-categorization,

Üsküdar, Beyazıt, Eminönü and Beyoğlu have a high population volume, whereas Mecidiyeköy, Sarıyer, Kadıköy, Ümraniye, Beşiktaş, Kız Kulesi and Fatih have lower population volume and this distinction is majorly precise and accurate when compared to the real life, excluding Fatih (has a special status in the game) and Mecidiyeköy (as it is the starting point in the gameplay).

Figure 4.36 The map of İstanbul in İELS, with the location of each district is marked with names and red circles



By the means of enemy profile that can spawn randomly while wandering, several districts share same profile while others have their exclusive profiles. As per such status, Lavuk and Maganda races are exclusive to Beyoğlu and Ortaköy; Karafatma, Çembersakal, Fanatik races can be seen in Üsküdar, Mecidiyeköy, Eminönü and Beyazıt; İrospas can be seen in Mecidiyeköy, Kız Kulesi and Eminönü; Hırgız race can be seen in Eminönü and Sarıyer; Dadaş and Balgam races are exclusive for Kadıköy; Yobaz races can be seen in Eminönü, Beyazıt, Beşiktaş, Fatih and Üsküdar; Kelps can be seen in Ümraniye, Eminönü and Fatih; Lale Savaşçıları are exclusive for Ümraniye and Mecidiyeköy; Dellenmiş Öğrenci and Dellenmiş Öğretmen are exclusive for Beyazıt; Guş race can be seen in Eminönü and Ortaköy; Faytır, Kılerik and Meycik

Yuzırs are exclusive to Sarıyer; Yarasa, Örümcek Böcüğü, Dev Örümcek, Yarasa and Fare creatures can be located in Eminönü, Beşiktaş, Sarıyer and Üsküdar; and Ayı and Köpek creatures are exclusive for Ümraniye. This polarization of demographics are also quite accurate with considering the character and race comparisons of İELS to the real life (*see 4.2.2.1 References to Local Culture section above and Characters section below*).

Regardless of the demographics listed above, some districts can serve as utility places. For instance, Beyazıt district contains each and every type of general utilities such as Silahçı (Gun shop), Gerekli Şeyler, Hotel (for safely resting), Yimmekçi (Restaurant) and the only permanent Swear-Apothegm tutoring shop. Therefore, players can visit Beyazıt for nearly every purpose in the words of building up and getting better throughout the whole gameplay, and this is an accurate design for the district when compared to the real life. As another precise example, as mentioned above, the only brothel (a.k.a. the mechanics for resurrecting a dead party member) is in Eminönü and this feature fits to the real profile of the district in real İstanbul.

These accuracy of sub-categorizations and their results, together with the other functions of the districts, can clarify the function of humor for a) increasing the comedic tone, b) creating a better communication of mechanics to the gamers, c) (as the game identifies the races with demographics from real İstanbul) appealing the local audience and d) generating a more immersive magic circle.

4.2.4.2 Setting, storyline and narration of İELS

As İELS intends to create an alternative İstanbul with authentic and comedic tone, where such İstanbul still has the similar spatial elements with the real one, humor was selected as the general tone and mood determiner of the game and had spread to all the formal and dramatic elements of the game, rather than concentrating and implementing the humor on only a single element few elements. The biggest aspects for creating a comedic atmosphere in İELS are the setting and the storyline; as setting determined the mood and the theme, and storyline assembled the dramatic act and the comedic nature.

4.2.4.2.1 *Setting*

The setting accordingly takes the metropolis and cosmopolitan city of İstanbul with its buildings (such as Topkapı Palace and İstanbul University) and geography (like Golden Horn and Bosphorus). The level of technology is somewhat inconsistent; all the theme is configured to the Medieval Age technology level (compatible with the classic RPG genre) with having no scientific weaponry or equipment (such as electricity or telephone) available to the player, but the game also employs Ferry, a machine, as a vehicle for transportation, refers to the car traffic load in Bosphorus Bridge, and claims that all the buildings and architecture are exactly the same with the 1990s İstanbul city in the storyline. Such technological perspective resembles the complicity of Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, which used the same Medieval Age preferences but also included some technological facts like telephone in the gameplay and absorbed this ridicule and irrationality by crafting all the elements with humor, with obtaining the solid absurdity that convinces the audience about the logic structure of the game as a result.

As another fact, (as mentioned above) the constant and common swearing or slang language usage in the local culture of Turkey and İstanbul had affected the position and importance of Swearing in the game. Pursuant to this factor, swearing is no longer deemed as an inappropriate action in this alternate İstanbul, but instead it is a solid mechanic and a type of combat in the battles of the game.. This criticism nevertheless generates the very own magical combat system of İELS and had contributed to the comedic tone of the game, impressiveness of the magic circle and laid down a much more smoother communication among the game mechanics and the players by using familiar setting and concepts when adapting the basics and rules of RPG genre.

4.2.4.2.2 *Storyline*

The storyline of İELS, as aforementioned, takes place in an alternate İstanbul, where the followers of Şeyh Cehalet (*Sheikh Ignoramus*), who was also a pupil of Gavur İmam (*Giaour/Infidel Imam*), had conquered the city of İstanbul after a series of uphill battles.

Though the forces of evil (also known as the forces of bigotry and fanaticism) including a highlander warrior from Middle Asia named Yabgu, were defeated at first, but they had retaliated by poisoning the leader of the forces of good, Barbaros the Wasp and secured a win against İstanbul's citizens. The party of heroes which the player creates and controls do also emerge into this situation from the real İstanbul, via a dimensional gate located in the basement of a parking garage in Mecidiyeköy[72]. Accordingly, as the player's company of heroes were playing soccer in the real world's Mecidiyeköy, their ball had jumped to the deeps of the garage and when they went after it, they encountered with a dimensional gate. As every other curious human being would do, they had touched the gate and found themselves in the alternate İstanbul. After they leave parking garage, they will be going to take the fate of this İstanbul into their own hands.

When the player wanders around Mecidiyeköy, they come across with NPC shops (such as 'Yimmekçi', 'Silahçı' and 'Gerekli Şeyler'; *see other sections for further details*), non-canonical quests (like the gardener Nahçıvan quest), and semi-canonical meeting with 'Barbie the Wasp', the leader of the Tulip Warriors. There the player takes the hint of where to go next (Beşiktaş). In Beşiktaş, there is a canonical and necessary quest given by the Mayor for re-opening the shut down pier which is under the siege of Yobaz race and the bridge traffic, which can be achieved by beating up the occupant enemies in the pier. When the player returns back to the municipality building, the news about 'the vice-mayor kidnapping the Mayor' breaks in. Then, the player has to best Barut Hüsam, the vice-mayor, and his followers, in order to save the Mayor. Afterwards, when the clock is between 07.00 and 19.00, the player can travel to Kadıköy, the opposite shore (Anatolian side of İstanbul) via ferry, or at any time by foot via the now-opened Bosphorus Bridge. In Kadıköy, the canonical quest is given by Kımıl Zararlıları Derneği, and as per such quest, the player must find the lair of Haşmet Maap boss character and dispose of him and his forces, the Dadaşlar race.

Afterwards, the player can go to a) Üsküdar for the medallion quest to be given by Kıl Sıtkı, b) Eminönü, for the Yeni Camii quest to be given by Tabık Vesile or c) go to

[72] Siliconworx, 1996. İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları – Game Manual

anywhere else, until selecting one of the two such quests. But after that point, there is only one true non-canonical quest remains in Mecidiyeköy, which is returning back to Barbie's office in order to watch her getting murdered by Şeyh Cehalet somehow, and fighting with her followers, Lale Savaşçıları (*Tulip Warriors, who gave their names to this game*) and getting out of there as soon as possible. This quest can be done anytime, and can be skipped totally.

In option 'b', when the player visits the headquarters of the resistance movement/rebel forces, their leader Vesile gives the quest of clearing Yeni Camii (*a real historical mosque in Eminönü*) from enraged birds (Guşlar). By doing so, the party releases the birds from the mind control of Şeyh Cehalet, and forms an alliance with them against fighting Leş Kargaları and other forces of evil in the mosque. There, the player encounters with Şeyh Cehalet face to face for the first time (Figure 4.37), but he flees immediately after the player beats his companions. Then, the party becomes free to leave the district and proceed in the story.

