



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO CEARÁ
CENTRO DE HUMANIDADES
DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDOS DA LÍNGUA INGLESA, SUAS LITERATURAS E
TRADUÇÃO
CURSO DE LETRAS INGLÊS

ANTONIO JONATHAN DE LIMA

WARCRAFT'S ARTHAS MENETHIL: A SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGIC HERO?

FORTALEZA

2018

ANTONIO JONATHAN DE LIMA

WARCRAFT'S ARTHAS MENETHIL: A SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGIC HERO?

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Curso de Letras Inglês do Departamento de Estudos da Língua Inglesa, suas Literaturas e Tradução da Universidade Federal do Ceará, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Licenciado em Letras.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Carlos Augusto Viana da Silva.

FORTALEZA

2018

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação
Universidade Federal do Ceará
Biblioteca Universitária
Gerada automaticamente pelo módulo Catalog, mediante os dados fornecidos pelo(a) autor(a)

- L696w Lima, Antonio Jonathan de.
Warcraft's Arthas Menethil : a Shakespearean tragic hero? / Antonio Jonathan de Lima. – 2018.
28 f.
- Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (graduação) – Universidade Federal do Ceará, Centro de Humanidades,
Curso de Letras (Inglês), Fortaleza, 2018.
Orientação: Prof. Dr. Carlos Augusto Viana da Silva.
1. Warcraft. 2. Shakespeare. 3. Arthas Menethil. 4. Tragic hero. 5. Game studies. I. Título.
CDD 420
-

ANTONIO JONATHAN DE LIMA

WARCRAFT'S ARTHAS MENETHIL: A SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGIC HERO?

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Curso de Letras Inglês do Departamento de Estudos da Língua Inglesa, suas Literaturas e Tradução da Universidade Federal do Ceará, como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Licenciado em Letras.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Carlos Augusto Viana da Silva.

Aprovado em: ___/___/____.

BANCA EXAMINADORA

Prof. Dr. Carlos Augusto Viana da Silva (Orientador)
Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC)

Prof. Ms. João Luiz Teixeira de Brito
Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC)

Prof. Ms. Simone dos Santos Machado Nascimento
Universidade Federal do Ceará (UFC)

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, several fields of knowledge such as teaching and learning (SADLER, 2017), genre theory (RACZOWSKI, 2012), narrative (KRZYWINSKA, 2008), among others, study computer games and their players. The object of this study is the character Arthas Menethil, from *World of Warcraft*, an online computer game from the successful game franchise *Warcraft*, created by Blizzard Entertainment. Inside the game, players create their own characters and can join adventures, challenging missions, explore new worlds and meet thousands of other players (KNAAK, 2014). The purpose of this paper is to discuss how certain elements of the Western literary tradition are brought to online games by describing and analyzing the construction of Arthas Menethil in comparison with the characteristics of the Shakespearean tragic hero (BRADLEY, 1992), seeking to investigate how this archetype is constructed in the computer game media. In order to do that, the character Macbeth was used as an example of the Shakespearean tragic hero. We concluded that Arthas Menethil shares many similarities with a typical Shakespearean tragic hero, however, the story of Arthas lacks the cathartic element from the theatrical plays.

Keywords: Warcraft. Shakespeare. Arthas Menethil. Tragic Hero. Game Studies.

RESUMO

Atualmente, diversos campos do conhecimento estudam jogos de computador e seus jogadores, como ensino e aprendizagem (SADLER, 2017), teoria de gênero (RACZOWSKI, 2012), narrativa (KRZYWINSKA, 2008), entre outros. O objeto deste estudo é o personagem Arthas Menethil, de *World of Warcraft*, um jogo de computador online da próspera franquia de jogos *Warcraft*, criada pelo estúdio *Blizzard Entertainment*. Dentro do jogo, os jogadores criam seus próprios personagens e podem participar de aventuras, missões desafiadoras, explorar novos mundos e conhecer milhares de outros jogadores (KNAAK, 2014). O objetivo deste trabalho é discutir como certos elementos da tradição literária ocidental?? (ver abstract) são trazidos para os jogos online, descrevendo e analisando a construção de Arthas Menethil em comparação com as características do herói trágico shakespeariano (BRADLEY, 1992), procurando investigar como esse arquétipo é construído na mídia de jogos de computador. Para fazer isso, o personagem Macbeth foi usado como exemplo do herói trágico shakespeariano. Concluímos que Arthas Menethil compartilha muitas semelhanças com um típico herói trágico de shakespeariano, no entanto, a história de Arthas carece do elemento catártico das peças teatrais.

Palavras-chave: Warcraft. Shakespeare. Arthas Menethil. Herói Trágico. Estudos em Jogos.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 VIRTUAL WORLDS AND THE RELEVANCE OF STUDYING GAMES.....	7
3 WHAT ARE MMORPGS?	9
4 THE WARCRAFT UNIVERSE.....	11
5 THE TRAGIC HERO: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION	13
6 ARTHAS MENETHIL AS A SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGIC HERO	15
7 FINAL REMARKS	23
REFERENCES	25

1 INTRODUCTION

World of Warcraft is an online computer game from the successful game franchise *Warcraft*, created by Blizzard Entertainment. Inside the game, players can create their own characters and can join adventures, challenging missions, explore new worlds and meet thousands of other players (KNAAK, 2014). The game is rich in terms of lore and fantasy, and all of the playable races have a huge background on the game's lore.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how certain elements of the Western literary tradition are brought to online games by describing and analyzing the construction of the character Arthas Menethil in *World of Warcraft* in comparison with the characteristics of the Shakespearean tragic hero, seeking to analyse how this archetype is constructed in the computer game media. In order to do that, we are going to use the character Macbeth, from the play *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare, as an example of the Shakespearean tragic hero.

Based on the concept of tragic hero developed by Aristotle (1996) and further discussed by Reeves (1952) and Barnes (2000), and on the characteristics of the heroes depicted in William Shakespeare's tragedies (BRADLEY, 1992), we argue that the character Arthas Menethil shares similarities with the construction of the Shakespearean tragic hero.

