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Stay Your Blade

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Abstract: In their article 'Transmedial worlds: Rethinking cyberworld design', Klastrup and Tosca show that the core elements of a Transmedial World are: Mythos, the lore of the world, the central knowledge necessary to interpret and successfully interact with events in the world; Topos, the setting and detailed geography of the world; and Ethos, the explicit and implicit ethics and (moral) codex of behaviour. Though other terms are used, in essence similar distinctions are made in game worlds and storyworlds. In this article, I will first discuss the game world and the storyworld and show that the storyworld in games is different from that in non-interactive narrative media. I then focus on the Mythos and Ethos elements in the world of the *Assassin's Creed* series as both govern the moral choices in the series and, by doing so, subtly direct the behaviour of the player.

Keywords: transmediality; transmedia storytelling; game worlds; storyworlds; transmedial worlds; Mythos; Ethos; *Assassin's Creed*

1. Introduction

In 2003, Henry Jenkins wrote "A good character can sustain multiple narratives and thus lead to a successful movie franchise. A good 'world' can sustain multiple characters (and their stories) and thus successfully launch a transmedia franchise" (Jenkins 2003a, §13). Jenkins' observation was made in the context of convergence culture and transmedia storytelling. However, storyworlds are also an important part of games, especially MMORPG's (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games), such as *World of Warcraft*. According to Klastrup and Tosca (2004, p. 410), "the exploration activity that cyberworlds [games] allow for is a very substantial advantage over other media when trying to bring a world to life". In the same article 'Transmedial Worlds: Rethinking cyberworld design', Klastrup and Tosca show that the core elements of a Transmedial World are: Mythos, the lore of the world, the central knowledge necessary to interpret and successfully interact with events in the world; Topos, the setting and detailed geography of the world; and Ethos, the explicit and implicit ethics and (moral) codex of behaviour. In this article, I want to specifically look into the Mythos and Ethos of the transmedial world of the *Assassin's Creed* series as both govern the moral choices in the series. Before I do so, I will first explain the concepts transmedia storytelling and transmediality. Next, I will explain game worlds and storyworlds and argue that games of progression,[1] or story-structured games (Veugen 2011), are a sort of amalgam of the two. This part will frame Klastrup and Tosca's transmedial world and its main parts of Mythos, Topos, and Ethos. Finally, I will show how the *Assassin's Creed* series uses both Mythos and, especially, Ethos to influence the player's (moral) choices.

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[1] In his 2005 book *Half-real: Video Games between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*, Jesper Juul distinguishes between Games of Emergence, i.e., games where the outcome is determined by the built-in rules, and Games of Progression, where the designer determines the sequence of events.

2. Transmedia Storytelling and Transmediality

Any text that addresses narrativity has to acknowledge that narratives are medium-dependent. As (Hutcheon 2013) showed, a written narrative operates in a different mode (telling) than an audio-visual narrative (showing) or a participatory narrative (interacting).[2] This is also called medium specificity. In the telling mode (books), the reader has to create the visual world herself; in the showing mode (film, television), the visual world is already presented; and in the participatory mode, the player moves through the already imagined visual world (games). The medium that is used limits the kinds of stories that can be told and the way they are told. According to Marie-Laure Ryan, the choice of medium even influences why a story is told (Ryan and Thon 2014). With the rise of convergence culture[3] (Jenkins 2006) in the last decade of the 20th Century, narratives began to defy classical Aristotelian linearity and closure and to challenge the limits of the book, film, and game, resulting in new formal patterns and new aesthetics that surpass the individual medium (Ndalianis 2005). Or, as Jenkins puts it: More and more, storytelling has become the art of world building, as artists create compelling environments that cannot be fully explored or exhausted within a single work or even a single medium (Jenkins 2006, p. 114). Such a polycentric open structure that employs different media demands an audience that is not only willing but also capable of piecing together the different storylines which are dispersed over different media texts. In Jenkins' words, modern audiences have become: "hunters and gatherers moving back across the various narratives trying to stitch together a coherent picture from the dispersed information" (Jenkins 2007, 8). Purposefully dispersing a narrative over different media was dubbed transmedia storytelling by (Jenkins 2006). However, as the term transmedia storytelling is still emerging, it is currently being defined differently for diverse purposes. In the context of the narratives discussed here, transmedia storytelling:

> [. . .] represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story.

> (Jenkins 2007, p. 1)

Transmedia storytelling and transmediality are often confused, but it should be pointed out that transmediality is a broader term than transmedia storytelling. Strictly speaking, transmedia just means 'across media'. In the theoretical context of narratology, intertextuality, and intermediality, transmedial concepts and transmedial phenomena usually denote concepts/phenomena that are not media-specific, such as a specific motif, discourse, or aesthetic (Rajewski 2005). In the context of storyworlds, transmedia denotes "the representation of a single storyworld through multiple media" (Ryan and Thon 2014, p. 14); for instance, the world of *The Lord of the Rings* or *Harry Potter*. It should be noted that although both these examples are transmedial, i.e., there are books, films, games, and, in the case of *Harry Potter*, even a theme park, these examples are not transmedia storytelling as each distinct medium basically tells the same story.

3. Game World, Storyworld, and Transmedial World

As Henry Jenkins observed, "most often, transmedia stories are based not on individual characters or specific plots but rather complex fictional worlds which can sustain multiple interrelated characters and their stories" (Jenkins 2007, p. 3). This holds true both for transmedial narratives, regardless

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[2] This does not mean that the first two modes (telling and showing) are not interactive, but as Hutcheon says "the move to participatory modes in which we also engage physically with the story and its world—whether it be in a violent action game or a role-playing or puzzle/skill testing one—is not more active but certainly active in a different way" (Hutcheon 2013, p. 23).

[3] By the end of the 20th century, most media corporations have become global with interests in multiple media, e.g., books, films, comic books, games, theme parks, etc. cf. *Harry Potter*.

of whether these narratives stem from books (*A Song of Ice and Fire*), films (*Star Wars*), or games (*Tomb Raider*), and for transmedia storytelling (*Assassin's Creed*). It also holds true for single media franchises,[4] especially for games, as exploring the virtual world of the game and trying to unravel its rules is an integral part of gameplay, especially in adventure and action adventure games.

According to the *Encyclopaedia of Video Games*, many games "can be said to have a diegetic world, that is, the imaginary or fictional world in which the world's characters live and where events take place" (Wolf 2012, p. 692). This is the world of the computer game, in short, the game world. As the *Encyclopaedia* further points out, this world is usually created to back a narrative, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Many games of emergence, such as *The Sims*, are also supported by a world. The game world consists at least of the following elements: some kind of space, inhabitants consisting of the player's character or avatar and program-controlled nonplayer characters (NPCs), and finally 'rules' that 'define' the consequences in the game world following actions either instigated by the player or emanating from the game world (Wolf 2012). These consequences are usually consistent so that the player can learn to anticipate the outcome, especially when consequences affect herself. According to Jesper Juul, this educational aspect is a fundamental aspect of games, as a player approaches every game with whatever repertoire of game skills he or she has, and then improves these skills in the course of playing the game (Juul 2005, p. 5). Game worlds are particularly important to (action) adventure games, as the exploration of the game world and the secrets it holds is an integral part of pursuing the critical path or accomplishing the critical goal the player has to achieve (Samsel and Wimberley 1998, p. 22).

Storyworlds derive from narrative theory. Marie-Laure Ryan (Ryan 1991) describes storyworlds as "mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what fashion in the world to which the interpreters relocate" (in Herman et al. 2005, p. 270). The reader uses these mental models to comprehend the narrative in question by attempting to reconstruct the world, its occupants, objects, actions, and events. In that sense, storyworlds are quite immersive: "more than reconstructed timelines and inventories of existents [see below], then, storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response" (ibid.). In 2014, Ryan adapted this concept of storyworlds into a media-conscious form that covers multimodal and transmedial texts. The rules of such a storyworld are contained within the separate media texts, whether these consist of a single medium or of multiple media, and it is the task of the reader/viewer/player to unravel them, or as Marie-Laure Ryan puts it: "The reader [. . .] of a narrative fiction has consequently no choice but to construct a world image in which the text is true" (Ryan and Thon 2014, p. 34).

According to Ryan (Ryan and Thon 2014), storyworlds consist of at least six components:

1. *Existents*, i.e., the characters and the objects that have special significance for the plot.
2. *Settings*, i.e., the space in which the existents are located.
3. *Physical laws*, i.e., the principles that determine what can and cannot happen in the world.
4. *Special rules and values*, i.e., principles that determine the obligations of the characters.
5. *Events*, i.e., the causes of the changes that happen in the time span of the narrative.
6. *Mental events*, i.e., how the individual characters react to both actual and perceived events.

For the reading and viewing mode, this set of six components makes sense. However, as I already pointed out, games convey their stories interactively. To do this, I would like to argue, they use both the game world as well as the storyworld, where the game world is not just a mental model, but also a represented world with its own modalities. For the above-mentioned components, this implies that at least one if the *existents* is the player character or the player's avatar. This is not the only way in which

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4　Although in light of our present convergence culture it is only a matter of time before such franchises will also expand their storyworld into other media.

the existents in games differ from those in other, non-interactive, media. Where in books and films[5] other existents serve the plot, in games, some are significant for the plot and others are there for the gameplay. Using (Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. 2013)'s four categories of in-game characters, I would say that, apart from the obvious role of the player character(s), the cast characters are there specifically for the plot, the functional characters for the gameplay, and the stage characters for ambience. As far as the 'special objects' are concerned, where in films these are usually highlighted and receive camera focus, in games, they are often hidden and the player has to actively locate them (Veugen 2011).

