AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENTS OF TURKEY JOINT GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE

May 16-17, 2024 Online Conference

Digital Games as Cultural and Literary Narratives

Hosted by Hacettepe University's American Studies Department

In collaboration with the American Studies Departments of Ankara University, Atatürk University, Başkent University, Bilkent University, Dokuz Eylül University, Ege University, Haliç University, and İstanbul University

Call for Papers

We are pleased to announce the Call for Papers for our second graduate/undergraduate conference on *Digital Games as Cultural and Literary Narratives*, to be held on May 16-17, 2024, which aims to explore the intriguing realm of digital games and their impact on American culture and literature. The event is hosted by Hacettepe University's American Culture and Literature Department and organized in collaboration with the American Studies Departments of Ankara University, Atatürk University, Başkent University, Bilkent University, Dokuz Eylül University, Ege University, Haliç University, and İstanbul University.

Are digital games a new part of our literary and cultural tradition? Are they narratives similar to novels, stories and plays that we write to express ourselves and make sense of the world? Are they, then, artistic and/or cultural products of a society making associations and creating meanings in time? These questions have bothered both literary critics and experts on ludology, the study of games, since the 1980s, when computers and game consoles entered homes and digital games became a part of daily experience. Digital games are, obviously, a lot of fun; yet, beyond being entertainment, are they narratives, i.e. do they tell us *stories*?

Indeed, the words of actor Andy Serkis confirm the dichotomy of digital games; on the one hand, he said, "Games — there's no heart in them. They're not about anything that is lasting," but on the other, he added, "In the next generation...you're going to see a lot of storytelling in games. ... gaming is a massive storytelling arena in the making and now the technology has arrived to do that." Digital games are undisputedly an integral part of our daily technology-oriented cultural consumption. They not only offer users aesthetic pleasure on a virtual level, evoking powerful sensations and eliciting emotional responses, but also establish a narrative-rich space conducive to quality entertainment and learning. Narrative-driven digital games also prompt literary criticism, as the grammar and narrative qualities of such cultural productions can carry ideological implications.

With the publication of *Cybertext—Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* by Espen J. Aarseth in 1997 and the launch of <u>gamestudies.org</u> in 2001, critical and academic interest in digital games became mainstream and it has become a separate field of study, the main subject of dedicated courses and workshops in university departments around the world. Digital games apparently have a unique way of handling literary objects and language such as life-writing, diaries, manuscripts, letters, and libraries, surpassing the passive role that one takes in consuming traditional literary mediums like books.

As such, it is crucial to bring this fresh and exciting genre and its narrative possibilities into the field of American Studies. More specifically, digital games have opened a new window on the representations and perceptions of American culture as they inform not only Americans but the rest of the world about how the US, its culture, history and people are viewed and understood. By stimulating discussions around this topic among students who are interested in this medium, we hope to create a versatile platform in which analytic methods and theoretical frameworks can be applied to the vast world of digital games.

Possible topics of discussion include, but are not limited to:

- Game as text and text as game
- Ludology and Ergodic literature and the intersections of literaricity with digital games
- Digital games as American popular culture products
- Literary objects such as diaries, manuscripts, letters, libraries, newspapers in digital games
- Literature inspired by games /games inspired by literature
- Thematic explorations of digital game stories
- Game adaptations of literary works
- Representation of race, gender, and sexuality in digital games
- Environmental storytelling in digital games
- Digital games and American history
- Climate change, culture, and digital games
- Interactions between gameplay & narrative
- Criminality, militarization, and violence in digital games
- Using games for educational purposes and learning through play
- Player-generated texts, mods as player/reader participation
- Digital games in the academia and beyond

We ask interested <u>graduate/undergraduate</u> students to send abstracts (max. 250 words) within the context of American culture and literature and one paragraph bio (max. 150 words) to the organizing committee (ASDTurkey.graduate@gmail.com) by 31.03.2024.

Important Dates

Deadline for abstract submission: 31 March 2024 Notification of acceptance: 7 April 2024 Deadline for participant confirmation: 10 April 2024

https://asdturkey.hacettepe.edu.tr/en

About ASDT Conferences: Initiated in 2022, The American Studies Departments of Ankara University, Atatürk University, Başkent University, Bilkent University, Dokuz Eylül University, Ege University, Hacettepe University, Haliç University, and İstanbul University collaborate in organizing undergraduate/graduate conferences.