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**IMMERSION AND PLAYER CHOICES IN THE
*DRAGON AGE TRILOGY***

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ABSTRACT

Tia Vuorijärvi: Immersion and player choices in the *Dragon Age* trilogy
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The *Dragon Age* (2009, 2011, 2014) trilogy is a fantasy roleplaying game series that emphasizes the player's ability to make choices and affect story within the games. These choices are made throughout the games' playtime and can affect the development of the story both inside the individual instalment in the series, as well as what happens in the sequel(s).

This thesis aims to analyze the immersion present in the *Dragon Age* trilogy by discussing the impact of character customization, the content in side quests as well as the construction of the main story line by inspecting examples from each of the three games. First, the term "immersion" is defined in the context of videogames. Second, the aforementioned examples are analyzed and the immersion in the choices made in character customization, side quests and main story is discussed.

The examples used in the thesis cover aspects of the games such as how the character customization is used to establish the player character in the game world, how interactions with non-player characters can affect the immersion, especially in the case of character death, and how the major choices made throughout games conclude or continue.

Immersion is a personal experience, and thus in this thesis it is concluded that because of the interactive nature of the *Dragon Age* games' choice-making, being immersed is depended on the player's openness to experience worlds different from their own, and their willingness to suspend their disbelief when confronted by the inconsistencies of the game world.

Keywords: Immersion, player choice, roleplaying game, *Dragon Age*

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tia Vuorijärvi: Immersio ja pelaajan valinnat *Dragon Age* trilogiassa
Kandidaatintutkielma
Tampereen Yliopisto
Kielten kandidaattiohjelma / Englannin kieli
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Dragon Age (2009, 2011, 2014) -trilogia on fantasiaroolipelisarja, joka painottaa tarinassaan pelaajien mahdollisuutta tehdä valintoja ja vaikuttaa niiden kautta pelien tarinan kulkuun. Näitä valintoja tehdään jokaisessa trilogian osassa ja niillä on seurauksia ja vaikutuksia sekä yksittäisen pelin, että sen jatko-osien tarinoihin.

Tämä tutkielma analysoi immersiota *Dragon Age* -pelisarjassa käsittelemällä hahmonluonnin, sivutehtävien sekä pelin päätarinan toteutuksen vaikutusta pelaajan immersioon esimerkkien kautta. "Immersio" määritellään videopelien asiayhteydessä ja tämän jälkeen valikoituja esimerkkejä analysoidaan, ja immersioon vaikuttavia näkökulmia tarkastellaan hahmonluonnissa, sivutehtävissä ja pelin päätarinassa esiintyvien valintojen yhteydessä.

Tutkielmassa käsiteltävät esimerkit havainnollistavat hahmonluonnin vaikutusta pelaajan käsitykseen pelattavan hahmon paikasta pelimaailmassa, ei-pelattavien hahmojen vaikutusta immersioon, etenkin hahmojen kuolemien yhteydessä, sekä pelien keskeisten päätösten lopputuloksia.

Immersio on pelaajan subjektiivinen kokemus ja tutkielman johtopäätöksessä todetaan, että immersion saavuttaminen on pelaajan omasta suhtautumisesta riippuvaista. *Dragon Age* -pelien yksi keskeisimmistä pelimekaniikoista on valintojen tekeminen, ja siksi pelaajan on oltava vastaanottavainen pelikokemukselle, sekä oltava valmis sivuuttamaan mahdolliset ristiriidat, jotka ovat läsnä pelin maailmassa ja tarinassa.

Avainsanat: immersio, pelaajan valinta, roolipeli, *Dragon Age*

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1. Introduction

The *Dragon Age* (2009, 2011, 2014) trilogy, a narrative-based fantasy roleplaying game series, allows the player to live through violence and unrest in Thedas through three different protagonists in three different games, the first one being one of the last Grey Wardens of Ferelden. The Grey Wardens are the only people capable of stopping a Blight and through death, betrayal and a civil war, the Grey Warden is triumphant, and the Blight is stopped. The second protagonist is a refugee of that Blight, Hawke, who escaped Ferelden to Kirkwall with their family. Even when the city-state is riddled with problems from having no room for refugees to invasions to troubled mages Hawke manages to rise in power, only to witness the fall of Kirkwall some years later, as the Chantry is blown up and the tensions between mages and templars break out into a war. Lastly, there is the inquisitor, who gains the title after the peace talks with the mages and templars conclude abruptly in an explosion caused by an ancient darkspawn. The inquisitor must find a way to stop the ancient evil, because failing to do so would mean the end of the world.