Figure 4.37 Şeyh Cehalet (Sheikh Ignoramus) is fleeing from the scene

In option 'a', which leads to the true canonical story of the game, the player demolishes some greater Yobaz race (*Yobaz Napoliten*) enemies and finds Kıl Sıtkı behind a secret passage door in Üsküdar. After a small talk, Sıtkı (originally a bad guy in story) gives player the quest of acquiring the other half of a medallion stolen by the leader of Hırgız (*Thief*) race, Gubarak Necati. This medallion should serve a purpose of clearing the path to reaching and having a conversation with Evliya Cevdet in Ümraniye. But first, the player leaves the district by using sewers path and goes to Beyoğlu. In Beyoğlu, the party confronts a massive fight against Lavuk and Maganda classes. After beating them,

the player has to reach to the leader of Lavuk class, Goşist İdris, by eliminating a series of troubles. Then, Goşist İdris gives a mandatory quest of defending his fortress together with Lavuks, against Yobaz forces. When that mission is accomplished, the party gets a reward from İdris (an enhanced weapon) and in one of the stores in Çiçek Pasajı, a citizen tells them to go to Beyazıt district in order to pursue Gubarak Necati and medallion.

In Beyazıt, the largest district of the game, the party interferes a fight between the police forces and the alliance of Dellenmiş Öğrenci and Dellenmiş Öğretmen races *(Enraged Students and Enraged Teachers)*. As doing so, the Öğrenciler and Öğretmenler attack to the party, as they are too much enraged to come to any sense (Figure 4.38). When they are done getting beaten by the party, the next task shall be a non-canonical quest, which is saving the Rektör Vektör (Rector Vector, the rector/chancellor of Istanbul University), given by Taazettin Sebur, the dean of Turkish Literature faculty. When this quest is completed, the party must visit the city library for obtaining the Romanian-Turkish dictionary (*by entering 'Sözlük' word when asked, a difficult puzzle to estimate*) and subsequent to this, player shall go to the district's brothel for asking one of the Romanian harlots about Gubarak Necati's whereabouts. She guides the party with informing that Necati shall be found in Ortaköy.

Figure 4.38 The wrath of Enraged Students, a.k.a Dellenmiş Öğrenciler

In Ortaköy, the player shall meet with the leader of the Maganda class, Nihilist Haydar, and finish a quest for him – finding his daughter, and marrying her in order make an honest woman of her. For such purpose, the party shall beat a group of birds in the deeps of Kaf-etheria and give their feathers to Haydar. Then, when exiting Haydar's

place, a man appears and tells that Gubarak Necati is in Sarıyer, in return of a favor of marrying the woman he loves(!). Sarıyer is a nearly deserted district, and the player has to clear the city from the FRP (*RPG*) creatures by completing a mandatory quest of retrieving the shoe from the roof back to Lord Soth. Then, as a progress, the party shall proceed to the sewers and find the lair of Gubarak Necati. Necati offers two options for the medallion's half; all of the player's money, or a brawl with his Hırgız squad. Any way the player prefers, he/she acquires the medallion and it will be the time for combining the two sides of the medallion in Kıl Sıtkı's place in Üsküdar.

After the combination phase, the party shall go to Ümraniye, mainly a jungle of wilderness more than a district, and find Evliya Cevdet to form an alliance with him for saving the city. The guardian dragons shall take the medallion as a bait and remove from the entrance of Cevdet's headquarters, but there will be a series of tests awaiting for the party. When all of them are completed anywise, the party meets with Evliya Cevdet and a long conversation takes place. When it is over, Kıl Sıtkı and his powerful Yobaz companions raid the place and kidnap Cevdet as well as attacking the player. After three difficult battles, another dragon, Celal, who appears to be a dragon of İstanbul Municipality, aids the party about going to Eminönü, but fails in midway and the party fells down to Kız Kulesi (*a real historical monument in the middle of Bosphorus*).

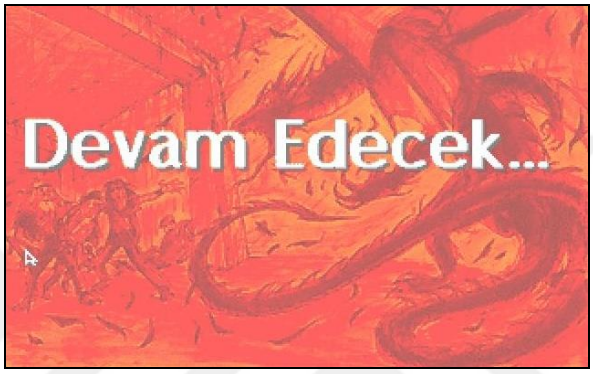
The only option in Kız Kulesi is climbing the stairs of the tower and helping the undead corpse of the historical princess kept in that prison, from a venomous snake. After that, the princess shows how to unlock the boathouse and the party goes back to Üsküdar, and then, to Eminönü via boats. In Eminönü, the vice-leader of the rebel forces informs the player that Vesile had went to Topkapı Sarayı (*as explained before, it is another real historical place in İstanbul – a well-known palace from Ottoman Empire era*). When the player visits the palace accordingly, he/she has to go down three stairs in order to find Vesile in the cellars. Vesile gives the mandatory and canonical quest of finding 'Kılıçartıbeş' *(an enhanced weapon that, Sword +5,* Figure 4.39). After doing so and returning it to her, she dies eventually and gives the keys of palace's ceiling. This quest is non-canonical, but when the player searches for Kıl Sıtkı in the ceiling and

finds him, Sıtkı denies the evil in his actions and wants the sword from us. The canonical choice is refusing that offer and fighting him. When he is beaten, the player confronts Dragon Celal this time in the gates of Topkapı Palace. Celal also asks for the sword, and is not fond of being refused – so a huge fight initiates. When all is over, Fatih district will be the only remaining destination for the player in order to reach the end of the storyline.

Figure 4.39 The moment where Kılıçartıbeş is retrieved

Until that very moment, unless all of the previous canonical and mandatory quests are completed, the doors of Fatih district are closed and locked. This district is the final place of the game, where the most glorious battles will take place. Immediately after entering Fatih, the party wear camouflages for wandering around, but in some places their mask will be slipped by enemies. Advancing with caution, the party reunites with Silikon Baba and gets some orders from him. Accordingly, the player stalls the first wave of enemy forces while Silikon Baba opens the district gates and allows Lale Savaşçıları into the place. Their aid comes in handy to the player when dealing with the second and hardest wave of enemies, consisted of the strongest Yobaz members. After winning those fights, the only task remaining shall be pursuing Şeyh Cehalet, who kidnapped Evliya Cevdet to the vaults of the district, and defeating him. Eligible for being considered as the most difficult fight there is in the game, Şeyh Cehalet surely makes the party break some sweat before being overpowered. When the fight is over, Silikon Baba and the Lale Savaşçıları celebrate the player, and the game ends with the epilogue video, which was intended to be a shift to the game's never published sequel (Figure 4.40 and 4.41).

Figure 4.40 and 4.41 When Şeyh Cehalet is over



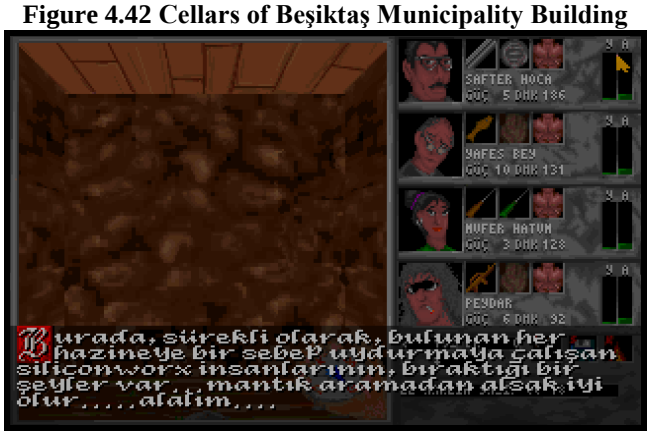
It can be claimed that, the general progression of the game story is quite linear, but hence a player requires to think outside of the box in order to find the whereabouts of the quest targets or where to go and what to do next, solve many simple but yet ability-demanding puzzles and select which path to go within the districts. Consequently, the player shall follow his/her instincts and search behind nearly all of the doors available – the inner-district maps won't do the job much generally. Therefore, with less hints in the pool of options of great variety, İELS resembles the puzzles, quest type and storyline of comedic Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Down!, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition and Grim Fandango Remastered, specifically. However, within the aspects of completing side quests and locating other collectibles for hundred-percent game completion, İELS is also similar to Freedom Force and South Park: The Stick of Truth games (which utilize XP-and- Prestige points-to-Train conversion for training roster; and many different side-missions such as Chinpokemon collection completion or adding 121 friends to the social media in total, respectively) as every place should be searched for finishing the game totally and exploring all the emergent and hidden humor in every possible manner in all of these games.

In the words of conducting the functions of humor, with such storyline and quest structure, İELS a) eases the game mechanics with creating a better communication environment to the player, b) mitigates all the explicit content, c) constructs a sensual absurdity among the irrational and irrelevant elements used in the storyline, with no major logical flaws, d) boosts the entertainment level of magic circle and e) feeds the comedic tone of the game primarily.

