

The God who lived: about religious narrative, Nietzsche's
death-of-God metaphysics, and popular culture remediation

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Abstract

Christian religion is undoubtedly one of the most influential sociological constructions in human history. Throughout the centuries, Christianity's religious discourse has moulded societies' political laws, educational policies, and even behavioural patterns. While Christianity can be examined through different theoretical lenses as theological figures, religious anthropology, morality, and so on, the focus of this discussion will be understanding its structure as a transmedial monomythic composition. Even though Christianity's canonical storyline persists up to our days as a significant metaphysical narrative, Fredrich Nietzsche's death-of-God assertion critically debilitated its narrative basis and generated a series of consequences for its system. Nonetheless, popular culture remediation has enable the religious discourse to introduce its old media format into a remediated multiplatform contemporary universe. These three angles (Christian narrative, Nietzsche's metaphysics, and pop culture remediation) will serve as a theoretical foundation for analysing the distinctions among a popular culture remediated noncanonical narrative (a videogame) in contrast to the canonical Christian storyline (a biblical passage). The purpose of the study is to comprehend if remixing practices can contribute to Christianity's orthodox structure. Thus, to compare the objects of study a comparative analysis was made. The analysis was divided in two stages, and the first one begun with an overall monomythical contrast amid the canonical and noncanonical narratives, to then focus on a specific part of both story-driven structures by using the exegetical method and environmental storytelling theory. The results of the analysis will show that Christian narrative has a potential for remediation and, therefore, it is unlikely to extinct in the coming years. However, the noncanonical narrative takes a bifurcation in the storyline and creates a product that dissociates from the orthodox story. Therefore, even when popular culture remediation can help to preserve God's narrative, it changes its core message.

Acknowledgements

To the boy who lived and the girl who dreamed.

To the man who returned, and all the people who passed by.

To you all, dead and undead, I salute you.

Ave, Caesar, morituri te salutant.

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Introduction: The stories we choose to believe

“It would be more accurate to say that the narrative comes first and that the formal systems we construct – whether in philosophy or science – are coloured, shaped, determined, by the story-telling soil from which they spring.”

(Lash, 1996)

Through the centuries humankind has engaged in the art of telling stories to pass on traditions, convey knowledge, entertain, and even try to explain the supernatural. Those stories we choose to believe are often moulded by our political context, cultural background or family traditions. It is under this story-centred limelight that the present theoretical discussion will analyse how the monomythical storyline in the Christian religion, Nietzsche’s metaphysical nihilism and the death of God assertion, as well as the remediation within popular culture, are intertwined. The leading argument is that the connection amid those three elements has stimulated a remediated noncanonical narrative, which is far apart from the original religious storyline, as illustrated by my comparative analysis of the noncanonical videogame. Thus, these three angles will serve as a foundation for the analysis between a selected canonical text from the Scriptures in contrast with a noncanonical narrative product.

First of all, this literature review is divided into three parts and entails the concepts of narrative and religion, Nietzsche’s metaphysical thought, and remediation within popular culture. The first part of the chapter involves the understanding of Christian religion as a narrative by using sociological definitions and the metanarrative’s theory. The second part goes deeper on the understanding of Nietzsche’s death-of-God statement and its consequences in Christianity’s storyline. The final part of the literature review discusses the theories about remixing practices in the popular culture context, as well as how certain narrative structures

have a potential for remediation.

Following this line of thought, the methods chapter will be related to the methodological tools used to analyse the remediated cultural product and contrast it with the narrative structure within a biblical passage. Ergo, the religious passage will be examined through an exegetical approach, which involves understanding the meaning of the text according to its historical and cultural context. In the case of the noncanonical narrative, the object of study chosen was the noncanonical independent videogame 'Fist of Jesus: the bloody Gospel of Judas' (FOJ) and will be analysed through the concept of environmental storytelling and level design patrons. The reasons for choosing this videogame as a popular culture remediation are further explained in the methods chapter.