2 VIRTUAL WORLDS AND THE RELEVANCE OF STUDYING GAMES

Sadler (2017), giving an overview of the evolving development of games, says that the modern concept of *virtual world* was founded on the concept of *cyberspace* first developed in literature in the beginning of the 1980s, by William Gibson and Vernon Vinge, emphasizing the idea of a virtual environment that exists only in a computer network

Sadler (2017) reinforces that virtual worlds in computer games can be traced back to the first text-based games in the 1970s. However, the author points out that multi-user online environments began with the creation of games known as MUDs (multi-user dungeons), which combine instant messages and role-playing. In the 1990s, the ensuing development are games known as MOOs (MUDs, Object-Oriented), which were still text-based, but in these games the owner of the MOO could create new rooms or items without dealing with their programming.

The author argues that the next evolution in that scale, the massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGS), like *World of Warcraft*, share many characteristics with virtual worlds; the difference, however, is that virtual worlds are seen as an environment

dedicated primarily to socializing, whereas MMORPGs are more focused on gaming. Some examples of common characteristics between virtual worlds and this kind of games are the online 3D environment, representations of real people who control the characters (“avatars”), real-time interactivity, 24-hour accessibility, persistence, number of players online at the same time and, in some cases, the ability of controlling the avatar’s own appearance or environment (SADLER, 2017, p. 185).

With the advance of technology, in both software and hardware, now it is possible for computer games to offer great quality in gameplay and graphics, increasing possibilities of interaction and narrative. Nowadays, several fields of knowledge such as teaching and learning (SADLER, 2017), genre theory (RACZOWSKI, 2012), narrative (KRZYWINSKA, 2008), among others, study computer games and their players.

Raczowski proposes a genre theory of computer games based on “culturally developed genres that serve as a background for most [...] theoretical and popular discourse” (RACZOWSKI, 2012, p. 62). Even though modern genre analysis recognizes non-textual genres in film and television studies, for example, the author points out that game studies have failed so far in discussing games academically without recurring only to popular genres coined through fan discourse (such as “first-person shoot”, “role-playing game”, “adventure” and so on) (RACZOWSKI, 2012, p. 63). According to him:

Game genres, it seems, share some of the properties of film and tv genres in that they, too, can be considered as contested territories in a sense that they are “cultural categories” (Mittell 2004, 1) with constantly shifting meaning and relevance to different groups. [...] [G]enres can (and probably should) be understood as discursive constructs, influenced and fabricated through, among other things, politics, economics, and critique. This means that genres are frequently subject to (context-related) redefinition. One text/film/game does not necessarily always belong to the same genre: as perspectives, circumstances, and influences change, so do generic descriptions. (RACZOWSKI, 2012, p. 64).

Along with this discussion on game genres, Raczowski (2012) also discusses aspects of the game industry. The author argues that game genres help the consumer decide, not only what they might want to play, but also base this decision on the skills the player already has or will have to acquire. He also states that “there are only comparatively few game series that have their names so strongly attached to their respective type of gameplay that they are advertised without any mention of genre” (RACZOWSKI, 2012, p. 69). Blizzard, for instance, has established itself in the market with typical games, and even games that are not part of established series still have their success based on the studio’s name.

Therefore, maybe in the future “the meaning of genre for the game industry will decrease with this tendency of developers to accent and distinguish themselves” (RACZOWSKI, 2012, p. 69).

Carr (2012), showing aspects of researches on this area of study, argues that research approaches to games associated to the humanities are as relevant as those associated to the social sciences. In the chapter “Interpretation, conflict and instruction in online multiplayer games: lessons from Warsong Gulch” (2012), she analyses interpretation in the context of online multiplayer games, using *World of Warcraft* as object of study, with the purpose of setting “the difficulties inherent to the conceptualizing of learning, tutoring, pleasure and aggression in this context” (CARR, 2012, p. 412).

As the author points out, games such as *World of Warcraft* are “designed to accommodate different tastes and different levels of commitment” (CARR, 2012, p. 412). Similarly, Raczowski (2012) also states that genres do not define the way games should be played; even though the developer might have intended for *World of Warcraft* to be about slaying dragons and fighting, for example, a player can consider it a business simulation and play accordingly to what he wants to accomplish in the game (RACZOWSKI, 2012).

Those are some points that could be risen by studying games, and as it has been pointed out before, such researches deal with virtual worlds and MMORPGs, helping us to understand what they represent and what can be extracted from them in academic terms. On the next section, the concept of MMORPG will be explored.

3 WHAT ARE MMORPGS?

Massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG) are games where the player undertakes the role of a character to play and interact with other players inside a virtual world. Those virtual worlds can have, simultaneously, thousands of players online. One characteristic of MMORPGs is that they are commonly inspired on the medieval fantasy style, which represents a world that has many elements from the Middle Ages (such as a monarchical government) and fabled entities inside the story, like dragons and witches. MMORPGs differ from standard RPG games in the number of players (that is quite larger), but their main characteristic is the same: one creates a character and has to develop it as the story of the game unfolds.

As the players create their character, they can construct it with the features that the game offers (like skin color, hairstyle, face type, etc.), but depending on the game, choosing a

race¹ can affect the gameplay. Sometimes the game portrays races as enemies of each other – for example, in *Rising Force Online* (also known as *RF Online*), the three playable races are fighting an endless war for supplies (ABOUT RF, 2015); or a number of races are from different factions that are constantly fighting each other – in *World of Warcraft*, for example, two major factions of allied races are at war.

Like Tolkien’s Middle-earth, the worldness of the game comes in large part from an assemblage of different—fictional—races and cultures; each has its own fictohistorical background (within which a variety of secondary myths and legends are found). As with the real world, particular myths inform the inhabitants’ different worldviews, and they arise out of the putative historical experiences of each ‘race.’ These have a profound effect on gameplay and on the interpellation of the player into the game world, and also inform the ways players regard one another. (KRZYWINSKA, 2008, p. 128).

After that, it is time to choose a class. Classes on MMORPGs are divided in three categories: damage dealers (with ranged or melee attacks), tanks (which are specialized on defending the group and protecting their allies) and healers (as the name suggests, they are responsible for healing the group from damage coming from enemies’ attacks). Another relevant point for the player is to set their goal inside the game and establish by which of those abilities they want to be recognized. When the players answer this question, they will be able to choose the right class and finish building their character.