4.2.4.2.3 *Narration*

As per such aim of humor, the game objects and its narration (in non-essential and non-linear parts of sub-quests or scenario) makes fun of itself and does a spoof on the logic and consistency of the game. For example (Figure 4.42), in the cellars of Beşiktaş Municipality Building, the players interfere with a treasure of some money and weaponry. The game has in fact no logical explanation for the reason of whereabouts of such treasure, so it criticizes itself by telling the player "*let's not question the logic of the producers, and loot the treasure with pleasure*" as a part of humorous and sarcastic tone in narration, which also points out the game's own ridicule and thereby inserting a humorous logic of absurdity instead of being defeated to irrationality in gamers' minds.

Figure 4.42 Cellars of Beşiktaş Municipality Building



The narration also steps up in several places through the gameplay, just like it does in Mecidiyeköy, when a supernatural voice tells the player that "their task in this İstanbul won't be so easy", or again in Mecidiyeköy, where a note was found together with a treasure to loot, which explains that the owner of those treasure desires the finders to 'use that money for good purposes and buy some weapons with it' (Figure 4.43). This

witticism of ‘for the favor of the humankind and goodness’ uncannily resembles the Freedom Force saga’s superpower disposal and seizure perception, with the aim of channeling the audience to use every talent for the good of all mankind, as no matter what their superpowers are and no matter what has happened to them, all the heroes automatically use their any non-ordinary power “for the sake of the humankind” or “for good purposes” like a patriot of goodness (Figure 4.44 and 4.45). Additionally, the “Never fart on a man’s balls!’ oath of South Park: The Stick of Truth is also quite similar to this perspective.

Figure 4.43 The famous note full of ‘good’ advices

Figure 4.44 & 4.45 Two of the Freedom Force hero squad with different backgrounds promise to fight for good

Overall, the narration (excluding from other narrative tools to be listed further below) of İELS serves for the same functions stipulated in storyline, as a complementary to the scenario flow and also states a major portion of the comedic tone of the game.

4.2.4.3 Dialogues

Dialogues in İELS, similar to the game narration, contains and conducts humor as a primary objective in the gameplay. For example, there is a mandatory quest in Ortaköy district, where the player must bring some feathers of the birds located in behind of the famous tale place, *Kaf Dağı* (*Cuff Mountain of legends and child tales*) to the leader of Maganda race, Nihilist Haydar. *"Kaf Dağı'nın ardı"* is a very common phrase in Turkish customary, with symbolizing an impossible task or action by using an imaginary insurmountable mountain. Though there is no such place available in real world, the surrealistic humor and fictional approach of the game implements such fairy tale object – the party members also confirm the nonsense of such quest in the beginning as *"This time it is too ridiculous, man!"* phrase (Figure 4.46). However, the game doesn't include any mountain area either; so the real Cuff Mountain in the game reveals to be the Kaf-etheria in Ortaköy, which is a simple highbrow/pseudo-intellectual cafeteria with a hidden compartment where birds (*Guşlar*) fly aimlessly and waiting for us to beat them as a part of the scenario.

This understanding of the game contributes to design a remix, rebuilt culture of İstanbul/Turkey, as many humorous games do as a part of world-building[73]. Most importantly in the words of humor, towards the end of that quest, when the player beats the birds, a party member speaks in slang language and says *"Bu tüyleri götürüp o herife yutturabiliriz"*, which can mean either offering them to Nihilist Haydar, the quest-giver, in order to make him "eat those feathers" or to "hype him to buy/deem these as the feathers of the birds from Kaf Mountain" in return of such ridiculous and unnecessary task (Figure 4.47).

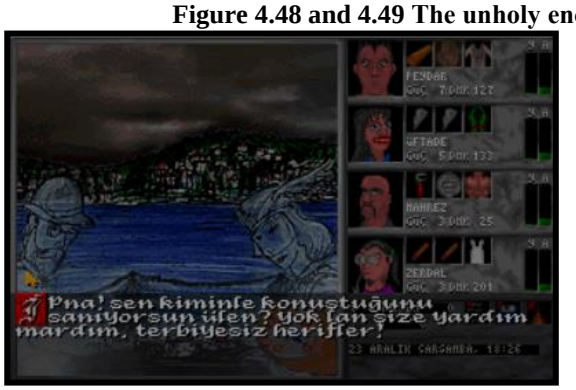
[73] Wendig, C., 2013, 25 Things You Should Know About Worldbuilding

Figure 4.46 It's all ridiculous in Ortaköy

Figure 4.47 The fraud attempt shall be successful

Again in Ortaköy district, when the player proceeds to the garden of an intellectual cafe, suddenly some ghosts appear besides the sea shore. The greeting speech comes from the narration, as it tells that *"there are two ghosts and a cheese in front of you – you have nothing to do with the cheese but the ghosts grab your attention"*. From their tone and manner, they resemble the elder citizens of Ortaköy, way before Magandalar (*Yahoos*) and Lavuklar (*Pricks*) had arrived and occupied the district, and diminished the level of the district's cultural profile accordingly. However, the player's party members are not eager to chit-chat with the ghosts, so they turn down the gesture of a cultural talk, and then, the ghosts prefer to use some slang words for such impoliteness, and start to talk among themselves again, about *"association of people that admire canaries singing like nightingales"* (Figure 4.48 and 4.49). This scene and the dialogues refer to the old İstanbul city culture, and the lumpen tone derived from the mixture of old and new İstanbul citizen image, with using surreal ghost figures as a tool of fun and some overdosed intellectual, highbrow phrases for the sarcastic humor environment.

Figure 4.48 and 4.49 The unholy encounter with the ghosts of Ortaköy



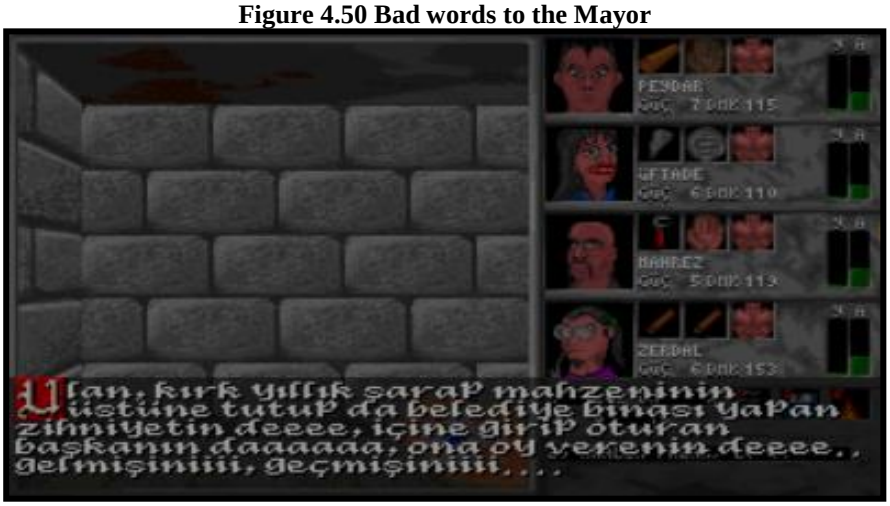
Some of the examples given until this point under the scenario heading are essential (like the *'Kaf Mountain'* duty) quests for the linear completion of game's storyline.

However, many other of those examples contain non-canonical events that can either be a side-quest or the just-for-fun and multi-dimensional, deeper scenario moments, created for a more colorful gaming experience. As per such color search, the dialogues spoken in the game also in general do help to catalyze the humor issue in the story and game flow. Many of those points are derived, altered, remixed and rebooted by the producers, and therefore, they are similar, and yet funny for the gamers.

Examples for this matter can be given as; the very first dialogue sequence of the game in between the party members is full of daily, familiar and informal language, and afterwards, the adjustment process dialogues in Mecidiyeköy contains candid speeches such as "Amma tırsaksın be! Yürü hadi, lale!" (*'You are such a yellow-belly coward! Keep moving you tulip/idiot!')*, "Abi Allah aşkına yürü, hadi!" (*'Man, keep moving for God's sake!'*), "Al işte demedim mi dop sahasına girilmez diye, şimdi bahçıvanlar dellenir al başına belayı!" (*'Ah, here we go! Didn't I tell you that we shouldn't enter the ball field; the gardeners will go berserk on us!')*, "Ulan iyi kalkındık ha!" (*'Wow, it was surely a nice treasure, nice progression!').* Further humorous dialogues in the game consist lines such as "Yaşasuuuun!" (a comic pronunciation of 'Hooraay!' in Turkish), "Allah be, şunlara bak!" (*Wow! Just look at these!*), "Beyler biz zıçtık!" *('Guys, we're damned!'* with a funny pronunciation), "Paldır, küldür, tantana!" (*Pell, mell, pandemonium!*) and the famous "Çok saçma ama, neyse..." *('It's so nonsense, but whatever..'*) self-criticism of the game in Ümraniye Wisdom Test.

