WHAT DOES LAS VEGAS TEACH VIDEO GAMES?: Commercial postmodern architecture and video game spaces

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Abstract

Architectural discourse influences many different artistic and technical disciplines as well as architectural practice. This article was conducted with the aim of examining the impact of architectural discourse on video game spaces and creating an analysis of what video games have gained from architectural discourse in terms of concept, story, environmental design and atmosphere, which have become one of the largest entertainment sectors. In the article, the book Learning from LasVegas, written by Venturi, Brown and Izenour in 1972, and the effect of the symbolic commercial Las Vegas discourse which is the basic teaching of this book is examined in detail on video games. The reflections were emphasized for various issues in video games such as the authors' perspectives on Las Vegas, the terms and criteria they created to evaluate the buildings, the popular culture and consumption understanding of the period, the aesthetic, commercial and moral value. Through analysis of the content of the book, eight criteria that characterize the Las Vegas architectural discourse have been identified. These; diversity of symbols, evocative architectural elements, advertising message and propaganda, speed focus, positional system, façade, lighting and architectural inconsistency. Within the scope of the study, five video games with fictional worlds designed with a focus on consumer society and commercial architecture were examined based on the determined criteria. As a result of this research on the architectures of video games, the main hypothesis of the study is; video games have proven to be a field influenced by and learning from architectural discourse.

Keywords: Learning from Las Vegas, architectural discourse of Las Vegas, commercial architecture, symbolic architecture, video games.

LAS VEGAS VİDEO OYUNLARINA NE ÖĞRETİYOR?: Ticari postmodern mimari ve video oyunu mekanları

Özet

Mimari söylem, mimarlık pratiğinin yanında pek çok farklı sanatsal ve teknik disiplini de etkiler. Bu makale, mimari söylemin video oyunu mekanları üzerindeki etkisini incelemek ve günümüzde dünyanın en büyük eğlence sektörlerinden biri haline gelmiş olan video oyunlarının konsept, hikâye, atmosfer ve çevre tasarımı konusunda mimari söylemden kazanımlarına ait bir inceleme oluşturmak amacı ile yapılmıştır. Makalede, Venturi, Brown ve Izenour tarafından 1972 yılında kaleme alınan *Las Vegas'ın Öğrettikleri (Learning from Las Vegas)* kitabı ve bu kitabın temel öğretisi olan, simgesel ticari Las Vegas söyleminin video oyunları üzerideki etkisi detaylı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Yazarların Las Vegas'a bakış açıları, yapıları değerlendirmek üzere oluşturdukları terim ve ölçütler, dönemin popüler kültürü ve tüketim anlayışı, şehrin yapılarının üzerindeki mimarinin estetik, ticari ve ahlaki değeri gibi çeşitli konuların video oyunlarındaki yansımaları üzerinde durulmuştur. Kitabın içeriği üzerinden yapılan analiz ile, Las Vegas mimari söylemini karakterize eden sekiz kriter belirlenmiştir. Bunlar; simgelerin çeşitliliği, anımsatıcı mimari öğeler, reklam ileti ve propaganda, hız odağı, konumsal sistem, ön cephe, aydınlatma ve mimari tutarsızlıktır. Çalışma kapsamında, tüketim toplumu ve ticari mimari odağında tasarlanmış kurgusal dünyalara sahip beş video oyunu belirlenmiş olan kriterler üzerinden incelenmiştir. Video oyunlarının mimarileri üzerinde yapılan bu araştırma sonucunda çalışmanın temel hipotezi olan; video oyunlarının mimari söylemden etkilenen ve ondan öğrenen bir alan olduğu kanıtlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Las Vegas'ın Öğrettikleri, Las Vegas mimari söylemi, ticari mimari, simgesel mimari, video oyunları

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Commercial postmodern architecture and video game spaces

1. INTRODUCTION

The contribution of architectural discourse, which has an impact on many areas of life, to the video game industry, which has become the largest field of the entertainment industry today, leaving behind film and music, is remarkable. Architectural discourse has been a very effective element that can change the aesthetic, structural and cultural structure of its environment throughout history. It is inevitable that video game spaces that blend art, technique and architecture are also influenced by architectural discourse. The aim of this study is; To examine the relationship between architectural discourses and the period in which these discourses came to the fore and video game spaces that developed their concepts by taking the structural environment as an example. The core evaluation in the study was carried out through the analysis of video game spaces. The focus of this study which reveals the connections between video game spaces and architectural discourse, one of the most influential and pioneering discourses of postmodern architecture is the book of "*Learning from Las Vegas*" (Venturi, Brown &Izenour, 1972, 1977 trans. Özaloğlu, 1993). The reason why Learning From Las Vegas was chosen as the main focus of study in this article is the similarities between the structure of commercial postmodern architecture discourse which is shaped according to consumer culture, based on competition and its intensely communicative structure that follows popular trends is very similar to the architectural spaces of a significant part of video games developed with similar commercial concerns. In this book, the architects drew attention to a new concept of architecture that they observed in Las Vegas and predicted would extend very quickly. The authors say that two basic typologies of communication architecture have emerged in Las Vegas, but their impact is not limited to Las Vegas but has begun to be observed on a worldwide scale. These typologies are "The Duck" which the architectural systems related to the building's space, structure and program are distorted as if disappearing by a symbolic form, and "The Decorated Shed" which uses the space and structure in a way that directly serves the program. A rapid increase in consumption in society in the mid-20th century gave rise to the Consumer Society and forced the current architectural approaches to change. Las Vegas architecture, which shows itself especially in the works produced by popular culture, has become a source that the video game industry frequently feeds on. Video games, with their prioritization of communication with the user and commercial profit, display similar characteristics to the attitude created in Las Vegas. This similarity is seen more in games that are conceptually about the post-20th century and take place in an architectural environment.