In most of the MMORPGs, the main goal to be achieved is the development of the chosen character, and the first step to make the character grow stronger is by getting experience. The most common way of getting experience is through completing quests. For example, the player completes missions for NPCs (non-playable characters), receives experience and maybe some additional rewards, such as equipment and/or an amount of the game currency (gold coins, for example). Once the character reaches the experience cap, it will “level up”, which means that it has enhanced its abilities and can move to areas of more difficult content. Most games have a level cap, which is the maximum level a character can reach. When a character reaches the level cap, it can grow stronger doing further game content to enhance its abilities, like fighting epic monsters and/or fighting rival players to get powerful gear, and most of those contents are not possible to be done alone. To solve this problem, it is time to cooperate with other players to overcome harder challenges and be

¹ In MMORPGs, players can create a character from a fantasy race (like elves, dwarves, gnomes or orcs, for example). The playable races mostly belong to the same ethnical group, and if not, they are treated equally inside their society (there is no such a thing as prejudice towards black people in a human society from MMORPGs, as they are all human and must be united against their enemies, for example). However, most MMORPGs are white-normative and it has been a theme of research (DIETRICH, 2013).

properly rewarded for it. The stronger gear you get, the stronger your character is, and stronger players are invited more often to be part of more difficult adventures inside the game: having a better equipment is a subtle way to say that the character's owner has more knowledge about the game's mechanics².

To wrap all of these elements together, MMORPGs must have a cohesive background plot for the narrative. As the character is being developed, there must be a reason to make it an important piece in the game's lore and make the character a valuable resource to take part in the main conflict of the story; be it against the rival race/faction or against an evil that may destroy the world where your character is.

Now that it is clear what MMORPGs are, their main characteristics, how most of the games from this genre work and what is the role of the player's character inside the story, it is time to move to the universe where the object of this research belongs: the Warcraft Universe.

4 THE WARCRAFT UNIVERSE

The highly awarded Warcraft Universe was born from a single computer game, and nowadays this universe has expanded to a large number of different media, such as board games, collectible card games, novels, comics, magazines, manga, film adaptation and even a cooking book.

This universe was born from *Warcraft: Orcs and Humans*, a real-time strategy (RTS for short, a genre of games in which players control small armies to fight each other) computer game created by Blizzard Entertainment and released in 1994 (WARCRAFT..., 2018). Although the game was not the first RTS released, it was very successful because of its innovative style of gameplay and its medieval fantasy design; it was a tremendous success both in sales (three hundred thousand copies sold) and in criticism. Its success motivated Blizzard Entertainment to develop a sequel called *Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness*, released in 1995, and, in 1996, they released an expansion pack called *Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal*. The reception was even more positive: they sold five hundred thousand copies in the first three months after its release, and according to Frank (2002), it surpassed three million copies worldwide in 2001.

² "Conversely, players who care less about role-playing may have their character's projected appearance determined to a greater extent by capacities acquired during play". (TRONSTAD, p. 250).

Those achievements established a solid place inside the gaming community, so the developers from Blizzard Entertainment expanded the Warcraft Universe to other media. In 2001, they released their first novel (*Warcraft: Of Blood and Honor*) in electronic format, and later on the same year their first printed books: *Warcraft: Day of the Dragon* and *Warcraft: Lord of the Clans*.

In July 2002, Blizzard Entertainment released *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos*. According to Cieniawa (2008), the game shipped 4.5 million copies to retail stores and within a month, it sold over one million units. The game was awarded multiple times as the Game of the Year by many specialized media (BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT, 2007), branding it with an absolute success, and in December of the same year, the book *Warcraft: The Last Guardian* was released. Then, in July of the next year, Blizzard Entertainment released the expansion pack *Warcraft III – The Frozen Throne*, awarded with multiple prizes as well, like the Best Expansion Pack (BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT, 2007).

Then, in November 2004, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the *Warcraft* franchise, Blizzard Entertainment released its most successful game: the MMORPG *World of Warcraft* (WoW). The game received many prizes, like the Best Game of the Year and the Best Persistent World Game (BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT, 2007), and was acclaimed by many specialized critics, such as *IGN* and *Armchair Empire* (WORLD OF WARCRAFT..., 2008). The success was so high that on its peak, the game had nearly 10 million subscriptions, making it hold the record of The Most Popular MMORPG (GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS..., 2008). Since its release, the franchise expanded to many different media: not only on books (which are many), but also on comics, tabletop games and even a movie, for example. The game is still popular, and regularly releases expansion packs, developing further its story and giving material to increase even more the depth of the Warcraft Universe.

The object of this research is a character named Arthas Menethil, introduced on *Warcraft III – Reign of Chaos* and his story persisted until the second expansion pack of WoW: *Wrath of the Lich King*. To analyze this character, the archetype of the tragic hero was chosen. So, before deepening on Arthas' story, a brief introduction to the tragic hero must be presented, to lay foundation for the main argument of this research: aligning Arthas with the Shakespearean tragic hero.

5 THE TRAGIC HERO: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Aristotle was an ancient Greek scientist and philosopher. His works and findings cover many knowledge areas, like physics, biology, linguistics, poetry and aesthetics and so on. The concept of tragic hero is commonly attributed to him and his book *Poetics*, which is considered the most influential work of literary criticism ever made. Despite the fact that this work was an analysis and description of many existing Greek dramas on his epoch, the ideas and thoughts aroused by *Poetics* shaped and influenced theatre and drama over centuries, all over the world.

On *Poetics*, Aristotle (1996) states his opinion about how tragic poets can build a stronger catharsis, and discusses the very concept of a tragic hero. According to him, the plot revolves about a central figure, the “tragic hero”. As Barnes (2000) summarises, he must be a man

[N]either preeminent in excellence and goodness nor falling into misfortune through badness and villainy, but rather through some mistake – a man of high reputation and good fortune, like Oedipus or Thyestes or famous men from such families’. The protagonist of a tragedy enjoys great success (Oedipus was King of Thebes). He has made some ‘mistake’ (Oedipus unwittingly killed his father and married his mother). The mistake is discovered, and a ‘reversal’ occurs (Oedipus’ mother commits suicide, he blinds himself and is banished from Thebes). (BARNES, 2000, p. 133).

Those characteristics evoke the sense of pity and fear on the audience, making them experience the catharsis (the purification of such emotions through art). (REEVES, 1952).