Moreover, just like South Park: The Stick of Truth, İELS also implements the billingsgate and vulgar language of its universe and American culture, as there are other instances for such flamboyant, yet local dialogues in the İELS game: In Beşiktaş, a drunkard swears against the Mayor of the district (Figure 4.50), and when you approach to the pier for the first time, the enemies do frighten your party members as one among them says "Oraya gitmesek mi diyorum, şey oluyor sanki, şey..." (*I'm reluctant to go there, let's give up, well, it seems something is going on there, something...)* with implying either a scary or a sexual event.

Figure 4.50 Bad words to the Mayor



Additionally, similar to the Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, which creates its own jargon for fun and humor, in Eminönü district, when we try to reach the headquarters of the resistant movement in day time, a Yobaz Beşamel (*a class of the Yobaz race*) threatens the player with "Keseyim mi lan topunuzu?" (*Which can mean either piercing the football of the party or slaughtering them all)* and "Çizeyim mi üzümünüzü?" (*An unclear slang jargon of the game which can refer to scratching the butts of the party members)* phrases (Figure 4.51).

Figure 4.51 Eminönü welcomes the player with open arms

From all these examples, it can be said that İELS shares the same perspective of dialogue humor with South Park: The Stick of Truth, Grim Fandango Remastered and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, where such dialogue usage contributes to the same functions with other dramatic elements

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4.2.4.4 Characters

Aside from the aforementioned role of characters and character creation phase in İELS, the humor can be also conducted and transferred via several aspects of the characters through the gameplay for serving the same functions in game design stipulated in prior sections. Besides the humorous naming process for each race in the game, İELS uses humor as a tool for defining the roles and importance of every race.

Pursuant to this fact, the characters a) were mocking and criticizing themselves and others using the meaning of their names, b) are either employed as enemies, allies, both enemies and allies and/or NPCs for conducting the functions of humor.

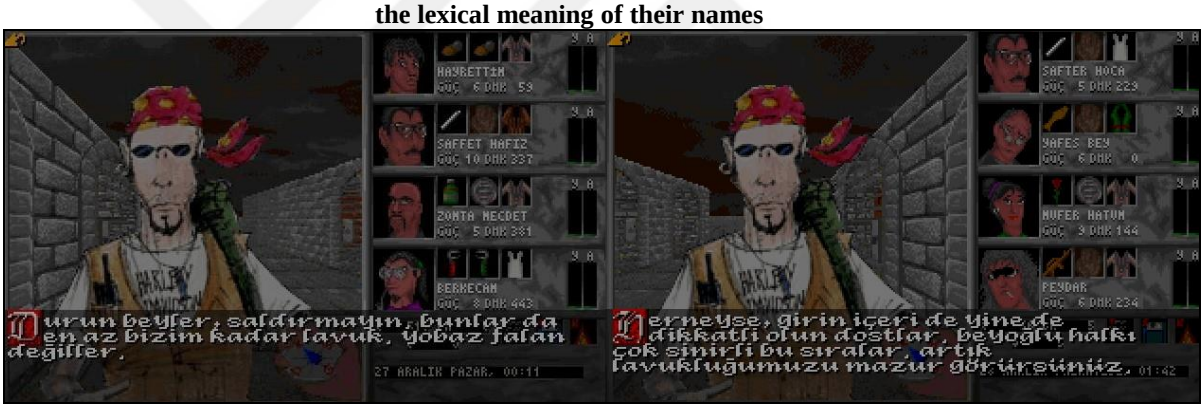
As an example for the first situation, Taazettin Sebur, also an NPC character in the game, refers to the Yobaz race as "Yobaz denen yobazlar" (*The zealots that are called Yobaz*) and define their roles as evil characters and make reference to the negative meaning of their names from real world. Another example is the Lavuk (Prick) militia in Beyoğlu that attacks to the player but upon being defeated, remarks the misunderstanding of their assault by deeming the player party being not Yobaz at all, but as prick as they are *("Bunlar da en az bizim kadar lavuk!")* and also apologizes by requesting to excuse them for being Pricks; which is a self-mocking manner of the race and identifying the characteristics and name of the race with the insulting adjective form of their names (Figure 4.52).

Also, the naming of many NPCs and enemies is reflecting the humor in the comedic tone of the game; such as 'Gubarak' (a funny word with no exact meaning) Necati, Nihilist Haydar (considering the fact that he is the leader of insensitive Yahoos, nihilism is an ironic choice as an adjective), Goşist İdris (derived from Gauche concept in French, also states an irony for naming the leader of intellectualists with a Communist adjective), Rektör Vektör (Rector Vector, humor in rhymes and absurdity), Barut Hüsam (Hüsam the Gunpowder), Haşmet Maap (reference to Haşmetmeap word in Turkish that means 'his illustrious highness'; also a humorous choice), Kıl Sıtkı

(Irksome Sıtkı), Taazettin Sebur and Rüknettin Çörek (those names are used for their funny pronunciation).

Moreover, several races in the game are named after rude slang words and swears in local culture of the Turkey, but they are modified in order to serve for a comedic game tone and mitigate the controversial effects of explicit content. For instance, 'İrospa' race is modified from 'Orospu' *('Whore', 'Prostitute' or 'Harlot')* term, which is a very rude swear and insult; 'İpna' is modified from 'İbne' ('Fagot' or 'Gay' with an insulting manner), 'Zepevenk' is the modified version of 'Pezevenk' ('Pimp'). Also, though the defaults are appropriate, it is possible to create male İrospa and also use an appearance for a different gender character in the game. Those two incidents also contribute to the absurdity of the game (Figure 4.53).

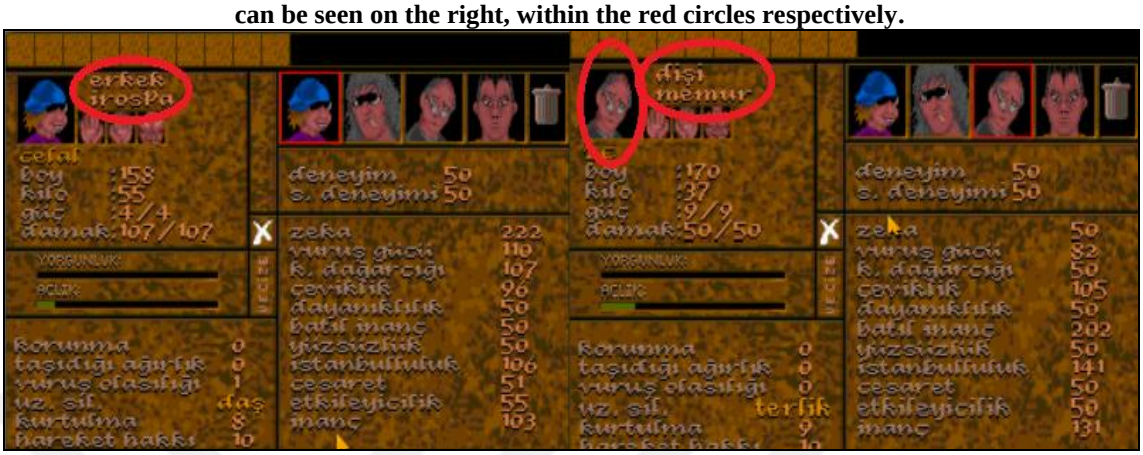
Figure 4.52 The game mocks the sociological and cultural background of the races by referring to the lexical meaning of their names



As an example for the second circumstance, again the Taazettin Sebur NPC makes denounce behind his colleagues and accuses them to remain their silence against the invasion of Yobaz races to the district, and the game narration mocks the inappropriate nature of his slandering with using criticism in parenthesis. As per the exampling from allies, the Lale Savaşçıları (Tulip Warriors) use sardonic words against each other while preparing an assault on the player by insulting the wisdom of one another in their headquarters located in Mecidiyeköy, assuming that the player was responsible from the death of their leader, Barbie the Wasp (Figure 4.54). As per the instances from enemies, the Yobaz Napoliten race discovers the true identity of the player's party who were under the Karafatma disguise by telling that the Karafatma race is well haunched and

hipped; a quality that the player's party members are lacking (*"Ulan bunlar ne biçim Karafatma? Karafatma dediğin kalçalı olur!*) (Figure 4.55).

Figure 4.53 Male İrospa can be seen on the left, where the utilization of different gender's avatar can be seen on the right, within the red circles respectively.