2. TEACHINGS OF THE COMMERCIAL LAS VEGAS STYLE

Through the review of the book *Learning from Las Vegas*, eight main criteria were determined showing the effect of the postmodern discourse on Las Vegas on games. These criteria; the variety of icons, evocative architectural elements, advertising-message-propaganda, speed focus, spatial system, façade, lighting and architectural inconsistency. Under each criterion, the relationship of the five video games selected to be examined with that criterion is explained. Video games and fictional cities of the games included in the scope of the review are Fallout, New Vegas (New Vegas), Yakuza: Like a Dragon (Yokohama), Sunset Overdrive (Sunset City), Cyberpunk 2077 (Night City) and Grand Theft Auto V (Los Santos). In determining these video games, the games included in this group were developed based on an architectural environment of the 20th century and beyond, used commercial symbolism in its architecture by interpreting it according to its fiction, tried to depict the consumer society through the architectural aesthetics. Buildings that constitute examples of the world were included that meet the determined criteria. It was aimed to reveal the reflections of the Las Vegas architectural style on these video games and to draw attention to the effects of the architectural discourse and the practices shaped by this discourse on the video game industry. The worlds of the selected video games, which contain structures and spaces containing intense commercial postmodern elements, formed a suitable basis for the analysis.

2.1 The Variety of Icons

Las Vegas tries to impress its customers with the variety of its symbols. In addition to the colorful messages adorned on the buildings, elements that strongly stimulate the senses are used, such as neon lights, billboards, loud sound, strong lighting, moving signs and sculptures (Vinegar, 2008) The signs, statues, sounds and lights of the hotels in Las Vegas are noticed before the buildings themselves. The buildings themselves, located inland from the road, are hidden behind the cars parked in their parking lots, the symbols placed on the facades of the buildings, and the large billboards in front of them. Parking spaces are located in front of buildings instead of behind them. This is because; to increase the perception of the size of the store and to prove its popularity to the new customers

by displaying the cars in front of it. Since the ventilation systems of buildings require spaces of low height, the buildings are low-rise and flat. Sales methods have also been developed to focus on a single floor and especially the entrance, rather than multi-storey stores. Since the buildings themselves can hardly be noticed from the road, their structural architecture does not have any distinctive and original features. Referring to the diversity of symbols in Las Vegas, Venturi says that the concept of architecture in this environment means "graphics and signs" (Banks, 1993) (Table 1.)

Table 1. The variety of icons (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

New Vegas: The Variety of Icons

The Strip stands out with its lively appearance among the ruins extending from the outer edges of the city into the interior. LED lighting that highlights the buildings at night, shapes, sculptures or reliefs on the facades, flashing, color-changing signs and billboards invite the player. In addition to the light effects on them, the structures also send messages to the players through sounds. The structural architecture of the buildings that advertise with their loud and bright signs is in the framework. They are mostly worn-out structures bearing the traces of the nuclear war. The majority of the buildings have the characteristics of "Decorated Shed" with the variety of symbols on their facades.

Yokohama: The Variety of Icons

Yokohama commercial buildings comply with the popular consumption city definition of Learning from Las Vegas; They convey it through various methods such as animated LED lights, reliefs, moving billboards, sculptures and audio propaganda.

Sunset City: The Variety of Icons

Sunset City is a city with lots of symbolic narrative like Las Vegas. Almost all of the buildings are commercial. With pop art, billboards, light tricks, holograms, loud messages, sculptures, and large-scale advertising balloons containing brands' mascots or logos, commercial communication is constantly in contact with the player in a versatile way. The structures of the game are often in a "Decorated Shed" or "Duck" typology in conveying messages.

Night City: The Variety of Icons

Night City exemplifies, from a dystopian-futuristic perspective, what the consumption city style defined in The Teachings of Las Vegas could take a hundred years later. In addition to billboards, signs, ornate facades, sculptures, vivid lighting and loud sound, company buildings bearing monumentality with their huge structures, advertisements made with hologram and laser technology, cyber neurochips and augmented reality that can directly propagate a place, product or service to the minds of the city's citizens. Messages specific to the game's world, such as technologies, also contribute to Night City's symbolic diversity.

Los Santos: The Variety of Icons

Los Santos offers a large map where players can visit various shops and entertainment centers, with streets designed specifically for commercial establishments in and around the city center. Icons are mostly used as elements that strengthen the atmosphere of the game by carrying the messages of the brands created to strengthen the consumption city atmosphere of the game. Los Santos aims to create a convincing example of the Las Vegas-like symbolism of today's consumer cities with its urban layout and commercial building types. Los Santos commercial buildings often feature popular, universally used elements of commercial symbolism such as inscriptions, brand logos, signs, LED lighting and shapes.