By the time of the English Renaissance, the characteristics of classicism inside art and culture in general were greatly valued. The man known as the most formidable writer in the English language was born on that historical time: William Shakespeare. He was a remarkable writer, poet, dramatist and even an actor. His works were translated into most of the major languages in the world (CRAIG, 2003) and are often considered as masterpieces, specially the tragedies. His most famous works are also tragedies, for example: *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Othello* (1622), *Macbeth* (1623), *Hamlet* (1603) and *King Lear* (1608).

Some of the tragedies written by him portray an adapted version of the Aristotelian’s tragic hero archetype. The core characteristics remain the same: a man of high estate that has a tragic flaw in his personality (named as *hamartia* by Aristotle); and that flaw makes him commit a sequence of mistakes, leading the tragic hero to his own doom

(ARISTOTLE, 1996). However, Shakespeare incorporated new elements to his tragic heroes, turning them into distinct versions of the Aristotelian archetype. For example, supernatural beings pulling the strings and weaving the destiny of the tragic hero are common in Shakespearean tragedies (like the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* (1623) or the ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet* (1603)). Moreover, the tragedies can evoke catharsis in different ways: with Oedipus, the catharsis happens when the misfortune falls upon him (evoking the sense of pity on the audience), and with Macbeth, the catharsis happens when he sees that he is calling misfortune upon him through his own actions. Aristotle (1996) rejects the idea that a man who has made villainous actions can be seen as a tragic hero, but Shakespeare was a skilled dramatist: he could evoke our senses of pity and fear when Macbeth was aware of how far he went on his crimes. Another important point is that the Shakespearean tragic heroes are bound to die: Bradley (1992, p. 3) states that "no play at the end of which the hero remains alive is, in the full Shakespearean sense, a tragedy".

Macbeth is one of the most famous tragic heroes inside Shakespeare's plays, so let us take him as an example. Macbeth was a general of King Duncan's army, admired for his fighting prowess and supported by many nobles. When he was returning from a fierce battle, the Weird Sisters gave him a prophecy that he was going to be king. Those prophecies led him to kill King Duncan (convinced by his wife, who challenged his manhood), in order to ascend to his position and become the King of Scotland. Suspicions rose against Macbeth, making the nobles fear and hate him, so he sent assassins to kill them to secure his position as king.

Descending more into the realms of madness, he consulted the Weird Sisters again and they gave him three prophecies: the first was to be aware of Macduff; the second was that no one born from a woman would be able to harm him; and the third was that he would be safe until the Great Birnam Woods come to his kingdom. With those prophecies, Macbeth thought he was invincible, however, his wife could not bear the guilt of being part of King Duncan's death: because of it, she becomes sick and kills herself. Then, the nobles started to gather themselves to fight Macbeth (as he continued to send men to kill them). Macduff, the man that the Weird Sisters warned Macbeth of, not only survived Macbeth's attempts of killing him, but also was born from caesarean section and united with forces that shielded themselves from attacks using boughs from the Great Birnam Woods, fulfilling the three prophecies that would bring the doom of Macbeth. In his final showdown, Macduff defeats and beheads Macbeth.

Now that the story of Macbeth was shown as an example, we can analyze and discuss about the object of this research: the Warcraft character Arthas Menethil as a Shakespearean tragic hero.

6 ARTHAS MENETHIL AS A SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGIC HERO

Famous newspapers, magazines and many specialized media award Arthas Menethil with the title of one of the best characters from games (CHATFIELD, 2010; THE BEST..., 2010; GLIXEL STAFF, 2016). He is one of the most well-known characters inside the *Warcraft Universe*, but not only because of his design: his actions in life (and in his “undeath” as well) had a powerful impact on the lives of many other iconic characters. He ruined cities and even entire kingdoms. However, to work with Arthas as an object of study, some delimitations have to be set: as he is a very famous character, his story is very long. Through the development of Arthas Menethil, we can notice elements demonstrating that he has traits of a tragic hero (especially from tragic heroes of Shakespearean tragedies), and the focus of this section will be on the characteristics that align Arthas Menethil with the tragic hero, using Macbeth as an example.

The first aspect to be pointed out is the presence of supernatural beings weaving the fate of the tragic hero and influencing his actions. In *Macbeth* (1623), the Weird Sisters are giving him predictions that have a big role on Macbeth’s tragedy. The first predictions were about him rising in power:

MACBETH: Speak if you can: what are you?

FIRST WITCH: All hail Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Glamis.

SECOND WITCH: All hail Macbeth, hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor.

THIRD WITCH: All hail Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter. (SHAKESPEARE, 1997, p. 112).

In Arthas’ story, the supernatural being is the Lich King, who once was a shaman from a dying world trying to escape from cosmic enemies, which were a demonic eredar³ called Kil’jaeden and the Burning Legion’s infinite army. Without success, Kil’jaeden captured the shaman and ordered his minions to torture his body until there was no piece left

³ “The eredar are one of the oldest known races in the Warcraft universe. They comprise the commanders and strategists of the Burning Legion. Exceptionally skilled in magic, their mastery of the arcane arts is renowned throughout the scattered worlds of the Great Dark Beyond. The likes of Archimonde and Kil’jaeden, feared and loathed for their unmatched cruelty and cunning, are among the more infamous members of the eredar race – the vanguard of an unstoppable, demonic army bent on universal annihilation.” (WORLD OF WARCRAFT..., 2010).

to torture. The shaman begged for death, but Kil'jaeden would grant his wish only if he sworn total obedience to the Burning Legion. Accepting his fate, Kil'jaeden transform his spirit into a spectral being, then told his minions to infuse him into a full set of armor and in a sword (a runeblade called Frostmourne), and encase him in a diamond-hard block of ice, transforming him into the Lich King (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018). Then, the Burning Legion forces opened a portal wide enough to send the block of ice and the Lich King's jailors to a distant world called Azeroth, falling as a meteor in Northrend, an icy continent from this world. When the icy meteor landed, the impact shaped a structure beneath it that resembled a throne of ice.