As part of the hidden humor in game design, the game AI can also make additions to the comedic tone of the game. For example, when the player's party stands near to achieving a dominant victory in a battle, the enemy AI can surrender automatically by saying a phrase from children games of local culture: "Teslim, teslim!" (*'I give up, I give up!')* and Çembersakal race can show their bigotry and ignorance by casting a Swear in a battle against a Guş, which is immune to Swears and Apothegms as other non-humanoid creatures in the game. Yet, the AI acts as if it was programmed to show the effects and results of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and zealotry.

Overall, it can be said that the characters in the game are used as a tool of conducting five of the six mentioned functions of humor; only excluding the universality of cultural concepts and features. With doing so, İELS resembles Grim Fandango Remastered and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition regarding the comedic naming purposes and process, and mostly the South Park: Stick of Truth, which gives alter egos for each and every enemy, ally or NPC in the game for making the game a sample of the RPG genre (i.e. Princess Kenny – who is a male in fact, Jimmy the Bard, etc.).

Figure 4.54 Each image trilogy from left to right reflects the dim-wittedness of Tulip Warriors

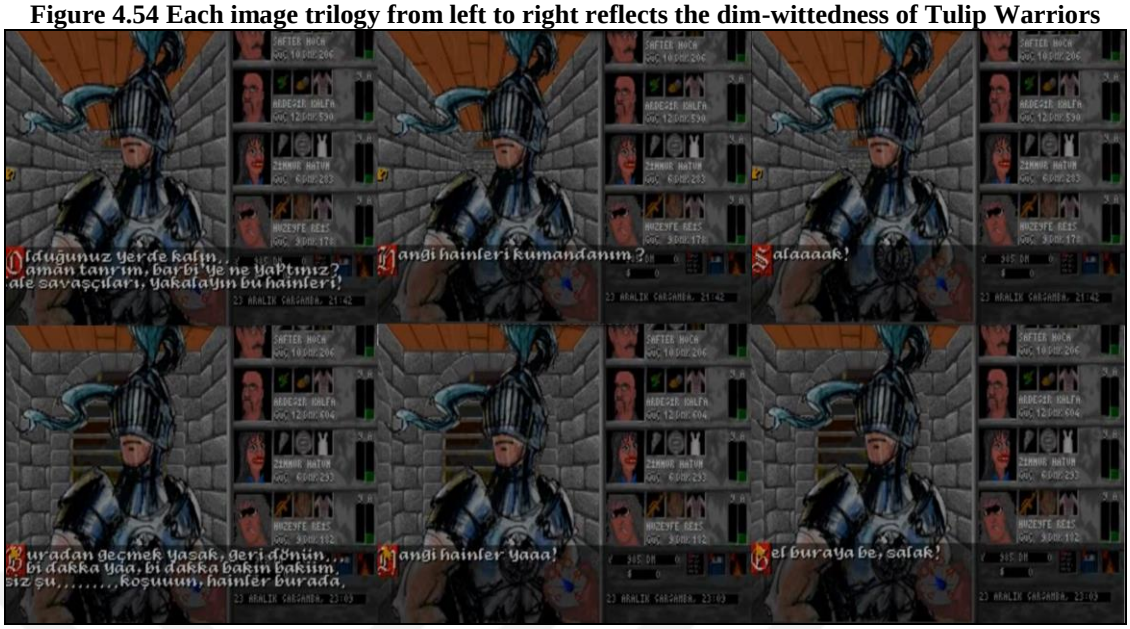


Figure 4.55 A Napoliten Yobaz can understand the difference between a Karafatma and the player

4.2.4.5 Dramatic act

Also serving for the comedic tone, immersive magic circle, better communication of mechanics, mitigating the explicit content and bringing a sense to ridicule and inconsistency, the dramatic acts of the game uses the humorous concepts especially taken from the local cultural feats. As an example for bringing a sense to the long and hard medallion quest in the game, the aim of the quest has been set to meeting and uniting forces with another hero of the game, Evliya Cevdet. 'Evliya', the plural version of 'veli' word, is a common Turkish-Arabic adjective that can be translated as 'saint', and it is generally used to define or refer the people that have supernatural insights,

especially if they went on a pilgrimage to Mecca city in real life as a part of Islamic culture. İELS also implements the 'Evliya' concept similar to that vein, as Cevdet is portrayed as the lawful good humanoid god of coincidences who can arrange the flow of events and coincidences with his superpower, and his mission was indeed to stop Şeyh Cehalet from spreading the evil, zealotry and ignorance (Figure 4.56).

Figure 4.56 The portrayal of Evliya Cevdet – not the exact image of Evliya notion in local culture

.

Such utilization of 'Evliya' concept serves to multiple functions of humor. First, it employs a superstitious notion in local culture in order to address more local audience. Secondly, that superstitious notion, combined with the non-related, "Elvis Presley-like" concept art that states a contradiction to the cultural "Saint/Evliya" image, fits well into both the absurdity of the game's tone, and makes a sensual addition to fictional abilities and talents described in the game. Thirdly, as 'Evliya' refers to 'saint' concept, it mitigates the possible controversy that can arise from the diabolical image of religious fraction in the game, by inserting a religious and Islamic notion to the 'good' fraction and tell the audience that it is not the religion but it is religion's malpractice that causes all the zealotry, ignorance and fanaticism and turn the believers to 'evil'. Lastly, as it is a familiar concept from the local daily life culture, it both maintains the focus of the players in the game by rising a curiosity regarding the content of 'Evliya' notion and thus enhances the entertainment in magic circle.

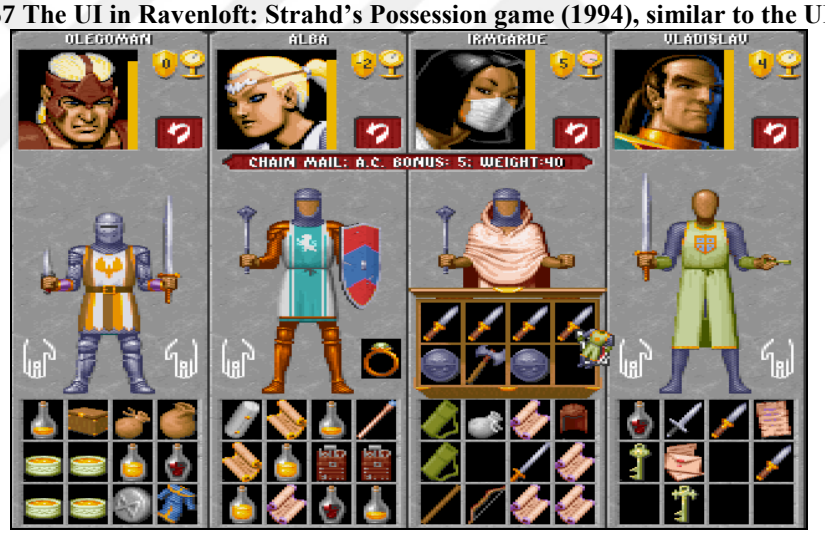
By giving the impression of fighting for the right side and good purposes, İELS' dramatic acts resemble Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition (as the player seeks the best and biggest treasure ever existed) and Grim Fandango Remastered (where the player rebels against corruption of good deeds) and especially South Park:

The Stick of Truth (where the player is under the illusion of fighting for the most powerful relic of the world and thus, for the sake of the universe).

4.2.4.6 Aesthetics

İELS had implemented many aspects of aesthetics, including cutscenes that are formed of real-time video footages in which the game's producers had also acted; humorous images and drawings as visuals; and comedic audio by voice acting in battle screens. Though the cutscenes, UI (user interface) or HUD (heads up display) do not contribute to the comedic tone of the game and only match with the general UI – HUD type of that period's RPG games in Amiga and PC platforms (Figure 4.57), rest of the aesthetics serve the same functions of humor with the other dramatic elements of game design.

Figure 4.57 The UI in Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession game (1994), similar to the UI in İELS



As an instance, in battle screen, each character from player's party shall give a vocal response when his/her turn begins. Such vocal responses contain humorous voice dubbings from real voice actors and consist of phrases or hues such as "Ho?" ('Huh?), "Evet?" ("Yep?"), "N'avar?" ('S'up?'), "Buyir?" ('Excuse me?'), with each having comedic pronunciation and accents. Other instances can be given from the visual images of the game, which were a product of hand-drawing exclusively and resemble a cartoonish style (Figure 4.58). Several of such drawings do contribute to the comedic game tone by including caricaturized gestures and mimics. By such scope, İELS

resembles every sample game from Chapter 3 of this thesis, as both audio and visuals are utilized as a contributing factor to the softening and enhancer functions of humor.