2.2 Evocative Architectural Elements

Reminiscences are frequently used on Las Vegas structures. Reminiscences can sometimes be eclectic, such as reusing historical forms, and sometimes they can be reminiscent of real or fictional characters and/or places that have become popular on radio, television and the press (Hell, Steinmetz, 2014) The eclecticism of roadside architecture for commercial persuasion in Las Vegas is; In the large, wide and complex layout of the new landscape consisting of large venues, high speed and complex programs, they flash and fade like lightning striking one after the other (Bhatt, 2003). According to the authors, creating the new for artists means making a choice between both the old ones and the existing ones. The customer who comes to Las Vegas must quickly match what they see with similar experiences in his mind in order to easily establish a connection with the environment. At this point, familiar art, popular and historical, comes to the aid of the customer (Barierre & Lavin, 1997) (Table 2).

New Vegas: Evocative Architectural Elements

In Learning from Las Vegas, the authors explain how architectural evocation can be not only historical but also popular. A similar approach applies in the world of Fallout: New Vegas. The desolate and eerie atmosphere of the Mojave Desert gives way to an environment reminiscent of 60s Las Vegas as the player enters the borders of the city center. The actor is reminded of The Strip and Fremont, the two biggest streets of Las Vegas in the 60s. Although streets, casinos and hotels differ from the buildings they are inspired by with their names and certain spatial features, they give the player the feeling of rediscovering places he knows from the real world.

Yokohama: Evocative Architectural Elements

In Yakuza: Like a Dragon's Yokohama, although the game's navigable area contains a largely unique city layout and structures, the city's skyline outside the interactable area and certain locations within the game area are designed to resemble the real Yokohama. In addition, the commercial buildings of the city, which are concerned with intense communication, benefit from various historical or popular architectural reminders from around the world, especially traditional Japanese architecture.

Table 2. Evocative architectural elements (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

Sunset City: Evocative Architectural Elements

Sunset City uses a thematic evocation. For example, the Japanese garden, one of many gardens in Sunset City, bears characteristic features of traditional Japanese architecture that have remained etched in popular memory, such as the roof shape, courtyard ponds, curved bridges, and red entrance arches. Sunset City architecture embraces an aesthetic style that blends the familiar with fantasy.

Night City: Evocative Architectural Elements

Night City uses the mnemonic that commercial cities often employ, whether historical, cultural, or popular, to create a backstory for structures to tell of a future far from the present. The evocative architectural elements in Night City help make the places and events in the game world permanent in the memory. Night City's architecture is a reflection of a multicultural society. Every commercial enterprise in Night City, a cosmopolitan city where people from different places come together, shows with its structure and messages that it has a different cultural infrastructure. Structures that reflect the cultures of different regions, mainly South America and the Far East, make it easier for players to connect with the futuristic world of the game with the feeling of familiarity they provide.
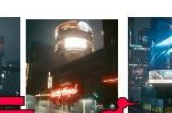
Los Santos: Evocative Architectural Elements

The evocation frequently used in the Las Vegas commercial style is also observed in a similar way in Los Santos buildings. Inspired by the city of Los Angeles, Los Santos features structures and spaces designed to remind the player of various popular Los Angeles structures through imitation and simulation. In addition, historical evocative structures and elements designed with an eclectic approach that make references to various architectural styles are also found in the world of the game.

2.3 Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

In the intense commercial competitive environment of Las Vegas, advertising becomes an important part of the structures. Buildings whose facades and signs are full of messages are constantly in search of new things to stay one step ahead of their competitors with similar functions (Rothman, 2002). Messages in buildings trying to sell their products or services often reach the level of propaganda. The customer is tried to be convinced that they have the best and most desired product or service through the architecture and signs of the building. (Heindl, 2005) According to the authors, a good advertising technique requires differentiation of products. Casinos with the same functions under the same sunlight need to be creative with their face and signs. Structures can be successful to the extent that the messages given by their advertisements activate the customers. The authors liken the aging rate of a sign to that of a car rather than that of a building. Signs are worn out by competition before they have time to physically wear out. The authors argue that the structures that shine brightly between their propaganda designs and differentiated messages brought about by competition, give the impression that each one is unique, no matter how ordinary their structural architectures are (Table 3).

Table 3. Advertisement, message and propaganda (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

New Vegas: Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

The world of Fallout: New Vegas, by portraying an alternative Las Vegas, was also fed by the intense advertising anxiety of Las Vegas. According to Venturi, Brown and Izenour, advertising, messaging and propaganda are the elements that give personality to Las Vegas buildings. Advertisements are now an internationally adopted element of the Las Vegas commercial style, as they are easy to install and dismantle, low-cost, attractive and up-to-date. When New Vegas is examined, it is seen that the brands created for the world of the game are used on buildings and signs with a similar approach.

Yokohama: Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

In Yakuza Like a Dragon's Yokohama, there is a similar density of advertising to the streets and alleys of Las Vegas. With large LED screens attached to the building surface and colorful signs mounted perpendicular to the structure, displayed against the road passing in front of the building. The streets of Yokohama are an example of the popular commercial style of Las Vegas, which emphasizes the commercial message before the structure. Designed with Japanese developers, Yakuza: Like a Dragon's Yokohama city is important as it shows that the Las Vegas-style city approach that emerged in the 20th century is not just an attitude specific to Las Vegas. Yokohama is an indication that competitive environments and commercial centers that encourage intense and exaggerated messaging exist on an international scale, outside of American cities and popular culture.

Sunset City: Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

Sunset City's structures are filled with propaganda from fictional brands designed for the game. Advertising with signs and reliefs on the building, billboards and statues on the streets continues throughout the game map. Commercial messages are used extensively throughout the city, regardless of markets, restaurants, hotels or industrial buildings, as criticism of the consumer society.