After that, the Lich King's jailors started to build a fortress around the Frozen Throne, and called it the Icecrown Citadel. Then, the Lich King started testing the range of his powers corrupting the thoughts of the inhabitants of this continent, and after that, spreading a magic disease that would kill them and turn them into zombies bound to the Lich King's will. Kil'jaeden was pleased with the results and promised freedom in a new body if he served well his purpose, and although the Lich King knew that this promise was empty, he started to look for a way to escape the Burning Legion's grasp:

[...] Though the entity played the part of a loyal servant, he was secretly determined to break away from the Legion's control. He held no allegiance to the demons. Kil'jaeden had forced him into servitude through acts of brutality. He knew the demon's lord promise that the Lich King would be allowed to freely roam the world was a lie. The Lich King would never forget what Kil'jaeden had done to him. *Never*. One day, he would make the demon lord pay for it. The main obstacles to the Lich King's vengeance were the dreadlords. Under Kil'jaeden's orders, they carefully watched the entity for any signs of disobedience. The dreadlords were highly intelligent and crafty, but their cunning paled in comparison to the Lich King's. With great caution, he manipulated the demons. The Lich King masked the true scope of his power. He made the dreadlords believe that they were in complete control of him. All the while, he watched his prey and learned their individual strengths and weaknesses. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 19).

The Lich King expanded his conscience further, influencing a mage interested in necromancy to look for him and become his servant. This mage, named Kel'Thuzad, was tasked to gather followers, develop a new breed of the undeath plague and unleash it though the Eastern Kingdoms. The Lich King then realized that he needed a champion to obey his orders directly, but he knew that Kel'Thuzad was not enough (he had a very specific task) and his demonic jailors would never allow it to happen. Again, he started to manipulate their thoughts, making them think that gathering more mortal champions was vital to the Burning Legion's victory and to make an individual take the Lich King's runeblade was one of the key

factors. Throughout the story, the Lich King threads carefully to make Arthas get the runeblade, manipulating his thoughts until ultimately turn him into his most powerful soldier, which will be better explained further in this section.

One of the basic characteristics of the tragic hero is that he is also a man of high estate, as Aristotle (1996) states in *Poetics* that comedies depict ordinary people (or people worse than the spectators), while tragedies imitate greater people.

Comedy is (as we have said) an imitation of inferior people – not, however, with respect to every kind of defect: the laughable is a species of what is disgraceful. [...] Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration. (ARISTOTLE, 1996, p. 9-10).

By connecting this concept with the hero observed here, we may say that he fits into the above definition. Macbeth is the general of King Duncan's army, and Arthas is not much different from him, concerning the noble position he takes in his context:

King Terenas Menethil II of Lordaeron had a son named Arthas [...] he was trained in the ways of warfare and righteousness. Arthas Menethil became a master swordsman under the tutelage of the dwarf Muradin Bronzebeard, Ironforge's ambassador to Lordaeron. The young man was also tutored in the ways of the Holy Light by the revered paladin Uther the Lightbringer. When the prince turned nineteen, he was inducted into the Order of the Silver Hand to become a paladin himself. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p.27).

Inside the context of a high fantasy world, paladins are warriors infused with the Holy Light. They are paragons of virtue and righteousness, and powerful assets in the battle against evil. Because of that, paladins are highly esteemed in society.

Another characteristic of a tragic hero is the tragic flaw of his personality, the tragic mistakes he makes, or both. In the case of Macbeth, the character is afflicted by his ambition; some scholars affirm that *Macbeth* is about his conflict between ambition and fear, where fear has a bigger role in the play⁴. Arthas' tragic flaw is his obstinacy. Although this is a trait considered important for a hero under normal conditions, this characteristic reveal to be a fatal flaw under special circumstances, ultimately leading Arthas Menethil to his downfall.

Kel'Thuzad gathered followers to infest with plague the granaries around and inside Andorhal, a city that produces most of the grains that the kingdom of Lordaeron

⁴ “It is usual to refer to Macbeth as a tragedy of ambition, and with a certain justification, for ambition does act as a determining passion in the play. This passion *The French Academie* described as ‘an unreasonable desire to enjoy honours, estates, and great places’. Such is the passion which moves Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to the murder of Duncan, but it is not ambition that is anatomized in the tragedy of Macbeth. The play is really a study in fear. [...]”. (CAMPBELL, 2009, p. 208).

consumes, and distributes to all of the cities and villages that are part of its territory. Word of the plague spread through the kingdom, so King Terenas sent his son and a group of soldiers to investigate the outbreak, and Dalaran sent Jaina Proudmoore, an archmage that was a friend of Arthas (and his love interest). When they got to the villages near Andorhal, the villagers were already turned into undead, and when Arthas saw that a group of cultists was deliberately testing their necromancy on his people, Arthas filled himself with rage. That unstoppable anger towards the responsible for the Scourge (which is the new breed of the undeath plague, developed by Kel'Thuzad) is what leads him into a personal quest to destroy this enemy (GOLDEN, 2009). In fact, destroying the enemy and keeping his people safe is a fair purpose of a hero, but when it becomes his obsession, the hero starts to fail. The Lich King observed Arthas through his undead minions and was intrigued by him. He saw not only a charismatic leader and a gifted fighter, but also a perfect vessel: with his psychic powers, the Lich King knew that the rage towards the cultists was consuming Arthas' mind.

Once again, the Lich King subtly manipulated the dreadlords and drew their attention to Arthas. They saw him as the perfect champion to corrupt, but luring him to Frostmourn in Northrend would be no easy task. The young human had just started down his path of self-destruction. The Lich King and the dreadlords would need to guide him the rest of the way. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 47).

The Lich King oriented Kel'Thuzad to stay in Andorhal to tease Arthas by telling him to he follow orders from a demon, and that this demon was in a holy city called Stratholme. Kel'Thuzad knew that Arthas would kill him in the process, but death was a small price to pay, since the Lich King would rise him again as an undead powerful creature. When Arthas reached the city, everything occurred according to the Lich King's plans: Arthas knew the location of the supposed leader of the Scourge and unleashed his fury on Kel'Thuzad. Then, Jaina, Arthas and his soldiers inspected the Andorhal's granaries, but they were all empty and at this moment, they realized that it would be too late. So they rode to Stratholme as fast as they could, with Arthas even more desperate and unhinged than before (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018).