Figure 4.58 Rector Vector, the rector of İstanbul University, with comedic and cartoonish artwork

To conclude, similar to the formal elements, the dramatic elements of a İELS, including aesthetics, also serve the functions of humor in the gameplay. Accordingly, a) the comedic tone is nurturing from the dramatic elements and with their aid, neither of the emergent or hidden humor forged in the game is going unnoticed, unexplored or being neglected by the player in the gameplay; b) the possibly controversial content of the game, in the words of the good and evil preferences among fractions and references to the religious, cultural and social features distinctions in local society, is mitigated with each and every inserted humorous dramatic element, c) creates a more immersive magic circle with more qualified entertainment in gameplay, d) such magic circle becomes more appealing to the local audience, e) humor lays a foundation by the dramatic elements for setting up a better communication of game mechanics to the players and ease their gameplay with a smoother adaptation phase, and f) connects all the surreal and irrelevant elements of inconsistency in the game design to a common logic, and thereby abolishes the nonsense in the game, together with the possible loss of focus and amusement of the audience pursuant to such non-logical ridicule.

4.3 TYPES OF HUMOR IN İELS

In order for detecting and confirming the presence and function of each stipulated humor type in İELS, each and every of such types shall be briefly exemplified respectively.

4.3.1 Punchline

As mentioned above, in the world building phase, İELS sets the tone of the game with humor[74] and achieves a comedic game status accordingly. For such purpose, the tone was configured with an eccentric and comical narration and brought the game to the level of absurdity, but yet the it was full of the impact of a dark and satiric socio-political humor. This choice was indeed somewhat necessary for setting the "good and evil" concepts of the game while not discriminating the everlasting controversies between the Yobaz (*Zealot* – fanatically religious and dim-sighted fraction of Turkish community; which also became an enemy type in the game as aforementioned) and secular parts of Turkey harshly.

Thus, the game's setting eventually had focused on a) the inner-conflicts between the secular, but yet non-sophisticated community of Turkey, and b) the ultimate dispute between the secular and zealot/reactionist fractions in the country. While the inner-conflicts of the secular community were the original departure points of the game for the producers[75], throughout the development stages, İELS employed a major sociological detection and determination process for the country demographics by adopting the Yobaz fraction as classical evil forces of a story and giving the heroic, lawful image to the secular side. Whereas therefore a humorous attitude was quite essential for making this a non-serious, non-controversial and still a funny and comedic

[74] Akay, K., 2011, Türkiye'de Dijital Oyun Endüstrisi: Nereden Nereye? [online] Dijital Oyun Kültürü, https://dijitaloyun.wordpress.com/2011/10/09/turkiyede-dijital-oyun-endustrisinereden-nereye/ [accessed 10 January 2017]

[75] E.S. ATV, 1994. *Kent Sokakları.* [Video]

game and attempt of mentioning the downsides of the community swiftly, and with ease.

Figure 4.59 The motto and premise of İELS

Pursuant to these facts, the game's moral was determined as "Verecek ışığı olmayan, karanlığı sever" (*He who is devoid of light, cherishes the dark* – Figure 4.1 above and 4.59), and it was strongly mentioned by the story teller and mood-setter of the game, Silikon Baba character, in the very beginning of the game, which was to be repeated and iterated by several other NPCs in gameplay, such as Taazettin Sebur of İstanbul University. Despite the deepness and discriminative nature of such premise and punchline (as it accuses the zealots by defining them as the representatives of darkness, due to their narrow-minded horizons towards religion, community life and general acceptance of the world), the game in fact was able to remain it's absurd, humorous and funny tone by exaggerating the simple facts in a surrealistic way in narration, as the ignorance and bigotry of all kind state two of the major threats to enlightenment of masses, advancement of civilization and happiness of citizens on universal scope.

Another punchline example is the 'Kızım olmadan asla!' (*'Not without my daughter!'*) yell of Nihilist Haydar, the leader of Yahoo race, as a part of the quest given by him. Such phrase is a reference to a cultural feature of that period, the famous and cult 1991 American movie 'Not Without My Daughter'. Though the film was a thriller melodrama, İELS refers to the film for accomplishing a humorous attempt and synthesizes a comedic situation out of the plot by handling such punchline in a humorous tone. As another fact, Nihilist Haydar represents the yahoo attitude of society

but hence he also refers to a piece of art, as if the Yahoos are in fact intellectuals. Such irony contributes to the comedic nature as well.

Such literal expression creates a seriousness in a totally absurd, yet realistic game environment and increases the focus of the players, in the words of avoiding boredom of simplicity or banality in gameplay as per the game flow theory of Csikszentmihalyi.

4.3.2 Raunchy Humor

The example for raunchy humor of İELS in Mecidiyeköy; accordingly, there is a gardener (called Nahçıvan – also the name of a region located in real world's Azerbaijan country) in the ball pitch who had saddened deeply about his lawnmower, Sezai. As per his words, Sezai had left him because he was not a psychic gardener unlike the gardener character in the 1992 movie The Lawnmower Man (Figure 4.60 and 4.61). The gardener gives the player a side quest to retrieve the lawnmower, which can be easily achieved by just talking to the machine. When the player returns Sezai back to the gardener, the gardener reveals a secret, yet very deviant, love relationship between him and his lawnmower Sezai (Figure 4.62). With such action, the game a) greets and refers to a famous real-time (and popular for its creation time) fantastic movie from real world, b) embodies a personality to a lawnmower, as if it was a human, c) uses mechanophilic[76] and agalmatophilic[77] concepts, d) with the name Nahçıvan, refers to a real region from a fellow neighbor country, Azerbaijan, and e) (as Sezai is a Turkish male name) mentions a possibly homosexual relationship type between a man and his supposably non-living machine.

These raunchy and surreal subjects had also been crafted by the producers via humor, as the "*Bahçıvan – Nahçıvan*" limericks, general dialogues and narration are carrying comedic qualities, whereas a real region of a real country and a popular film of game's

[76]Griffiths, M. 2016, Mechanophilia Exposed and Explained [online] Psychology Today, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-excess/201611/mechanophilia-exposed-and-explained. [accessed 20 February 2017]

[77]Griffiths, M. 2013, Love Sculpture [online] Psychology Today, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-excess/201311/love-sculpture. [accessed 20 February 2017]

time was mentioned briefly and those sharp extraordinary raunchy elements were mitigated via humor and not evoked truly (also, with such action, the alternate universe of the game became somehow connected to the real world of the players).

This perspective of raunchy humor resembles mostly the deviant perception of South Park: The Stick of Truth, where intensive sexuality and homosexuality was a part of raunchy humor.

Figure 4.60 The 1992 movie Lawnmower Man, also mentioned in İELS for humorous purposes

Source: IMDB, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0104692/ [date of retrieval: 10 March 2017]

Figure 4.61 The reference to a real movie

Figure 4.62 The love of a man and his lawnmower

4.3.3 Satire

One of the most prominent examples of satire in İELS is made through the Celal character, who serves the İstanbul Municipality as a dragon. Accordingly, after winning the battles in Ümraniye Test Center, 'Belediye Dragonu' Celal suddenly appears in front of the player and offers his help to the party, which is flying on his wings for pursuing Kıl Sıtkı and his captive, Evliya Cevdet. As the player agrees, Celal flies the party over İstanbul skyline, but according to the narration, 'with such a (high) speed that can't be related with Municipality at all' (Figure 4.63). Such humor is a criticism to the mass transportation system, traffic load and executive velocity of İstanbul and municipality, full of dark humor and thus, constitutes an example of satiric humor. Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special edition and Grim Fandango Remastered utilize quite similar type of satire with İELS within this scope.

Figure 4.63 Celal is portrayed as a 'Quicksilver' creature when compared to the municipal transportation system in İstanbul

4.3.4 Sarcasm

With regards to the implementation of irony and sarcasm, İELS uses examples like the Kız Kulesi (*The Maiden's Tower; a historical place in İstanbul's Bosphorus*). Accordingly, when the player rescues the old maiden of Kız Kulesi, she unlocks the door of the boathouse with a very simple 'hold and turn' manner. The game criticizes the simplicity and absurdity of such quest by speaking one of the party members as "Çok sağolasın bacım. Biz hayatta bunu düşünemezdik.." *("Thanks, sister. There is no*

way that we could figure this out on our own...') (Figure 4.64). This manner is nevertheless similar to the Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition's sarcasm, as self-criticism of the game and the characters is quite popular in both game's sarcasm perception.

Figure 4.64 The sarcastic self-criticism of the game

4.3.5 Sardonic Humor

One of the sardonic humor samples of İELS is the insulting manner towards Leş Kargaları (Carrion Crows), who are actually designed as living, mutated, humanoid ravens (Figure 4.65). Accordingly, the game refers to Leş Kargaları as filthy and disgusting creatures by using their names as an assaultive insult: 'Cehaletin Leş Kargaları' *('The Carrion Crows of ignorance'; a despising discourse*), as the 'Leş Kargaları' phrase is commonly used as a direct insult in local culture of real İstanbul. Similarly, the game refers to the Kelp (Algae) race as 'Cehaletin lanet olasıca Kelpleri' with using the Kelp word in its Ottoman Turkish definition, 'dog'; therefore the narration insults Kelps with using the homonym of their names. This type of sardonic humor corresponds to South Park: The Stick of Truth's sardonic approach mainly.