What creates immersion in the *Dragon Age* trilogy is the impact the player can have on the world they play in. The games have emphasised the player's ability to make choices within the set story in the games, and have the choices affect the next instalment in the series. This is a trait that video games as a medium are rather uniquely capable of using as a way to immerse the players in the story and the world. Making the player feel as if they are 'changing the world' through their actions is a way of making them feel attached to the world they are changing. But what if the world is not changing? If the player is promised that their actions have consequences, but they do not see those consequences, how can that affect the immersion? If all the references to actions that appeared major to the player in earlier games in the series are placed in in-game codex entries, where information about the player's choices is sprinkled in between lore that is inconsequential to the

overall story of the game, it can seem like the choices the player made did not actually matter.

This thesis aims to analyse three key ways in which the types of consequences of the choices the player can make during the three *Dragon Age* games can affect the immersion of the player. First, the term ‘immersion’ will be considered to understand what is meant when discussing ‘immersion’ later in the thesis. *Dragon Age* has previously been studied from the perspective of what the story entails, but few if any studies have been conducted in regard to the aspect of immersion present in the game. The analysis of this thesis consists of three parts; the immersion present in the game series will be considered from the point of view of character customization, choices in side quests as well as how the main story of the game contributes to the immersion. The *Dragon Age* games are heavily depended on their stories to immerse the players, and a vessel for the story as well as a central game mechanic is choice-based dialogue. This means that discussing how that immersion manifests through the choices can help understand what is an effective way to immerse players and what is not.

A choice made in an earlier game can change where certain characters appear, or even the possibility for some characters to appear. These choices may also be ignored or undermined by writers, or an unfortunate glitch in the game. Some choices the player finds only if they go looking through codex entries. A choice made, in the very beginning of the game, of who the player plays as, has the ability change the experiences the player can have. How these actions appear in the game can create a cohesive experience where the player sees the steps they have taken to get where they are, or it can undermine the choices the player thought they were making by hiding, or even completely erasing the consequences the choices should have had. These types of games that allow players to make choices that impact the game world encourage replaying the game to see how the other choices affect the game differently. However, as well as seeing the differences, the player may see that their actions might not have had an effect after all.

2. Defining immersion

As this thesis discusses the immersion breaking and enhancing instances that occur in the *Dragon Age* games, it is important to have an understanding of what the term ‘immersion’ means in a video game narrative. Videogames differ from traditional narrative media, such as books and movies, in that no matter what the end goal of the story is, the player is always somewhat in control of what happens in front of them. Even games that do not offer the player any choices in the narrative afford the player some freedom, often with the speed in which they proceed with the story, or with the chance to look at their surroundings more carefully. Stories often become more engaging when the one experiencing the story feels they are making a difference (Ferchaud et al. 105); thus, when games embrace this and give the reins to the players, the game is actively trying to immerse the players in the game world and the stories within that world.

Defining immersion in gaming has proven to be vague at best. Janet Murray’s definition of immersion compares being immersed in a game with being submerged in water and learning to swim (qtd. in McMahan, 68), and Alison McMahan then notes that it is not realism that immerses the players, but how the world of the game presents itself, through matching the player’s expectations of the world, the player’s actions having a non-trivial impact on the game, as well as the game world being consistent within itself (69). One might think it is harder to be immersed in a world so different from their own, since a world filled with magic seems so far removed from the reality the players exist in, but that is not the case. When the world looks different from the one the players exist in, it is easier to not focus on superficial similarities, but to focus on the story and the conflict that exist in that world, and through that relate to the game world through similar experiences to one’s own (Slater et al., 449-450).

Emily Brown and Paul Cairns suggest that immersion comes in different stages, from engagement to engrossment, then in some cases, total immersion. They go on to elaborate that engagement is about access to the game world through investment of time and effort (1298), and both engrossment and total immersion are more to do with the construction of the world, and then the player's presence within the game through concepts such as empathy (1299). This would suggest that immersion is a tiered process, and every player has the potential to experience different levels of immersion despite having access to the same game. Brown and Cairns also noted, that in their study they found total immersion to be more of a fleeting sensation, only occurring occasionally, while engagement and engrossment were more likely to be reached more often by the players (1299). Charlene Jennett elaborates on the concept of immersion by Brown and Cairns, noting that immersion is not something that necessarily emerges from specific actions taken during the playing of a game, but a state that they player fluctuates in and out of (643-644), meaning that the player cannot decide to be immersed, and instead must be willing and able to be engaged and engrossed in the game. The player can then experience immersion, provided that the game has the means for this.