Night City: Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

Night City, which is under the control of companies, uses the entire city as a propaganda tool to convey the commercial concerns of these companies to the player. The surfaces of the city's buildings, mostly skyscrapers, are covered with digital screens advertising big brands. The constantly changing advertisements on these screens promote current products and services, similar to the advertisements of Las Vegas buildings. The authors say that commercial messages are above moral, social or aesthetic values in consumer cities, and that propaganda does not hesitate to ignore these values when necessary. Being a dystopian future consumer city dominated by lawlessness, the propaganda in Night City is made in a more exaggerated and provocative way than in Las Vegas. Since there is no ethical limit in the competition between the messages of fictional brands, there are advertisements encouraging crime, violence or excessive consumption in every part of the city.

Los Santos: Advertisement, Message and Propaganda

The streets of Los Santos are filled with neon lights, huge billboards, graffiti and posters. While some ads in the city are parodies of real-world brands, the majority are ads for brands specific to the fictional world of the game. Similar to Las Vegas messages, Los Santos can present propaganda in its buildings and streets, ignoring ethical and moral values. Commercial structures often include messages that disparage other structures or brands or provide exaggerated and misleading information about their own products and services. Unlike Las Vegas, Los Santos also includes messages other than commercial purposes on its buildings. The fictional government, security forces, and other organizations in the game run advertising campaigns to manipulate public perception and support certain policies.

2.4 Focus of Speed

Las Vegas signs attract attention primarily with their main warnings targeting high speed. These stimuli are usually colorful, animated, sculptural (or all together) large-scale messages containing the name or logotype of the commercial location (Blake, 1964). Due to the intense competition between similar functions lined up one after the other, the scale of these messages is larger in Las Vegas than in other consumer cities of the period (such as Los Angeles and Chicago). As the first message attracts attention and draws the customer to the parking place in front of the building, the smaller subheadings under the main message of the building's sign become readable. These subheadings include short and interesting articles and visuals about current events. When the customer walks from the car he left in the parking place towards the entrance of the building, he begins to see smaller and more specific messages under the subheadings. These messages, on the other hand, are messages that describe the dates of the event, short-term discounts or innovations in slot machines, and require a longer perception as they are intended to be read widely (Table 4).

New Vegas: Focus of Speed

The aim of the New Vegas buildings is to create a convincing picture of what a city of the modern world might look like after the disaster, by designing structures similar to the globally accepted style of 19th century commercial buildings. When the player emerges from New Vegas' Mojave Desert onto The Strip and walks downtown, they encounter numerous car billboards pointing towards the road.

Table 4. Focus of speed (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

Yokohama: Focus of Speed

Yakuza Like a Dragon's Yokohama map consists largely of side streets closed to vehicle traffic. Pedestrian-only streets have smaller-scale messages and signs aimed at being perceived more as pedestrians. Although Yokohama's side streets are close to Las Vegas in terms of message density, the size of the messages is not exaggeratedly different from the human scale as in Las Vegas, since they are designed for pedestrian speed rather than vehicle speed. There are only two roads with vehicle traffic in the game. These are Yokohama Boulevard and Tsurukame Street. The player can only explore these roads on foot, but the road-facing structures of the area have messages designed to focus on the speed of the vehicles.

Sunset City: Focus of Speed

Sunset Overdrive features a travel mechanic that allows the player to parkour by quickly gliding over flat surfaces such as building corners, roofs and balconies, street railings, lampposts and billboards. As one of the main mechanics that has an important place in the basis of the game, sliding enables the player to move quickly and interactively with the environment in the game where there is no vehicle transportation. On the Sunset City map, which consists of islands connected by train lines and highways, a player who slides on train tracks and moves towards the city center encounters many speed-oriented messages, similar to billboards announcing the Las Vegas Strip from miles away.

Night City: Focus of Speed

Night City is a developed city in the middle of a desert, focusing on car transportation, similar to Las Vegas. For this reason, the structures and messages on the game are designed to be perceived with the speed in the vehicle. Since the speed limits in the city have increased and the speed capacities of the futuristic vehicles of 2077 are higher than the vehicles that traveled the Las Vegas of a hundred years ago, the scale of the messages and the

perception time of the message to be given. The player, who can navigate the city using a vehicle from a first- or third-person camera perspective, is exposed to a multitude of messages directed at them. These messages may be familiar speed-oriented messages, such as roadside billboards, or they may be virtual messages that are not tied to a specific point with augmented reality. The player, who can quickly navigate the city, experiences an intense example of vehicular communication familiar from the real world. In this way, it is tried to show the player the point that the consumption culture in the game has reached.

Los Santos: Focus of Speed

Los Santos has a city design with detailed consideration of in-game transportation, with boulevards, highways, side streets, highway bridges and large parking areas. The game encourages the player to use fast vehicles, with content based on police chases, street races and reaching certain points in a limited time. The messages on the buildings or signs on the roadside are also designed in ways appropriate to this speed. Messages feature gradual scaling similar to Las Vegas' speed-oriented messages. Messages targeting high-speed vehicles with large shapes or symbols contain smaller messages underneath, which can be understood when approaching them and switching to a pedestrian position.