Figure 4.65 The Leş Kargası race, portrayed as servants of Sheikh Ignoramus, and thus, ignorance

4.3.6 Invective Humor

Inventive humor of İELS is crafted mainly in the race naming process. As mentioned before, İrospa, Zepevenk and İpna races carry modified names that are derived from the originals in Turkish culture, where all of such names are representing the invective humor in the game. Another race, Balgam, which is actually the phlegm of a real person (Dadaş race) but they were grown into unbelievable size and gained life and consciousness. This gross choice points out the usage of tükürük (spit) and balgam (phlegm) terms as a part of the game mechanics, with player can do neither of them, but somehow gets exposed to them in Kadıköy (Figure 4.66). Such invective humor overlaps with South Park: The Stick of Truth's invective 'farting' incident.

Figure 4.66 Balgam (phlegm) race is an example of invective humor in the game

4.3.7 Slapstick Humor

As per the motionless 2D graphics and primitive visual effects of the game, the real slapstick humor is the sole major humor type that İELS lacks in gameplay. However, by narration, the game gives the impression of slapstick humor actions in several events. For example, as a part of the Tabık Vesile's first quest in Eminönü, Vesile blindfolds the party members and presumably makes them do some physical actions. While doing so, Vesile guides them to make gymnastic moves with saying comedic phrases and lyrics of local melodies, such as "Bacağını dönder," *('Turn your leg' with a comedic local pronunciation*), "Yaradana Kurban" ('*Lordy! Wow!; a common phrase of Turkish local and Islamic culture*), "Kır belini, tara beline yar" *('Bend down and wrap your back', a modified version of local song's lyrics)*; whereas the party members of the player hit their bodies and heads to several places and cry out loud with exclamation sounds such as "Aaaaaaah! Kafam!" (*'Ouuucch! My head!'*) (Figure 4.67). This implication of motion-action comedy can state an example of slapstick humor in İELS and it resembles mostly the Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!, due to their similar graphics and gameplay motion (*Figure 3.6 above*).

Figure 4.67 A party member hits his head and cries out loud (left) and Vesile uses comedic words for guiding the party's movement (right) for creating an invective humor.

4.3.8 Violent Humor

Pursuant to the violence concept in gameplay, İELS uses narrative tools for mitigating the violent content mainly before and/or after any battle. As an example, when Celal the Municipality Dragon demands the Kılıçartıbeş sword from the player in Eminönü, if player rejects such demand, a party member says "Senin anan güzel mi?" *('I'm no fool!', but with targeting and insulting the interlocutor's mother)* (Figure 4.68), and

Celal responds in a threatening manner that can be deemed as comedic by the player (*Figure 4.4 above*; see section *4.2.1 General Tone of İELS* for further details of Celal's response). By this method, the game mitigates the violence to a level that makes player accept such violence as an amusing part of the gameplay's magic circle and game mechanics, and accordingly, he/she voluntarily does what he/she won't do in his/her life and harms the enemy. İELS coincides with South Park: The Stick of Truth, Freedom Force and Worms 2 games within this scope.

Figure 4.68 Player does not buy the threats of Celal and insults him in order to trigger a battle, and thus, a comedic violence, all by his/her own actions

4.3.9 Cheesy Humor

Engaged with the puns and clichés, the cheesy humor in İELS reveals itself in many dialogues and narration, such as Haşmet Maap's 'Gelin babanızın kucağına!' *('Come to your papa's lap!')* speech in Kadıköy. Such phrase is also used as an Apothegm in the game ('Gel Babana' – 'Come to Papa'), and these two phrases refer to the common usage of those words exactly for threatening purposes in neighborhood arguments and quarrels of local culture (Figure 4.69). By catalyzing simple, low qualified fun instead of pure amusement, cheesy humor makes additions to the comedic tone of the game, just like it does in Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, Grim Fandango Remastered and South Park: The Stick of Truth.

Figure 4.69 The 'Come to your papa's lap!' speech of Haşmet Maap boss character as a sample of cheesy humor

4.3.10 Puns

Just like the cheesy humor and cliché, puns are also engaged with other humor types (both serves them and uses them) and spread to most of the dialogues and narration. In addition to the Kaf-etheria – Kaf Mountain wits, the wording matters were processed in numerous different example. One of them is the Rektör Vektör Bey (*Mr. Rector Vector)* rhyme in Beyazıt, İstanbul University. To complement this pun joke, the Rector Vector character has a comedic visual (*Figure 4.58 above*) that resembles also the vector schemes in real life science and fits the surreal tone of creating a human out of vector notion well;, and a member of the player's party asks him 'Vektör ne lan?' ('What the hell means vector?') after the player saves him from Yobaz race. Just like İELS, South Park: The Stick of Truth, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!, Grim Fandango Remastered and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition are also full of such puns.

4.3.11 Cliché Humor

As per the clichés, İELS uses several acquainting local and foreign concepts in the storyline and game mechanics. In addition to "Ocağı açık unuttum" *('I forgot to turn off the oven*') excuse, a specimen of such clichés is the utilization of three of the classic RPG classes as enemies in the game. Accordingly, the common characteristics of RPG genre is implementing at least a few of the basic races and classes in games that became

clichés for RPG genre, and İELS selects Kilerik (Cleric), Faytır (Fighter) and Meycik Yuzır (Magic User, or simply Mage) among them (Figure 4.70). The narration also refers them as ‘magical creatures from another realm’, which reveals to be the FRP (Fantasy Role Playing; counterpart of RPG in Turkish culture) realm by their leader, Lord Soth. Ironically, neither Kilerik nor Meycik Yuzır can deal magical damage, and the whole FRP trio is immune to Küfür ve Vecizeler (Swears and Apothegms).

Figure 4.70 From left to right, Kilerik (Cleric), Faytır (Fighter) and Meycik Yuzır (Magic User) races

4.3.12 Caricature Humor

With its cartoonish visuals, İELS uses caricature majorly in every aspect of the gameplay. As an example, in Ümraniye, there is an ill-tempered exam supervisor that gives the ‘boring’ instructions to the player, but as being frustrated from such supervisors in every type of exam and test in real life, especially the Student Selection Exam (Ö.S.S. in Turkish), one member of player’s party opposes him in the middle of his instructions (Figure 4.69). As the supervisor gets angry from such action, he drops giving advices and deserts the player to his/her fate. By such plot, the game caricaturizes the ill-mannered supervisors in real life, that can cause headaches with his/her officious behavior against the students. Such caricaturizing can be compared with all the sample games from Chapter 3 above.

Figure 4.71 The portrayal of ill-tempered exam supervisor in İELS

4.3.13 Mimicry

Also standing as an example of cliché, the party members imitate the lawful good profile of real RPG-type heroes in Eminönü Yeni Camii, against the king of Guş (Bird) race, in order calm it down and bring the situation to sense (Figure 4.70). Before reaching to such point, the party members do not deem themselves as respectable heroes of RPG genre, but such identification irrevocably sticks to them in that point of the Yeni Camii quest. Another example of mimicry in a motionless 2D game with a first-person view is the Silikon Baba and Lale Savaşçıları figures, respectively. Where Silikon Baba imitates the 'wise old man' image in local in universal culture and modifies it with heavy metal – rock – Siliconian music style, Lale Savaşçıları were also designed in accordance with the classic armored knights of Medieval Age. Though Lale Savaşçıları prefer Lale (Tulip) as a weapon instead of any piercing or slashing, sword-type equipment, they resemble the knights of goodness in classical RPG games. These two character concepts use mimicry for imitating other concepts and images from real life thereby.

İELS whence resembles Grim Fandango Remastered within such aspects of mimicry, where Manny Calavera disguises and imitates Grim Reaper for his job.

Figure 4.72 The King of the Birds and the shift of player's party to lawful goodness

4.3.14 Misunderstanding Humor

One of the few misunderstanding examples in İELS, when the player takes the quest of finding the daughter of Nihilist Haydar in Ortaköy, Haydar tells the player that her daughter's name is Neriman. She can indeed be found in the nearby Prick cafe. Upon encountering her, the player's part members forget the real name of Neriman, and mistakenly calls her Nalan, without being corrected by the girl. Such misunderstanding and further content and tone of the dialogues with the girl refer to the iconic Yeşilçam cinema culture, in which Nalan is a very common name for leading female characters. With such cultural reference, misunderstanding humor in İELS contributes to the comedic tone of the game, just like Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!.