As for the space in which the existents are located, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Veugen 2011) space in games is different from space in other media because games are the only medium where we can 'move through' the digital environment, and, equally important, can interact with it.[6] Consequently, the settings and physical laws of the storyworld are not just a given, as in books or films; the game world is explored actively. That is to say, in games, the player's choices are always confined by the (physical) laws (rules) of the game that dictate how the world functions. Sometimes these rules can be baffling, e.g., that you can always whistle for a new horse in *Red Dead Redemption* even though your own faithful companion has just been mauled by a couple of mountain lions. However, in the context of *Red Dead Redemption's* game world, it is important that the player is always able to flee a dangerous situation; consequently, she can always whistle for a horse. Designers employ several techniques to help the player navigate the game world; for instance, by using literary repertoire, a term coined by (Iser 1980) to represent anything that the reader/viewer/player already may know from other media texts, social norms, or historical events. Examples are, for instance, using familiar architecture (Adams 2003) or evocative game spaces (Jenkins 2003b).[7] Despite the fact that these techniques are not medium-specific (we find them in books and films as well), for the player they are more relevant as her success or failure depends on them.

The special rules and values again are different because they influence the player's choices. In narrative games, actions should be meaningful (Murray 1999) and as interactors we not only should *see* the results of our decisions and choices, but we should also understand their consequences. Therefore, it can be argued that the special rules and values of the storyworld are more important for a player than for a reader or viewer because they can affect gameplay. For instance, in the 1993 *Legend of Zelda* game *Link's Awakening*, the player can steal a weapon from a shop instead of paying for it. At first, the consequences seem minor (the NPCs will call the player "Thief"). However, when the player returns to the same shop, the shop owner now has gained the ability to kill her. I will return to the special rules and values when discussing the Ethos of the *Assassin's Creed* storyworld.

Events in games are also different in the sense that player characters may have no choice but to undergo the event itself, but, once the event is triggered, the player will then choose how to react. In *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*, the protagonist Gabriel (the player character) cannot prevent the scripted event in which his love interest Malia falls into a pit of molten lava. However, the player's next action determines how the game ends. She either rescues Malia and Gabriel lives, or she decides to sacrifice Malia in order to put an end to Malia's evil ancestor spirit Tetelo. When the player chooses the latter option, Gabriel also dies. As many story-structured games follow Joseph Campbell's classic mono-myth, they usually start with a major event (the "call to adventure") that not only prompts the player into action but also motivates her (initial) choices. For instance, in the second *Assassin's Creed* game, the main motivation is revenge. It is triggered by the hanging of the protagonist's father and brothers despite a promise that their arrests were an error that would be righted in time. As the main structure of the game is quite linear,[8] the player has no other choice

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[5]　I use the terms books and films as placeholders for respectively the reading mode and the viewing mode. Of course, these modes represent different types of media.

[6]　Of course, theme parks are also interactive, but I would argue that their narratives are emergent.

[7]　For instance, real world places that evoke a particular atmosphere, such as New Orleans or Transylvania.

[8]　See Veugen 2011.

but to kill the betrayer. This is different in *Red Dead Redemption*, where the trigger event has taken place before the start of the game (the kidnapping of the protagonist's wife and children) and where the underlying structure allows for many different actions (Veugen 2011). In fact, when the player does not read the back story or has not seen the game's introductory trailer, there is nothing in the opening sequence, 'Exodus in America', a fifteen-minute cutscene, that informs the player about the protagonist's motivation. The first part of the sequence introduces the storyworld in word and image in which stage characters talk about religion and how the native Americans (the "savages") have been 'saved'. In the next part, the protagonist is taken to an old fort and although his guide (a functional character) asks a lot of questions, the protagonist is not very forthcoming, which prompts the comment "You are not very talkative, are you". Even when he has reached his destination, the player can only deduce from the conversation that the protagonist is there to get the bandit Bill Williamson (a cast character) to accompany him to town (allegedly to save him).

Finally, mental events, i.e., how the individual characters react to the events, are, of course, also different in that they should be separated into the mental events of the player, which are not visible but which can affect gameplay, the mental events of the player character as shown through cutscenes, which can influence the player as she identifies with the character, and the mental events of cast characters that may also influence the choices the player makes.

4. Mythos, Ethos, and Topos

The storyworld, as proposed by Klastrup and Tosca, is a transmedial world, i.e., an abstract content system that is medium-independent and from which "a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms" (Klastrup and Tosca 2004, p. 409). The world has a number of distinguishing traits that both users and designers recognize as part of its 'worldness'. These traits usually stem from the first initiation of the storyworld, which Klastrup and Tosca refer to as the 'ur-world'. Not all originating worlds become transmedial worlds; only worlds that attract a following can expand either through the designers of the 'ur-world' or through the fan community. Klastrup and Tosca compare the transmedial world to another medium-independent system, that of genre as described in literary and film theory.[9] Genre is also a system of traits that came into being interchangeably and involved both the production as well as the reception context of the media texts (Bordwell and Thompson 2001). Genre is part of the repertoire of the community needed to decode texts. The same goes for the transmedial world. It is both the task of the designers and of the fans to ensure that a new expansion to or actualisation of the world adheres to the abstract content system which both parties agree on. Of course, for games this content system has long since existed and is referred to as *the lore* of the game world. As the many online discussions of, especially, online game worlds, e.g., *World of Warcraft*, show, fans take the 'correctness' of the world very seriously. In *Assassin's Creed*, for instance, the fans for a long time did not recognize the graphic novels as part of the transmedial world set out by the games, despite the fact that they were referred to in official game trailers and adhere to the Mythos, Topos, and Ethos of the world. As the transmedial world expands, it is critical that the consistency of the world is maintained. In games, this is often achieved by the so-called Game Bible. Before the release of *Assassin's Creed III* in 2011, Ubisoft had to call on the fan community to help them 'reconstruct' the transmedial world of the franchise. This resulted in the first version of the *Assassin's Creed Encyclopaedia*.

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9   It should be noted that while the concept of genre may be seen as being medium-agnostic, its interpretation/application is medium-specific.

Mythos, Topos, and Ethos[10] are, according to Klastrup and Tosca, the core elements that every transmedial world contains. They call the Mythos "the backstory of all backstories: the central knowledge one needs to have in order *to interact with or interpret events in the world* successfully" ([Klastrup and Tosca 2004](), p. 412). The characters, founding conflicts, and battles originate from the Mythos as well as lore items and creatures that are unique to the world. The Topos is the world's setting, in which both the rendering of the space as well as a sense of history are important. Finally, the Ethos tells the reader/viewer/player how to behave in the world. What is accepted and what is not? What is considered in character and what not? Ethos is both explicit and implicit, and the more familiar the reader/viewer/player is with the transmedial world the easier it will be to adhere to its moral codex. Klastrup and Tosca use several transmedial worlds to explain the three core elements. The first and most obvious one is *The Lord of the Rings*. However, the transmedial world Tolkien created did not originate in the trilogy as Klastrup and Tosca suggest. Middle Earth's Mythos, its characters, races, creatures, history etc., stems from Tolkien's longing for England's own myths and legends, its own cosmology which England lost after the Norman Conquest ([Shippey 1982]()). Middle Earth as Topos is clearly recognizable as Tolkien's England with Hobbiton as the ideal rural version that is under threat, just as Tolkien and his vision of England lost their pastoral innocence in the first World War. Additionally, although Tolkien's Ethos is based on the myths and legends of the Norse Edda and early Germanic and Welsh legends, his Ragnarök is profoundly Christian: the sacrificing of the one for the good of the all. It is a world that appeals to us all, but also a world that can be expanded in different media texts for different audiences in different times ([Veugen 2005]()).

5. The Transmedial World of *Assassin's Creed*

As Klastrup and Tosca argue, the source of the transmedial world lies in the 'ur-text'. In the case of *Assassin's Creed*, this is the first game that was launched in 2007.[11] As we will see, all the core elements of the transmedial world were already in place as the game's designer Patrice Désilets saw the game as the start of a new game franchise ([North 2015]()), where each game would centre around a different assassin from a different time period. As ([Jenkins 2003a]()) explains, game worlds are spatial in nature and thus have an inherent 'worldness'. The authors in ([Mulligan and Patrovsky 2003]()) show that, in order for games to work, they need some background to provide the player with a motivation to play; consequently, it can be determined that every game world starts with a Topos and Mythos. In the first *Assassin's Creed* game, the overall Topoi of the game series are introduced: a present-day game world (2012 in the first game) and a historic time period (1191 in the first game). The Mythos introduces us to the centuries-old conflict between the Templars and the Assassins, where the Assassins believe in free will, while the Templars believe in order. The Mythos also introduces us to special artefacts, the so-called Pieces of Eden, that have hidden properties. The main piece of Eden in the first game is an Apple of Eden with which the wielder can manipulate the will of others. These Pieces of Eden were created by the so-called First Civilization, the Isu or 'Those who came before', a super human race that once lived on earth. Another core element in the Mythos of *Assassin's Creed* is 'the Animus', a piece of equipment with which a modern-day member of the Assassins can access the genetic memories of his Ancestor Assassins. The Animus in question belongs to Abstergo Industries, the modern-day front for the Templars. They use the Animus to locate Pieces of Eden in

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10 Klastrup and Tosca explain that their concept of transmedial worlds is based on genre and adaptation theory. In a later article 'MMOGs and the Ecology of Fiction: Understanding LOTRO as Transmedial World' ([Klastrup and Tosca 2009]()), they explain that their methodology follows the traditional humanistic aesthetic approach. The terms Mythos and Ethos stem from Aristotle's *Poetics* ([Aristotle 1996]()), where Ethos is the moral or ethical character of the agent, an interpretation that in modern narrative theory more or less has the same meaning but now also denotes the values of a people, group, nation, etc. Mythos in Aristotle's view denoted the plot as a logical sequence of events, focusing on the actions of the characters rather than on the characters themselves and their myths as modern narrative theory does.

11 In this article I will only discuss the *Assassin's Creed* texts (various media) that were launched between 2007 and 2017, up to the game *Assassin's Creed Origins*. The data stem from a close reading of the various media texts.

history to retrieve them in the present-day. The first game does not reveal why the Templars pursue the Pieces of Eden so relentlessly; the player only knows that it has something to do with the date 21 December 2012. The Mythos also introduces the two main protagonists, 25-year-old Desmond Miles, who has been kidnapped by Abstergo to get access to the genetic memories of his Assassin Ancestors, and 25-year-old Altaïr-Ibn-La'Ahad, the Ancestor Assassin whose memories are being accessed.