2.5 Positional System

The authors say that the evolution of Las Vegas is consistently towards a symbolism that is increasingly gigantic in size. The most determining factor in this rapid development process of Las Vegas is the location system in Las Vegas (Gray & DeFilippis, 2015). Buildings in competition want to have the best location as well as being the biggest and most spectacular. Environmental qualities of the land, such as ground and daylight, are in the background when positioning the buildings. There are two important determining factors in determining the location where a commercial Las Vegas structure will be built; The first of these is being close to the most popular and highly circulated arteries such as The Strip and Fremont Street. The second is to be located in the same region with competitors with similar functions that the building can compete with. In order not to fall behind in the intense competition of giant casinos, the structure must constantly keep itself fresh physically and contextually. The position of a casino that is lagging behind the competition and financially worn out is replaced by a new casino with its new concept and exciting games (Table 5).

New Vegas: Positional System

Due to the effects of the nuclear war, the city center is smaller in scale, more congested and isolated than the real Las Vegas. The location of the casinos on the New Vegas Strip, one after the other, surrounding the street, shows intense competition, just like in the real Las Vegas. Buildings with their signs and billboards compete for dominance over the area.

Yokohama: Positional System

Commercial buildings on Yakuza: Like a Dragon's map have a staggered layout similar to the Las Vegas location system. The commercial axes connected to the main roads located in the center of the map consist of structures containing the most intense examples of color, message, sound and lighting, as they are the regions with the highest competition. When you move away from the boulevards and avenues and go down to the lower level streets at the borders of the map, it is seen that the density of the commercial style decreases.

Sunset City: Positional System

Sunset City's structures are positioned with an approach similar to the commercial hierarchy of Las Vegas. The central island contains markets and hotels. This is the region where symbols and messages are most dense, and the competition of the fictional companies created for the game can be read from the architecture of the region. The peninsula located in the northwest of the central island is the Robo HQ region which stands out with its futuristic-style structures, is the region where the communication language extended throughout the game is the lightest. The island in the west of the map is an industrial and residential area. Although it has fewer commercial functions than the central island, the symbols and messages on the houses and factories continue to comply with the general building concept of the city. The eastern island is a touristic region with intense commercial symbolism, with its restaurants, shopping malls, theme parks and amusement parks.

Table 5. Positional system (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

Night City: Positional System

Cyberpunk 2077 features regions that are home to different cultures and architectural styles. Westbrook district is the luxurious and wealthy district of the city. In the region where there are large digital billboards with flashy designs and holograms with colorful animations, the messages are predominantly luxury consumption propaganda. The Heywood area is the middle-class district of the city. In this region, digital and holographic messages in the downtown and Westbrook areas are replaced by cheaper types of messages: posters, banners and signs. Advertisements are mostly aimed at brands that are popular among the middle class. The City Center is the most important commercial communication zone that complies with the Las Vegas location system emphasized by the game's Las Vegas Teachings. The structures here are located in groups close to each other according to their areas of competition. A large number of Decorated Hangars and Duck-like structures, where intense messages dominate the architecture of the building, are placed in rows on the streets of the city. The City Center, which creates a city image similar to the Las Vegas skyline with its symbolism especially at night, can be described as The Strip of Night City.
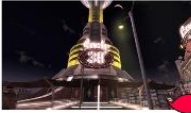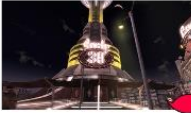
Los Santos: Positional System

The city of Los Santos has a spatial system grouped into regions according to structures with different functions. The map of the city area is divided into seven sections, these are; Downtown Los Santos, Vespucci Beach, Little Seoul, La Puerta, Mirror Park, El Burro Heights and Vinewood Hills. Located in Vinewood Hills, Vinewood Boulevard has a design that reflects the Las Vegas commercial style with the layout of casino and hotel buildings and intense commercial messages. The facades and signs of the casinos, theatres, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls on the boulevard compete with each other for visibility. With a stroll on the boulevard, especially at night, the player may encounter many structures and messages that contain the characteristic features of the Las Vegas commercial style.

2.6 Front Facade

It is important to pay attention to the facade of Las Vegas buildings. Buildings facing the traffic of the street should make the structure look magnificent with their messages, decorations and colorful neon lights. For writers, the façade is more important than the architecture of the building. Commercial buildings whose facades are larger than the building itself increase the value and integrity of the road. The buildings that stand out with their façades fully comply with the authors' definition of "Decorated Hangar" (Beardsley, 1975). Except for the front façade, the rest of the building does not have a specific style. Because it is thought that no one will see the back of the building, all care is given to the front. Authors say that the casinos, whose front facades are sensitively placed on the road, return their mechanical equipment and service areas to the natural environment, where their mechanical equipment and service areas are shamelessly displayed, and their rear facades, which are not taken care of. False facades are placed perpendicular to the road in the form of large, tall signs (Table 6).

Table 6. Front facade (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

New Vegas: Front Facade

The structures of the New Vegas Strip attaches importance to the façade; while hotels and casinos include colorful messages and shapes on their facades, they turn their plain back facades, which cannot be reached by the player, into the sets separating The Strip from the desert.

Yokohama: Front Facade

Yokohama's commercial buildings are mostly designed in an adjacent manner. Since most of the buildings, their side facades and rear facades are blocked by other structures, only their front facades and roofs are modeled in the game. Additionally, most buildings do not have an interior, except for structures that can be interacted with through quests and certain events. The congested structure of the city facilitates the work of developers by allowing buildings to be designed as single facades, creating streets suitable for the semi-open corridor which is the game's

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progression system, and creating examples of the "Decorated Hangars" of the popular commercial. Style by highlighting the messages on the facades of commercial buildings with ordinary architectures are also created.

