

T.C.
BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN

**COMPERATIVE ANALYSIS OF PIRATE IDENTITY, GAME MECHANICS
AND WORLD BUILDING IN PIRATE-THEMED GAMES**



MASTER'S THESIS
ALİ EFE GÜLERTEKİN

ISTANBUL 2024

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THESIS ADVISOR
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ABSTRACT

COMPERATIVE ANALYSIS OF PIRATE IDENTITY, GAME MECHANICS AND WORLD BUILDING IN PIRATE-THEMED GAMES

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Master's Program in Game Design

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Pirate theme is a popular theme for video games. They offer an image of a life without any law, adventures on high seas, treasure hunting and fame and thrilling combat. This study provides a comperative analysis of pirate-identity, game mechanics and world building elements across a spectrum of pirate-themed video games. By examining pirate-themed video games, it highlights portrayal of pirates and detailing the role of character naratives, immersive game mechanics like ship navigation and combat. The search underscores the importance of detailed world-building in creating engaging, explorative environments of pirate-lore. Findings gives information about representation of pirate identity, adventurous game mechanics and what are the pirate elements that build a pirate world in pirate-themed games. offering insights for future game development within this theme. This condensed analysis provides valuable perspectives for both game developers and scholars interested in the dynamics of pirate-themed video gaming.

Keywords: Pirate-themed Video Games, Video Games, Pirate Identity, Game Mechanics, World Building

ÖZ

KORSAN TEMALI OYUNLARDA KORSAN KİMLİĞİ, OYUN MEKANİĞİ VE DÜNYA İNŞASININ KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ

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Korsan teması video oyunları için popüler bir temadır. Yasalardan bağımsız bir hayatı, açık denizlerdeki maceraları, hazine avını, şöhreti ve heyecan verici çatışmaları temsil ederler. Bu çalışma, korsan kimliği, oyun mekanikleri ve dünya inşa edici unsurlar üzerinden geniş bir yelpazede korsan temalı video oyunları arasında karşılaştırmalı bir analiz sunar. Korsan temalı video oyunlarını inceleyerek, korsanların tasvirini ve karakter naratiflerinin, gemi navigasyonu ve dövüş gibi sürükleyici oyun mekaniklerinin rolünü detaylandırır. Araştırma, korsan mitolojisinin etkileyici, keşfetmeye dayalı ortamlarını yaratmada detaylı dünya inşasının önemini vurgular. Bulgular, korsan kimliğinin temsili, maceracı oyun mekanikleri ve korsan temalı oyunlarda bir korsan dünyasını oluşturan korsan unsurları hakkında bilgi verir. Bu tema içinde gelecekteki oyun geliştirmeleri için içgörüler sunarak, hem oyun geliştiricileri hem de korsan temalı video oyunlarının dinamikleriyle ilgilenen akademisyenler için değerli perspektifler sağlayan bu özet analiz, önemli katkılar sunar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Korsan Temalı Video Oyunları, Video Oyunları, Korsan Kimliği, Oyun Mekanikleri, Dünya İnşası

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NPC	Non-Playable Character
AC 4	Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag
PotC	Pirates of the Caribbean



Chapter 1

Introduction

Free from civilized world and its law. This idea often very intriguing to many people today. In modern world when people imagine about pirates many adventurous stories and excited figures come to their mind as a result of portrayals of pirates from Golden Age of Piracy (1650 - 1720s) in recent media. The media doesn't extensively emphasize the acts of murder and cruelty committed by these pirates. They even gained a special status for their cruel actions in Golden Age of Piracy. "Enemy of the All Mankind". This status was frightening once but now, individuals are envisioning adventurous and excited ideas. Imagining of their swashbuckling and sea fights days on the high seas thrilled people. Besides of that they were naturally against empires and their strict rules so this awaken the rebellious spirit of individuals. According to Mackie (2005), the concept of the swashbuckling pirate, particularly when linked with images of tropical Caribbean islands, continues to effectively evoke deep-seated desires within individuals.

Further, pirate way of living symbolize an different lifestyle against established and dominant authorities and it is likely one of the key reasons for they are still popular. Ganser (2012) mentions about this subject, It represents the allure of exotic experiences and thrilling adventures, freedom, and romanticism with sexuality and she continues "In representations so ambivalent and repetitious as to signal a cultural fixation, volume after volume of criminal biography have fixed the pirates of the early modern Caribbean as objects of popular fascination, glamorization, and, I think, nostalgia since the late seventeenth century."

On the other hand, history of pirates is still not too clear for historians, even in the most well-known period, the Golden Age of Piracy. Thus, depiction of pirate can be easily reshaped due to the lack of documentation by media.

In the contemporary world, the representation of pirates in media has changed significantly. During this period, the pirate theme has been used in various works and has become popular. This includes literature, movies, TV shows, video game representations and even theme parks (such as the Pirates of the Caribbean theme park at multiple Disneylands).

In this study, representation of pirates identity, reflections of their actions as game mechanics, and pirate world building mostly concentrated in video games will be investigated. Outlaw representation and romantization of pirates, along with the popular pirate image, will be examined. Reflections of their actions as game mechanics, such as thrilling sword and sea battles, and how these elements are integrated, along with pirate elements used in games for world building —such as famous locations associated with pirates where events occurred, social relationships between pirate captains and their crews, their appearances, and pirate flags in pirate-themed games —will be explored. Therefore, popular pirate-themed video games will be examined for this purpose, and also some elements from on screen adaptations will be used in this analysis. Video games that will be examined include: Sid Meier's Pirates (2004), Monkey Island series: Secret of the Monkey Island (1990), *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge* (1991), The Curse of Monkey Island (1997), Escape from Monkey Island (2000), Tales of Monkey Island (2009), Return to Monkey Island (2022), Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag (2013), Sea of Thieves (2018) and on screen adaptations include: Pirates Of the Caribbeans series (2003, 2006, 2007, 2011, 2017) and Black Sails (2014-2017).

All these productions take place in the time of Golden Age of Piracy. That's why they have similarities in the term of events, figures such as John "Jack" Rannam (Calico Jack) in Black Sails and Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag as well as the representation Jack Sparrow in the Pirates of the Caribbean, Blackbeard, Charles Vane, Benjamin Hornigold, Anne Bonny, Mary Read, etc. I selected them due to their prominence as the most recognized pirate-themed productions.

From seventeenth century to the present day, narratives of pirates have a long past, starting with travelogues, then theater plays, stories, poems, novels, tv and cinema. These narratives finally arrived in video games. "Whatever we know about society, or indeed about the world in which we live, we know through the mass media." As he adds, "Even if all knowledge were to carry a warning that it was open to doubt, it would still have to be used as a foundation, as a starting point" (Luhmann, 2000). According to Pfister (2018), people's knowledge about cultural, economic, social and political framed by information that is not only upbringing and education but also acquired from mass media, and he continues, the same holds for fictional works as well, and he claims people partly socialised through video games.

Pirates of the Caribbean series has become most renowned pirate-themed production worldwide, with a total lifetime gross of \$4,522,062,632. Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, the main protagonist of the series is Captain Jack Sparrow, played by Johnny Depp, an untrustworthy and fickle pirate on Caribbean seas, and story unfolds through his adventures. He's an exaggerated adaptation of Calico "Jack" Rancham, a pirate from Golden Age of Piracy. As the story continues, viewers realize story heavily relies on fantasy and supernatural elements, with limited emphasis on historical accuracy. The film series contains many supernatural elements such as zombie pirates, Davy Jones and Flying Dutchman, the Kraken which is the nightmare of sailors, mermaids, Fountain of Youth, etc.



Figure 1. Pirates of the Caribbeans

Black Sails, created by Jonathan E. Steinberg and Robert Levine, is a story based on Robert Louis Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island* (1883). The narrative takes place approximately two decades before the events of *Treasure Island*, during the Golden Age of Piracy, after the laws of every civilized nation declared them "hostis

humani generis” (enemies of all mankind). In response, pirates declared war against the world. The narrative of *Black Sails*, unlike *Pirates of the Caribbean*, is more based on historical accuracy. It features pirate representations such as Captain Flint, Long John Silver, Charles Vane, Jack Rackham, Anne Bonny, etc. The story takes place mostly in Caribbean and Nassau. Nassau serves as a haven for pirates in the narrative, and these pirates strive to defend it against larger nations and aim to maintain their freedom from the constraints of laws lifestyle. The viewership of the *Black Sails*’s first three seasons have averaged 3.6 million with DVR and multiplatform viewers. Show has ended in 2017 with a total episode of 38.

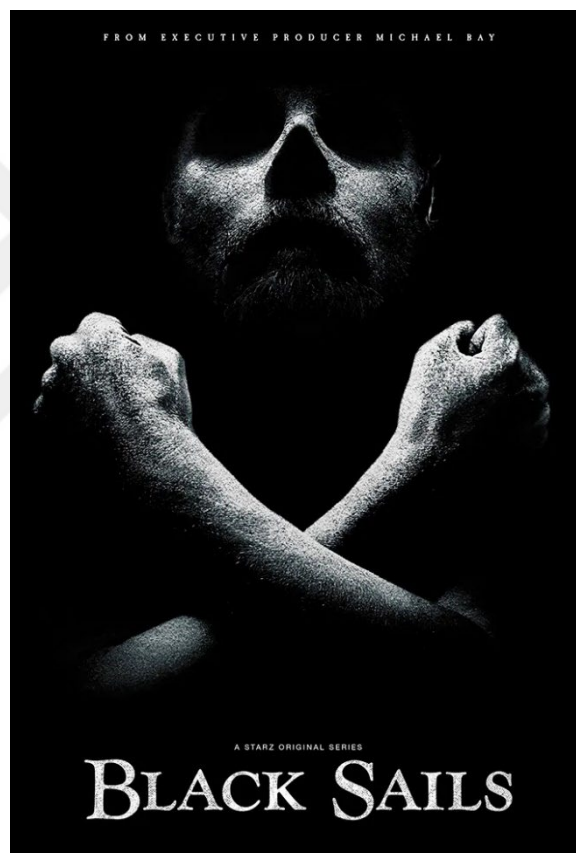


Figure 2. Black Sails

The *Assassin's Creed* series takes place in various time zones and different location. The game can be described as a historical action-adventure game. The main focus of the *Assassin's Creed* games centers on the enduring rivalry between ancient and secret factions: the Order of Assassins, symbolizing liberty, and the Knights Templar, symbolizing order and control. These two factions are trying to obtain an artifact, and this power struggle continues between each other for ages. A mega-

corporation, Abstergo Industries, are founded by The Templars, has developed a machine that allows users to relive their ancestors' memories again with their genetic materials. Therefore, Abstergo Industries find people who relative with Assassin's organization and use this device on them to find the artifact. This narrative level serves only the purpose to link the game to the other games of the series and is of no further importance for the main narrative, set in the Caribbean.

In the Assassin's Creed series, players can find themselves several places such as in Ancient Greece, in Victorian Era England, in Egypt (Ptolemaic period from 49 to 43 BC) and with vikings when they were invading England. While playing in that time zones, players can experience historical environment of that times with architecture, language, weapons, clothing, etc. Historical accuracy is a significant selling feature of the Assassin's Creed series to offer their players. Campbell (2014) pointed out AC 4 has sold 11 million copies.



Figure 3. Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

In Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag, players have to pursue the main questline to advance in the game; however, in Sid Meier's Pirates, players have a more free-form gameplay experience.

Sid Meier's Pirates! is a popular action-adventure and strategy video game designed by Sid Meier, initially released in 1987. The game has had various editions and remakes over the years, with the most notable being the 2004 edition developed by Firaxis Games and published by 2K Games. During 17th century, players embody the role of a pirate in the Caribbean, navigating the oceans, engaging in combat, and seeking fortune and fame.