After having described the methodologies used, the analysis chapter will consist of the comparative analysis of the canonical and noncanonical storylines. The comparative analysis will employ the monomythical structure to determine the similarities and dissonances among both storylines. Thus, the comparative analysis will establish if the remediated narrative improves the canonical one or if it completely alienates itself from it. Furthermore, the main thread of this analysis will be through the foundations and meanings of the death of God metaphysical philosophy.

In the last chapter of the research, there will be a synthesis of all the conclusions that resulted from the comparative analysis, as well as mapping out what else can be taken in consideration for further explorations. Additionally, the discussion will finish with some open questions that tempt to inspire future analysis within the same topic.

Chapter 1. Christian narrative, the ‘death of God’ metaphysics, and popular culture

“Gods die. And when they truly die they are unmourned and unremembered. Ideas are more difficult to kill than people, but they can be killed, in the end”

(Neil Gaiman, 2001, p.195)

In this chapter, the three main ideas that will connect the discussion are Christian narrative, the death of God metaphysics and popular culture. Those notions will be discussed and analysed in terms of how they have stimulated a remediated noncanonical narrative. For understanding the connection between these ideas, this chapter will focus on discussing different points of view of several authors.

Furthermore, along with the study, there have been some questions that had arisen and inspired the research. One of the main interrogations from which other queries detached is related to how the Christian narrative, Friedrich Nietzsche’s metaphysical thought about God’s death, and the remediation of Jesus’ narrative within popular culture are related to one another. Yet, to answer this question there is a former one to consider, which is if Christianity can be acknowledged as a narrative structure at all. And, if so, what type of story-driven framework it is, what are its particularities, and what potential it has within for its remediation. Thereby, in the first part of the literature review, there will be a further exploration about Christian religion and its narrative features mainly through the lenses of Joseph Campbell’s monomyth and Henry Jenkins’ transmedia narrative, among other authors such as Jean-François Lyotard, Chris Crawford, Stephen Prickett, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and so on.

Once Christianity has been examined as a narrative design, the second part of the

literature review will discuss Friedrich Nietzsche's death-of-God statement and its contrast with other atheistic points of view by Georg Hegel and Immanuel Kant. After reflecting on Nietzsche's metaphysical postulate, the discussion will continue around its influence in post-modern secularism, thus, the consequences that had in Christianity's storyline and lead towards a post-mortem theology.

Foremost, whereas Nietzsche's allegations occurred in a specific cultural and historical context, his statement is still relevant in contemporary thought and had even inspired a noncanonical remediated narratives as 'God is dead' comic. Thus, the importance for examining the death-of-God assertion is to evaluate if it was a fulminating proclamation for the Abrahamic God, or if it left a chance for resurrection. The significance of encountering this chance is to hypothesize with the possibility that Nietzsche might have underestimated Christianity and to evaluate if transmediated monomythical narratives can survive throughout time even with grand criticisms.

Moreover, the third part of the literature review will engage in describing a chance for Christianity to escape the death-of-God dilemma. This heavenly opportunity will be examined through popular culture's theories about remediation and remixing practices. Thus, the analysis will contemplate in what ways does remix and remediation enables the return of Christianity's fallen deity. Furthermore, if the remediation of non-canonical narratives is a suitable antidote for enhancing Christianity's canonical narrative or, on the contrary, it becomes the venom that will increase the deterioration of its storyline. Besides, if remediation is indeed Christianity's salvation from its foretold Nietzschean downfall, then, was Nietzsche wrong when he postulated that the Christian God was dead? All these definitions will help to set the foundations for continuing with the comparative analysis of the orthodox and unorthodox narratives that will be examined in the analysis chapter.

1.1 Once upon a God: religious narrative

This section entails the starting point of the discussion by addressing the concepts of religion and narrative. For many people across the world, religion is not only a confessional credo that one can profess, or a regulatory system which allows us to discern right from wrong. No, religion often becomes a mantra, a type of motivation that allows its followers to keep going forward despite their difficulties. In some cases, religion is seen as a righteous cause to fight for, dedicate your entire life to, or even die thinking that all around us is part of a master comic plan (Porter, 2008, pp. 532). In this sense, engaging with a specific religion can be due to several factors. For example, one factor may be the cultural context in which someone was raised, and which religious discourse was the predominant narrative within that context. Another factor may be religion's eloquent speech about how to gain eternal life, or how beneficial it is for finding peace with oneself.