4.3.15 Surprise Humor

The surprise humor is handled and inserted in the randomly spawning enemies mechanism in İELS. However, especially one of those spawn enemies gives the hardest time to the player at the greatest extent possible, which is named as Afakan. Afakans are humanoid, mutated creatures that mainly spawns nearby and attacks the player while the party is camping/resting. Afakan name represents boredom and palpitation, but as per the narration when Afakans appear and attack the player off-guard (thus, surprisingly),

the player ‘gets severely depressed and become exasperated’ with the ‘Afakanlar Bastı!’ phrase and fights with Afakans as a result of such exasperation (Figure 4.73). ‘Afakanlar basmak’ term is generally used in Turkish culture for defining a frustration out of boredom, when someone gets overwhelmingly bored of something, and accordingly, the game uses it for mentioning when the party gets exasperated from excessive amount of camping (Kamp) in non-secured areas, with generating original and exclusive creatures that shall attack the player, for symbolizing exasperation. As an issue of surprise, Afakans can either intervene the camping process while it is in the middle of progression, or attack after the resting phase is done (but it was not enough to avoid exasperation).

Figure 4.73 ‘Afakanlar Bastı’ is a frequent event for ‘Kamp’ing parties in İELS

Other type of surprise humor arises in the sudden reveal of the true identity of evil boss characters. Accordingly, the player’s party members have a hard time of realizing the true nature of Kıl Sıtkı and Barut Hüsam evil boss characters, who acted differently and disguised the truth under a ‘good’ image. It can be said that, the surprise humor of İELS works with the similar perspective of South Park: The Stick of Truth, in which the player can also shift alliances during the Attack The School quest and surprise his/her former alliance. Another instance for surprise humor from South Park: The Stick of Truth is the Clyde character, who serves as a mediocre member of Kingdom of the Kupa Keep in the beginning of the game, but becomes surprisingly an evil boss character in the end with a motivation of retaliation to Eric Cartman, who banished him from their imaginary role-playing game.

4.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude, such humor types were used in certain scales in İELS in order to serve for a) the comedic tone of the game, b) bringing sense to the ridicule thereafter, c) mitigating the explicit and controversial content, d) setting up a better communication of game mechanics with the player, e) due to the language barrier, increasing the appeal of only local audience towards the game with qualified and sophisticated content and daily references to many concepts, which also addresses to upscale audience as well, and f) enhancing the immersive nature of the magic circle of the game. All of such functions add up cumulatively to result in a better and more amusing gaming experience for the players.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 DISCUSSION OF DATA

By taking all the data from Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 into consideration, several conclusions can be deduced within the perspective of humor's usage in game design. Accordingly,

i) Games tend to have two major type of elements, formal and dramatic, in their designs; in which the designers can determine the mechanics, rules, objectives, procedures, boundaries, resources, conflicts and outcomes (as formal elements), and world building, tone, story, setting, narration, dialogues, characters and dramatic act (as dramatic elements) and also, aesthetics.

ii) All of such elements contribute to the fascination amount of the game's magic circle that is formed by the amusement and fun level in game's imaginary world and reflects to the players' gaming experience.

iii) Humor can be used as an element of fun and amusement for video games, within the game mechanics as a formal element, or in aesthetics, or even as a narrative tool and thus in a dramatic element, in order to enhance the fun and amusement in the gaming experience of the players, primarily.

iv) From the point of view of such primary effect, humor, which has the same 'boosting amusement and entertainment' aim with the games toward the audience, can serve for different, yet related functions in such game design for a better gameplay.

v) Humor also has more than a single perspective that eventually create several major sub-types of it, which can catalyze such functions and hence make further contributions to the gaming experience, in the words of advanced gameplay for the players.

vi) Such elements of game design, as well as the humor itself, tend to get affected by the local and/or universal language and culture of the producers.

vii) The utilization of such different humor types can make the game feature its humor prominently before any other elements, and such behavior can achieve a different identification to the game, which can be defined as comedic tone. In such case, humor will not remain unexplored or go unnoticed in gameplay by the players, regardless of whether the humor is emergent or hidden in that game's design, or the humor type used in such game design.

viii) The sub-types of humor can be contained and held under fifteen major categories; which are Punchline, Satire, Sarcasm, Sardonic, Cheesy, Misunderstanding, Puns, Violent, Surprise, Slapstick, Raunchy, Invective, Cliché, Caricature and Mimicry.

ix) Each of such humor types can be observed in the comedic games, or even in the non-comedic games that merely contain humor.

x) All of such utilization of humor can serve for six major different functions in a game's design and reflect to the gameplay and gaming experience of the players in the same manner; which are basically a) creating a more immersive magic circle for the players, b) setting up a better communication for the game mechanics to the players for easing and smoothing their adaptation to gameplay, c) serve for the comedic tone of the game, if any, and hence avoid the risk of unexplored emergent or hidden humor in gameplay, d) mitigate the explicit content, such as violence and maturity, if any (which will reflect to the ESRB or PEGI rating of the game, as well as the gamer feedbacks); e) bring a common sense to all the ridiculous and surreal tools used in narration or mechanics, and f) enhance the audience demographics by addressing local or foreign/universal cultural features and increase the game's appeal accordingly.

Such claims were defined and explained with examples from games that contain humor in miscellaneous dimensions, different types (collectively or respectively), and inserted such humor in one or more elements of game design. Accordingly; six sample games, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!, Grim Fandango Remastered, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition, Freedom Force, South Park: The Stick of Truth and Worms 2 were put under a microscope regarding their usage of humor and such claims were verified.

Within those games,

i) Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!, South Park: The Stick of Truth, Grim Fandango Remastered, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition and especially Worms 2 had used humor for mitigating the explicit content in the game for the players;

ii) Freedom Force, South Park: The Stick of Truth, Leisure Suit Larry 6: Shape Up or Slip Out!, Grim Fandango Remastered and Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition had set up a better communication of game mechanics to the players with humor;

iii) All of such games brought a logic and sense to the surreal or ridiculous contents in the game via humor;

iv) By either making references to local or foreign cultural or lingual features, or employing a more universal humorous approach, all of such games had enhanced their audience demographics and level of sophistication;

v) All of the example games had fitted the remaining elements of their game design with their comedic tone, nurtured that comedic tone by those other elements of game design with such implementation and formed a gameplay that will not allow the emergent or hidden humor go unnoticed in gaming experience,

vi) And lastly, all of the sample games accordingly generated a more immersive magic circle for the players by using humor as an element of game design.

When such data is applied to a comedic game, İstanbul Efsaneleri: Lale Savaşçıları (İELS), as a case study,

a) All of the claimed humor types were confirmed to be used within the gameplay, either in formal or dramatic elements, or even in both of them, and

b) All but one of the stipulated functions were observed to be fulfilled again by using humor as an element of game design and the primary determiner of the game's tone.

As an exception, such remaining function was the enhancement of audience demographics, due to the fact that the local language preference of İELS was indeed narrowing down the audience (despite the wealth of references to local or foreign cultural concepts), in the words of alienating the audience from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

5.2 CONCLUSION

With regards to the research question of this thesis, by taking all the findings and qualitative data acquired above, it can be said that,

a) Humor can be a strong tool, and even a separate game design element all by itself, for creating an advanced gaming experience for the players by fulfilling at least one of the six stipulated functions in gameplay and/or game design,

b) Within the perspective of the engagement of game design elements, when humor is used as the main tone of handling all the remaining game elements (like a mood setter and determiner of the game's emotional and physical atmosphere), it also gets nurtured

from the functions of the remaining formal or dramatic game design elements in the gameplay. Correspondingly, the emergent and/or hidden humor in game design is spread to all aspects of the elements and tools of game design and such tone will prevent the possibility of humor being gone unnoticed by the player.

Therefore, it can be claimed that humor can be preferred as a tool of game design, even in the level of a separate game design element on its own, in order for serving, using and/or fulfilling the six mentioned functions in the game that affect different aspects of the gameplay; and thus builds an advanced, improved and enhanced gaming experience to the players overall, with enrolling in and presenting a more qualified entertainment.

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APPENDIX 1: HUMOR CHARACTERISTICS OF A GAME								
NAME OF THE GAME (Release Date – Genre – Developer – ESRB/PEGI rating if available)	Presence in Formal Elements	Presence in Dramatic Elements	Serve the Comedic Tone	Mitigation of Content	Immersive Magic Circle	Communication of Game Mechanics	Advanced Audience Demographics	Logic for Inconsistency
Raunchy								
Sarcasm								
Satire								
Sardonic								
Misunderstanding								
Puns								
Mimicry								
Invective								
Cheesy Humor								
Slapstick								
Violent								
Cliché								
Caricature								
Surprise								
Punchline								

(Note: This form shall be filled by putting ticks or any other marks to verify the presence of each related unit

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