Naval battles, treasure hunts, trading, dueling with other characters, and dancing are the combination of activities that the gameplay offers. Players start as an unknown pirate in the game and gradually progress by completing various missions and tasks. Players can strive to climb up the ranking of the top 10 most notorious pirates. The protagonist starts the game with the 10th ranking on the list. This ranking changes based on total collected wealth, the number of ships captured, cities sacked, promotions earned, treasures found, and special items obtained.

Players can choose their path, whether it's fearsome pirate, aligning with different nations, or pursuing treasures. The open world of the game allows players to explore and roam freely in the Caribbean seas, visit ports, and interact with different factions (the player can ally with them). Players can manage their crew and strengthen it, upgrade their ship, and even romance governors' daughters to improve their reputation or gain rewards. Sid Meier's Pirates! offers to its players an open-ended gameplay, allowing players to live the life of a pirate, with a multiple path selection to be successful and several activities to engage in. It is celebrated for its combination of strategy, action, and adventure, offering a dynamic and enjoyable experience for players exploring the seas and pirate life of the Caribbean.



Figure 4. Sid Meier's Pirates!

Monkey Island series is a point-and-click graphic adventure game. It is wrote by Ron Gilbert, Tim Schafer and Dave Grossman for Lucasilm Games. There are 6 game in this game series.

The first game, *Secret of the Monkey Island*, published in 1990, Amiga, MS-DOS, Atari ST and Macintosh platforms; the game was later ported to FM Towns and Mega-CD (1993). A remake version with updated graphics and new voiceovers was released for PlayStation Network, PC Windows, Xbox Live Arcade and OS X. An iPhone version was also released on July 23, 2009.

The second game, *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge* from 1991, was available for fewer platforms; it was only released for PC MS-DOS, Amiga, Macintosh, and later for FM Towns. A Special Edition version, in a similar style as *The Secret of Monkey Island: Special Edition*, was released in July 2010 for iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch, Mac, PC, PS3 and Xbox 360.

The third game, *The Curse of Monkey Island*, was released exclusively for Microsoft Windows on PC in 1997.

The fourth game, *Escape from Monkey Island*, was released in 2000 for PC Windows, and in 2001 for Macintosh and PlayStation 2.

The fifth game, *Tales of Monkey Island* release both on WiiWare and PC. Unlike other installments, *Tales* is an episodic adventure consisting of five different episodes. The first episode was released on July 7, with the last one released on December 8, 2009. This game is co-developed by Telltale Games and LucasArts.

The sixth game, Return to Monkey Island, was released on September 19, 2022, on the Nintendo Switch and Windows. It is a collaboration between Gilbert's Terrible Toybox studio and Lucasfilm Games, and published by Devolver Digital.

Players control the protagonist named Guybrush Threepwood, and the story begins on Melee Island, an imaginary island located somewhere in the Caribbean. Guybrush's primary objective is to become a daring, swashbuckling, and ruthless pirate. Players have to solve puzzles and pass trials to continue the story and reunite with his beloved.

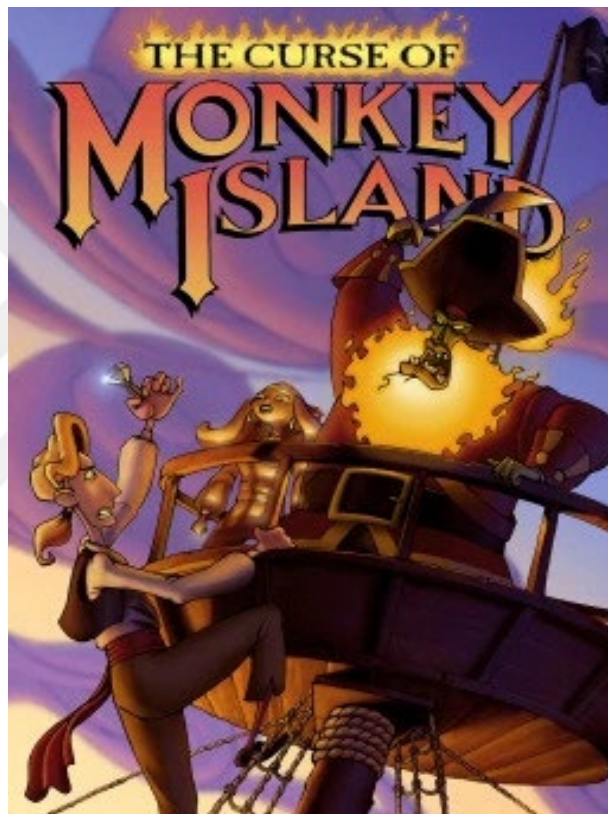


Figure 5. Monkey Island

Sea of Thieves is an action-adventure game developed by Rare Ltd. and published by Microsoft Studios in 2018. Set in an open-world environment, players explore the high seas, discover islands, engage in naval combat, and seek treasures. It is an online pirate game that can be played solo or with others as part of a captain's crews. Players can sail to oceans, fight with skeleton crew and other players with the game encouraging teamwork and coordination. The game allow players to personalize their pirate characters and upgrade their ships. The art style of Sea of Thieves is colorful and cartoonish, contributing to its unique and vibrant atmosphere. Social

interaction, cooperation, and rivalry among players are encouraged by Sea of Thieves to create a dynamic and immersive multiplayer experience. The game frequently receives updates. New contents, events, challenges always adds to the game. Developers have also made some fun crossovers with other famous pirate productions such as Pirates of the Caribbean and Curse of the Monkey Island. Sea of Thieves provides players a dangerous and engaging universe to enjoy with others.

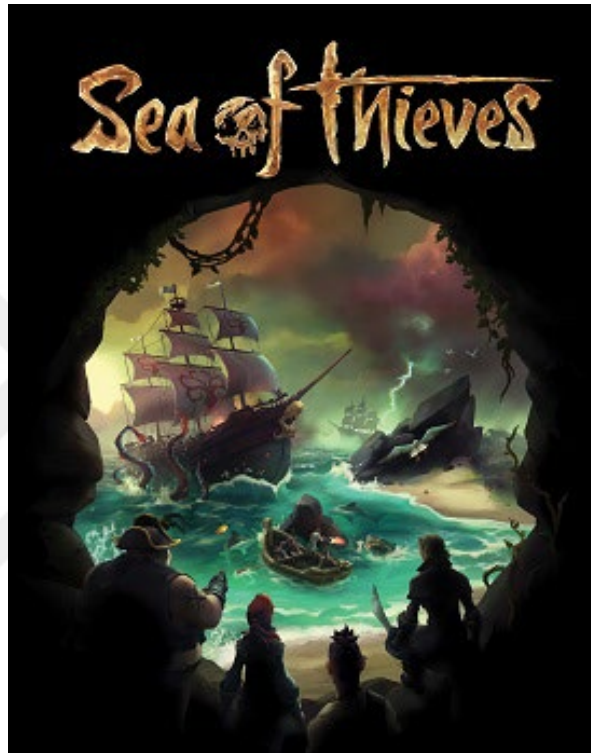


Figure 6. Sea of Thieves

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A video game is built on different foundations. Characters, game mechanics and world building are significant elements of these foundations.

Video games need solid and engaging characters and identities. A well-designed character can enhance immersion of the game, making players feel more connected to the game world and its narrative.

Game mechanics are the systems and rules that dictate how players interact with the game. For an excellent gaming experience, engaging and fun game mechanics are essential.

The construction of game worlds encompasses elements such as unique materials, settings, environments, backgrounds, and the timing of stories in the game.

Pirate-themed games are a popular theme in the gaming industry. This theme offers players different experiences in the vivid and adventurous world of piracy. However, there is a gap in comprehending how these games portray pirate identities, utilize gameplay mechanics, and construct engaging worlds.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study has attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Examine the representation of pirate identity in several media production, with a primary focus on video games.
2. Examine game mechanics of pirate themed games and how these mechanics contribute to player engagement, immersion, and overall gaming experience.
3. Examine various elements that associated with pirates in pirate-themed games to see how these elements contribute to world-building in these games.
4. Examine historical elements that used in representation of pirate identity, game mechanics and world building.
5. Examine common elements between pirate-themed video games.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 History of Pirates

Piracy has been present since ancient eras in our world. Throughout history, there have been several instances of it. Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans ships are targeted by them. The Roman fleet defeated pirates from Cilicia (located in present-day Turkey), leading to a period of tranquility at sea that endured until the decline of the Roman Empire. Actions of Danes and Vikings also can be described as piracy in North at Middle Ages. Piracy thrived in regions encompassing Southwest England, South-West Wales, and South-West Ireland, during the sixteenth century. The most

formidable fleet of pirate vessels, however, was the one that roamed the South China Sea; it amounted to about 40,000 men (Cordingly, 2004).

However, there is a lack of extensive documentation regarding the deeds of pirates. Some details of the pirates' activities across the world have mostly been obtained from colonial and naval communications. Survivors' accounts, trial logs, logbooks of the captains, and records of archaeological excavations of wrecked vessels are reported in these documents. Historians extensively focus on what is commonly referred to as the "Golden Age of Piracy," spanning roughly from 1650 to 1720s, considered a pivotal period in pirate history. Throughout this era, piracy thrived along the Atlantic shores of America and Africa, alongside the Indian Ocean. However, the primary center of pirate activity was concentrated in the Caribbean Sea. Nevertheless, despite the historical cruelty of the pirates, today, piracy has become a subject of considerable contemporary interest and discussion.

When people define piracy, they often describe it as encompassing all forms of theft, violence, and outlaw activities on the high seas, but in fact, labeling all criminals as pirates is mostly not accurate. Since the sixteenth century, these actions have been committed by individuals known by various names such as "Corsair", "Privateer", "Buccaneer" and "Pirate". People use these definitions interchangeably; therefore, this situation has caused some problems and confusion.

People who were pirates in Mediterranean Sea were named corsairs. The most renowned include those from the Barbary Coast, the Saltee Rovers, the Knights of Santo Stefano, and the individuals from Malta (Cordingly, 2004). Their motivation was primarily about religious beliefs (Earle, 2004). They persisted until the seventeenth century when European nations united against them and annihilate them.

Captains and crews who had an armed vessel and permission from their ruler were named as privateers. They had a document named "letter of marque" that authorized them to attack and capture the ships of those who had hostile actions against them.

Buccaneers were originally escaped servants and enslaved individuals, primarily from the French colonies, who resided and hunted on the islands of Hispaniola and Tortuga during the latter part of the 17th century. Hunters, gamblers and sharpshooters were the first buccaneers.

Pirates refer to outlaws who engage in robbery, assault, and murder at sea, encompassing individuals not classified within the previously mentioned categories. According to Cordingly (2004), pirates typically consisted of former sailors or

mariners, seasoned seafarers in their twenties, recognizable by their weathered faces from the sea and rough hands calloused by handling ropes. Most of them were mutineers and criminals.

The Golden Age of Piracy, which roughly dates from the 1650s to the 1720s when piracy thrived in the Caribbean world, is the historical period from which most contemporary representations of piracy take their inspiration. In this study mostly “pirate” term will be used.

2.2 Portrayal of Pirates

The archetype of the outlaw hero holds a rich and extensive historical presence within various literatures, folklore and media. This archetype is often depicted as a rebel against social norms. Tales of outlaw heroes have emerged several stories throughout history. Robin Hood in English folklore, Billy the Kid and Jesse James in the American Wild West can be example of outlaw hero archetype. Steckmesser (1966) claims that, most common portrayal of American outlaws is that they resemble Robin Hoods. Both these individuals, despite being romanticized as folk heroes, are essentially lawbreakers operating beyond legal boundaries.

Often they are portrayed as those who challenge oppressive forces, this archetype inspires social change and question authority. Human desire for freedom and justice are reflected by these representations. Historically, outlaws were individuals who were declared as such by authorities due to their criminal activities, and they were often pursued and punished for their actions.