As the game is the first in a new franchise, initially conceived as six games centering around Desmond Miles and his Ancestor Assassins, the game not only introduces the player to the Mythos and Topos of the game world but also to the Ethos of the Assassins: The Creed. As in other games, the player has to identify with her game alter ego. In this case it is Altaïr, as 90% of the game takes place in the Animus. Despite his youth, at 25 Altaïr already is a master Assassin (of Arab descent[12]). As I have argued elsewhere (2014), Altaïr is not a true player character but an avatar. Consequently, he is more of an open book for the player to inhabit than a character the player has to identify with (as is the case with the later Assassins). Despite being an avatar, Altaïr's path is certainly recognizable as it is based on Joseph Campbell's Monomyth*: The Hero's Journey*. Consequently, the player, be it perhaps subconsciously, is already familiar with the basic premises. The 'call to adventure' takes place at the very beginning of the game when we find Altaïr in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, where he is send by his mentor to retrieve the Apple of Eden. Altaïr fails this mission and consequently is demoted to the lowest rank, an ideal situation for the player as she can now learn the Creed alongside Altaïr. To regain his status as master Assassin, Altaïr has to kill nine individuals who, as far as is known at this moment in the game, stand in the way of peace (the game takes place during the Third Crusade). As the hero of the game, the player expects that the adversaries she has to kill are enemies that deserve no better; after all, her mentor has ordered their deaths. In a sense, Altaïr is a foot soldier: he himself does not give the orders, he obeys them. Killing for the greater good. As long as he obeys the Creed, his actions are justifiable.

In 2018, it is hard to grasp the innovative concept that was realized in *Assassin's Creed*. At first, the game was planned as a spin-off game for the already successful game franchise *Prince of Persia* and to be called *Prince of Peria Assassins* (Machinima 2010). However, Ubisoft did not like the idea that a *Prince of Persia* title would not centre on the Prince but on his bodyguard. So, Désilets decided to create a totally new game. One of his ambitions was to create a game with believable crowds; however, the memory of the two popular consoles at the time, the PS2 and Xbox, only allowed for eight characters at a time (DidYouKnowGaming 2014). Therefore, the decision was made to design the game exclusively for the upcoming PS3. To realise their ambitious plans, the team developed a new game engine called Anvil, which ultimately meant that the game could not be released at the launch of the PS3 as originally planned (Machinima 2010). Still, Ubisoft used the delay to their advantage by preceding the launch with a clever and at times stunning marketing campaign that not only started to build the Mythos of *Assassin's Creed* but that also discussed the new gameplay. In the promotional video *Assassin's Creed Developer Diary #3: Freedom* (2007), Patrice Désilets talks about the fact that the game world of *Assassin's Creed* was designed to be completely interactive: "It was really important that the player could go anywhere and interact with everything" (Désilets 2007). The concept is referred to as a 'Flower Box' design:[13] "In which everything is well-placed in a narrative structure" (ibid.). This also means that the game world and the storyworld are interwoven, as Désilets emphasizes: "So everything that you can do with your freedom is basically driving the story forward" (ibid.). The interaction with the stage characters in the game world was designed to be intuitive, which was referred to as organic design or social stealth: "So if you start bumping people around in real life, you will probably have some cops after you. It is the same thing in our game, if you are running and

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[12] In the game itself it is not clear; only later in the book *The Secret Crusade* (2011) we learn that Altaïr's mother was Christian and his father Muslim. As his mother died in childbirth, Altaïr effectively grew up with his father in the order of the Assassins (Veugen 2014).

[13] Instead of the usual Sandbox design of other open world games.

use your 'tackle move' after a while some soldiers will come and they will try to arrest you, but you have some blades and we will see what happens after that" (ibid.).

The apparently complete freedom of the game is not as free as Désilets' words suggest. Basically, the player has three choices to overcome barriers in the game world, which often take the form of opponents that block certain areas the player needs to access. The player can fight the opponents, she can use the surrounding architecture to try and enter another way, or she can use a group of 'scholars' to hide amongst and thus enter the area. To leave an area (especially after an assassination), she can fight her way out, again use the architecture, or she can hide amongst the scholars/crowd or in certain places until the alert has passed. Thus, she not only determines her gameplay and the skills she needs but she also creates her own version of Altaïr, his moral choices, and his path through the narrative. Strictly speaking, the choice is hers, but this is where the Ethos of the transmedial world steps in: The Creed of the Assassins, which consists of the following three tenets:

1. Stay your blade from the flesh of an innocent
2. Hide in plain sight
3. Never compromise the Brotherhood

If we apply these to the gameplay, we see that according to the Ethos the player only has one correct way to tackle these situations: do not fight (tenet 1), do not cause any commotion (tenet 3), but use the scholars to enter an area and the scholars/crowd/special places[14] to 'leave' (tenet 2), otherwise there will be consequences. These tenets and their consequences are built into the design of the game. When you kill an innocent bystander, the game warns the player and once you have killed too many, you get desynced from the animus and have to start again from your last save-point. In side missions, you can actively help people and be awarded with the protection of their fathers/husbands/brothers from the guards. The scholars you help offer you a human shield and thus you can pass unnoticed through guarded places. Additionally, by killing through stealth rather than brute force, the assassinations do not attract unnecessary attention to yourself and to the Brotherhood. In fact, when Altaïr fails to remain undetected he cannot enter an Assassin's bureau to obtain his next mission.[15]

In the first failed mission, Altaïr, who should know better as he was trained as an Assassin from an early age, breaks all three tenets. First, he kills an old man who he fears might alert others to his presence. Secondly, he does not hide, but pursues his adversary in plain sight, as a result of which he leads the enemy to the stronghold of the Assassins, thus jeopardizing the Brotherhood. Of course, this is a deliberate design choice so that the player along with Altaïr can start from scratch. As Altaïr is punished for his disobedience, the player learns the Creed:

Altaïr: I did as I was asked.

Mentor: No, you did as you pleased. Malik has told me of the arrogance you displayed, your disregard of our ways.

Altaïr: What are you doing [he is being held back by two fellow Assassins].

Mentor: There are rules, we are nothing if we do not abide by the Assassin's Creed. Three simple tenets which you seem to forget. I will remind you. First and foremost, stay your blade . . .

Altaïr: from the flesh of an innocent. I know [the mentor slaps him].

Mentor: And stay your tongue unless I give you leave to use it. If you are so familiar with this tenet then why did you kill the old man inside the temple? He was innocent, he did not need to

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14 There are certain places in the gameworld, such as wells and haystacks, that the Assassin can use to hide. After a certain amount of time, the player character becomes anonymous and can leave the place safely.

15 An exception to the first tenet are bombs. In *Assassin's Creed Altaïr's Chronicles*, Altaïr has to use a bomb. In *Assassin's Creed Revelations*, lethal bombs are introduced to help the player overcome opponents in the game world, a gameplay device that became a standard element in the games. Obviously, a bomb is indiscriminate and will kill innocent bystanders as well.

die. Your insolence knows no bounds. Make humble your heart child or I swear I'll tear it from you with my own hands. The second tenet is that which gives us strength. Hide in plain sight. Let the people mask you such that you become one with the crowd. Do you remember? Because, as I hear it, you chose to expose yourself drawing attention before you struck. Third, and final tenet, the worst of all your betrayals. Never compromise the Brotherhood. Its meaning should be obvious. Your actions must never bring harm upon us, direct or indirect. Yet your selfish act beneath Jerusalem placed us all in danger. Worse still, you brought our enemy to our home. Every man we have lost today was lost because of you. I'm sorry, truly I am [he draws a dagger].

Altaïr: What?

Mentor: But I cannot abide a traitor.

Altaïr: I am NOT a traitor.

Mentor: Your actions indicate otherwise and so you leave me no choice. Peace be upon you Altaïr. [The Mentor stabs Altaïr with the dagger, fade to black]

In the next scene, it becomes clear that the stabbing was an illusion. Now that Altaïr (and the player) has been reminded of the Creed, the rules can be followed.

There is one other element in the Ethos of *Assassin's Creed* which is introduced in the first game: pickpocketing. In certain missions, Altaïr must intercept secret messages. To be able to do this, the player must follow the messenger closely and keep a button on the controller pressed while the messenger is still moving. If successful, the player will see Altaïr 'brush' the messenger, then the player should react quickly and move into the crowd. If the messenger stands still, he will detect Altaïr and shout, which alerts the guards. In the first *Assassin's Creed* game, pickpocketing is a specific game skill needed to fulfil these missions, and although pickpocketing in the later games can be used to steal money, it is also needed for successful gameplay, for instance to steal keys to gain access to restricted areas.

6. *Assassin's Creed* and Transmedia Storytelling

Assassin's Creed started off as a transmedial world. At first, the world was created to accommodate six games centering around Desmond Miles and six of his Ancestor Assassins. In accordance with Jenkins' explanation that "A good character can sustain multiple narratives and thus lead to a successful movie franchise. A good 'world' can sustain multiple characters (and their stories) and thus successfully launch a transmedia franchise" (Jenkins 2003a, §13), the world in *Assassin's Creed* was created to sustain the stories of multiple characters (six Assassins) instead of just being the backdrop to Desmond's story. It can be debated if this premise still holds true for the next games—*Altaïr's Chronicles*, which was published in 2008 for the Nintendo DS, and *Assassin's Creed Bloodlines* (2009) for the PSP—that do not include the modern-day Desmond part. As both are solely about Altaïr (the first a prequel and the latter a sequel to the first game), they are rather part of a game franchise than a transmedial world. This was soon amended when Ubisoft decided on a book series to accompany the main games so that members of the public that did not play the games could still get involved, starting with *Assassin's Creed Renaissance* (2009), the 'book version' of the Ancestor Assassin story of *Assassin's Creed II* (2009). The real first steps in transmedia storytelling[16] were taken with the release of the short film *Assassin's Creed: Lineage* (2009), which introduced the viewer to the main protagonist of the second *Assassin's Creed* game, Ezio Auditore da Firenze, and, more importantly, to the storyworld of *Assassin's Creed*

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16 The special edition of the first *Assassin's Creed* game came with a short comic that takes place in the storyworld of the first game (both the modern as well as the historic part) and adds to the story. However, as it is not separately available it is usually seen as a paratext rather than a part of the transmedial story. There is also a non-canonical Penny Arcade *Assassin's Creed* comic about Altaïr.