The tragic flaw of a hero leads him to make many mistakes and morally questionable decisions during his story, and his first mistake generally is the point of no return for the tragic hero. Macbeth told his wife about the predictions of the Weird Sisters, and she rushed him to make them true, telling him to kill King Duncan in his sleep, otherwise, he would be a coward and not man enough to do so (SHAKESPEARE, 1997). After that, he becomes the king of Scotland and wants to keep his position by any means necessary, such as

sending assassins to murder any noble he thinks is trying to remove the kingship from him. In Arthas' story, his vindictive trait leads him to make extreme decisions to kill the responsible for the Scourge, doing "whatever it takes" to save his people. On their way to Stratholme, Arthas gives almost no time for his comrades to rest, and en route to the holy city, Uther joins them. Uther thought that Arthas was acting according to his usual headstrongness, but when they reached the city, he saw that Arthas was excessively disturbed. Arthas and his group realized that it was too late: the grains were already distributed among the townsfolk and consumed by them. Arthas, assuming that their fate was already sealed, ordered his men to kill all the citizens from Stratholme before they succumb to the plague.

Some of the prince's allies obeyed his order. Many did not. Uther and the paladins under his command were disgusted at the thought of killing innocents. They would not take part. Their disobedience only pushed Arthas to even darker extremes. He turned his back on the other paladins, calling their refusal as an act of treason. Arthas called on Jaina to join him, but she also refused. She could not bear to see the prince commit such an atrocity. Along with Uther and the paladins, she left the prince to his grim work. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 48).

McAlindon (2004) states that Shakespeare pictures the brutal actions of tragic hero as plausible, and even forgivable.

Shakespeare seeks to render the brutal actions of the noble hero plausible and potentially forgivable in other ways. [...] More obviously, the fatal act is often unpremeditated and rash, the product of an unbearable access of passion, or of temporary madness or something close to madness. [...] Or he has the pure misfortune of being faced with the one challenge that his nature and experience do not equip him to deal with. (MCALINDON, 2004, p. 11).

In the middle of the killing, the demon Mal'Ganis appears and challenges him: if he wants a true fight, he must face him in Northrend. Wasting no time, he united his soldiers and sailed to Northrend. This episode, known as the Culling of Stratholme, was the turning point for Arthas. His obsession with killing the leader of the Scourge led him to further decisions that made his figure darker and darker, and the Lich King knew that he was closer to fulfilling his plans. He turned his attention to a group of dwarven explorers that were in the same continent in search of ancient artifacts, and it happened that Muradin Bronzebeard was leading this group. The Lich King oriented Mal'Ganis to manipulate the thoughts of the dwarves and plant clues on their camp about a fabled runeblade. The dwarves did not know where that information came from, but they got interested on this legendary sword. Then, the Lich King sent his undead minions to fight the dwarves and herd them towards where Arthas

and his crew landed. When Arthas and Muradin met, the dwarf told him about his purpose in Northrend and about his recent quest of searching the runeblade. After hearing about the runeblade, Arthas wanted to join Muradin's quest, since the blade could prove itself useful against Mal'Ganis, however, an emissary from Lordaeron came bearing news from king Terenas, ordering his son to return to his kingdom and end his madness.

Arthas knew that he could not go back now, after everything he did: secretly, he burned every single one of the ships, giving them no other alternative but remain in Northrend. When both the Lich King and Mal'Ganis saw how steady Arthas was to take desperate measures, they pressed the attack of their undead minions on Arthas' and Muradin's forces, making Arthas think that his only hope was to seek Frostmourne and use its power against the Scourge. Muradin and Arthas tracked the sword and found it in a cave, floating inside a chunk of ice.

[...] The blade radiated not only power but also something ominous and otherworldly. Muradin urged Arthas to leave Frostmourne be, but the prince could not. He had come too far to turn back now. The Lich King sensed Arthas' determination. Energy burst out from Frostmourne, shattering its icy prison in a violent explosion. Jagged shards shot across the cavern, one of which impaled Muradin and struck him down. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 51).

Arthas rushed to heal his friend using the power of the Holy Light, but the power of Frostmourne was there. He thought that the death of his friend was a small price to pay in order to kill Mal'Ganis and save his people (GOLDEN, 2009). He turned his back for the Holy Light and took the sword, and in that moment, its power flooded him, chilling Arthas' veins and devouring his soul. Now, the Lich King wanted Arthas to believe that he was still controlling his actions and let Arthas have his revenge against Mal'Ganis: Arthas returned to his comrades, to aid in the fight against the undead. He appeared in the battlefield slashing through the undead, and his soldiers rejoiced seeing his prince fighting against his hated enemy. The Lich King whispered to Arthas through Frostmourne, telling him to feed the blade, so he did: Arthas pressed the attack against the Scourge, knowing by the runeblade that Mal'Ganis was close. Arthas found the demon and finally killed him, making his allies celebrate the victory. However, Arthas did not join them. He roamed alone in the wilds, where the Lich King would destroy his mind and his humanity. Days after that, Arthas returned to the camp:

[...] His skin had become deathly pale, and his hair had turned bone white. Gone was the prince of Lordaeron. In the place stood something else. The first of the Lich King's newest undead creations: death knights. Arthas Menethil slaughtered his

followers, and Frostmourne feasted on their souls. Some arose as simple Scourge minions like those that roamed the Eastweald. Others were granted a different fate. Arthas transformed them into fearsome death knights like himself. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 52).

From this point on, Arthas was merely a servant of the Lich King, obeying all of his orders to spread the plague of undeath and making more servants to him, setting stage to the invasion of the Burning Legion. The Lich King sent Arthas to kill King Terenas Menethil (Arthas' father) and all the citizens of Lordaeron with the aid of the death knights, and later, to invade Quel'Thalas (the kingdom of the high elves) and use its magic source to resurrect Kel'Thuzad, killing almost the entire high elven population on that day.

Returning to the characteristics of the Shakespearean tragic heroes: they will eventually face the consequence of their acts, because those acts will not be left unchecked. Macbeth's actions made him be viewed as a tyrant, and the people of Scotland wanted him dead, but Macbeth feared nothing because of the predictions of the Weird Sisters. However, the predictions proved misinterpreted and Macbeth found death. Arthas, on the other hand, was just a soldier of the Lich King. The Burning Legion tried an invasion on Kalimdor (the western continent of Azeroth), but they did not succeed. Kil'jaeden thought that he still had the Lich King by his side, but when he sent new orders to him, the Lich King refused to obey. He was powerful enough, and had a large number of minions that could easily destroy his jailors. Kil'jaeden was furious and knew that invading a world ruled by the Lich King would be harder, so he sent some of his forces to destroy him. Later, when a servant of Kil'jaeden's, a night elf called Illidan Stormrage, used a magic artefact to attack directly the Lich King, he summoned Arthas promptly to defend the Frozen Throne.