Sunset City: Front Facade

The Sunset City map is full of examples of "Decorated Hangars", especially in the city center and the east island. As the players travels around the city through fast parkour, they can observe numerous buildings whose facades are filled with commercial symbolism. These buildings, like their counterparts in Las Vegas, use large-scale text, sculpture or neon decorations on their facades, overlaid on ordinary structures. Additionally, there are various examples of "Ducks" in Sunset City whose programs have been transformed by their messages.

Night City: Front Facade

Night City's Downtown area is filled with dense and disorganized urbanization, structures that are difficult to distinguish from each other with their common color palettes and futuristic cyberfits on their facades. The only solution for many commercial buildings that cannot be distinguished from their basic architecture is to stand out in the ordinariness of the urban fabric by making their facades as ornate and symbolic as possible, as in the Las Vegas buildings. Many examples of "Decorated Hangars" with their facades and signs can be observed in the Westbrook and Heywood areas of the game, especially in the City Center.

Los Santos: Front Facade

On the map of the game, it can be seen that the front facades of commercial buildings, especially those facing the roadside, are modeled in more detail and meticulously than the other facades. Other facades generally consist of plain textures that are copied from each other or do not contain many model elements. These structures communicate with the player with ornate writings on their facades, slogans, colorful shapes, moving LED lights, sculptures and mechanisms that provide audio propaganda. Some structures appear before the player as small "Hangars" hidden behind large advertising signs.

2.7 Lighting

Lighting is one of the most frequently used elements in creating the Las Vegas style. Buildings attract attention by illuminating their surroundings with neon lights, flashing LEDs and backlit panels. The lighting of Las Vegas casinos shows contrasts on the structure. The exterior of the building is tried to be shown as bright, colorful and lively as possible. On the other hand, the inside of the building is kept dark. Gaming halls are always dim, they are designed as a low volume. Their surroundings are closed and they do not have any windows. Time loses its determining effect on the interior, the difference between noon light and midnight light cannot affect the hall. Authors say that the space in casinos is unlimited, because they believe that artificial light cannot define any boundaries, but will only make the boundaries unclear (Table 7).

New Vegas: Lighting

An attempt was made to draw a portrait close to the real Las Vegas in terms of lighting on New Vegas. With their central location on the game map, the New Vegas Strip buildings can attract the attention of the player who is far from The Strip on the map with the intense light they emit into the sky in the darkness of the desert at night. Hotel and casino buildings also have well-lit exteriors and dimly lit interiors.

Yokohama: Lighting

Lighting is very important for a game like Yakuza: Like a Dragon, where the majority of the story takes place at night. Streets covered with high-brightness signs, color changes obtained by the play of light on the buildings, and sparkling street decorations guide the player in a way similar to the streets of Las Vegas. The exaggerated lighting concept brought by the Las Vegas-style commercial style is effective in the majority of the game map, glorifying the liveliness of the city, the competition of the markets, the brands and the propaganda for the consumption of the products they offer.

Table 7. Lighting (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

Sunset City: Lighting

Sunset Overdrive does not have the day-night cycle found in most open-world action-adventure games. Although many of the elements that highlight the Las Vegas commercial style, such as signs, billboards, sculptures and neon lighting or holograms on the facade, are found in Sunset City commercial buildings, the effect of these lighting elements on night darkness cannot be observed.

Night City: Lighting

As its name suggests, Night City is a city famous for its liveliness at night. Bright neon panels, pictures and stripes on the structures try to attract the player's attention in the dark of night. Streets equipped with many screens can make their propaganda more effectively in the dark. Laser advertising strips extending into the sky from the City Center area become clearer and detectable from longer distances after sunset. Every restaurant, casino, cybernetic parts store, shopping mall, and hotel structure within the city competes with each other with intense use of lighting, similar to The Strip and Fremont streets in Las Vegas.

Los Santos: Lighting

GTA5 is a game with a day cycle, where every hour of the day can be read on the game map. The city of Los Santos has a design that pays attention to lighting due to the many tasks that occur at night and the 24-hour live nature of the city center. Especially Downtown Los Santos, Vespucci Beach and Vinewood Hills areas of the city are places where commercial lighting is concentrated. Buildings strengthen their commercial symbolism and complete the atmosphere of the game with various lighting such as neon strips, LED panels, street lamps in different popular shapes, lights reflected from the ground on the facades of the buildings and digital facade ornaments that instantly can change.

2.8 Architectural Inconsistency

Las Vegas commercial style consists of numerous contrasts and irregularities on the structures. The flashy lights on the facades, large-scale symbolism and messages based on speed strive to create a perception of "perfection" in which the building's many program elements are in harmony with each other (Didelon, 2006). Unlike the ostentation outside, inside, the focus is on the ostentation of the betting equipment rather than the ostentation of the structure. In the interior, activity areas divided into small volumes are scattered in a way that gives the impression of being in a labyrinth. Customer circulation may unevenly distributed across all functions of the building. Customers who want to reach the wet areas or the cafeteria have to pass by the betting events that may interest them in this mixed order while searching for their way. At the entrance, the customer is directly confronted with the view of the intricately placed gaming spaces on the flat floor, while the lobby remains behind. Even in indoor lounge areas, betting machines and upcoming shows are constantly advertised. Behind this complex structure designed to make the customer spend money, there are courtyards, which contradicts the general approach of the building (Table 8).