II.[17] Also, for the French-speaking market, the graphic novel *Assassin's Creed 1 Desmond* (2009) was published that expanded both Desmond's story as well as the Mythos of the Pieces of Eden.[18]

To date, there are 10 main games[19], 20 other games, 8 graphic novels, 6 comic books and 3 comic book series, 4 series of novels, 4 short animated movies, 1 short fiction film, 1 feature film, and rumours of an animated TV series in cooperation with Netflix.[20] Most of these media texts expand the Mythos of *Assassin's Creed* by introducing new artefacts, such as the Shrouds of Eden, which have healing and regenerative properties, other Apples, which are used to manipulate people, and the Swords of Eden that not only give the bearer great charisma, but also negate the effectiveness of illusions. A notable exception are the mobile adaptations of the main games, which are also different in that they only use the storyworld and gameworld of the Ancestor Assassins and not Desmond's present-day world. Other exceptions are the mobile (multiplayer) spin-off games, which are clearly designed to give the player new opportunities to explore the game world—again only that of the Ancestor Assassins—but do not add anything to the storyworld. The new Pieces of Eden that were and are still being introduced often have religious associations, such as the pontifical staff of Pope Alexander VI (Rodrigo de Borja), the sword of Jeanne d'Arc, the Shroud of Turin, or the Apple from the Garden of Eden. Others are associated with mythical objects, such as the Chrystal Skulls, Arthur's sword Excalibur, or the Golden Fleece. The transmedial texts also give more information on the ancient and very advanced humanoid species, the Isu, who made the Pieces of Eden and other cutting-edge technological devices. We learn that the Isu created the human race to serve them as slave labour. Additionally, even though the enmity between the Isu and the humans grew, over time, some Isu and humans formed attachments, resulting in human progeny with special DNA, the so-called Precursor DNA (the Assassins), which accounts for their special abilities, such as Eagle Vision.[21] In 75,000 BC, a global catastrophe destroyed most of the Isu and the humans as well as their civilization and the greater part of their technology. However, in the course of the Mythos, as was already shown in the first game, it becomes clear that the Isu and their Pieces of Eden continue to interfere with humankind.

Of the games that introduce new information, *Assassin's Creed II* (2009) is notable because for the first time the player is confronted with the Isu themselves who reveal the major elements of the Mythos. The Facebook game *Assassin's Creed Project Legacy* (2010–2012) introduced several new Ancestor Assassins and Pieces of Eden, so that players would have a better idea of the multi-game storyworld before playing *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood* (2010). The online game *Assassins' Creed Initiates* (2012–2013) brought the information introduced in the main games together, while adding new information as well, so that player fans were well-prepared for *Assassin's Creed III* (2012), as this game would mean the demise of Desmond and the solution to the 21 December 2012 enigma. This also brought a major change in the storyworld in that the main protagonist in the modern-day part, the character through which the player 'entered' both the game world and the storyworld of the Ancestor Assassin, was no longer there. For the gameworld, this meant that it was now the player herself who 'enters' the world as an employee of Abstergo[22], making the gameplay experience in theory more immersive. In the storyworld, the player cooperates with the Assassins.[23] Notable new elements that were added to the Mythos, especially in *Assassin's Creed Black Flag* (2013) and *Assassin's Creed Rogue* (2014), are Precursor

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[17] See Veugen 2016.

[18] *Assassin's Creed 1: Desmond* as well as *Assassin's Creed 2: Aquilus* (2010) and *Assassin's Creed 3: Accipiter* (2011) are part of the so-called *The Ankh of Isis Trilogy* (bundled in 2013). As the modern-day part tells an alternative version of Desmond's story, this set of graphic novels is considered non-canonical by many fans.

[19] *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation* was first released as a PS Vita game and only later ported to the PS3, Xbox, and PC. As it only takes place in the Animus, it cannot be considered a main game. The next main game, *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*, is already announced.

[20] See Appendix A for the complete list.

[21] Eagle Vision allows the Assassins, for instance, to distinguish between enemies and targets.

[22] In *Assassin's Creed Project Legacy*, the player already was an employee of Abstergo, but now to gather information on Pieces of Eden and other Ancestor Assassins.

[23] The player is now addressed with the 'title' Initiate and her handler is an Assassin called Bishop.

Sites, i.e., First Civilization Temples: "We haven't found an apple, but... a tree. These Temples hold the earth together like roots. Disturb them, and Haiti falls or... Lisbon. Or any other place the Manuscript shows" as Shay Cormac, the protagonist of *Assassin's Creed Rogue*, explains; blood vials which can be used to spy on the donor as long as the person is still alive,[24] but which, of course, also contain the DNA of that person; and Sages, human incarnations of the Isu Atjah. Sages have triple DNA consisting of a significantly higher percentage of the First Civilization genome, which means that Sages have an extraordinary affinity with Pieces of Eden.

With *Assassin's Creed III*, Ubisoft stepped Transmedia Storytelling up a notch. Along with the game, Ubisoft published two comic books, *Assassin's Creed the Chain* (2010–2011) and *Assassin's Creed the Fall* (2012), where the reader is introduced to Assassin-turned-Templar Daniel Cross and his Ancestor Assassin Nikolai Orelov. Cross is Desmond's main antagonist in *Assassin's Creed III* and Orelov is the protagonist of the game *Assassin's Creed Chronicles: Russia* (2016). The Oliver Bowden books, which so far had been adaptations of the Ancestor Assassin part of the games, from then on were no longer adaptations[25] but became counterparts to the games, either telling the story from the point-of-view of a Templar (Haytham Kenway, the father of Ratonhnhaké:ton/Connor the protagonist of *Assassin's Creed III* in *Assassin's Creed Forsaken* (2012) and Élise de la Serre, the childhood friend and later love interest of Arno Dorian the protagonist of *Assassin's Creed Unity* in the book with the same title (2014)) or what happened before, i.e., the story leading up to the moment the game starts (in *Assassin's Creed Underworld* (2015) for the game *Assassin's Creed Syndicate* (2015)).[26] More recent comic books and fictional novels not only introduce *Assassin's Creed* to a younger generation, they also use the new elements of the Mythos while adding Precursor Artefacts, Templars, and Assassins of their own.

7. The Ethos of *Assassin's Creed's* Transmedial World

As for the Ethos, the three tenets of the Creed, the player/reader/viewer expects them to hold true for all Assassins, but obviously outside of the games they can only be part of the storyworld and not the game world. Still, as will be shown, some of the non-interactive media texts use the tenets while several of the main games do not.

7.1. The Main Games

Already in the second *Assassin's Creed* game the three tenets are not mentioned.[27] In the storyworld of the game this is logical because the game's protagonist Ezio Auditore da Firenze is not raised as an Assassin. Still, in the course of the game, Ezio learns the skills he needs but not through formal training. As Desmond's friend Lucy tells Desmond that he learns the skills of his Ancestor Assassins through the so-called bleeding effect of the Animus, so does the player learn the skills needed in the game world by following instructions given to Ezio. The first is new, and morally questionable. In the new game world of *Assassin's Creed II*, money has become a necessity as Ezio has to buy armor and weapons, pay for travel and healthcare, etc. However, when he starts off as a 17-year-old youth who gets in a brawl with the Pazzi family, he is wounded and needs medical care. As he does not have any money, his older brother encourages him to loot the men they have just beat up. This ability to loot will become one of the ways to obtain money, valuables, and (special) objects in the game world of *Assassin's Creed*, as will the looting of chests, which are strewn all over the game world. Interestingly, Ezio can loot chests in plain sight without any consequences, but this does not hold true

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[24] Originally only by a Sage in the so-called Observatory through a specially prepared Chrystal Skull. However, as the game shows, the Skull also works outside the Observatory and does not require the presence of a Sage.

[25] Apart from the book *Assassin's Creed Black Flag*, I will come back to this when discussing the books.

[26] Before *Assassin's Creed III*, the Assassins, both in the games as well as in the graphic novels, had names related to birds of prey, e.g., Ezio which is translated 'Eagle'. Interestingly, in the recent film, this tradition is reinstated: Callum (=dove, not a bird of prey of course but a bird) and Aguilar (=Eagle).

[27] For the years of publication/release of the separate media texts see Appendix A.

for (dead) bodies. Looting bodies will be commented on by nearby stage characters. Looting bodies in front of guards is inadvisable as the player will immediately get in a fight; so, in essence, tenet 3 'Never compromise the Brotherhood' is still in place even though it is not literally mentioned in the game. This also holds true for the other two tenets, 1 'Stay your Blade' and 2 'Hide in plain sight'. The first tenet becomes evident as soon as Ezio has a blade and the player inadvertently kills a stage character. The game will comment "Ezio did not kill civilians". The next time it happens, the player is desynchronized. Ezio learns the second tenet when he is wanted for murder early on in the game and is brought to a house of courtesans. Here, he is taught how to blend in with a group of people to remain undetected. Additionally, instead of Altair's scholars, Ezio now befriends courtesans, thieves, and mercenaries whom he can hire to distract guards. So, even though the tenets are not explicitly mentioned, through the story Ezio learns them step-by-step once the storyworld (and/or the game world) calls for the particular skill. Ezio also has no Assassination contracts. As mentioned before, he wants revenge for the murder of his father and brothers. However, when he has killed the person he holds responsible, he finds out that more people were involved, and when he kills those, other names are revealed, driving the story and Ezio's quest forward. Every step of the way, Ezio and the player learn new skills or information while growing from a 17-year-old boy to a seasoned Assassin of age 39 years. This is when he finally confronts the head of the Templar Order Rodrigo Borgia, i.e., Pope Alexander VI. However, instead of killing him, the now wiser Ezio 'stays his blade'. Not that Borgia is innocent; he was the brain behind the murders, but the wiser Ezio recognizes that Borgia (as a Pope) is no longer a threat and that his son Cesare is much more dangerous to the Assassins' cause. This raises the question of whether Ezio has somehow learned the tenets 'off-screen' so to say. This could also explain an apparent discrepancy in the game. About mid-way through the game, Ezio is in pursuit of Jacomo de Pazzi. When he has found him, he does not go in for the kill but says: "If I can stay my blade long enough to follow him he'll lead me to his Templar brothers, I'll have more names for my list".[28] "Stay my blade" is not a random phrase: to use this exact phrase one has to know the tenets. Ezio is the protagonist in two other main games, *Brotherhood* and *Revelations*, in which he grows from a master Assassin to a mentor of fame. In these games, the tenets themselves hold true (with the same consequences as in *Assassin's Creed II*), but, as in *Assassin's Creed II*, they are not mentioned explicitly.[29] Particular to *Assassin's Creed Revelations* is that the game also 'retells' Altaïr's story as recorded by Altaïr himself on another First Civilization object, the Memory Seal.[30] Additionally, although the first disk recalls the storming of the Assassin stronghold after Altaïr failed to retrieve the Apple of Eden, his being reminded of the three tenets is not on the Seal.