Many different aspects of a game can have an impact on the player's experience regarding immersion in the game and one way to immerse a player, especially in a roleplaying game, is customization. Often the first action a player takes in a roleplaying game is creating a character. Character customization is a common way to immerse players into the games they play, because it allows the player to create an avatar through which they can experience the world, be it a character created in the image of the player and thus a 'self-insert' placed in the world of the game, or a fictional character they want to have exist in that world. Because the character is the tool through which they experience the game world, being attached to it enhances the immersion. Being able to customize one's avatar in a game positively impacts immersion (Teng 1552). Customizing a

character is an ongoing effort during roleplaying games, and it can be cosmetic or skill based, so being able to customize the character throughout the game gives the player a chance to develop their character beyond only initially designing how the character looks physically.

Another way to immerse, especially in a narrative-based game, is the game mechanic of choice making. The player can be required to make choices to further the narrative of the game, those choices often being moral ones which the player must make within the context of the game world and what they have learned about it. Arienne Ferchaud and Mary Beth Oliver note that it is easier for players to be immersed by the moral choices they make if those choices coincide with their own (113). Being able to make moral choices enhances immersion, as it lets the players make deep and impactful choices based on the understanding they have built about the situation, the people and the world of the game. Having the ability to make a choice as dramatic as ‘do I kill or spare this person’ based on one’s own morals and justifications and have that impact the world in a meaningful allows the players to forge stronger connection to the game world. However, the implementation of those choices is important, as a poor implementation may have an adverse effect on the immersion.

3. Where the immersion is found

The importance of immersion in roleplaying games is immense, as the player needs to be able to immerse themselves into the world to fully experience the roleplaying aspect of the game. This immersion can come from many different sources. However, in a game series that keeps track of the choices the player makes throughout not only the game, but the series, those choices need to have a tangible impact on the world of the game. Giving players a choice to make should mean that the player is able to, at some point, see the consequences of their actions, be it immediately or after hours of playing. While most of the choices and the possible consequences are made and met during

the playing of the game, some important choices are already made in character customization, which is a key component of any roleplaying game. These immersive or immersion breaking instances will be explored through considering character customization, side quests and their minor effects on immersion, as well as the main story and how it affects the immersion of the narrative.

3.1. Character customization

In a typical role-playing game, the game begins with character customization and the character lore that comes with it, has a big impact on the player's immersion, as it is the very first and most prominent aspect of inserting oneself into the world. While *Dragon age* is a game series, every entry's approach to character customization, and the following intro to the game, differs significantly from each other. The first *Dragon Age* game got the additional title "Origins" after its prominent feature, the character origins. This is not a common practise in role-playing games and is not present in the sequels. In character customization, the player is able to choose the race, the class, and the background of their character, and based on those choices, they will play through a tutorial set in the character's chosen origin. In this tutorial, the player will play through the moments which lead to the protagonist to be found by Duncan, a Warden-Commander looking for new Grey Warden recruits. There are six origins from which to choose, and it is implied that every one of these people exists in any given 'timeline' in the game, the only change being that whichever origin the player chooses becomes the Warden, while all the rest perish once the game has truly begun. Not only does the origin system allow the player to understand and grow fond of their character by showing them where they come from, who they were close to and how they had to lose it all to be saved from death, it also makes it so that not all playthroughs of the game are the same, and the player can feel that their experience is unique from the beginning.