New Vegas: Architectural Inconsistency

It is possible to see the architectural inconsistencies that the authors explain with the contrasts, irregularities, space changes and program inconsistencies on the Las Vegas buildings, also on the New Vegas buildings. The flat interior and the oases mentioned in The Teachings of Las Vegas are two important elements that create contrast on the structure. The structures of New Vegas, designed to be perceived as large and wide from the outside, consist of flat and smaller structures on the inside. It is possible to see examples of artificial oases in New Vegas, which try to create the feeling of being in a holiday resort on a tropical beach, among the functions that drive customers to ambition and competition, which are located in most Las Vegas hotels and casinos.

Yokohama: Architectural Inconsistency

In Yokohama, messages are scattered irregularly over structures and streets, similar to the streets of Las Vegas. Their size, colours, sounds, harmony with the appearance of the building or street, or the social or moral value of the messages they convey are not important. As long as the message maintains its commercial impact, it continues to be displayed without the need to be consistent with its environment. In terms of program, there is no obvious separation on Yokohama structures. Buildings with residential and commercial features are mixed together. There are no special areas reserved for residences on the map of the game, where commercial buildings predominate. Residential buildings distributed among commercial buildings continue the communication language of the adjacent buildings with messages placed irregularly on them.
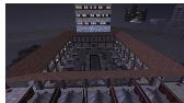
Sunset City: Architectural Inconsistency

As can be seen from the figures examined, Sunset City is a city with a complex structure and no common aesthetic language. The game's developers' efforts to criticize postmodern consumer cities have succeeded in making Sunset City a city without a clear identity and inconsistent with the commercial style of Las Vegas. Offering a symbolic complexity, Sunset Overdrive is a work that reveals, at an absurd level, the impact of the commercial city style, explained by the authors in Sunset City and Learning from Las Vegas on the ever-expanding consumer cities of the 21st century.

Night City: Architectural Inconsistency

In Night City, some areas of the city use high tech and postmodern architectural styles, while other areas may adopt more traditional or old architectural styles. Additionally, some regions use contemporary or futuristic elements such as tall buildings, huge digital billboards, holograms, and animated neon shapes, while smaller structures and fewer advertising elements can be seen in other regions. However, Night City has a more consistent theme and atmosphere than Las Vegas. All areas of Night City are designed in accordance with the city's worldview and style; It is designed in a more holistic language with common mechanical articulations, color palette and use of structural materials. Although a Las Vegas-like inconsistency is observed among the commercially competitive structures of the City Center area, the structures across the map present a more consistent city skyline with the common dystopian city interpretations they add to their different architectural approaches.

Table 8. Architectural inconsistency (Prepared by the authors, 2023)

Los Santos: Architectural Inconsistency

Los Santos is a city that has imitations of Los Angeles' famous buildings. Although the names, aesthetics and residential areas of the buildings differ from the originals, as the fictional city is based on a single real-world city, a more consistent and holistic city portrait emerges in Los Santos, unlike the silhouette of Las Vegas. Even Vinewood Boulevard contributes to the architectural consistency in the game by interpreting the complex appearance of Hollywood Boulevard close to its essence. The majority of the structures on the game's map are made from structures designed from scratch for the game, rather than inspired structures. However, these structures are in harmony with those built for reminder purposes. Los Santos, with its highly convincing American coastal city appearance, creates a more architecturally consistent image than Las Vegas, a complex entertainment city in the middle of the desert.

3. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained from the examination of video game spaces in the context of the Learning From Las Vegas discourse are discussed.

3.1 Fallout: New Vegas

As a result of the analysis conducted on the city of New Vegas in the game Fallout: New Vegas, it has been observed that the city is heavily influenced by the architectural aesthetics of Las Vegas in the 1960s. Designed with significant fidelity to the location of Las Vegas within the Mojave Desert, New Vegas incorporates numerous structures from the downtown area and surroundings of Las Vegas, with some name changes while preserving the original communicative qualities of the buildings. Iconic streets such as The Strip and Fremont have been recreated

in New Vegas using elements that reflect the commercial symbolic architectural approach described in Learning from Las Vegas. The impact of the nuclear war in the game's narrative is represented through the widespread debris and the heavily damaged architecture across the city. Most of the structures in New Vegas, with their worn facades adorned by intense, colorful, and vibrant commercial symbolism, appear to be designed in accordance with the "decorated shed" concept from Learning from Las Vegas, which prioritizes communication over architecture itself. While the structures in New Vegas emphasize decoration, the hangar aspect has been further diminished compared to Las Vegas due to the effects of destruction. The game's influence from commercial symbolic architectural discourse is notably high, as reflected in various structures that meet the eight defined criteria.

3.2 Yakuza: Like a Dragon

The city of Yokohama in Yakuza: Like a Dragon features a map design where commercial buildings dominate, and the commercial messages on these structures continuously draw the player's attention throughout the game. When analyzed through the discourse of Learning from Las Vegas, Yokohama's architectural approach closely parallels that of Las Vegas, especially in the use of billboards, facade decorations, statues, and the interplay of sound and light. The city is predominantly characterized by the "decorated shed" typology, where the buildings themselves are relatively plain, while the symbols and messages on them provide narrative depth and enable competition with their surroundings. Most explorable areas on the map consist of commercial spaces such as shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues, while even the limited number of residential structures feature advertisements and messages. Similar to Las Vegas, the city's design emphasizes nightlife, with indistinct building facades blending into the darkness, while the vibrant and dynamic signage keeps the structures visually engaging. The analysis reveals that, as in Las Vegas, the game's map design is primarily defined by the commercial programming and communicative aesthetics of the structures, with the architecture following this visual language.