The tenets are also not mentioned explicitly in a number of the main games with an Assassin protagonist that followed. In fact, starting with *Assassin's Creed III,* the protagonist/player can no longer kill civilians (at least not in hand-to-hand combat, however hard many players have tried).[31] There is an exception: the player can still (inadvertently) shoot civilians, which leads to the usual "X did not kill civilians" and desynchronization when another civilian is shot, but this seems to be an element of the game engine rather than a conscious design decision. The second tenet, 'Hide in plain sight', still works for all the Assassins even though they are not 'taught' to do so.[32] However, tenet 3,

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[28] Of those who are responsible for the murder of his father and brothers.

[29] As a mentor Ezio does, however, uphold the tenets. There is a more covert reference to the tenets in *Revelations*. On the door to Altaïr's library, underneath the original Assassin stronghold in Masyaf, it states in Arabic "Revere the blood of the innocent" and "Hide in the midst of the crowd".

[30] As already mentioned, in the first game Altaïr is an avatar and not a character with a background story etc. The Seals, in a sense, repair this by telling Altaïr's life story, how he grew up, his travels, his research into the Apple of Eden, etc., thus turning the erstwhile avatar into a fully fledged character. This story can also be found in the book *Assassin's Creed The Last Crusade.* Ubisoft also included the first *Assassin's Creed* game for fans who had not played the game before.

[31] In the storyworld of *Assassin's Creed III*, Ratonhnhaké:ton is half Native American. His tribe, the Kanien'kehá:ka, show respect to all living creatures and that is why he does not kill (initially also not Templars).

[32] In most games, there are on-screen instructions. Apart from not being detected and becoming anonymous, hiding places are most often used for stealth assassinations.

'Never compromise the Brotherhood', only applies to specific games.[33] This has to do with the fact that starting with *Assassins Creed III*, the up-to-then black and white portrayal of the Assassins and the Templars is greatly nuanced and the Brotherhood of Assassins has been severely diminished so that Assassins, such as Ratonhnhaké:ton (*Assassin's Creed III*), Arno (*Assassin's Creed Unity*), and Jacob Fry (*Assassin's Creed Syndicate*), do not feel as obligated to the Creed as Altaïr or Ezio. Edward Kenway, protagonist of *Assassin's Creed Black Flag*, is a civilian first before he becomes a pirate and for a very short time a Templar. He takes on the role of an Assassin he has killed for personal gain. Becoming rich and a man of status is his motivation for most of the game. However, several Assassins and the Sage he meets remark that he has some Assassin powers. Only at the end of the game does Edward decide to work with the Assassins and finally become one of them.[34] Arno (*Assassin's Creed Unity*) is 'taught' the tenets of the Creed, but only after ca. one quarter of the game has already passed. From the ensuing gameplay it becomes clear that this time the tenets are only there for the story. At first, Arno obeys the mentor, but when his love Élise is threatened, he no longer waits for orders but takes matters into his own hands, even bringing Élise, who is a Templar, to the Assassin council.[35] Because he has not consulted with the Brotherhood on several occasions, Arno is expelled from the order for exposing the Brotherhood (tenet 3). Still, not attracting attention and becoming anonymous remain important elements in the game world and are at times still linked to the storyworld as well. When Jacob Fry helps Charles Darwin in *Syndicate* and Darwin suggests that he might help with the mission, Jacob replies: "Oh with all respect, mister Darwin, I believe I will proceed alone. After all, we wouldn't want to attract any unwanted attention".

As far as pickpocketing is concerned, all Assassins can still pickpocket but Jacob and Evie Fry only pickpocket to steal special objects; they do not steal from civilians. There is no explicit explanation why they cannot; it is merely suggested that they feel more a part of the people than a part of the Brotherhood.[36] All Assassins can also still loot, but when Arno loots commoners, the spoils are meagre (spoons, forks, etc.) in keeping with the poverty of the French people at the time of the revolution. That Jacob and Evie were tutored by an Assassin father becomes also clear in the combination of storyworld and game world. The game is situated in Victorian London. Like Ezio, they have helpers, this time in the form of the Rooks, a gang of street thugs that Jacob founded. They also get help from street urchins who, as in the original Sherlock Holmes stories, source information and from the historic policeman Frederick Abberline. When Evie or Jacob or both have assassinated someone, they dip a white handkerchief in the blood of their victim in a similar motion to the one Altaïr used to stain the feather he was given as a token of his contract.

However, that the tenets have become increasingly less important can also be seen from the missions, which often call for X number of kills of soldiers, guards, ship's crew, etc. to gain 100% completion. This translates into awards and credits, which not only determine the player's ranking on the overall leader board but also enable the player to buy extra skills or armour in the game. A glitch in *Assassin's Creed III* means that Ratonhnhaké:ton often faces groups of more than fifty soldiers in circumstances where the fighting itself then attracts even more soldiers, clearly violating the third

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[33]　In fact, *Assassin's Creed Black Flag* is the only game that at the very end mentions the Assassin's Creed bureau.

[34]　The gameworld and gameplay of *Assassin's Creed Black Flag* is more like that of *Assassin's Creed II* than *Assassin's Creed III*, as Edward can again use 'courtesans' to lure guards away and has more opportunities to blend in with crowds and sit on benches to remain undetected while waiting for his assassination victim.

[35]　When his father is murdered, Arno is adopted by the Templar Grand Master of the Parisian Rite, Élise's father. From the book *Unity* it becomes clear that Élise from an early age knows that he is an Assassin, even though Arno does not know yet. The game and the book are very much written to show that both in the ranks of the Assassins as well as the Templars there are traitors and there are those, like Élise's mother, who want to end the feud between the two groups.

[36]　In the book it becomes clear that the Creed has been ingrained in them by their father Ethan. Evie is the true believer of the two. She often reminds Jacob of what their father would have said or wanted. Jacob is more a brawler and fights more openly, thus violating tenets 2 and 3, although the British Brotherhood has been greatly diminished and there is no Assassin's bureau in London. Evie and Jacob report to Henry Green, who, as can be found out in the book *Assassin's Creed Underground*, in fact is Jayadeep Mir, the son of Arbaz Mir (*Assassin's Creed Brahman* and *Forsaken*).

tenet. However, even without the glitch, it is very hard to stealth assassinate in *Assassin's Creed III*.[37] Obviously, these elements, which also can be found in other games, are solely added to make the game harder to play. It is part of the game world and not of the storyworld, thus gradually moving the games away from Désilets' original idea that everything the player does drives the story forward (2007).

This is less the case in *Assassins' Creed Rogue*, which is truer to the original design of the first *Assassin's Creed* games. As if to remind us, the game starts with the words:

> Stay my blade from the flesh of the innocent.
> Hide in plain sight.
> Never compromise the Assassin Brotherhood.
> These are the tenets of the Creed.
> The principles I used to live by.
> was a young man then.
> The Seven Years' War was about to begin.
> could not have imagined what the future had in store for me...
> Nor the cost I would choose to bear...
> My name is Shay Patrick Cormac.
> This is my story . . .

Shay starts off as an Assassin, but the American Assassins and their leader Achilles increasingly act against the tenets in Shay's eyes. When Shay is tasked to get a piece of Eden from a Precursor Temple in Lisbon he causes a massive earthquake, killing hundreds of innocent civilizations. When he confronts Achilles with the disaster, Achilles still perseveres with finding the other Temples. This makes Shay turn away from the Brotherhood. In the course of the game, it becomes clear that even though Shay eventually takes the side of the Templars he does this because he still truly believes in the first tenet: Assassins are there to protect normal people, not to let them suffer. Shay also shows compassion towards the people he kills. He kills because there is no other way; he does not kill out of spite, hatred, or any other negative emotion. However, because some of the people he has to kill are Assassins, the gameplay can be quite challenging as Shay and the Assassins share the same skillset, including tenet 2 'Hide in plain sight'. Interestingly, when Shay has left the Brotherhood and happens to kill a civilian, instead of the obligatory "Shay did not kill civilians" the game now warns that killing civilians will put bounty hunters on his track.

Apart from the interesting reversal from Assassin to Templar, which contributes to the already mentioned nuancing of the black and white opposition, *Assassin's Creed Rogue* is also a very important game not only because of the new insights gained in the Mythos of *Assassin's Creed*, but also because the game adds to Achilles' backstory,[38] filling in gaps left by *Assassin's Creed III*. It also shows Haytham Kenway as Templar Master of the Templar's Order of the Colonial Rite and his near destruction of the Colonial Brotherhood of Assassins. Finally, it reveals that Shay is responsible for the death of Arno's Assassin father, which is Arno's 'call to adventure' in *Assassin's Creed Unity.* Similar to the opening, *Assassin's Creed Rogue* ends with Shay's words, but now they are spoken as a Templar:

> Uphold the principles of our Order, and all that for which we stand.
> Never share our secrets nor divulge the true nature of our work.
> Do so until death—whatever the cost.
> This is my new creed. I am Shay Patrick Cormac.