The attack weakened the Lich King so much that he lost control of many of his minions, especially of those who died at Lordaeron and were raised to serve him. Illidan was interrupted during his spellcast, and knew that he had to attack the Lich King's ice block directly, so he gathered soldiers and travelled to Northrend, but he found Arthas on his way. The Lich King, wounded by the first attack, used almost all of his energy left to infuse Arthas with strength, and Arthas could defeat Illidan Stormrage. With his power bleeding through the cracks of his icy prison, the Lich King ordered Arthas to climb to the Frozen Throne and shatter his prison, and then, wear his helmet, in order to merge with him. Arthas obeyed this command and they became one entity. The existence of Arthas as the Lich King has begun, but not peacefully: he spent years sitting on the Frozen Throne, battling internally for the complete dominion of his newfound power against the former Lich King's mind, the shaman

spirit from the dying world trapped inside the armor. Once he triumphed, he had a twisted plan to bring order to Azeroth:

A world ruled by the undead would have no more injustice, no more wars, no more mortal flaws. Perhaps most importantly to the Lich King, he believed his Scourge would be far more capable of defending Azeroth against the threats that would try to conquer it. [...] To control Azeroth, the Lich King would enslave the strongest creatures within it, the great champions who had arisen within the Alliance and the Horde. Once they were under his will, the rest of the world would fall in a war of attrition. But the Lich King first needed to lure these champions into his clutches. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 172).

The first step of Arthas, now as the Lich King, was to rise more death knights to assault a chapel, which was a holy site for the paladins. However, his plans backfired when the death knights realized that the Lich King intended to sacrifice them all to kill a champion of the Holy Light, named Tirion Fordring. Fordring's paladins, united with the death knights led by Darion Mograine managed to make the Lich King flee, and after that, they rallied to unite the opposing major factions of Azeroth (the Alliance and the Horde) to defeat the Lich King. Later, the united forces of the Alliance and the Horde defeated many of the monstrosities sent by the Lich King to fight them; however, they were still enemies and tension rose between the opposing factions.

Tirion concluded that a massive army attacking the Lich King forces would be a disaster, since the Lich King could raise those who fall in battle as his undead minions. Fordring believed that a small force of the most powerful champions of Azeroth would prove more effective, so he organized the Argent Tournament to select those champions. Once the champions were selected, they united themselves under a new order called The Ashen Verdict, and together, assaulted the Icecrown Citadel. The enemies were many, but the champions of the Ashen Verdict and Tirion Fordring kept persisting until they reached the Lich King's chamber. When they got there, the champions were already tired of battling countless enemies, just as the Lich king planned.

The Lich King unleashed his full fury. Tirion Fordring and his champions fought back in a valiant battle that shook Icecrown Citadel to its foundations. The Lich King ripped several heroes' souls from their bodies with Frostmourne, but even that did not stop them. The champions trapped in the cursed blade fought on, stirring the other spirits in the sword to action. (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018, p. 187).

However, this was not enough. The Lich King trapped Tirion Fordring in a block of ice and killed all of the champions. When the Lich King was preparing himself to rise the champions as his most powerful minions, Tirion did not give up: he called the strength of the

Holy Light, freed himself from the ice block and leaped upon the Lich King, shattering Frostmourne with his sword. The souls from the Lich King's victims were released from the broken sword, swarming the Lich King and afflicting his body. Even the soul of his father, Terenas Menethil, helped in the battle, resurrecting the champions and restoring their health. Defenseless, Arthas was defeated and slipped into death, into a cold afterlife of darkness (METZEN; BURNS; BROOKS, 2018).

Arthas Menethil has many traits of a Shakespearean tragic hero, but he lacks one crucial point: the cathartic element. Macbeth evokes the sense of pity when Macbeth realizes how far he went on his ambition and how meaningless his life has become:

MACBETH: [...] Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing. (SHAKESPEARE, 1997, p. 229).

However, in Arthas' story, he does not evoke any sense of pity and fear. He had no resignation on his quest to murder the responsible for the Scourge, and was swift to make decisions that would grant him his vengeance, leaving behind what means to be a paladin.

7 FINAL REMARKS

Given the analysis done in the previous section, we can conclude that Arthas Menethil shares many similarities with a typical Shakespearean tragic hero: he is a good man of high estate, which has a tragic flaw that leads him to his downfall. In addition, supernatural beings are an important part of his story and strong opposition forces take him down.

However, the story of Arthas lacks the cathartic element from the theatrical plays. While we can sympathize with Macbeth's realizations that what he did was wrong⁵, we cannot feel the same with Arthas Menethil. Arthas was remorseless, and throughout his story, we do not feel the sense of fear or pity (what distances him further from the Aristotelian archetype).

⁵ "Macbeth is a sinner, and he knows it: even before he kills Duncan, he confesses that Duncan's virtues will plead, 'like angels, trumpet-tongued, against / The deep damnation of his taking-off'" (BEVINGTON, 2004, p. 63).

"Shakespeare goes to considerable trouble, not only to make the crimes vividly brutal, but also to show that Macbeth gets just what he deserves – what, in fact, he asks for. Macbeth's crime is his punishment. He forfeits precisely the regenerative functions that he violated in murdering Duncan [...]" (WATSON, 2004, p. 176)

The Warcraft Universe is vast in terms of lore, and many researchers worked with it, not only on literature, but also in diverse fields. Corneliussen and Rettberg (2008) affirm in *Digital Culture, Play and Identity: A Warcraft Reader* that “like Sweden or Bolivia, World of Warcraft has a culture and a language all its own” (2008, p. 1). Such virtual world is worthy of being researched, since it has a wide range of content to research about, and as the MMORPGs are still making a great success until now, the field only enriches itself.