3.3 Sunset Overdrive

With its concept built around critiquing consumer culture and its dense, intertwined metropolitan structure, Sunset Overdrive's Sunset City uses commercial symbolism at a level far more exaggerated than any real-world city today. Billboards, reliefs, holograms, and sculptures are densely packed and extensively used on the buildings. Sunset City adopts the commercial symbolic architecture approach described in Learning from Las Vegas and presents a fictional American city that explores how this aesthetic might evolve in the near future. Players navigate the city using the game's parkour mechanics, moving along streets and across buildings while interacting with various structural elements. During this traversal, fictional brand advertisements and their influence on the buildings are showcased, immersing the player in an environment where commercial competition has surpassed ethical boundaries, creating an overwhelming symbolic experience. When viewed through the lens of Learning from Las Vegas and its established principles, Sunset City centers and critiques commercial postmodernism as its core design philosophy. The city's architecture reflects a speculative vision of how dominant commercial symbolism might manifest in 2027. Alongside its dominant postmodernist structures, Sunset City also incorporates various popular and cultural architectural styles distributed throughout the urban landscape.

3.4 Cyberpunk 2077

Cyberpunk 2077's Night City serves as a significant subject of analysis for observing how the evaluations of commercial symbolic architecture presented in Learning from Las Vegas and its methodological arguments have evolved a century later in the year 2077. The analysis reveals that Night City has transformed into a metropolis where evolving communication methods and the expanding needs of consumer culture have led to a diversification and amplification of symbolic elements on buildings. Shapes and texts created by neon lights, dynamic digital billboards, holographic facade decorations, audio laser advertisements, and ads projected onto both buildings and their users through augmented reality and cybernetic technologies reflect a futuristic reinterpretation of the architectural discourse from Learning from Las Vegas. This increased symbolic diversity has further diminished the architectural prominence of the buildings, reinforcing the "decorated shed" concept even more than in Las Vegas. Night City, with its blend of multiple cultural influences, is composed of structures with diverse themes, yet the high-tech advertisements covering the surfaces of the buildings create a cohesive visual identity. In this lawless

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and corrupt city, the visual messages also disregard social and moral values, emphasizing the extreme commercialization and ethical decay of the environment.

3.5 Grand Theft Auto V

Grand Theft Auto V, with its city of Los Santos, presents one of the most expansive and high-budget open worlds in the gaming industry. Inspired by Los Angeles, Los Santos features a vast map encompassing a variety of architectural styles and settlement patterns, ranging from rural life to dense urban environments. The city portrays a contemporary American metropolis with a design approach closely reflecting the needs of consumer culture. Numerous structures in Los Santos parallel the symbolic interpretations of American cities and the use of communicative elements on buildings described in Learning from Las Vegas. For the game's fictional world, a wide array of fictional consumer brands was created. The messages of these brands are prominently displayed on buildings across the map through colorful lights, billboards, reliefs, sculptures, and posters, competing visually with one another. While the symbolic density of advertisements diminishes in residential and rural areas, it becomes exaggerated and densely packed in downtown and tourist zones, similar to Las Vegas. The placement of advertising elements based on the functional use of each area contributes to a more realistic communicative architectural approach throughout the map. Los Santos' extensive urban landscape includes a diverse range of structures and symbolic elements that provide numerous examples aligning with all the established criteria.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to highlight the interaction between architectural and video game literatures by demonstrating the broad representation of the principles of a specific 20th-century architectural discourse in popular video game spaces. It emphasizes that architectural discourse can be a significant resource in the field of video games and that the existing interaction can be further developed in literature with different discourses and video games. Learning from Las Vegas, focusing on Las Vegas, describes the commercial symbolic architectural discourse that constitutes the concept of "commercial architectural style", which is a part of the 20th century consumer culture around the world. The five video games examined use the commercial symbolic architecture discourse in various ways in constructing their worlds. Commercial symbolic architecture; Fallout: New Vegas uses it to create a post-apocalyptic future world directly influenced by Las Vegas. Yakuza: Like a Dragon shows that this architectural discourse does not remain within American borders, and creates a contemporary Japanese city as an example of its international use. Sunset Overdrive is not about a place in the real world, but draws a portrait of the near future that is an example of the intensified use of this discourse in an alternative fiction. Cyberpunk 2077 provides a futuristic and dystopian example of where the discourse has come a century later, and includes concepts for the future use of symbolism. Grand Theft Auto V, on the other hand, tries to portray in detail a contemporary American city shaped by this discourse. All the games in the review group contain elements of the characteristic features of commercial symbolic architecture explained in the book. All of the games examined use this discourse in their worlds, similar to the real world, but at the same time differentiating them according to their concepts. Today's video game industry, in an ever-expanding variety of concepts, reveals architecture from prehistoric times to the distant future, especially in the 20th and 21st centuries. The video industry continues to be nourished by many historical, modern, postmodern, utopian, dystopian, futuristic (etc.) discourses that have taken place on the stage of history.

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