Dragon Age II approaches character creation and setting the scene differently from *Dragon Age: Origins*. Whereas in *Origins* the player has the option of choosing from three races, human, elf and dwarf, three classes, warrior, rogue and mage, and thus has six options for an origin, in the second game they may only choose the class which the protagonist Hawke, who is human by default, has. Hawke is in a different position from the Warden protagonist, as they are fleeing the Blight in the beginning of the second game with their family, that consists of their mother and their brother and sister, to escape to their uncle's home in Kirkwall. The game, like the previous instalment, allows full customization of Hawke's face, which means that their skin tone may be anything from the darkest to the lightest. The game recognizes this, and ensures that Hawkes family reflects this choice, as their skin tone changes to match Hawke. This is a necessary step to take in a game where family is a core theme. This is not common in games, be it because no family is involved or perhaps that level of detail was deemed unimportant, the practise stands out as a notable step in achieving immersion as it creates a cohesive environment inside the game, an important aspect of keeping the world consistent with itself. The ramifications of character creation in the second game are not limited to cosmetic changes. Based on if the player chooses to become a warrior or a rogue, or a mage, one of their siblings die before they make it to safety. If the player chooses to be a warrior or a rogue, their brother, a warrior themselves, dies, and if the player chooses to become a mage, their sister, another mage of the family, dies instead. Such a harrowing loss, even at the beginning of the game where the player does not know their siblings, can have the effect of drawing the player in, creating a bond with the surviving sibling after witnessing the loss of another.

The way *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II* utilize character creation has a chance to deepen the player's connection to their character beyond ability to create them is an organic way to draw the player in. However, the character creation can be to the series detriment. For example,

knowing that nothing can be done to save both siblings, and the simple act of starting a game will kill one of them no matter what, can be a demoralizing experience. In *Dragon age: Inquisition* the character creation offers no immediate change in gameplay, apart from what class the player chooses. The character's background, where they come from and why they are present at the start of the game is written down once the player has chosen their race, class and difficulty, after which the player can confirm their choices and are then dropped into the character customization screen. After that the game simply begins. For a new player this might be an okay experience, even considered as the standard for many roleplaying games, but if the player is a returning one, not knowing their character has the possibility to be an unfulfilling experience. As small as it may seem, going into the next instalment in a game series and seeing it has lost something integral to the experience can immediately distance the player from the situation. Having their player character experience something unique to them specifically is can be utilized to deepen the player's connection to their player character. In *Dragon Age: Origin*, the origin the player chooses sets their character apart from all the other options they had, and in *Dragon Age II* what happens in the beginning of the game, while being mostly the same every time, is happening to the Hawke family, the player characters family. In *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, no matter who you are and where you come from, the player character finds themselves in the exact same situation, were they an elven mage or a dwarven warrior.

3.2. Side quests and player choices

Once the games truly begin, the player will begin to make choices, and throughout the game they will encounter major and minor ones. While the major choices have consequences that are easy to perceive, the minor choices are the ones that, if done right, can reward the player for being especially perceptive and for noticing the games' smaller story details, or the player may be

disappointed to find out their choice did not matter. The games are full of minor choices, conversations, and side quests that all have differing levels of consequence to the world, some immediate, some the player has to wait for, and other that, naturally, have no real consequences. This subchapter consists of two examples on character death, their immediate and long-term consequences, and how their execution can affect immersion.

An example of what is a well-executed, not necessarily plot significant, but morally significant, consequence of the player's choices is the survival and subsequent existence of Connor, a mage child the Warden has a choice to save from demonic possession in Redcliffe village in the first game. The questline to save or not save Connor takes place early in the game, and thus the player is more likely to remember what they chose. If the player chooses to kill Connor, or let him remain possessed, he will not appear once the Inquisitor makes their way to Redcliffe, however if the conditions are met and the Inquisitor travels to Redcliffe after the player has saved Connor in the first game, Connor will be there to speak to the Inquisitor. The player is also rewarded for choosing to save Connor in the first game by being given that extra bit of information about what is happening around Redcliffe from him. This is information that the players cannot get elsewhere and shows the player that the actions they have taken have had an impact on the world. This in turn reinforces the feeling of immersion, as the player confronts the consequences of their choices. They may experience a feeling of belonging in the world, seeing the impact they have had, and feel justified in their choice of saving a child instead of accepting the demon's offer. Additionally, as choices such as this one reach their conclusion, there is consistency in the world the player is able to observe and note.