According to Seal (2011), an outlaw is a person who has been expelled from society, either due to committing a crime or posing a threat to those in authority, often a result of both circumstances converging. In most of pirate stories, they are represented as living freely without the constraints of the law, often portrayed in a heroic light with minimized emphasis on their violent deeds and heightened focus on their heroic exploits.

In this chapter, the representation of the popular outlaw pirate identity will be investigated. This chapter includes an examination of representations of pirate outlaws in literature, on screen and in video games. Most of productions that examined take place during Golden Age of Piracy.

2.2.1 Outlaw pirate identity in literature. At first pirate theme used by artist since the sixteenth century, although they portrayed pirates as in marginal roles. In “Hamlet” (1601) written by William Shakespeare and “Pericles, Prince of Tyre” (1608) written by Shakespeare, in both scenarios, one of the protagonists is saved by the actions of these representations of pirates. Then, following the release of numerous historical records and brochures during the latter part of the 17th century, pirates started to become protagonits of stories.

In “Captain Singleton”, written by Daniel Defoe, Defoe swiftly moves past the cruel deeds of the pirates and, above all, he saves the main character through his act of repentance, and finally, wretched occupation has been abandonted by him. In “King of Pirates” (1720) also written by Defoe, he depicted Captain Avery, who has a romanticized personality and emphasizing his habit of taking valuable goods from captured ships and frequently changing both his crew and the ships he used. The captain’s brutal actions aren’t highlighted in the book and are portrayed as civilized and brave.

Since the publication of Captain Charles Johnson’s book “A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates” in 1724, pirates have remained a widely explored theme in action and adventure stories. Although Johnson aimed for historical accuracy in his work, pirates also earned their place in popular fiction.

The fascination with tales of pirates increased throughout the 19th century. Romantic poem “The Corsair” (1814) is written by Lord Byron, which sets in the Mediterrean. The subject of “The Corsair” is a captain of pirates who endeavors to save his beloved, who has been captured and enslaved by the Turks.

Also Golden Age of Piracy served as inspiration for well-known authors like Robert Louis Stevenson and J.M. Barrie.

In 1883, Robert Louis Stevenson published his timeless adventure story “Treasure Island” and brought pirates to a broad audience. In the book, Long John Silver embodies a duality as both a charming crew member and a menacing, ruthless character. J.M. Barrie, who wrote “Peter Pan” (1902) correspondingly.

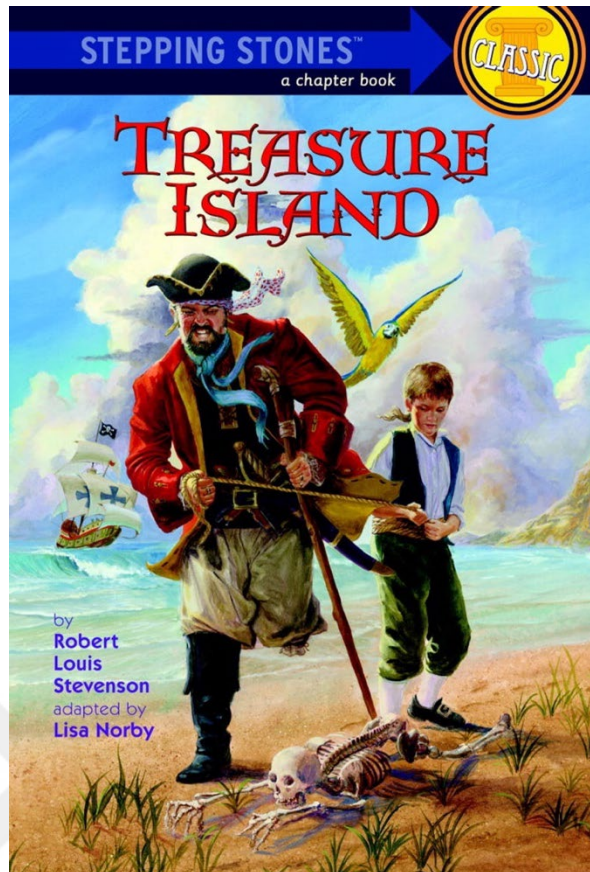


Figure 7. Treasure Island

As Cordingly (2004) argues, “Long John Silver ... is better known than any of the real pirates of history and, together with Captain Hook, has come to represent many people’s image of a pirate”. “Treasure Island” also inaugurated the traditional depiction of pirates burying their treasure—a practice that in reality was infrequent, such as with Captain Kidd, who buried his treasure in order to bargain in his negotiations with Governor Bellomont.

According to Cordingly (2004), regarding ‘the public perception of pirates’ the nineteenth century significantly altered how pirates were perceived by the public. During this time, their previous menace diminished, and they began to be seen more romantically.

2.2.2 Outlaw pirate identity on screen. According to Dolin (2018), movies have had a greater influence than books and plays in creating widespread enthusiasm for pirates. Erll (2010) claims that movies depicting imagined or historical events are recognized for their ability to influence the collective imagination of the past, and this

is one of explanations why the romanticized portrayal of pirates surpasses a portrayal that strictly adheres to historical accuracy.

The definition of a pirate has been shaped by the widespread, shared ideas of what defines one. Consequently, the initial essence of piracy has been altered due to a dominant public perception. The iconic pirate figure is ingrained in our cultural recollection, and conversations regarding this specific era of history are created within our collective imagination.

According to Seal (2011), portrayal of the outlaw in media is a flawed but romantic figure. The romanticized outlaw is deeply connected to his conflicting status, in which he is recognized as evil (in other words, as an individual who acts in brutal, violent actions), but also as person who represents specific values, such as battling against tyrannical powers, pursuing freedom, and embodying anything but a boring life at the same time.

The archetype of the outlaw hero on screen can also be observed in various depictions, not limited solely to pirates.

In "A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980," Ray (1985) discusses the concepts of the outlaw hero and the official hero. According to him, "American culture's traditional dichotomy of individual and community that had generated the most significant pair of competing myths: the outlaw hero and the official hero". He adds that outlaw hero generally is a "gunfighter" or "loner" who embodies the American people's desire for independence and "freedom from entanglements," while the conflicting figure of the official hero often a "farmer" or "family man" who embraces a belief "collective action" and the "legal process" instead of favoring an individualized moral code. According to Ray, these two antithetical paradigms are perhaps best represented in "disguised westerns" such as *Casablanca* (1942) with Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) and Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid) as outlaw and official heroes, respectively.

Moreover, production companies largely avoided the pirate film genre following several failures during the 1980s and 1990s, such as Roman Polanski's *Pirates* (1986) and Renny Harlin's *Cutthroat Island* (1995). However, despite the risk factors, Disney studios decided to undertake the pirate theme.

The *Pirates of Caribbean* franchise, with five movies released by Disney, emerged as one of the most significant film series in terms of success and popularity. One of the crucial factors why this series was successful is Johnny Depp who portrayed

Captain Jack Sparrow, lead pirate of the series. The portrayal of Captain Jack Sparrow was unlike any previous pirate. One of the famous critics of the time, Ebert (2003), mentions about Jack Sparrow “There has never been a pirate, or for that matter a human being, like this in any other movie.”. Ebert continues, “He is a peacock in full display.”

Besides his appearance with his kohl-rimmed eyes, dreadlocks, and a braided beard, he is not much of a successful leader. His former crew admitted they left him on a deserted island. Also, in the series, Captain Jack Sparrow constantly has to remind other characters that he is “Captain Jack Sparrow.” This shows that his reputation as a captain is not so good. Even if he is not a great leader, the show highlights that his success comes from his madness. He consistently engages in daring actions that defy the laws of physics in the series, often managing to escape dangerous situations. In the beginning of the series, it is shown that he does not care about anyone but himself and his beloved “Black Pearl.” However, as the series continues, viewers can observe his character development, and at the end of the third movie, *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*, he rescues his friend Will Turner, even though this means that he cannot be the captain of the “Flying Dutchman” anymore. This action showcases Jack Sparrow's romanticized pirate persona. He sacrifices his goal of becoming the most feared pirate captain on the seas for his friend.



Figure 8. Captain Jack Sparrow

Black Sails aims to represent pirate elements as authentically as possible. The narrative mostly revolves around Long John Silver and Captain Flint in the TV series. The story also depicts many important characters of the period, such as Blackbeard, Charles Vane, Benjamin Hornigold, Eleanor Guthrie, Jack Rackham, etc. Black Sails draws attention by highlighting strong female characters such as Anne Bonny, a dangerous and vicious pirate, and Eleanor Guthrie, who makes trade contracts with pirates in Nassau during times when the roles of women at sea were questioned and believed to bring bad luck. The series depicts the cunning and savage aspects of pirates, showing that they can do anything to achieve their goals, including ruthlessly killing people and manipulating them by telling lies.



Figure 9. Long John Silver and Captain Flint

2.2.3 Outlaw pirate identity in video games. According to Pinckard (2003), when creating characters, it is crucial to consider the balance between fostering identification and inducing a sense of alienation, as the player is both actor and spectator. She adds that this is a good tension; it drives a lot of gameplay and innovation. Without identification, developers create a game with little emotional impact or drama. This situation might be acceptable in a characterless game like Tetris, but in games featuring characters, those characters should likely serve as conduits for something more meaningful.

The portrayal of pirate identity in video games contributes significantly to the popularity of pirates in popular culture. They symbolize freedom from authority, embracing a life outside conventional rules, which resonates with players seeking an unconventional and adventurous experience. In pirate-themed games, players take on the roles of pirates, undertaking adventures that include plundering, exploration, and participating in swashbuckling escapades, capturing the essence of the rebellious nature of pirates.

They are mostly shown as daring outlaws who have a rebellious spirit and an adventurous lifestyle in video games. Popular imagination of individuals paints pirates' life as a series of exciting naval battles, intense sword duels, and romantic escapades quite distinct from the routine affairs of historical pirates. Pirate characters portrayed in video games are quite different from real ones. For instance, players can

constantly find victim after victim to fight and plunder them, don't need to regularly clean the bottoms of their ships, they aren't required to seek drinkable water in hostile environments. They don't have to escape from the navy, and they don't end up on the gallows.

In the Monkey Island series, the main protagonist is Guybrush Threepwood. He is a pirate who adventures throughout the Caribbean in pursuit of fame and treasure, alongside his love interest, Elaine Marley. Most of the time in this series, Guybrush tries to defeat the evil pirate LeChuck.

In *The Secret of Monkey Island*, Elaine is kidnapped by LeChuck, and Guybrush fights against him to rescue his love.

In *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge*, Guybrush searches for the legendary treasure of Big Whoop and once more confronts the pirate LeChuck, who has been transformed into a zombie.

In *The Curse of Monkey Island*, Elaine is transformed into a gold statue as a result of a curse and soon stolen by pirates. Guybrush tries to find her and lift the curse.

In the series, Guybrush shows all the common features of a romanticized pirate identity: the pursuit to be a mighty pirate, hunting for treasures, and saving his beloved. Guybrush has a quirky personality and is a clever pirate. He can successfully get out of dire situations, whether with items from his inventory or with answers given to other characters.

According to Pfister (2018), "By making fun of the genre, the game is at the same time a loving tribute and therefore a perfect source for the cultural imagery of piracy". In an online excerpt from a 1990 interview published by The SCUMM Bar (2004), Ron Gilbert mentions the representation of pirates in *Monkey Island*, noting that they are not ruthless and cruel like the historical pirates who lived in the 17th century. Instead, they are jovial and adventurous pirate representations of the characters found in beloved adventure tales that captivate people during their youth.



Figure 10. Guybrush Threepwood and Crew

In Sid Meier's *Pirates!*, the story begins with the protagonist's family imprisoned by an evil, corrupt nobleman. The protagonist sets forth on a journey to rescue their imprisoned family and bring down the nobleman, driven by a sense of justice and a desire for revenge. Along the way, the player becomes entangled in the world of piracy, with the opportunity to forge their own pirate identity. They can choose their name, skills, and nation according to their roleplay and play style.