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[37] In *Black Flag* I have killed 3016 opponents to date. Of course, Edward is not an Assassin. Still, in the book his mother asks him "How many men have died at your hand, eh?" Edward does not reply directly "I looked at her. The answer, of course, was countless" (p. 428). This basically acknowledges that only killing a select number of opponents is no longer part of being an Assassin in the games, even though in the scene in the book his mother disowns Edward publicly for his deeds.

[38] Amongst others reconfirming why Achilles calls Ratonhnhaké:ton Connor.

> Templar of the Colonial... of the American Rite.
>
> am an older man now, and perhaps wiser.
>
> war and a revolution have ended, and another is about to begin.
>
> May the Father of Understanding guide us all."[39]

7.2. The Mobile and Online Games

Of the mobile games, only those with new content are interesting. These are *Assassin's Creed Altaïr's Chronicles*, *Assassin's Creed Bloodlines*, *Assassin's Creed III Discovery*, *Assassin's Creed Liberations*, and the three *Assassin's Creed Chronicles* games: China, India, and Russia. The first two games have Altaïr as protagonist. *Chronicles* is a side-scrolling game and uses text boxes instead of speech. Although the game's story is credible as a prequel dated one year before the main game, the gameplay is not, especially the fact that you have to kill civilians to get their clothes. Apparently, the makers, Gameloft, were not aware of the tenets. More importantly, the restricted game world of the side-scroller did not call for a storyworld element to direct the player. The gameworld of the PSP game *Assassin's Creed Bloodlines* is very similar to that of the main game. The game includes a 'New game tutorial' that not only shows the button combinations for the various actions, it also teaches the player the three tenets, although they are somewhat rephrased:

> Please note that following the assassin's creed,
>
> your ancestor's way of life, will assist you with staying in sync.
>
> The Creed consists of three tenets.
>
> First: Never hurt an innocent person.
>
> Second: Always be discreet.
>
> Third: Do not compromise the clan.
>
> Should you lose sync, you can restore synchronization
>
> by reviewing key moments of your ancestor's life
>
> or by respecting the creed.

So, similar to the main game, the player is instructed on how to 'behave' in the open-world setting of the game.

Assassin's Creed III Discovery is again a side scrolling game, with a similarly restricted game world as *Altaïr's Chronicles*. The gameplay is based mostly on combat. Hiding places are available but they serve as elements for stealth combat. In the tutorial, the player is taught the important moves the player character can make, but the tenets are not mentioned. In the game, which takes place in the storyworld of the main game 15 years after the murder of Ezio's father and brothers, Ezio mentions that his thirst for vengeance is still strong, but that his responsibility to the Assassin Brotherhood is stronger. In the game, you are constantly killing or dodging opponents and navigating and exploring the game world, which presents itself as a puzzle with switches and hidden passages. This reinforces the idea that the tenets are not necessary due to the game world restrictions of side-scrolling games.

The game world of the PS Vita game *Assassin's Creed Liberation* is very similar to that of the main games, and like the other mobile games, only uses the Ancestor part. The Ancestor in question (the Assassin player character) is Aveline de Grand Pré. She is not taught the tenets explicitly, but they still apply. Like the Assassins in the earlier main games, she can kill innocents, but will get the obligatory warning "Aveline did not kill civilians" and desync should it happen again. She can loot (dead) bodies—in fact, it is part of a mission—but as it is forbidden in the storyworld she cannot do so when guards are around. Pickpocketing is not only still possible, it is also a game skill, e.g., to collect

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[39] "May the Father of Understanding guide us all" is part of the 'Creed' of the Templars. Note Shay's correction in line five: first he says Colonial (=Assassins) then he corrects it in American (=Templar). This basically reveals that even at the end of his life Shay still thinks of himself as an Assassin.

voodoo dolls.[40] The touchscreen of the PS Vita gives pickpocketing an extra dimension. As for the most recent *Chronicles* Games, they are interesting but mostly from a transmedia storytelling point of view as they link several of the already existing media texts.[41] The games are again fast-paced side-scrolling games, so even though the game world includes looting, at least in *Assassin's Creed Chronicles Russia*, you hardly bother. All three games have soldiers, guards, Templars, etc. but no real civilians, so accidentally killing those does not happen. However, in *Assassin's Creed Chronicles India*, for the first mission, the player is warned that: "This mission is different though. There are no Templars to deal with, only innocent [palace] guards who, under the Assassin's mantra, cannot be harmed".

The Facebook game *Assassin's Creed Project Legacy* was more of a turn-based strategy game where the player was an employee of Abstergo tasked with sifting through memories collected from different Assassins. In this way, the game did really expand the Mythos and Topos of the transmedial world. As such, the game world could not be set up as a flower box; it had to adhere to just texts and pictures. Most players thought of themselves as friends or even recruits of the Assassin Brotherhood, which was enhanced by the fact that Abstergo at times questioned the players to test their loyalty. Added to that, a mysterious character named Erudito used social media and actual 'Abstergo' merchandise to help the fan community to access deeper levels of the Abstergo mainframe. Unfortunately, the promised *Project Legacy 2.0* was never launched, but thanks to Erudito the players did get access to the last set of videos. Even though *Project Legacy* did not have a regular player character, one of the memories recounts the life of the Assassin Perotto Calderon, who was sent by Ezio to spy on the Borgias. He compromised the Brotherhood by falling in love with Lucrezia Borgia and had a son with her, Giovanni. As the child was sickly and deformed, Perotte stole a Shroud of Eden in the hope of curing the child, killing several of his fellow Assassins in the process, in all this violating tenet 3. The online game *Assassin's Creed Initiates* was an alternate reality game where the players both competed but also worked together to solve puzzles set in the storyworld of *Assassin's Creed* in the lead up to *Assassin's Creed III*. To solve some of the clues, the hive mind of the collective was needed as each player brought his or her own set of knowledge to the task. The game also had a world map and a time line, both of which were needed to solve the second part of the game. This even involved players going to actual locations to report to the community what could be found there.

7.3. The Books

Here, I will limit myself to the Oliver Bowden books as these are the ones that are the most closely linked to the games. The books are not participatory as they only involve the storyworld as discussed by Ryan. In discussing the books, I will again only focus on the tenets, as these form the basis of the Ethos of the Assassin storyworld.

In Ezio's storyworld, *Assassins Creed Renaissance* (the adaptation of the ancestor part of *Assassin's Creed II)*, *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, and Ezio's part of *Revelations*, the tenets are not mentioned in concurrence with the games.[42] As already explained, *Revelations* is different as it also includes Altaïr's memory seals. There are two references to the Creed here; both are directly linked to the Assassins. Firstly, when Altaïr wants to burn the body of their mentor, his former friend Abbas protests: "But this is not our way! To burn a man's body is forbidden!" and blames Altaïr saying: "All your life you have made a mockery of the Creed! You bend the rules to suit your whims, while belittling and humiliating those around you!" This causes a fight among the Assassins when Altaïr shouts:

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[40] Voodoo Dolls are only part of the game world. The reward for collecting all of them is a special outfit.
[41] Most notably the short animated film *Assassin's Creed Embers*, where Shao Jun, the protagonist of the *China Chronicles*, seeks out Ezio and receives a Precursor Box which features in all three *Chronicles* games.
[42] Even though the Ezio books are adaptations, they do all contain new parts as well. In *Renaissance*, they are relatively small, but in *Brotherhood* Ezio also goes to Spain to look for Cesare Borgia. In the mobile game *Discovery*, Ezio also travels to Spain but for a different reason. In *Revelations*, we learn what happened after *Brotherhood* and why Ezio travels to Constantinople. Then, his story from the game is told. However, the book ends with Ezio's last days as told in the short animated film *Embers*.

"Brothers . . . Stop! Stay your blades!" (p. 222). When after many years, Altaïr returns to the Assassins'
stronghold, he finds that many of the Assassins have turned from the Creed:

> You say these men are cruel,' said Altaïr. 'Has any man raised his blade
> against an innocent?' 'Alas, yes,' Cemal replied. 'Brutality seems to be
> their sole source of pleasure.' 'Then they must die, for they have
> compromised the Order,' said Altaïr. 'But those who still live by the
> Creed must be spared.' (p. 309).

Alongside *Revelations*, Oliver Boden also published *Assassin's Creed The Secret Crusade*. As this
book tells Altaïr's life story, turning the erstwhile avatar in a true character, it also contains the passage
about the three tenets. However, as it is a book, we also get Altaïr's thoughts, which puts a different
light on the character of Altaïr: "There are rules. We are nothing if we do not abide by the Assassin's
Creed. Three simple tenets, which you seem to forget. I will remind you. First and foremost: stay your
blade . . . ' It was to be a lecture. Altaïr relaxed, unable to keep the note of resignation from his voice as
he finished Al Mualim's sentence. ' . . . from the flesh of an innocent. I know.'"[43]

Assassin's Creed Black Flag begins with Edward's 'call to adventure', the reason he goes to sea and
initially joins the crew of a privateer. The next two parts and most of part four tell the story of the
game, adding his voyage back to England and explaining the premises of *Assassin's Creed Forsaken*.
The book is interesting form a transmedial storytelling point of view because it links the storyworld of
the games *Black Flag*, *Assassin's Creed III*, and *Syndicate* and the book *Assassin's Creed Forsaken*. It should
be noted that the book much earlier than the game shows Edward's sympathy for the Assassins. In the
first part of the book, which is not in the game, Edward is thwarted by a man wearing a ring with the
symbol of a cross. The imprint of the ring is left on his face when the man hits him. When Edward
is recruited into the Templar order he is given a similar ring and it dawns on him that it is the same
ring the mysterious man was wearing, the man who not only struck him but also burned down his
father's farmstead: "And suddenly I was thinking that whatever squabbles these people had with the
Assassins, then, well, I was on the side of the Assassins." (p. 194).