Sometimes the choice the player can make is the choice to kill, as it is with Connor. Most notably, in *Dragon Age: Origins* the player is able to cause the death of most of their companion characters, including directly killing two of the romance options of the game, Zevran

and Leliana. This is an important, since the deaths are not left ambiguous. The player has caused their deaths and seen their dead bodies. What will happen when those characters are not dead in the sequels? *Dragon Age II* suffered from an unfortunate, yet common glitch where the player would encounter Zevran even if they had killed him in the first game. However, with Leliana, the situation is created through the choices made when constructing the following games', *Dragon Age II* and *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, narrative. In the first game, it takes multiple specific choices to be in a position to be forced to kill Leliana, so when the player does kill her, it is clear that she dies. The player is able to encounter Leliana in the second game, but can just as easily miss her entirely, as she (excluding appearances in downloadable content) appears only briefly at the end of the game where the effect on immersion is miniscule at worst. In the third game Leliana is on screen within minutes and is referred to by name, and she will stay there throughout the rest of the game. The player has the chance to question Leliana about this topic. If asked, Leliana will tell the Inquisitor that she died and if asked to elaborate, she recounts what happened in the first game and adds that she must have been saved by divine intervention. This line of dialogue is easily missed. Seeing that the game does not honour character death, especially major character death, can indicate to the player that choosing to kill someone can easily be overwritten later for the convenience of the plot. This can be frustrating and disappointing to discover and can make the player doubtful towards the gaming experience.

3.3. Main story and player choices

Throughout all the games in the *Dragon age* series there are choices that are designed to shape the way the world in the game remembers the player's actions and unlike the smaller choices that can deepen the lore of the world, the bigger choices should noticeably change the world around the player. In the series, these bigger, major options often revolve around which factions the player

chooses to support, and how that affects them going forward in the story and how they appear in later games. In fact, some choices matter more inside the specific game the choices are made in, and others leave a mark that remind the player that they have made choices and now must live with them going forward in the game series.

Some choices the player is presented with appear to be simple, having to choose between this or that. That is because in *Dragon Age: Origins*, the major story choices the player can make revolve around solving conflicts between two different groups (for example elves versus werewolves, mages versus templars) and deciding who has to die. As the main mission of the game is to kill the Archdemon and end the Blight, the player moves around the map looking for allies. To gain some of those allies, they must choose between two different groups that can potentially help them, such as the choice between having the help from the mages that they saved from the templars that wanted to kill them, or the templars who the player offered to help in exchange of them helping the player. This kind of choice has a clear consequence, since in the last battle of the game, the groups who were helped will come and help the player. In this case, the player is able to see how their actions have changed the course of the battle, since every group brings a different kind of talent into the fight, and the player can feel as if they have actually made the choices that led to the battle going as it did for that specific player.

As well as choices that stay inside the game, *Dragon Age: Origins* has multiple choices that have consequences only after the game is over and the player has proceeded to the next instalments in the series. Depending on the choices the player makes, some characters either live or die. This is important in making the player's choices feel like choices, further immersing them not only into the game, but into the world of the game through seeing their own impact on it. There comes a point in the first game, where the player can make decisions about the line of succession of the royal family and thus the ruler of Ferelden. It is imperative that this choice is not forgotten and is taken into

account later in the lore of the game. The player may choose to either execute or spare a character, Loghain, the father of the de facto ruler of Ferelden. By executing him, he dies, but by showing him mercy another character, Alistair, the player's companion from the very beginning, will not allow that to happen and will leave the party permanently. In another game, Alistair could have become the king of Ferelden himself, he could have stayed with the Grey Wardens, or he could have died killing the Archdemon, but by showing mercy to Loghain, none of that can happen to Alistair. These are major characters whose fates are chosen by the player, and witnessing those fates is central in setting an example on how those choices can affect the companions the player's encounter. If the players have the chance to see where their companionship has led their companions and when witnessing that they *feel* something, then immersion has been achieved, as the player has become a part of the game's world.

Dragon Age II has a somewhat different approach to choices and their consequences. In the second game the bigger choices the player makes revolve around their companions, and because the player is surrounded by their companions at most times, they are the central tool for creating space for immersion. In *Dragon Age: Origins*, if some of the companions' approval of the player character is low enough, they can attack the player and leave the party permanently. In *Dragon Age: Inquisition*, if the companions dislike the player enough, they will leave permanently. *Dragon Age II* differs from the others in this regard, as the opinion system works in both directions, friendship and rivalry, opening up the possibility to explore a 'negative' relationship with the companions without the fear of losing them due to low approval. Instead, the player is able to lose their companions through the choices they make during the game, as some of the actions the player can take can make them lose a companion regardless of their approval level.