The game features skills such as fencing, gunnery, navigation, medicine, and charm. Fencing quickens the player's attacks and dodges while dueling. Gunnery improves the player's accuracy during naval battles. The navigation skill increases the speed of the player's ships, even when sailing against the wind. The medicine skill increases the player's hit points and extends the player's life. The charm skill helps the player when it comes to wooing the opposite gender.

Players can choose from four nationalities: English, French, Spanish, and Dutch. These choices add depth to the character. Players decide how their maritime piracy careers will unfold throughout the game. They can pursue vendettas against rival pirate factions, climb the ranks among the most feared pirates through plundering, or engage in trade like merchants. Defeating renowned enemies or capturing valuable ships contributes to the pirate's reputation, which affects how other characters and nations perceive and interact with the player's pirate character. Pirates can also engage in romantic actions as a representation of the romanticized pirate identity. These romantic

relationships, and even marriage, add an intimate layer to the narrative of the pirate. In the game world, they influence players to establish alliances.

In *Sea of Thieves*, players have the freedom to choose their identity, goals, and motivations within the game. They have the option to work together in Player Alliances or engage in conflict, destroying each other's ships and seizing their treasure for personal gain. Pirates forming an Alliance are not obligated to collaborate; they have the freedom to betray and eliminate one another without facing any consequences. These interactions can contribute to a pirate's reputation and add depth to their identity. After defeating enemies, completing voyages, and finding treasure, players earn reputation with several trading companies in the game. With these reputations, players can unlock new titles and shape their character. There are NPCs that don't have many personalized features except for some figures. Mostly, they serve players for several purposes such as shopkeepers, Trading Company representatives, and also as part of Quests and Tall Tales.

In *Assassin's Creed Black Flag*, players control Edward Kenway and his ship, the *Jackdaw*, on the sea. At the beginning of the game, Edward is shown to players as a regular pirate from the Golden Age of Piracy who seeks fortune to live properly with his girlfriend, Caroline, in England.



Figure 11. Edward Kenway

According to Pfister (2018), “thrilling sea fights” and “dizzying swordfights” are aspects that are often present within the romantic pirate theme. For instance, the very first mission opens in the middle of a sea fight, which makes new players immediately recognize that they are playing a pirate game.

In *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag*, while players are doing nothing but wandering around peacefully with their ship (Jackdaw) on the sea or walking on land, sometimes NPCs force players to behave like a romantic pirate. When players stand in guards' way, guards push away the player, or when players enter a restricted area, guards immediately attack the player. When guards are too close to the player, it becomes possible to kill them. All these elements incite the player to engage in combat, essentially encouraging the player to embody the romantic pirate role who experiences “dizzying swordfights”.

While players are at sea, they often encounter sea fights between British, Spanish, or pirate ships. These encounters are normal when players are in the dangerous high seas, but the most crucial element is that even while anchored in a harbor, the player can engage in a naval battle. The reason for this is enemy ships progressively approach the player, consequently causing damage to the Jackdaw. Thus, the players find themselves amidst a “thrilling sea fight” and forced to behave like a romantic pirate.

Moreover, when at sea, the Jackdaw continues to sail across the ocean even without any navigation order. The Jackdaw starts to move when there is floating cargo in the sea. This invisible thrust to the ship aligns with Pfister's notion of the “individualistic treasure hunter.” Due to these factors, it's evident that the game encourages the player to behave like a romantic pirate who pursues gold and sea fights.

Even without taking action, the game pushes its player to embody the role of a romantic pirate. This means players cannot escape from playing like a romantic pirate when they just want to wander around, and it shows that the idea of a romantic pirate has been aimed for during the production of the game. This is critical because producers of the game aimed to portray pirates as realistically as possible.

2.3 Game Mechanics of Pirate Games

The source of positive or negative thoughts about a game often comes from the play experience of the players. While players play the game, they enter a virtual universe. The basic definition of how it's played is that the game receives inputs from players and changes its status according to these inputs. The outcome of this new status of the game is transmitted to players, and players decide what they will do next with this information in the game. This is the interactive cycle in the play experience (Fabricatore, 1999). This cycle continues until the game is finished, or players decide to stop playing.

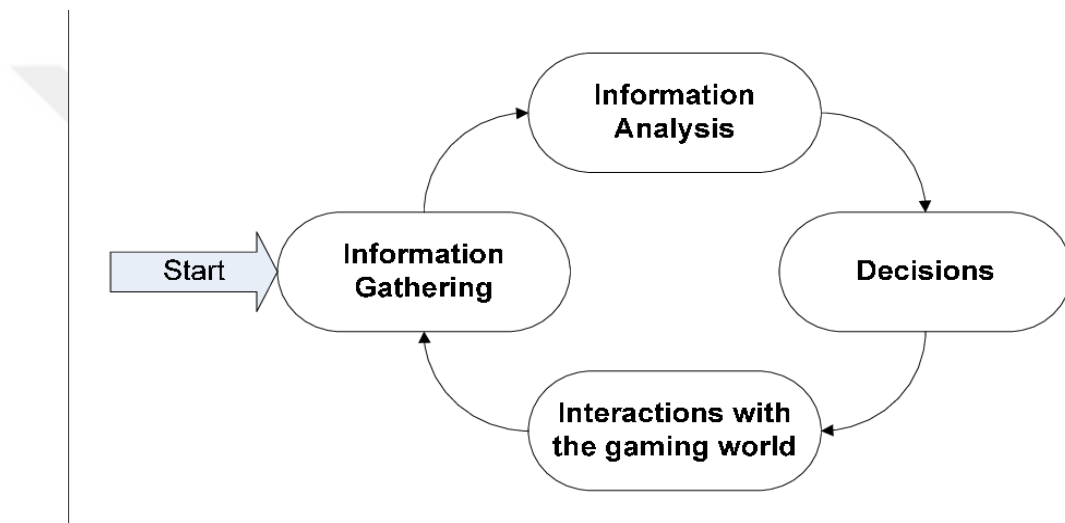


Figure 12. Interactive Cycle in Play Experience

Mechanics of the game are one of the primary elements that affect the playing experience of players and continue to play the game. Game mechanics are concepts such as rules, systems, and interactions that govern how a game operates and allow players to play the game. They define the behavior and structure of a game. Game mechanics include various elements such as movement, combat, progression, etc. These provide the structure within which players interact and engage with the game world. As mentioned above, these mechanics influence the player's experience, determine the challenges they face, and shape their decisions throughout gameplay.

Rejack (2007) argues that games that depend on history must not only depict historical events but also generate an enjoyable and engaging play experience.

Most pirate-themed games offer game mechanics to players such as swashbuckling sword combats, treasure hunts, and naval battles. Besides the thrilling

world of piracy, these mechanics also draw individuals to play them. In this chapter, I will analyze several mechanics featured in some renowned pirate games.

2.3.1 Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag. Assassin's Creed Black Flag uses a third-person perspective to observe the action and adventure of the game. Every Assassin's Creed game in the series has three common main mechanics: fight mechanics, stealth mechanics, and parkour mechanics.

The game offers swashbuckling sword fights to players on ships at high seas or on lands with long blades. These fights allow players to engage in intense hand-to-hand combat or use ranged weapons such as pistols and bombs to help defeat enemies.



Figure 13. Sword Fight in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

Since it is a game that belongs to the Assassin's Creed series, players have the famous hidden assassin blades of the series for those who want to kill their targets silently. These stealth mechanics are critical to finishing some quests in the game.

Physical movement mechanics, such as engaging in parkour-like actions, are also featured. This includes climbing and jumping from very high places such as towers, buildings, trees, and running on, over, and across obstacles.

As a result of its being a pirate game, Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag has unique ship control mechanics unlike any other game in the series. Control of the ship (Jackdaw) involves managing various aspects such as controlling sails, maneuvering, and engaging in naval combat. Players can navigate their ship across the open seas,

adjust sail positioning for speed, and execute tactics during battles, including firing cannons and boarding enemy vessels. The control of both sailing and combat mechanics allows players to experience the thrill of commanding a ship in a dynamic and engaging manner. They can destroy numerous enemy ships. All of this indicates that at sea, the game wants the player to behave like a romantic pirate by carrying out an abundance of "thrilling sea fights" in which romance overarches the representation of the subaltern (Pfister, 2018).

Throughout history, when facing a ship, pirates would show their colors and demand immediate surrender from their victims. Unlike the representation of pirates in popular media, most fights ended with a surrender without engaging in combat. Otherwise, if the victims were approximately 1,000 yards away, pirates would initiate an attack by firing all the guns on one side of the ship, a tactic known as "the broadside." The essential characteristics of pirate vessels, in fact, included the need to be fast, seaworthy (that is, able to face storms at sea without the likelihood of structural breakdown), and well-armed (Konstam, 2011).

According to Simon (2023), the mechanic of capturing a ship in the game doesn't reflect reality. She claims that the deck must be full of many people to control that kind of ship. Also, she adds that when pirates capture a ship, they contact the captain of the ship and the quartermaster; they want to leave quickly without killing too many people.

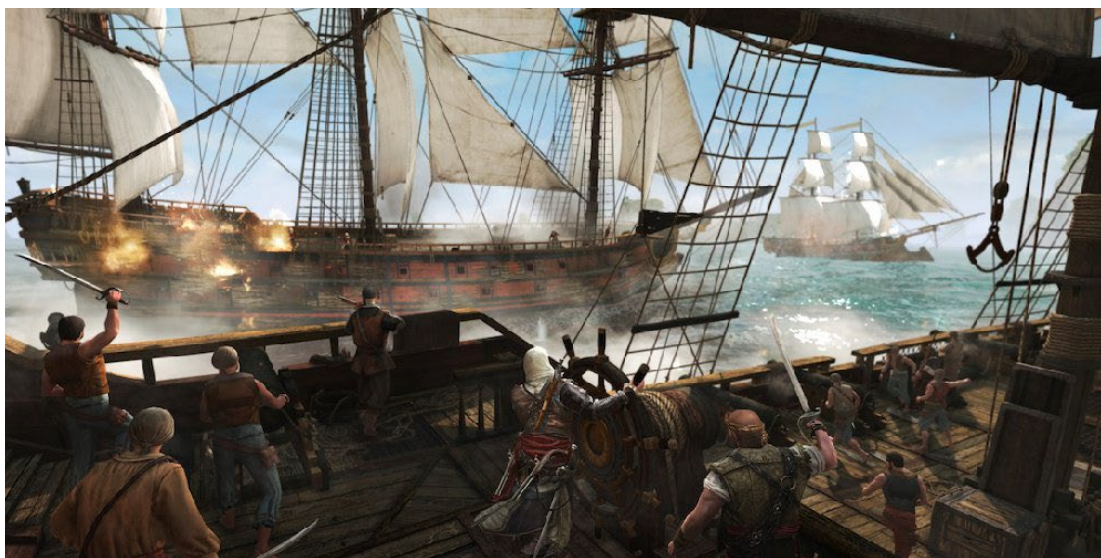


Figure 14. Naval Battle in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

With the treasure hunting mechanic, players have to find clues, solve puzzles, and finally discover hidden treasures. This mechanic arouses curiosity in players and keeps them engaged in the game.