Assassin's Creed Forsaken tells Haytham Kenway's life story from his own point of view. Like the
Black Flag book, it includes part of the game as well. As Haytham is the son of Edward Kenway,
the protagonist of *Assassin's Creed Black Flag*, he knows about the tenets. In fact, he knows a lot about
the Assassins and even has a hidden blade, which Shay comments on in *Assassin's Creed Rogue* and
which also explains why the player in *Assassin's Creed III*, where Haytham is the protagonist of the first
part, believes him to be an Assassin. Interesting in *Forsaken* is that the book confirms Edward Kenway's
scepticism towards the Brotherhood. When Haytham talks with Reginald Birch, his former Templar
mentor, Birch remarks: "Of course, I knew your father felt differently to me concerning many—perhaps
even most—of the tenets of the Order, but that is because he didn't subscribe to them".

The book *Assassin's Creed Unity*, like *Forsaken*, does not tell the Ancestor story of Arno the
protagonist of the *Unity* game. The book is Élise de la Serre's diary with a few additions by Arno.
As already mentioned, Élise is the daughter of François de la Serre, the Grand Master of the French
Templars as well as the man who adopted Arno after Shay killed his father. As Élise is destined to
become Grand Master herself, the tenets discussed in this book are those of the Templars and not those
of the Assassins. Both *Forsaken* and *Unity* are clearly intended to show that Templars and Assassins
are not that different. *Assassin's Creed Underworld*, finally, tells the story of Evie and Jacob Fry's father
Ethan, who contrary to the preceding Assassins was born to the Creed. This also meant that he taught
his children Evie and Jacob the tenets of the Creed, although this is not literally in the book and is only
hinted at when the twins are concerned: "They had no servants. Ethan would not have allowed it,
believing the very idea of retaining servants went against the tenets of the creed" (Kindle Location

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[43] See Appendix B for the full dialogue.

2986). However, apart from Evie and Jacob, Ethan did also train the son of his friend Arbaaz Mir: Jayadeep. When Jayadeep fails his first mission, two of the three tenets are mentioned: "Jayadeep's actions had broken the tenets of the creed: he had been forced to surrender hiding in plain sight; worse, he had been forced to compromise the Brotherhood" (Kindle Locations 1032–1033).

7.4. The Comic Books and Graphic Novels

Of the many comic books and graphic novels, only three are closely linked to the games. As already explained, even though the graphic novels use the same storyworld and transmedial world, their legitimacy as part of the transmedia story is questioned. The Titan comics are part of transmedia storytelling but have no direct reference to a particular game. They were crated for a new, younger audience and expand on the transmedial world, both that of the present-day as well as the Ancestor part (with new Ancestors, Locations, Artefacts, and Sages). The three comics that have direct links to the games are *The Fall*, *The Chain*, and *Brahman*. *The Fall* and *The Chain*, which as already mentioned are directly linked to *Assassin's Creed III*, tell the story of Assassin-born Daniel Cross. Like Desmond, he was kidnapped by Abstergo but at a much younger age. Through prolonged exposure to the animus he suffers from constant 'hallucinations' caused by the bleeding effect. He escapes and is found by the Assassins who try to improve his condition. However, when he finally meets the Mentor the hallucinations take over and he kills the Mentor. After fleeing, he returns to Abstergo and the Animus. In *The Chain*, through his Assassin Ancestor Nikolai Orolov, he finds Ezio's Codex in which Desmond is mentioned. Despite the fact that he spends a long time with the Assassins, the tenets are never mentioned. *Brahman* is linked to the book *Assassin's Creed Underworld* and the games *Assassin's Creed Syndicate* and *Assassin's Creed Chronicles India*. As it is fairly recent, the storyworld uses an Abstergo headset, allegedly an entertainment device to replay the best parts gathered from the DNA of an Ancestor Assassin.[44] In the game *Assassin's Creed Black Flag*, the object of Abstergo, apart from getting information about Sages, Blood Vials, and the Observatory, is to create such an experience which in the game is called *Devils of the Caribbean* (alleged release date Summer 2014). In *Brahman*, when Jot Soora, an employee of Mysore Tech, is testing the Abstergo device for release on the Indian Market, he stumbles upon hidden code that can upload the actual memories of an Ancestor of the current wearer. So, as it turns out he was not randomly chosen to wear the headset as his Ancestor was linked to the Assassin Arbaaz Mir and should know the last location of the famous Koh-I-Noor diamond (another Precursor Artefact). As the Ancestor Assassin's memories are accessed in media res, there are no references to the tenets in the comic.

7.5. The (Animated) Films

The short films, whether animated or not, serve as introductions to and bridges between main games. Consequently, they do not give information about the tenets, not even *Assassin's Creed Lineage*, which introduces Ezio and his family and also shows what happened before *Assassin's Creed II*, which helps to understand why Ezio's father had to die. *Embers*, the short film that tells about Ezio's final days and death, introduces the Chinese Assassin Shao Jun, the protagonist of *Assassin's Creed Chronicles China*. The story of *Embers* can also be found in the book *Assassin's Creed Revelations.*

The tenets are also not in the feature film, but they are in the film's promotional material. The film was first announced to the fans on 21 December 2015 in a tweet by Ubisoft that showed the business card of Alan Rikkin, the CEO of Abstergo in the film. When the fans called the number on the card they heard a voicemail by Rikkin (Jeremy Irons) giving the website of Twentieth Century Fox (the film's distributer). On 25 March 2016, the Voicemail changed. It again began with a message by Rikkin but then hacking sounds were heard and the voce of Callum Lynch (Michael Fassbender), the modern

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[44] This was also the premise of *Assassin's Creed Liberation*, where the data came from the very first participant, Subject 1 (Desmond is Subject 17). This was still in the experimental phase of the Animus Project.

day Assassin in the film, speaks the words: "These are the sacred tenets of our brotherhood: to stay your blade from the flesh of the innocent, to hide in the plain sight, and above all else, never to compromise the brotherhood". As Callum only in the last part of the film understands that he is part of the Brotherhood and is not taught the tenets in the film, it must be assumed that the events in the film took place before 25 March 2015.[45] Interesting about the film is that, unlike the games, 65% takes place in the present day. The film is an independent production in the transmedia storytelling world of *Assassin's Creed*: "'We essentially did them all on our own because we wanted to have an original script,' he said. 'It's a movie that's based on the game, but it's not a movie that is the game.'" (Makkuch 2016).

Still, the film adheres to the Mythos, Topos, and Ethos of the transmedial world even though there are discrepancies with the games. The Apple of Eden Abstergo is seeking in the film is the Apple of Adam and Eve. In the games, this Apple is Altaïr's Apple (Apple #2), which Ezio left hidden behind a wall in Altaïr's vault in the original Assassin's stronghold in Masyaf (in *Revelations*). However, as there are several Apples of Eden and the one in the film is simply referred to as Aguilar's[46] Apple, which apparently was not discovered until 1492, the year the historic part of the film takes place, we must assume that this is one of the other Apples. Another seeming discrepancy is that in the game *Assassin's Creed II Discovery*, Ezio is in Spain in 1491 to save Christopher Columbus from Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition. The film is set one year later in 1492. Aguilar himself is pursued by the Inquisition and Torquemada and nearly escapes being burned at the stake. At the end of the historic part, Aguilar hands over the Apple to Columbus for safe keeping. In 2017, Aymar Azaizia, head of content since *Assassin's Creed II*, during a Reddit AMA discussion stated that the game was no longer canon in light of the story of the film (Azaizia 2017). However, later, after a discussion with the fan community, he changed his mind: "I declare that thanks to the light you put on the matter, Assassin's Creed (AC) Discovery should be considered as canon in the AC lore". (Azaizia 2017)[47]

Even though the tenets are not in the film, they are in the official novelization of the film. First, when the Assassins try to rescue Prince Ahmad[48] when his hiding place is discovered by the Templars, they implement tenet 2: "Now, the Assassins blended in effortlessly with the throng that stood, frightened and uneasy, awaiting the approach of the Templars. It was one of the tenets of the Creed: *Hide in plain sight*" [Italics in the original] (p. 50). Secondly, after Aguilar and Maria escape from the Inquisition, in their flight they land in the room of a family. Aguilar thinks: "Stay *your blade from the flesh of the innocent*. The first tenet of the Creed. These people would come to no harm through him or Maria" (p. 147). Finally, when the sultan betrays the Brotherhood by giving up the Apple for the life of his son, the prince, Aguilar has every right to kill him, especially as this action cost Maria's life. In the film, we only see the reaction of the sultan: "Forgive me". In the book, however, we also get Aguilar's thoughts: "*I could kill him right now*, Aguilar thought. He knew that Muhammad would not resist . . . But Aguilar knew he would not kill the sultan. The first tenet of the Creed was '*Stay your blade from the flesh of the innocent*." (p. 199). The differences between the film and the book are obvious. The film is about showing, so there would have to be a scene in the film that could have lent credibility to Callum stating the tenets. The book, however, is about telling, which gives more room to explain actions and thoughts.

8. Conclusions

The transmedial world, as described by Klastrup and Tosca, is an abstract content system that is medium-independent. However, the Mythos, Topos, and Ethos of this transmedial world

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[45] The film was released on 21 December 2016, a month and day with some significance in the *Assassin's Creed* transmedia storytelling world, as is of course the date of the Tweet.

[46] Aguilar is the Ancestor Assassin in the film.

[47] Showing the commitment of the fan community to keep the Mythos of the transmedial world intact. As already mentioned, in the book *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, Ezio returns again to Spain, but this takes place in March 1507, so after the events of the film.

[48] He is the son of the sultan and has been kidnapped to force his father, the keeper of the Apple, to hand it over to the Templars.

originally stem from the storyworld of the 'ur'-text. As the 'ur'-text of *Assassin's Creed* is the first game, also called *Assassin's Creed* (2007), apart from the storyworld there is also the game world, the represented version of the storyworld. As I argued, in the earlier games the storyworld and the game world are interwoven. However, the storyworld in games, by necessity, differs from the one described by Ryan in her book *Storyworlds Across Media.* The participatory mode of computer games means that special rules, values, and (mental) events in games are not 'independent' as in books or films but that they may influence the player's decisions and consequently her actions. By examining several media texts from the transmedial world of *Assassin's Creed*, focussing specifically on the Mythos and Ethos of this world, it became clear that on the one hand the transmedial world uses different media to expand the Mythos of the series, while, on the other hand, the Ethos of the storyworld influences player decisions in the game world. It also became clear that, throughout the series, the innovative idea of the original designer Patrice Désilets, where "everything that you can do with your freedom is basically driving the story forward" (2007), thus interweaving the storyworld and the game world, has been abandoned in favour of gameplay-driven challenges. In the game world, this manifested itself in less emphasis on the tenets of the Creed, arguably the most important element of the Ethos of *Assassin's Creed*. However, the tenets are not completely forgotten as the promotional material for the *Assassin's Creed* film and its novelization showed. However, these media texts 'show' and 'tell'; they do not direct.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

Legend: * media introducing new Precursor Artefacts and/or information about the Isu.[A] adaptations.