REFERENCES

- ABOUT RF: RF Online. **Redfox Games**. 2015. Available at: <<http://rfonline-help.playredfox.com/en/support/solutions/articles/8000014860-about-rf>>. Access on: 10 June 2018.
- ARISTOTLE. **Poetics**. London: Penguin Books, 1996.
- BARNES, J. **Aristotle: a very short introduction**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- BEVINGTON, D. Tragedy in Shakespeare's career. *In*: MCEACHERN, C. (Ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 50-68.
- BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT – Awards. **Blizzard Entertainment**, 7 June 2007. Available at: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20070607130605/http://www.blizzard.com/inblizz/awards.shtml>>. Access on: 18 June 2018.
- BRADLEY, A. C. **Shakespearean tragedy: lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth**. 3. ed. New York: Macmillan Education, 1992.
- CAMPBELL, L. B. Macbeth – A study in fear. *In*: _____. **Shakespeare's tragic heroes: Slaves of Passion**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. p. 208-240.
- CARR, D. Interpretation, conflict and instruction in online multiplayer games: lessons from Warsong Gulch. *In*: FROMME, J.; UNGER, A. (Ed.). **Computer games and new media cultures: a handbook of digital games studies**. New York: Springer, 2012. p. 411-424.
- CIENIAWA, L. Warcraft III – Reign of Chaos. **The Armchair Empire**, 9 Aug. 2002. Available at: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20150506205553/http://www.armchairempire.com:80/Reviews/PC%20Games/warcraft-iii-reign-chaos.htm>>. Access on: 18 June 2018.
- CHATFIELD, T. The 10 best videogame characters. **The Guardian**, 8 Aug. 2010. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2010/aug/08/10-best-video-game-characters>>. Access on: 5 June 2018.
- CORNELIUSSEN, H. G.; RETTBERG, J. W. (Ed.). **Digital culture, play and identity: a World of Warcraft reader**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008.
- DIETRICH, D. R. **Avatars of Whiteness: Racial Expression in Video Game Characters**. *Sociological Inquiry*, v. 83, n. 1, p. 82-105, Feb. 2013.
- FRANK: WARCRAFT! 10th anniversary feature. **Blizzard Entertainment**. 2002. Available at: <<https://web.archive.org/web/20020222122116/http://www.blizzard.com:80/blizz-anniversary/frank.shtml>>. Access on: 6 June 2018.

GLIXEL STAFF. 50 Most Iconic Video Game Characters of the 21st Century. **Rolling Stone**. 17 nov. 2016. Available at: <<https://www.rollingstone.com/glixel/news/lists/50-most-iconic-video-game-characters-of-the-21st-century-w449203/dante-w449235>>. Access on: 6 June 2018.

GOLDEN, C. **Arthas: Rise of the Lich King**. New York: Pocket Books, 2009. (World of Warcraft)

GUINNESS WORLD RECCORDS GAMER'S EDITION – Records – PC Gaming. **Guinness World Records**. 5 Apr. 2008. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080405020338/http://gamers.guinnessworldrecords.com/records/pc_gaming.aspx>. Access on: 6 June 2018.

KNAAK, R. A. **World of Warcraft: Alvorada dos Aspectos**. Rio de Janeiro: Galera Record, 2014.

KRZYWINSKA, T. World creation and lore: *World of Warcraft* as rich text. In: CORNELIUSSEN, H. G.; RETTBERG, J. W. (Ed.). **Digital culture, play and identity: a World of Warcraft reader**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008. p. 123-142.

LIANG, J. On tragic heroes: a comparative study of *Hamlet* and *The Orphan of Chao*. **Theory and Practice in Language Studies**, v. 5, n. 10, p. 2076-2082, Oct. 2015.

MCALINDON, T. What is a Shakespearean tragedy? In: MCEACHERN, C. (Ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 1-22.

METZEN, C.; BURNS, M.; BROOKS, R. **World of Warcraft Chronicle: Volume III**. Milwaukee: Dark Horse Books, 2018. 3 v.

RACZKOWSKI, F. "And what do you play?": a few considerations concerning a genre theory of games. In: FROMME, J.; UNGER, A. (Ed.). **Computer games and new media cultures: a handbook of digital games studies**. New York: Springer, 2012. p. 61-74.

REEVES, C. H. The Aristotelian concept of the tragic hero. **The American Journal of Philology**, v. 73, n. 2, p. 172-188, 1952.

RYAN, M. From narrative games to playable stories: toward a poetics of interactive narrative. **StoryWorlds: a Journal of Narrative Studies**, v. 1, p. 43-59, 2009.

SADLER, R. W. The Continuing Evolution of Virtual Worlds for Language Learning. In: CHAPELLE, C. A.; SAURO, S. **The Handbook of Technology and Second Language Teaching and Learning**. (Ed.). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2007. p. 184-201.

SHAKESPEARE, W. **Macbeth**. Edited by A. R. Braunmuller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. (New Cambridge Shakespeare)

_____. **Hamlet, Prince of Denmark**. Edited by Philip Edwards. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. (New Cambridge Shakespeare)

THE BEST VIDEO GAME CHARACTERS EVER. **Empire**, 11 June 2010. Available at: <<https://www.empireonline.com/movies/features/50-greatest-video-game-characters/>>. Access on: 16 Jun. 2018.

THIMM, C. Virtual worlds: game or virtual society? *In*: FROMME, J.; UNGER, A. (Ed.). **Computer games and new media cultures: a handbook of digital games studies**. New York: Springer, 2012. p. 173-192.

TRONSTAD, R. Character identification in *World of Warcraft*: the relationship between capacity and appearance. *In*: CORNELIUSSEN, H. G.; RETTBERG, J. W. (Ed.). **Digital culture, play and identity: a World of Warcraft reader**. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008. p. 249-264.

WARCRAFT: ORCS & HUMANS - WoW. **Blizzard Entertainment**. 2018. Available at: <<https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/story/timeline>>. Access on: 15 June 2018.

WATSON, R. N. Tragedies of revenge and ambition. *In*: MCEACHERN, C. (Ed.). **The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. p. 160-181.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT FOR PC REVIEWS. **Metacritic**. 24 June 2008. Available at: <<http://www.metacritic.com/game/pc/world-of-warcraft>>. Access on: 18 June 2018.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT: The Burning Crusade – Bestiary. **Blizzard Entertainment**. 2010. Available at: <<http://web.archive.org/web/20101124173644/http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/burninburnin/gc/townhall/bestiary.html>>. Access on: 8 June 2018.