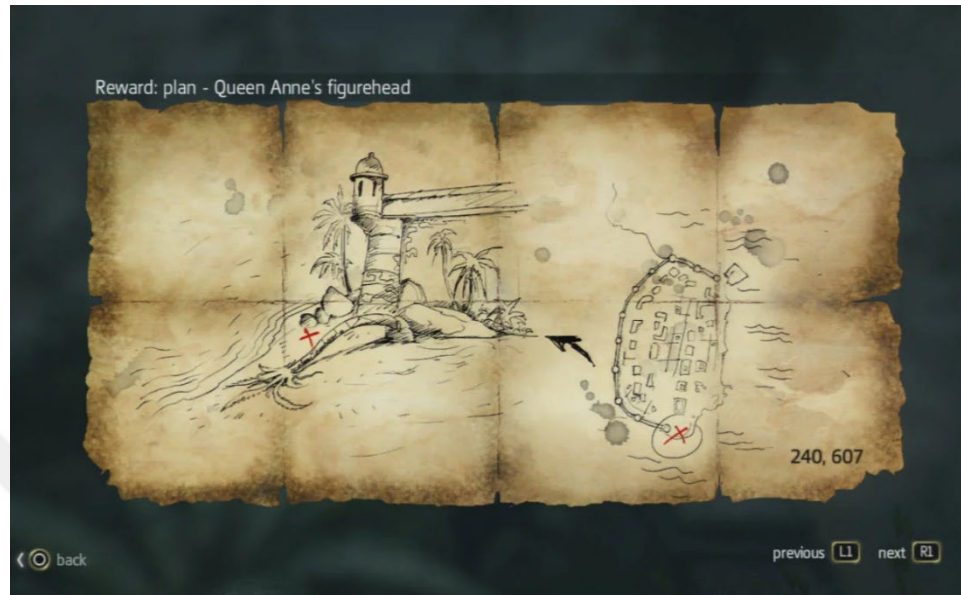


Figure 15. A Treasure Map in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

2.3.2 Monkey Island series. Secret of Monkey Island, Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge, and Curse of Monkey Island games feature point-and-click movement mechanics. Escape from Monkey Island is controlled entirely with the keyboard or alternatively with a joystick, making it the only non-point-and-click game in the Monkey Island series. In Tales of Monkey Island, the player holds and drags the mouse to move Guybrush, rather than pointing and clicking. Return to Monkey Island is a 2D point-and-click adventure game.

Monkey Island game series have many differences in the game mechanics compared to other pirate-themed games. This game series is famous for its creative and often humorous puzzles. Players must use logic and creative thinking while solving these puzzles, combining items in their inventory or interacting with the environment. Dialogue mechanics have a significant place in the series. Players can choose what Guybrush will say to NPCs from dialogue options and receive different responses and interactions from them. Most of these interactions are humorous and witty.

Instead of engaging in traditional sword fight mechanics, there is a different type of fight in *The Secret of Monkey Island*, *Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge*, and *The Curse of Monkey Island*: insult sword fighting. Insult sword fighting is one of the iconic elements of these games. Characters exchange humorous insults. During a fight, a player or opposing pirate launches an insult. The opponent responds to these words with another insult. Whoever's insult is sufficiently sharp gains the upper hand in the battle and will be able to throw the next insult. Usually, three successfully landed insults will ensure a combatant's victory. Insult Sword Fighting has a slightly different rule when at sea. While fighting on board a ship, all insult comebacks must rhyme with the attacker's line.

In *The Curse of Monkey Island*, ship battle mechanics require players to strategically position their ships to optimally use their cannons for maximum impact while dodging enemy cannon fire. After successful cannon fire disables an enemy ship, players can board the enemy vessel and fight them face to face, often engaging in an Insult Sword Fight.

Table 1

Insults and Comebacks When Fighting Against Normal Pirates

Insults	Comebacks
You fight like a dairy Farmer!	How appropriate. You fight like a cow!
This is the END for you, you gutter crawling cur!	And I've got a little TIP for you, get the POINT?
I've spoken with apes more polite than you!	I'm glad to hear you attended your family reunion!
Soon you'll be wearing my sword like a shish kebab!	First you'd better stop waving it like a feather duster.
People fall at my feet when they see me coming!	Even BEFORE they smell your breath?
I'm not going to take your insolence sitting down!	Your hemorrhoids are flaring up again eh?
I once owned a dog that was smarter than you.	He must have taught you everything you know.
Nobody's ever drawn blood from me and nobody ever will.	You run THAT fast?

Table 1 (cont'd)

Insults	Comebacks
Have you stopped wearing diapers yet?	Why? Did you want to borrow one?
There are no words for how disgusting you are.	Yes, there are. You just never learned them.
You make me want to puke.	You make me think somebody already did.
My handkerchief will wipe up your blood!	So you got that job as janitor, after all.
I got this scar on my face during a mighty struggle!	I hope now you've learned to stop picking your nose.
I've heard you are a contemptible sneak.	Too bad no one's ever heard of YOU at all.
You're no match for my brains, you poor fool.	I'd be in real trouble if you ever used them.
You have the manners of a beggar.	I wanted to make sure you'd feel comfortable with me.

After Guybrush wins three fights against normal pirates, they begin to say, "You're good enough to fight the Sword Master."

Table 2

Insults and Comebacks When Fighting Against Sword Masters

Insults	Comebacks
Now I know what filth and stupidity really are.	I'm glad to hear you attended your family reunion.
Every word you say to me is stupid.	I wanted to make sure you'd feel comfortable with me.
I've got a long, sharp lesson for you to learn today.	And I've got a little TIP for you. Get the POINT?
I will milk every drop of blood from your body!	How appropriate, you fight like a cow!
I've got the courage and skill of a master swordsman.	I'd be in real trouble if you ever used them.

Table 2 (cont'd)

Insults	Comebacks
My tongue is sharper than any sword.	First, you'd better stop waving it like a feather-duster.
My name is feared in every dirty corner of this island!	• So you got that job as a janitor, after all. • Too bad no one's ever heard of YOU at all.
My wisest enemies run away at the first sight of me!	Even BEFORE they smell your breath?
Only once have I met such a coward!	• He must have taught you everything you know. • . I'm glad to hear you attended your family reunion.
If your brother's like you, better to marry a pig.	You make me think somebody already did.
No one will ever catch ME fighting as badly as you do.	You run THAT fast?
My last fight ended with my hands covered with blood.	• I hope now you've learned to stop picking your nose. • Your hemorrhoids are flaring up again, eh?
I hope you have a boat ready for a quick escape.	Why, did you want to borrow one?
My sword is famous all over the Caribbean!	Too bad no one's ever heard of YOU at all.
You are a pain in the backside, sir!	Your hemorrhoids are flaring up again, eh?
I usually see people like you passed-out on tavern floors.	• Even BEFORE they smell your breath? • I'm glad to hear you attended your family reunion.
There are no clever moves that can help you now.	Yes, there are. You just never learned them.

It is also impossible to gain the upper hand against sword masters, even with a successful comeback. They will do all of the initial insults. They are beatable but prove the toughest opponents of all in sword fights.

When Insult Sword Fighting is at sea, rules are slightly different. While fighting on board ship, all insult comebacks must rhyme with the attacker's line. When Guybrush fights against Captain Rottingham in *The Curse of Monkey Island*, there are different insults and comebacks.

Table 3

Insults and Comebacks While Fighting Against Captain René Rottingham and Pirates at Sea

Insult	René Rottingham 's Insults	Comeback	Guybrush's Loser Comeback
Every enemy I've met I've annihilated!	My attacks have left entire islands depopulated!	With your breath, I'm sure they all suffocated.	I had my cat laminated.
You're as repulsive as a monkey in a negligee.	You have the sex appeal of a Shar-Pei	I look THAT much like your fiancée?	• Instead of skip, I'd rather sashay. • This floor is lovely. Is it parquet? • In case of an earthquake, stand in a doorway. • I set my blender to frappe.
Killing you would be justifiable homicide!	When I'm done, your body will be rotted and putrified!	Then killing you must be justifiable fungicide.	• Hydraulic suspension guarantees a nice smooth ride. • I like my steak chicken-fried. • I found a three-dollar bill, but I don't think it was bona fide, • I sent a letter to the King of Portugal, who never replied.

Table 3 (cont'd)

Insult	René Rottingham 's Insults	Comeback	Guybrush's Loser Comeback
You're the ugliest monster ever created!	Your looks would make pigs nauseated.	If you don't count all the ones you've dated.	• We had a Little League team, but I never participated. • You'll digest food better if it's been masticated. • I was thrown off a subway because I had expectorated. • I'd like the Latin verb 'to go' conjugated.
I'll skewer you like a sow at a buffet!	Your lips look like they belong on catch of the day!	When I'm done with YOU, you'll be a boneless filet.	• I think that my sister's in a family way. • The Caribbean is in such a state of disarray.
Would you like to be buried, or cremated?	I give you a choice. You can be gutted, or decapitated!	With you around, I'd prefer to be fumigated.	• Better keep that refrigerated. • These swordfights need to be officiated. • This isn't going as well as I'd anticipated. • Could I get my parking ticket validated? • The importance of breakfast cannot be overstated.

Table 3 (cont'd)

Insult	René Rottingham 's Insults	Comeback	Guybrush's Loser Comeback
Coming face to face with me must leave you petrified!	Never before have I seen someone so sissified!	Is that your face? I thought it was your backside.	• I'm waiting for these feelings of nausea to subside. • Well, I'm fit to be tied. • You should let your conscience be your guide.
When your father first saw you, he must have been mortified!	You're a disgrace to your species, you're so undignified!	At least mine can be identified.	• I carry traveler's cheques that are accepted worldwide. • Dinoflagellates are the cause of red tide.
I have never seen such clumsy swordplay!	I have never lost to a melee!	You would have, but you were always running away.	• Plan for your future with an IRA. • I'll meet you in the foyer. • Of all crafts, my favorite is papier-mâché.
En garde! Touché!	Your mother wears a toupee!	Oh, that is so cliché.	• I'd like to see this swordfight on instant replay. • Remember, pedestrians always have the right of way.
Throughout the Caribbean, my great deeds are celebrated!	My skills with a sword are highly venerated!	Too bad they're all fabricated.	I'd have a good comeback, but it's hard to get motivated. •

Table 3 (cont'd)

Insult	René Rottingham 's Insults	Comeback	Guybrush's Loser Comeback
I can't rest 'til you've been exterminated!	Your stench would make an outhouse cleaner irritated!	Then perhaps you should switch to decaffeinated.	• I haven't fed my dog for so long, he's emaciated. • My fishing hook is always live-baited. • I fear our government's funds are being misappropriated. • I like music that's syncopated.
I'll leave you devastated, mutilated, and perforated!	I can't tell you which of my traits leaves you most intimidated.	Your odor alone makes me aggravated, agitated, and infuriated.	• My entire wardrobe is color-coordinated. • Let's get these sausages hot-plated. • My craving for peanuts will never be satiated. • Chinese food's best when not monosodium-glutamated.
Heaven preserve me! You look like something that's died!	Nothing on this Earth can save your sorry hide!	The only way you'll be preserved is in formaldehyde.	• Can you go cross-eyed? • If you're planning on retiring, have money set aside. • My ship has barnacles on its underside.

Table 3 (cont'd)

Insult	René Rottingham 's Insults	Comeback	Guybrush's Loser Comeback
I'll hound you night and day!	You'll find I am dogged and relentless to my prey!	Then be a good dog. Sit! Stay!	• What this island needs is a good, reasonable buffet. • Happy birthday. • You're ugly. • You're stupid.

When players successfully defeat a regular enemy pirate in an insult sword fight, they will take the enemy's booty. However, if players lose and they have booty in their hold, the enemy will take the players' booty. In the story, Captain René Rottingham steals Guybrush's map, and Guybrush must defeat him in an insult sword fight to take his map back.



Figure 16. Guybrush Threepwood Engages in an Insult Sword Fight Against Captain René Rottingham

2.3.3 Sid Meier's Pirates!. In Sid Meier's Pirates!, the game sets players free from a fixed questline, starting with choosing the allegiance they will be affiliated with, such as English, Dutch, French, or Spanish. While players sail the Caribbean seas, they have the option to engage and attack any ships. They can either sink these ships or, upon defeating the enemy, have the opportunity to integrate the captured ships into their fleet or recruit crew members from them. Every action that the player performs alters their standing with nations. A new rank, loot, and land are rewarded to the player by their supported country, but the country that is attacked by the player and its allies defines the player as an enemy. This mechanic affects player free-roaming on the high seas. Ships belonging to an enemy country attack the player when they locate the player on the game map. Entrances to towns belonging to enemy countries can also be blocked.