Main games
PS3, Xbox360, PC (the dates given are for the console releases)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED (2007).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED II (2009).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED BROTHERHOOD (2010).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS (2011).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED III (2012).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED IV BLACK FLAG (2013)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED ROGUE (2014)

PS 4, Xbox One, PC (the dates given are for the console releases)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY (2014)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED SYNDICATE (2015)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED ORIGINS (2017)

Games for handheld or mobile platforms
[A]ASSASSIN'S CREED (2007).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED: ALTAÏR'S CHRONICLES (2008, Nintendo DS)
*ASSASSIN'S CREED BLOODLINES (2009, PSP).
[A]ASSASSIN'S CREED II (2009).
[A]ASSASSIN'S CREED TWITTER ASSASSINATION EXPERIENCE (2009).
[A]ASSASSIN'S CREED II: MULTIPLAYER (2010)).
*ASSASSIN'S CREED II DISCOVERY (2009, Nintendo DS).
[A]ASSASSIN'S CREED BROTHERHOOD (2010).
[?]ASSASSIN'S CREED RECOLLECTION (2011)

^AASSASSIN'S CREED REVELATIONS (2011).

^AASSASSIN'S CREED III (2012).

*ASSASSIN'S CREED LIBERATIONS (2012, PS Vita)

*ASSASSIN'S CREED PIRATES (2013)

[?]ASSASSIN'S CREED MEMORIES (2014)

*ASSASSIN'S CREED CHRONICLES CHINA (2015, PS Vita)

*ASSASSIN'S CREED CHRONICLES INDIA (2016, PS Vita)

*ASSASSIN'S CREED CHRONICLES RUSSIA (2016, PS Vita)

[?]ASSASSIN'S CREED IDENTITY (2016)

Online games/databases

*ASSASSIN'S CREED PROJECT LEGACY (2010-2012, Facebook).

*ASSASSIN'S CREED INITIATES (2012-2013).

(Animated) short films

*ASSASSIN'S CREED: LINEAGE (2009). Simoneau, Y. (director). Ubisoft Montreal & Hybride. http://assassinscreedlineage.us.ubi.com/.

*ASSASSIN'S CREED: ASCENDANCE (2010). Ubisoft Workshop (production). Ubisoft Entertainment. http://www.megavideo.com/v/ZQV0Y3H2c2801992086a1c1ca1865c66522a82f41.

^(*)ASSASSIN'S CREED: EMBERS (2011). Ubisoft Workshop (production). Ubisoft Montreal. www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL30864YID4.

^(*)ASSASSIN'S CREED: THE SYNDICATE (2015) Felix Gary Gray (writer), New Science (producer). Ubisoft. www.youtube.com/watch?v=geNmfrPMhgg.

^(*)ASSASSIN'S CREED: FRENCH REVOLUTION (2017) Rob Zombie (writer), New Science (producer). Ubisoft. www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEe219MWyOM.

Feature films

*ASSASSIN'S CREED (2016). Justin Kurzel (director). 20th Century Fox. Blu ray.

Oliver Bowden Books

Official *Assassin's Creed* series by Oliver Bowden published by Penguin books London.

^A *Assassin's Creed Renaissance.* (2009)

^{A (*)} *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood.* (2010)

* *Assassin's Creed The Secret Crusade.* (2011)

* *Assassin's Creed Revelations.* (2011)

* *Assassin's Creed Forsaken.* (2012)

* *Assassin's Creed Black Flag.* (2012)

* *Assassin's Creed Unity.* (2014)

* *Assassin's Creed Underworld.* (2015)

* *Assassin's Creed Origins Desert Oath.* (2017)

Other Books

*Kirbey Matthew J. (2016). *Last Descendants*. Scholastic Inc.

* Golden, Christy. (2016). *Assassin's Creed Heresy.* San Francisco Ubisoft.

^A Golden, Christy. (2016). *Assassin's Creed official movie novelization.* San Francisco Ubisoft.

*Golden, Christy (2016) *Assassin's Creed Regression in Assassin's Creed official movie novelization*. San Francisco Ubisoft.

*Kirbey Matthew J. (2016). *Last Descendants: Tomb of the Kahn*. Scholastic Inc.

*Kirbey Matthew J. (2017). *Last Descendants: Fate of the Gods*. Scholastic Inc.

Graphic Novels (French editions)
published by Les Deux Royaumes Paris.

Ankh of Isis Trilogy. Artists Eric Corbeyron & Djillali Defali
* *Assassin's Creed: 1 Desmond*. (2009)
* *Assassin's Creed: 2 Aquilus*. (2010)
* *Assassin's Creed: 3 Accipiter*. (2011)

The Hawk Trilogy. Artists Eric Corbeyron & Djillali Defali
* *Assassin's Creed: 4 Hawk*. (2012)
* *Assassin's Creed: 5 El Cakr*. (2013
* *Assassin's Creed: 6 Leila*. (2014)

Assassin's Creed: Conspirations
Tome 1: Die Glocke (2016). Artistes Guillaume Dorison & Jean-Baptiste Hostache
Tome 2: Le Projet Rainbow (2017). Artistes Guillaume Dorison & Patrick Pion

Comic Books

*Kerschl, K. & C. Stewart (2011). *Assassin's Creed: The Chain*. Ubisoft.

*Kerschl, K. & C. Stewart (2012). *Assassin's Creed: The Fall*. Ubisoft.

(*)Kerschl, K. & C. Stewart (2012). *Assassin's Creed: Subject Four*. Ubisoft.(compilation of *Assassin's Creed: The Fall* and *Assassin's Creed: The Chain*).

*Kerschl, K. & C. Stewart (2014). *Assassin's Creed: Brahman.* Ubisoft.

*Col del, A & C. McCreery (2015) *Trial by Fire. Assassin's Creed series*. Titan Comics.

*Col del, A & C. McCreery (2016) *Setting Sun. Assassin's Creed series*. Titan Comics.

*Lente van F. & D. Calero (2016) *Black Cross. Templar series.* Titan Comics

*Col del, A & C. McCreery (2017) *Homecoming. Assassin's Creed series*. Titan Comics.

*Lente van F. & D. Calero (2017) *Cross of Water. Templar series.* Titan Comics

*Watters D & A. Plaknadel (2017) *Common Ground. Uprising series.* Titan Comics

*Edgington I. (2017) *Assassin's Creed Reflections. Assassin's Creed series*. Titan Comics.

*Watters D & A. Plaknadel (2018) *Inflection Point. Uprising series.* Titan Comics

*Watters D & A. Plaknadel (2018) *Finale, Uprising series.* Titan Comics

*Toole. A. (2018) *Assassin's Creed Origins.* Titan Comics.

Other publications
Assassin's Creed Encyclopaedia 1st edition (2011). Ubisoft
Assassin's Creed Encyclopaedia 2nd edition (2012). Ubisoft
Assassin's Creed Encyclopaedia 3rd edition (2013). Ubisoft
Assassin's Creed Unity: Abstergo Entertainment—Employee Handbook (2014). Ubisoft

Appendix B

The two guards on either side of Altaïr stepped forward and took his arms. His muscles tensed. He braced himself against them but did not struggle. 'What are you doing?' he said warily. The colour rose in Al Mualim's[49] cheeks. 'There are rules. We are nothing if we do not abide by the Assassin's Creed. Three simple tenets, which you seem to forget. I will remind you. First and foremost: stay your blade . . . ' It was to be a lecture. Altaïr relaxed, unable to keep the note of resignation from his voice as he finished Al Mualim's sentence. ' . . . from the flesh of an innocent. I know'. The crack of Al Mualim's palm across Altaïr's face echoed from the stone of the courtyard. Altaïr felt his cheek

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[49] Al Mualin is Ezio's mentor and head of the Brotherhood.

burn. 'And stay your tongue unless I give you leave to use it', roared Al Mualim. 'If you are so familiar with this tenet, why did you kill the old man inside the Temple? He was innocent. He did not need to die'. Altaïr said nothing. What could he say? I acted rashly? Killing the old man was an act of arrogance? 'Your insolence knows no bounds', bellowed Al Mualim. 'Make humble your heart, child, or I swear I'll tear it from you with my own hands'. He paused, his shoulders rising and falling as he took hold of his anger. 'The second tenet is that which gives us strength', he continued. 'Hide in plain sight. Let the people mask you so that you become one with the crowd. Do you remember? Because, as I hear it, you chose to expose yourself, drawing attention before you'd struck'. Still Altaïr said nothing. He felt the shame squat in his gut. 'The third and final tenet', added Al Mualim, 'the worst of all your betrayals: never compromise the Brotherhood. Its meaning should be obvious. Your actions must never bring harm upon us: direct or indirect. Yet your selfish act beneath Jerusalem placed us all in danger. Worse still, you brought the enemy to our home. Every man we've lost today was lost because of you'. Altaïr had been unable to look at the Master. His head had remained on one side, still smarting from the slap. But as he heard Al Mualim draw his dagger he looked at last. 'I am sorry. Truly, I am,' said Al Mualim. 'But I cannot abide a traitor'. No. Not that. Not a traitor's death. His eyes widened as they went to the blade in the Master's hand: the hand that had guided him since him childhood. 'I am not a traitor,' he managed. 'Your actions indicate otherwise. And so you leave me no choice'. Al Mualim drew back his dagger. 'Peace be upon you, Altaïr', he said, and plunged it into Altaïr's stomach. (pp. 55–57).

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