On the other hand, storytelling is a universal technique, a time-travelling vehicle where cultural knowledge can easily sit and wait to be communicated from one generation to another. A religious narrative emerges from the union between socialization and language where, whenever there was the need to justify a natural phenomenon, then archaic people attribute these catastrophes to a judge-all powerful people that they later called gods (Crawford, 2005, pp.5-6). This mythical storytelling remained until our times and, whereas other fictional stories can catch our attention grandiosely, the religious narrative can go deeper in our psyche.

When someone deeply believes in the religious discourse, its battle not only becomes a story-like combat about falling into sin or not but an ultimate and definitive struggle between Eternal Life or Eternal Damnation (Prickett, 2002, p.12). Therefore, the narrative of God becomes one of the greatest narratives of our times because of its claims to be true, a feature of its metanarrative structure which will be further discussed below. Hence, the reason why the

religious narrative is a powerful narrative construction is due to its archetypal system, which has served to support one of the major narrative theories from the past decade, namely, the hero's journey.

Nonetheless, there are other ways to define religion. For example, the conventional sociological definition portrays it as a social practice that enables the composition of cohesive moral communities assembled upon a system of belief (Durkheim, 1995; Fulcher & Scott, 2011, p. 393). Furthermore, complementary to this definition, religion as a system of belief has been characterized by Berger under the term 'sacred canopy', an overarching socially constructed framework created to protect ourselves from the chaos and tensions of ordinary life (Berger, 1991). Ergo, religion is the ultimate escape from the world into an alternate reality.

Akin to Berger's definition, Karl Marx's emblematic phrase about religion being the 'opium of the people' describes how believing often leads to a state of mental numbness. This Marxist allegation critically defines religion as a hallucinogenic reality construction whose beguiling nature can stun its followers (Marx, 1978). The purpose of providing such stunners is to spread the people's attention from other significant issues. Marx criticises that religion is often used as an oppressive medium to control people and distract them from political activism.

Whilst sociology has described religion as a distracting social practice which provides people with cosmical meaning and a communal sense, the focus of this research will be understanding religion as a narrative structure. On this basis, Marx's and Berger's description of religion being an alienating stun force is an analogous condition seen in other narrative formats. Fictional stories have the ability to abstract users from their own reality into a fabricated storyworld. In this sense, just as a story can captivate users within an immersive narrative universe, religion engages its followers into a narrative system where the line between truth and myth becomes blurry.

Although narrative and religion have similar dazzling effects in their audiences, considering Christianity as a narrative structure remains a controversial subject for the most conservative wings (Menzies, 2014, pp. 142). The reason of this controversy is because if religion were to be considered in the same category as fiction, then it would lose its redeeming status and turn into a series of fables of Judeo-Christian origin written in the first century.

1.1.1 Choosing sides: why use Christianity as a narrative example?

Authors such as German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, or Pope Emeritus, Joseph Ratzinger, do not agree with the perspective of defining Christianity as a narrative, thus, they both concur that this vision leaves life without transcendence and in a purely nihilistic state (Jaspers, 2000; Ratzinger, 2011). Nevertheless, the comprehension of religion as an encompassing storyline it does not originate from nihilism but has its origins in the Enlightenment, a European intellectual movement of the 18th century (Price, 2012, pp. 104). It is during this alleged 'Age of Reason' that religion was understood as a metanarrative construction. On the other hand, these sacred metanarratives can stem from various cultural and theological backgrounds such as monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, among others.

A metanarrative is a term minted by Jean-François Lyotard and used to describe grand stories that arise to legitimize certain society's criteria. Besides, these legitimization stories consider certain parts of their narrative as absolute truths (Lyotard, 1984). The selected narrative parts that may be established as facts vary depending on the metanarrative discourse. In this sense, these truths are no longer regard as fictional reconstructions but as reality; even though the source of them can derive from subjective principles. Thus, aside from its subjective origin, the metanarrative unfolds as a progressive storyline towards an ultimate state of self-fulfillment. Nonetheless, this self-attainment is an exclusive insight which can only be gained through the metanarrative's sole system of belief.