Getting rich is one of the dreams of every pirate. Players trade and sell goods that are picked up from other ships, and they have the opportunity to stay away from sword and sea fights and make a fortune by finding lost treasures located by treasure maps and just trading goods.

There are three types of combat mechanics in Sid Meier's Pirates: Naval battles, fencing, and raids. In naval battles, players control their flagship to fire cannons at enemy ships while additionally avoiding projectiles coming from them. Although the fundamental elements of naval battles are quite simple, more strategic logic is required in preparation for these confrontations. Players have the option to stop by port towns to enhance their fleet's ships with various ammunition types or better defenses. However, these enhancements do not ensure certain victory. Also, there are different types of ships, and these ships come with distinct advantages and disadvantages; for instance, Frigates are known for their resilience despite their slow speed, whereas sloops offer better maneuverability yet lack robust defenses.



Figure 17. Naval Battle in Sid Meier's Pirates!

Ramming an enemy ship during naval combat triggers a boarding action where both crews engage in an intense fight, while the player engages in a fencing duel with the enemy captain. Players must observe the enemy captain's actions and react by either deflecting attacks or finding weaknesses in their defense in these crucial individual sword fights.

During the duel between the player and the enemy, crew members from both sides decrease in numbers as crewmates are defeated in battle. Before the end of the duel, if one side loses all their crew members, that side loses the battle. Besides offering a swifter way to winning naval battles, boarding a ship also enables players to plunder its cargo and incorporate the vessel into their fleet.



Figure 18. Sword Fight in Sid Meier's Pirates!

Although most of these actions have consequences. Players gain respect from one faction and anger another. Assaulting any ship or settlement will anger the nation tied to it, potentially resulting in players being expelled from towns after enough provocation. After that, players have the option to use stealth and sneak into towns, taking the risk of being caught and thrown into prison, or they can choose another option and raid those towns, trying to conquer these settlements in the name of a player's own faction. When all enemy forces, often appearing in groups of hundreds or thousands of soldiers, are wiped out, raids are considered won, or players have to reach the gates of the town successfully. In Sid Meier's Pirates, raids are the most challenging fight mechanics. As a result of these battles, there are massive rewards, and players strengthen their ties with allied factions.

2.3.4 Sea of Thieves. In Sea of Thieves, swashbuckling action continues. There are different types of weapons in the game, and choices of weapons determine the fighting style of the player. If players want to fight from afar, they can choose ranged weapons, or they can opt for the classic pirate sword.



Figure 19. Sword Fight in Sea of Thieves

In Sea of Thieves, naval battles are really exciting and fast-paced. There are different types of cannonballs. Players can choose which type of cannonball to fire at the enemy according to their strategy. In the naval battles of Sea of Thieves, players' own ships also take damage. Another mechanic in the game is repairing ships. Since it is a challenging task to fight and repair at the same time, these types of situations boost player engagement in the game. While all of these actions may be too much for just one player, the developers encourage players to play together with bigger ships.



Figure 20. Naval Battle in Sea of Thieves

Thus, engagement in the game, chances of players to complete missions, and get the treasures increase; also, players socialize with each other.

In Sea of Thieves, treasures are the main source of gold, reputations, and emissary values. There are certain types of treasure associated with each Trading Company. Representatives of Trading Companies accept treasures related to their company for gold, reputation, and emissary value. Trading Companies offer voyages to players, and with these voyages, players can hunt for treasures on various islands. Players must determine their destination using the voyage's island map, and upon reaching that specific location, they need to find the place marked on the voyage's map. Treasures can be found in random places such as floating on the sea, in caves on islands, or by defeating foes such as Skeleton Ships, Megalodons (giant sharks that assault pirate ships), the Kraken, etc.



Figure 21. A Treasure Map in Sea of Thieves

While players choose a voyage from a Trading Company, everyone who is in the crew also votes for that voyage. It is a reference that comes from the understanding of democracy among pirates.

2.4 World Building in Pirate Games

According to Hamilton (2009), the definition of worldbuilding is the creation of an imagined world or even an entire universe.

Creating a vivid pirate world involves blending history, imagination, and a touch of swashbuckling flair to fashion an immersive setting that captivates both creators and audiences alike. Clothing style, locations where the narrative unfolds, and items of significance crucial to the plot all serve as crucial points that enhance the depth of the story. If a tale isn't anchored in history, it lacks substance and validity, merely hovering without a solid foundation. Although political scientists Peterson, Miller, and Fedorko (2013) argue that video games are frequently seen as historical simulations aiming to represent history rather than providing strictly accurate historical depictions.

Because of video games' ahistorical nature, they lack the capacity to deliver an authentic historical portrayal (Peterson, Miller & Fedorko, 2013). Uricchio (2005) adds that the combination of history and fiction is challenging due to the interaction between the player and the portrayal of history.

In this chapter, I will talk about the similarities between the historical pirate world and representations of the pirate world in popular media to create a vivid, imaginary, yet adventurous world.

Apart from the infamous reputation of pirates for their cruel deeds and outlaw status in history, they actually formed a form of democratic society. Captains and quartermasters were elected and deposed with a one-man/one-vote system and held a council of war for decisions about the vessel's route.

There were no class distinctions aboard a pirate vessel, where surnames were replaced with noms de guerre, or nicknames (Earle, 2004).

Earle explained that individuals had a "political and ideological incentive to join a pirate crew," seeking an escape from the strict and capricious control prevalent in legal employment. Instead, they aimed to enter a society where leaders were regularly chosen through elections and kept in line by the possibility of being removed from their positions. Moreover, this community operated by making decisions collectively through majority voting.

In *Sea of Thieves*, one crew member proposes the voyage. Once the voyage is proposed, other crew members need to cast their votes. For the voyage to be accepted,

a majority of crew members must vote in favor of it. If the majority votes in favor, the voyage becomes active.

With the AC 4 game, a book was also published named Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag: Blackbeard - The Lost Journal to boost the world-building feeling. It is a graphic novel that contains several illustrations, detailed ship's logs and maps, newspaper clippings, and "Letters of Marque." One of the illustrations is about the Pirate Code of Edward Thatch (Blackbeard). In the game, Edward Thatch's pirate code is very similar to the Pirate Code of another famous pirate, Bartholomew Roberts, in history. There are 3 different articles. Both of these pirate codes mention that crew members who flee from battle will face death.

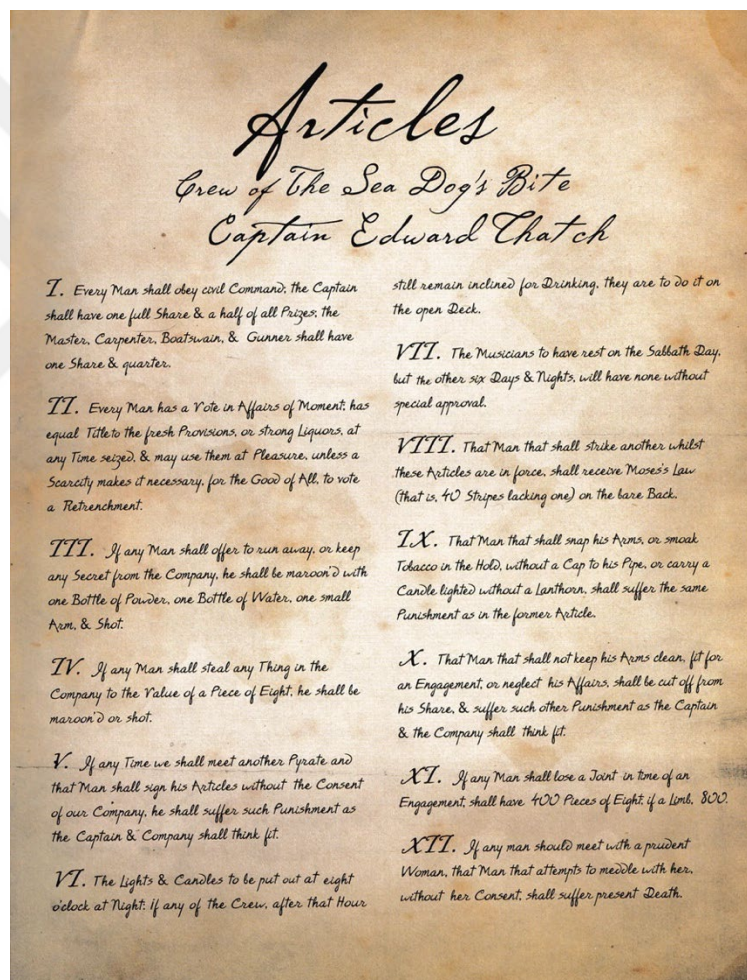


Figure 22. Pirate Code of Blackbeard

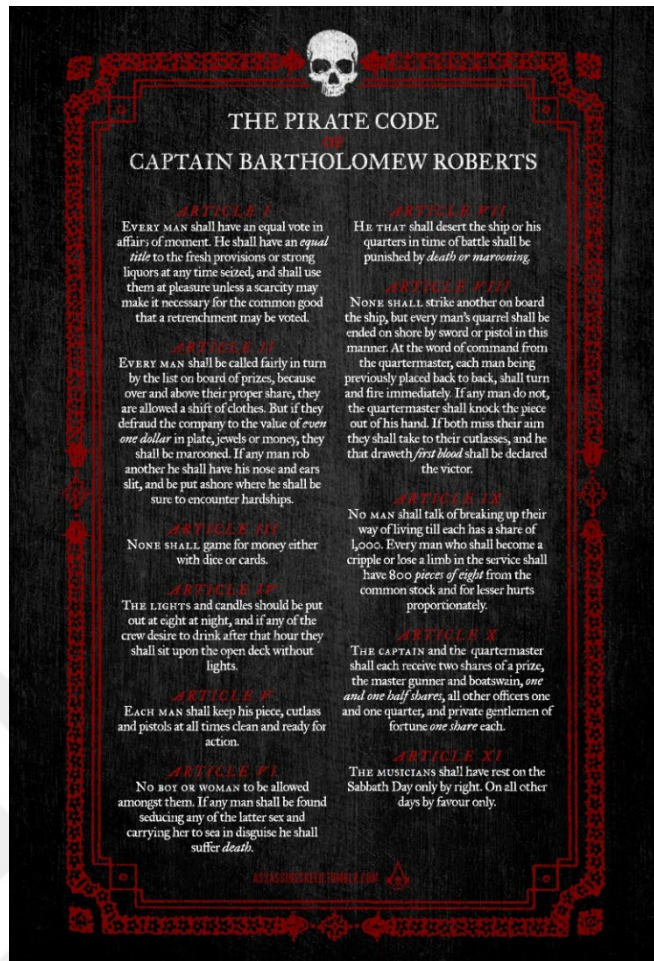


Figure 23. Pirate Code of Captain Bartholomew Roberts

According to Earle (2004), the worst crimes among pirates were cowardice in the moment of battle and desertion, which were punished by death or marooning (i.e., being cast ashore on a rock or deserted island). Failure to keep arms in good condition was also considered a grave and punishable offense.

In the *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* movie, in the scene where pirate captains choose the Pirate King, one of the crew members tries to prevent the implementation of the pirate code. Later in this scene, he is executed by Captain Edward Teague, who indicates that "the code is the law."



Figure 24. Captain Edward Teague with Book of Pirate Code in Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End

Hanging of pirates, whose bodies were then caged and displayed at the entrance of Caribbean ports or on the Execution Dock on the northern bank of the Thames, was intended to serve as a warning to passing ships. The corpses were sometimes coated with tar to ensure a longer and more durable display (Cordingly, 2004). Skeletons in gibbets, the name of the hanging cages, can be seen in *Assassin's Creed: Black Flag* in the port. According to Simon (2023), this was a common punishment for pirates after they were hanged, with the three tides symbolizing drowning, but their bodies were protected from decay with tar. She continues with the scene from *Assassin's Creed: Black Flag* showing two skeletons in a gibbet and adds that the decay of a body in a gibbet is uncommon, but she mentions the famous pirate Captain Kidd, whose body was one of the few that decayed in a gibbet.