The companion approval system is constructed so that it allows the player to experience the consequences of their actions in a way that cannot be fixed with giving gifts or having a few good

conversations with their companions. If the player chooses an action that hurts their companions, those companions will not stay with the player. This can be achieved by hurting their feelings or by causing their death. In the beginning of the game, the player loses one of their siblings, this, however, cannot be avoided. The sibling the player has left can survive until the end of the game, but they can just as well die before the player finishes the game, either by an unfortunate accident, where the player takes their sibling with them to an expedition, where they suffer a mortal wound that cannot be treated without including another, different companion to the expedition team, or depending on their choices, the player may let Knight-Commander of the Templar order kill their mage sister. At certain points in the game, the player may also lose their other companions, such as Fenris, a former slave, who the player can choose to return back to his former slaver, or Merrill, a mage, who can leave the player if the player sides with the Templars and has not forged a strong enough relationship with her. Losing a companion, a character the player is supposed to form some kind of an emotional bond with, positive or negative, is an effective reminder that while the player can make choices they believe to be correct, the characters around them might not agree and will indicate that by taking actions that the player cannot prevent once the choices have been made.

Although the way the companionship works in the game can make the player feel more connected to the characters and to the choices they have to make, arguably the biggest choice the player makes at the end of the game does not have the effect one might hope it to have. At the end the player must choose whether they help the mages or the templars, a choice that can make multiple companions leave their side one way or another, and a choice that will, or should, dictate where the next game in the series begins. Because the *Dragon Age series* has an overarching story, a choice between two factions should have some tangible consequences, but the third game begins with the exact same positioning of mages versus templar regardless of the player's choice at the end of the second game. With the first game this issue was not present. The game ends with the

Archdemon being defeated no matter what choices the player makes, and the second game begins with the player character escaping the Blight followed by a three-year time skip. Those two stories clearly follow each other, but the beginning of the second game does not depend on the ending of the first. The transition between the second and the third game is direct, albeit with a minor time skip. Because of the setting, the third game should, in a perfect world, begin by showing the player exactly the effect the protagonist of the second game had with their choice, but it does not. While this decision appears to be consistent with the story of the game, it disregards any consequence the player's choice could have had on the situation at the start of the third game.

Unlike *Dragon Age: Origins* and *Dragon Age II*, *Dragon Age: Inquisition* is currently the last game in the series, and the effects of the seemingly bigger choices in the game is yet to be determined outside of the game itself. However, the game is different from its predecessors by being an open world roleplaying game. This change allows the player some more freedom with how to approach missions given to them but makes it clear which missions are the ones that are going to have lasting consequences in the overarching story. Every time the player is making a significant decision, the game indicates this by changing the look of the dialogue wheel. While this allows the player to make informed decisions about what is going to happen in the world, it detracts from the experience of choice making by simply stating to the player what is going to happen. While it is true that not every choice can as be equally significant, having the game visually differentiate the answers that actually matter inside the story means that the player does not necessarily have to consider the entirety of their actions and dialogue when making a choice, only the dialogue prompt that poses the ultimate choice.

4. Conclusion

The way Murray expresses the concept of immersion in a participatory narrative is through the idea of the physical experience of being immersed in water, having nothing but the water around you and having to learn to swim (qtd. McMahan, 68) and it is an apt comparison. Learning to accept the game world and its quirks and then allowing oneself to enter the setting is vital for a game to be able to immerse its players. In a fantasy roleplaying game, the fantasy aspect requires a certain suspension of disbelief, but the roleplaying aspect requires the player to also believe in the world they are entering. In the choice-based *Dragon Age* games the player's interaction is the primary method of immersing the player into the game.

Every aspect that a player can affect is bound to also affect the overall immersion of the narrative and world that the game has constructed. This study finds that consistency is a key way of ensuring that the player is able to immerse themselves into the world of the *Dragon Age* games, as much of the games' core gameplay mechanics revolve around making choices and experiencing the consequences of those choices. The ability to create and understand the player's character, making the choice to help or hinder the surrounding game world while exploring and seeing the culmination of a game's worth of playing at the end allows the player to believe in the world and thus immerse themselves into it. However, if the character creation lacks depth, or if making a choice leads to confusion or has no consequences the player is able to perceive, those same gameplay mechanics that at other points could have immersed the player are now to the immersion's detriment.

The games' attempt at achieving this immersion are dependent on the player's willingness to ignore possible discrepancies present in the games. Being able to make choices that the game claims to have consequences can lead the player to revel in the influence they have on the world and characters around them or display to them the inherent predetermined nature of all manmade narratives.

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