In the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series and *Sea of Thieves* world, there are lots of supernatural elements used in world-building, which give individuals feelings of more adventure and excitement. For instance, fighting with zombies, skeletons, battling the legendary creature Kraken, and encountering mermaids, etc.



Figure 25. An Enemy Skeleton in Sea of Thieves



Figure 26. Skeleton Pirate Crew in Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl

Kraken is a mythical sea monster that frightens sailors in maritime stories. It is often depicted as a giant cephalopod or squid of enormous size and strength. It is based on Scandinavian folklore and mythology. The kraken is typically described as an enormous creature, and it has multiple long and powerful tentacles. In the Pirates of

the Caribbean series, it belongs to Davy Jones. It finds black-spotted people in the sea and destroys the ship.



Figure 27. Kraken Attacks to Black Pearl in Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

In Sea of Thieves, it is used as a fear factor as well. Players first see darkness under the water, which makes them nervous. After a few seconds, tentacles come out from the sea, and the fight begins.



Figure 28. Kraken Attacks to Ship in Sea of Thieves

Pirate crews also amused themselves with games, singing, dancing, and musical entertainment. They conducted fake trials for fun but simultaneously they practiced for their future trials that awaited many of them.

In Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag, while the player navigates the ship at ocean, the pirate crew starts to sing shanties. Although pirates likely sang during their voyages to alleviate work and enhance their lives' entertainment, the term "shanty" and the renowned shanties featured in Black Flag originate from the 19th century. This shanty mechanic offers the player a joyful navigating experience. This means that the shanties in AC 4 can be considered as counterfactual, and thus offer players a joyful experience while they are sailing towards a specific destination. The shanties therefore do not rely on historical accuracy and provide the impression that life at sea was pleasurable, thus creating a romantic image of life on a pirate ship. AC 4 therefore neglects the actual conditions on pirate ships, which were far from romantic, and replaces it with an image that corresponds to the romantic pirate genre.

2.4.1 Appearance. According to Cawthorne (2003), most pirate figures wore a headband or a piece of cloth to prevent sweat from getting into their eyes. If they had a tricorn hat, they would wear it over the headband. Their faces were covered up with powder because of their muskets or ship's cannons, and they wouldn't wash their faces. If the time spent at sea was too long, their teeth would have fallen out, and it was nearly impossible to maintain their set of eyes, ears, hands, and feet .

Pirates were armed to the teeth (pun intended); they usually handled boarding axes, pikes, muskets, and blunderbusses, and their belts were heavy with two pistols, knives, and a cutlass. Moreover, as Cordingly (2004) has noted, "many of the men cultivated a macho image which was expressed in hard drinking, coarse language, threatening behaviour, and casual cruelty".

The iconic role of Jack Sparrow, played by Johnny Depp, contradicts certain aspects of the stereotype of the macho image. His style is kohl-rimmed eyes, dreadlocks, and a braided beard. However, constantly drunk behavior never changes. He depicted a more artistic pirate image in cinema and engraved in the minds of individuals. As I've previously stated in this thesis, Roger Ebert's words, 'There has

never been a pirate, or for that matter a human being, like this in any other movie,' emphasize the uniqueness of this portrayal.

In Sea of Thieves, players can customize their appearances and costumes. They can use eyepatches or add scars to give themselves a more dangerous look and can equip peg legs or hooks, emphasizing the adventurous life of a pirate. In the game, besides the classic pirate look, since it is an exaggerated example of pirate-themed games, these aspects can also be seen in costumes.



Figure 29. Appearance of a Pirate in Sea of Thieves

There are over 25 costumes available for Edward Kenway in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag. Since it is an Assassin's Creed game, as an assassin, he has the iconic Assassin's hood.



Figure 30. Appearance of Edward Kenway in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

Another iconic character in the game, Blackbeard, has sparklers coming off from his hat. According to Simon (2023), this portrayal of Blackbeard is pretty accurate. In history, Blackbeard used this image to frighten people and get them to surrender. He wanted to look like he was a man who had come from hell.



Figure 31. Appearance of Blackbeard in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

2.4.2 Pirate flags. The black flag with a skull and crossbones is the most known symbol of pirates, but many historians have contradicted that widespread belief. According to Cordingly (2004), in the Golden Age of Piracy (early eighteenth century), pirate flags

showcased a range of symbols such as bleeding hearts, fiery spheres, hourglasses, spears, swords, and complete skeletons.



Figure 32. Pirate Flags From Golden Age of Piracy

Pirates used red flags as much as black flags to indicate their murderous intentions to others. Also, Simon (2023) mentions different flag types of pirates. According to her, a red flag means pirates will not have mercy on the victims; they will fight to the death and will not negotiate. She adds that pirates with a black flag imply that if victims surrender, they can negotiate with them, and around the eighteenth century, red flags disappeared, and all the flags turned black.

Additionally, there were customized flags used by pirates such as Bartholomew Roberts, Calico "Jack" Rackham, Edward Teach (Blackbeard), and Henry Every. Pirates used the term "Old Roger" for the name of their flags (a nickname associated with the devil), and Cordingly (2004) adds that this name later transformed into "Jolly Roger". According to Cawthorne (2003), the term "Jolly Roger" has its origins in the French phrase "joli rouge," which refers to the red flag utilized by early privateers.

In AC 4, the protagonist of the game, Edward Kenway's flag is created just for the game.



Figure 33. Pirate Flag of Edward Kenway in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

Also in Sea of Thieves, there are three different flags to state the purpose of the voyage: Regular Flags (rectangular), Alliance Flags (triangular pennants), and Emissary Flags.

2.4.3 Locations. According to Konstam (2011), fiction about pirates takes individuals to an unfamiliar world, set against the exotic backdrop of palm trees and balmy tropical seas, distinct from their usual experiences. While it is a fact that the Caribbean is a naturally tropical paradise-like destination, this tropical environment is regularly used and even highlighted in almost every pirate-themed production. In video games such as Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag and Sea of Thieves, this tropical background is highlighted during the missions and travel in the open game world. For instance, there are exotic islands that can be seen or traveled to, and animals such as whales and sharks can be interacted with.

Numerous islands constitute the map in Sea of Thieves. In the game, outposts such as Sanctuary Outpost, Plunder Outpost, and Ancient Spire Outpost are also considered regular islands while having a tavern, weapon shop, clothing shop, equipment shop, Pirate Emporium, and Trading Companies. On regular islands such as Thieves' Haven, Kraken's Fall, and Shark Tooth Key that don't have outposts, players encounter treasures, supernatural elements, puzzles, etc.



Figure 34. An Outpost in Sea of Thieves

In Monkey Island series, adventures continue on various exotic islands such as Monkey Island, Melee Island, Scabb Island, Phatt Island, Plunder Island, etc.

Besides the exotic nature of the Caribbean, pirate-themed productions often feature bustling pirate towns or settlements around this exotic environment. The representation of the pirate town, Nassau on New Providence Island, is one of the best places to symbolize pirate society. Both Black Sails and Assassin's Creed Black Flag Nassau are related to the famed and allegedly non-existent "Libertatia" (also known as Libertalia); a town in Madagascar that was believed to have served as a pirate sanctuary towards the end of the seventeenth century.



Figure 35. Nassau Town in Black Sails



Figure 36. Nassau Town in Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag

According to Sherry (2008), the legendary story of Libertatia is a pirate community placed in Madagascar that operated based on socialist principles, under the control of a democratic governance. Sherry added that, however much of a fantasy the story of Libertatia may have been, it symbolized "the freedom inherent in a pirate's life that attracted them to the outlaw nation."

Furthermore, the portrayal of Golden Age Nassau can be seen as an adaptation of the envisioned, idealistic town of Libertatia into an actual settlement. The ultimate

dream of a pirate, a pirate nation against the world under the Jolly Roger. Libertatia and its popular portrayal Nassau in recent media are the home of that pirate nation.

On the other hand, Pirates of the Caribbean series mostly focus on Tortuga Island. It is another island located in the Caribbean. Exaggeration is one of the narrative elements used in PotC. Hence, it is represented as a port where it appears the waves have gathered a bunch of dangerous and boisterous pirates, privateers, prostitutes, thieves, and drunkards with non-stop action in the series in the Golden Age of Piracy. In short, it is an exaggerated pirate haven.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Google Scholar and BAU Academic Search Engine were scanned using the keywords Pirate History, Pirate-theme Games, Pirates On Screen, Outlaws, Outlaws in History, Pirate Outlaws, Outlaws in Literature, Outlaws on Screen, Game Mechanics, World Building, World Building of Pirate Games, World Building of Pirates on Screen, Pirates of the Caribbean, Black Sails, Treasure Island, Assassin's Creed, Assassin's Creed Black Flag, Sid Meier, Sid Meier's Monkey Island, Sea of Thieves, Jack Sparrow, Video Games, Cinema, Famous Pirates in History and their various combinations. Youtube search engine also used for this research to examine interviews.

Throughout history, there have been several pirate productions. In this research, the most known pirate productions were examined. This study aims to examine the representation of pirate identity, game mechanics, and world-building in various pirate-themed video games. For this purpose, online videos, literature, articles, and theses were reviewed. Understanding how pirate identity is portrayed, game mechanics are employed, and worlds are constructed contributes to a deeper comprehension of narratives and their impact on audience engagement.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Data collection instruments. Data has been collected through different instruments. Close reading is used for in-depth analysis of pirate-themed articles, focusing on narrative elements, character development, and themes related to pirate identity. Gameplay observation involves playing selected pirate-themed video games, capturing details about game mechanics and narrative elements.

3.2.2 Data collection procedures. Most well-known pirate productions were selected for examination. Academic literature, theses, and articles related to pirate identity, game mechanics, and world-building were reviewed. Selected multiple pirate-themed games were played. Online content was examined, such as insights from pirate historians and pirate game producers. Pirate elements were compared with each other.

3.2.3 Data analysis procedures. Representations of pirate identity in media and literature, game mechanics of pirate games, and world-building of pirates were compared with comparative analysis; also, character developments and plot elements were examined.

3.3 Limitations

In this study, the most popular pirate-themed video games are examined. It does not comprehensively cover all pirate-themed video games due to the vast number of titles available. If other pirate-themed games are examined, the findings could change. For this study, historical texts were also reviewed. There were not many valid sources about piracy, even for the era of the Golden Age of Piracy.

In the future, the trends that make pirate games successful may change and hinder the validity of this thesis.

Chapter 4

Findings

4.1 Pirate Identity Representation

4.1.1 Diversity of pirate identities. Several pirate identities have been portrayed, and these figures have motivations for piracy such as personal gain, seeking treasures, and challenging oppressive systems. The diversity of motivations adds complexity to their identities. The identity of a pirate changes according to the decision of whether the story will rely on historical accounts or create fictional pirates with unique backgrounds. In literature, authors make this decision; on screen, diversity can be seen in how actors portray pirates visually, verbally, and emotionally. In video games, game developers have the creative freedom to design pirates within the game world. This includes considerations for appearance, behavior, and the role players take on within the game narrative.

Table 4

Features of Pirate Identity

Games	Personal Gain	Seeking Treasures	Challenge Oppressive System
Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag	x	x	x
Sid Meier's Pirates	x	x	x
Monkey Island		x	
Sea of Thieves	x	x	

4.1.2 Archetypal traits. Pirates have common features in popular media. They represent freedom and a life without boundaries; their rebellious natures are highlighted in their pursuit of freedom from the constraints of law. Pirates are often portrayed as outlaws who establish their own authorities, whether it's against

oppressive governments, naval forces, or other ruling bodies. Hence, this strong desire for freedom and independence in these representations, they reject societal constraints and embrace a life of adventure on the open seas. They are depicted as having a unique code of honor, emphasizing loyalty and mutual respect within their crew while forming a brotherhood among them. The Pirate Code, which every crew member should follow, ensures that all members of the crew have equal rights. Swashbuckling adventures, thrilling sword fights, naval battles, and romantic interests are often elements through which a romantic pirate identity is portrayed as engaging.

Table 5
Archetypal Traits in Pirate-Themed Video Games

Games	Romantic Interest	Adventurous Lifestyle	Code of Honor
Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag	x	x	x
Sid Meier's Pirates	x	x	
Monkey Island	x	x	x
Sea of Thieves		x	x

4.1.3 Evolution of pirate identity. Most popular media fiction and research about piracy takes place during the Golden Age of Piracy, between the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Pirate identity, rooted in historical contexts, has undergone significant changes due to media such as literature, film, video games, and other forms of media. Hence, public perception about pirates and piracy has been affected by these media fictions. The pirate figure perception transformed from a cruel pirate figure to a romantic outlaw. Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island" has played a significant role in shaping the pirate archetype in the past. In recent history, the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise has had a unique impact on people's perceptions, unlike any other pirate-themed productions in history. Captain Jack Sparrow, portrayed by Johnny

Depp, brought a quirky and comedic dimension to the character. This portrayal challenges traditional pirate representations.

4.2 Game Mechanics in Pirate-Theme Games

4.2.1 Player engagement. Pirate-themed games strive to achieve high levels of player engagement. They offer players engaging storylines and well-developed characters that contribute to player immersion. These games often feature exciting pirates' tales. Engaging in activities linked to pirates, such as thrilling sea fights, dizzying swordfights, and treasure hunting, allows players to immerse themselves in the game. Furthermore, in some pirate-themed games, players can choose their equipment, such as weapons, and customize their outfits and ships according to their gameplay role-play style. With these opportunities, they make a deeper connection with its world. Pirate-themed games with open-world structures encourage exploration, discovery of hidden treasures, and encounters with dynamic events, fostering a sense of adventure. Randomized or dynamically generated events, such as random sea battles within the game world, add unpredictability to the games, keeping players engaged by offering new challenges. Dynamic weather conditions and day/night cycles also contribute to creating a living world.

Table 6
Game Mechanics of Pirate-Themed Games

Games	Pirate Tales	Sword Fights	Sea Battles	Treasure Hunting
Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag	x	x	x	x
Sid Meier's Pirates	x	x	x	x
Monkey Island	x	x	x	x
Sea of Thieves	x	x	x	x

4.2.2 Interactive elements. Interactive elements in game mechanics refer to the features and aspects of gameplay that allow players to actively engage with the game world. The overall gaming experience of players is enhanced by these interactive elements, providing them with challenges and opportunities for exploration. In most pirate-themed games, an interactive sailing system allows players to navigate the open seas, control the wind direction, and manage ship speed. In naval combat, ship-to-ship battles allow players to control cannon fire, board enemy ships, and perform strategic maneuvers. With map systems, players determine where their ship will go. Furthermore, pirate-themed games with treasure hunt mechanics enable players to use the map system to follow clues to find hidden treasures. Resource management systems are important in these games for gathering resources, trading with merchants, managing a pirate crew, and establishing a settlement with resources. The trading system is also important for character progression, allowing players to purchase improved swords and weapons, for instance.

4.3 World Building in Pirate-Theme Games

4.3.1 Cultural and historical influences. Usage of cultural and historical elements in pirate-themed video games significantly contributes to the credibility of the narrative. Integrating authentic cultural and historical aspects into the design, storyline, and overall portrayal of the pirate realms enhances the player's experience. In pirate-themed media fictions, several historical influences can be observed. In most of these productions, famous captains from the Golden Age of Piracy such as Blackbeard, Calico Jack Rackham, Charles Vane, Anne Bonny, etc., can be seen. There are stories where the effects of representations of other cultures can be examined among crew members and pirate town folks. The usage of legends and mythical elements from various cultures increases the excitement and impressiveness of the narrative.

Table 7

Historical and Supernatural Elements in World Building

Games	Historical Elements	Supernatural Elements
Assassin's Creed IV Black Flag	x	
Sid Meier's Pirates	x	
Monkey Island		x
Sea of Thieves		x

4.3.2 Visual representations. Visualization representations contribute significantly to the immersive experience of players. Since almost all pirate-themed representations take place in exotic locations and high seas, environmental aesthetics play a significant role in these productions and enhance the overall atmosphere. Pirate settlements and ports are depicted as independent pirate territories with no connection to any government or nation. Appearances of pirates, except for some portrayed in popular media, closely resemble those in real life.

Chapter 5

Discussions and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

In Sid Meier's Pirates!, the forge of pirate identity is left to the player up to a point. The game starts with a revenge story. The representation of the pirate seeks adventure and treasure while doing so. The pirate protagonist considers their rank at the most notorious pirate table for personal gain and gets treasures to upgrade their wealth and ship. The dancing mechanic with the governor's daughter allows players to obtain different items that contribute to their personal gain and contribute to the romantic plot of the game, as well as increase reputation with that nation. Fighting against different nations, authorities, and real-life pirates with sword fights, naval battles, and raids challenges oppressive systems in the game, contributes to engagement and immersion, highlights the historical part of the game, and adds depth

to the experience of players as an adventurous pirate. Also, treasure hunting and plundering other ships contribute to personal gain in the game. In Sid Meier's Pirates!, players control ships around the Caribbean and stop by at ports and islands. This gives a feeling of freedom to players. However, the exotic background feeling of locations is somewhat lacking in the game. Players cannot fully immerse in the atmosphere of the Caribbean. While sailing, players can encounter hostile nations and other ships. These dynamic encounters give the feeling of a living world.

In Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag, the game focuses on a character named Edward Kenway. The game starts with Edward's romantic interest and explains his first motivation is to become rich and famous. Edward continues to seek treasures throughout the game for personal gain and fights against powerful authorities such as the British and Spanish forces and the Templars. A code of honor can be seen in the crew. They attack together, defend together, and are loyal to each other. Mechanics such as sword fighting and naval battles, and treasure seeking enrich the experience for players as the life of a pirate. Besides its main story, players can join events on the Caribbean sea and plunder other ships. With these dynamic events, players feel they are in a living world and have the freedom to do whatever they want at sea. Original story of Assassin's Creed series supernatural elements such as machine that player can play past life, Edward Kenway there aren't any exaggerated supernatural enemies such as skeleton army as enemy or ghost ship in the game. Elements that used build of pirate world in the game are as close to original as possible such as pirate flags, appearances of captains and crews, locations. The game allows players to deeply experience the exotic pirate world by traveling around the Caribbean Sea and with the design of realistic locations such as Nassau and Havana. AC 4 is intertwined with history and culture, for instance, the usage of historical famous real-life pirates and relationships with them, as well as places and islands, show pirate culture successfully.

The Monkey Island series, unlike other pirate-themed games, contains more humorous elements. In the beginning, the primary motivation of the protagonist, Guybrush Threepwood, is to become a mighty pirate. For this purpose, he has to complete quests. He has a romantic interest in Elaine. In the first game of the series, Elaine is captured by an evil pirate, and Guybrush tries to save her heroically, in line with the romantic pirate narrative. In the story, Guybrush doesn't fight against an authority or challenge the oppressive system. He mostly fights against the evil pirate LeChuck. The Monkey Island series is based on puzzle mechanics and engages players

mostly through solving puzzles. Players have to solve puzzles cleverly to continue the story of Guybrush. The game also has common mechanics with other pirate-themed video games such as sword fighting, naval battles, and treasure hunts. However, the game's sword fighting is of its own type: insult sword fighting. The game is mostly based on a fantastic world. Supernatural elements are used in the game, such as LeChuck, the main enemy of Guybrush, the Voodoo Lady, and sword fights in the first three games happening through insults, etc. Even though the game story is known around Caribbean islands, the locations are made up. The main purpose of the game is to solve puzzles in a humorous way while experiencing the pirate theme, and due to the lack of action, it is somewhat lacking in giving the player the feeling of being a pirate.

In *Sea of Thieves*, players forge their own paths and stories within a shared, open world in the game. The game focuses on adventure and freedom with a crew. Players can go to any island or sea on the game map. Players fight with each other with sword fighting and naval battles. They can apply different strategies to defeat opponents. They can change their movement speed and position by directing the ship according to the wind and sea conditions. They can organize their strategies according to this positioning in naval battles. With the use of a map system, they can pursue treasures and adventures. These full-time action game mechanics, in addition to being fun, increase immersion and engagement in the game. It offers a fantastic world with mythical creatures and stories. These supernatural elements can be seen also from the appearance of players to ships, their cannons, etc. Locations are all imaginary in the game. The game contains exotic islands and seas that look like a fantastic representation of the Caribbean. The appearance of pirates also contributes to this fantastic world with their outfits.

5.2 Conclusion

In the pirate-themed games examined in this study, the protagonists, despite having varying motivations, share a pirate image intertwined with attributes that have been romanticized in pirate portrayals. This includes heroic deeds, the pursuit of a rebellious lifestyle, thrilling sword and sea battles, and romantic love interests. They are anti-hero figures who live their life without constraints of the civilized world in a exotic and rebellious way. They live in paradise-like places such as relaxing Caribbean

beaches, exotic background of palm trees and warm tropical oceans while pursuing of fame and treasures to make them rich. Their pirate identity has transformed from that of a cruel, vicious pirate to a popular, romanticized outlaw.

Game mechanics in pirate-themed video games have a key role in shaping immersive and engaging player experiences. Most of pirate-themed game has exciting naval combat and sword fights on the high seas, strategic decision-making, and interactive exploration lands and lost treasures, these mechanics offer players an opportunity to embody the adventurous life of a pirate. Allowing players to navigate ships at open seas, partake in daring escapades, these mechanics facilitate sense of freedom. These are not just boost the gameplay but also contributes to originality of the game, effectively players find themselves into a vividly recreated pirate world. Ship customization, recruiting crews, build fleets, strengthen player's position as a captain providing players with a sense of control and progression.

The art of world-building in video games is a critical factor in engaging players alike, immersing them in rich, detailed, and captivating environments. World building in video games, the aim is transport players to universe where the game unfolds but it is more interactive and participatory dimension than cinematic world. In pirate-theme productions world building dynamics especially have an important place. They aim players to feel the thrilling popular pirate world and pirate life. These games offer players to experience exotic Caribbean beaches and relaxing background, islands and seas, encounter with real pirate figures who lived in the past, supernatural events and characters from different cultures, introduce players to elements associated with pirates culture such as different design of pirate flags, pirate code, their settlements and ports, etc.

Throughout history, many productions have drawn inspiration from history itself and from each other, shaping the romantic image of pirates in people's minds today and creating their adventurous world. Game director and lead writer of Assassin's Creed: Black Flag has a statement about purposefully avoids typical pirate stereotypes in an attempt to depict pirates in a more authentic and realistic (IGN, 2013). Therefore, these productions' primary objective is entertain individuals and fulfill their expectations.

This study provides insights into the elements that can be incorporated into a pirate-themed game. With a comparative analysis of the romanticized outlaw pirate image, game mechanics, and world-building in pirate-themed video games, it not only

contributes to the academic discourse on pirate representations but also offers practical implications for creators in the gaming industry.

5.3 Recommendations

About pirate-themed video games it should not be forgotten that these productions are mainly made for entertain its consumers. Hence, some of these features of pirates were exaggerated and adapted to construct the worlds in productions. Therefore they should not be consumed solely for the purpose of learning history.

Future studies may include more pirate-themed video games. More elements can be found for use in comparative analysis with the increasing scale of this research.



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