In the case of Christianity, the parts that constitute its system and are presented as truth involve the belief that God is an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent trinitarian being compound by three different ‘personas’ yet sharing one same nature altogether. This trinitarian tripartition of God is known as the Holy Trinity. One of these personas is Jesus, the begotten son of God, who has divine nature as well as a human nature. According to the Catholic tradition, Jesus was incarnated in his mother, Mary, through the help of the third persona of the Holy Trinity: The Holy Spirit (Catholic Church, 1995; Cooper, 2015, p. vii). As well as these beliefs, there are many other statements consider to be true within Christian narrative and that create a unique progressive path into the mysteries of God. Besides, the source of these dogmatic postulates is purely based on faith instead of provable evidence. Therefore, Christianity fulfils all the features of a metanarrative and, henceforth, will be taken as such.

Even theologians who are focused on the crescent field of ‘narrative theology’ usually ignore the ‘plot-linear’ aptitude that can be found in Christianity and only concentrate on its theological aspect (Lash, 1996, p. 23). Nevertheless, theology cannot deny the religion’s clerestory nature which is both devotional and dogmatical, experiential yet rational, supernatural with shades of Earth-like, a secret society while open to everyone, merciful and lawful, light and dark, fear and love (Newman, 1960, p.27; p.150). All these combined characteristics mould the religious discourse and had inspired other sources of non-religious multi-narratives throughout the history. From literature to poetry, artworks alike painting and opera, to movies and games, and yet most importantly a whole monomythical theory that serves to construct multiplatform stories was inspired by the Christian narrative.

1.1.2 The sorting hat: picking among narrative models

The purpose of choosing a narrative model is to examine the story-driven structure within Christianity. Aside from Joseph Campbell, there are other scholars that approach to the

study of myth. For example, Claude Lévi-Strauss' structuralist approach to myths consists in describing mythology as an oral-descended structure which can be broken down in small units of meaning, called 'constituent units' (Lévi-Strauss, 1955). Additionally, Vladimir Propp grouped a story in terms of functions, which are defined as events or character's actions in the story, for example, functions can be trickery, complicity, mediation, departure, punishment, and so on (Propp, 1968). While Lévi-Strauss and Propp structuralist's approach contemplates each unit or function as a dividing part of the narrative, Campbell not only considers a division but that each stage has a linking importance in the story.

In the case of Tzvetan Todorov's literary theory, he established that narrative events can be categorized depending on their level of realness and resolved in dividing them in two: fantastic uncanny and fantastic marvellous (Todorov, 1975). On the other hand, whereas Campbell agrees with Todorov's ideas about fantastic elements within the narrative, he does not contemplate those fantastic elements as the central part of the structure but as an additive event that occurs in the narrative.

Or, if we go further back in time, Aristotle was one of the first to provide a consolidating framework to analyse narrative drama. According to Greek philosopher, dramas should have a dignified leading figure so that the audience can rise to a state of catharsis. When the spectators witnessed the leading figure performing his epic action on stage, then they would elevate with him and experience an elevation through dramatic art (Aristotle, 2014). In contrast with Aristotle, Campbell concentrates on a leading average hero, someone who until the adventure starts would not be considered worthy.

Nevertheless, Campbell's model also has limitations. The monomyth tends to better function in stories where the protagonist action is of an active nature, therefore, stories of a contemplative or existential nature need another type of model for their analysis. Nonetheless,

for other transmedia narratives, Campbell's ideas have served to influence the work of storytellers such as Christopher Vogler and even George Lucas (Vogler, 2002). However, the intrinsic reasons why the monomyth can be used as an analysis model for certain narratives and not others is not part of the examination.

Furthermore, another reason to select this specific model is because Joseph Campbell studied Christianity as a narrative structure and even based its monomythical frameworks in Jesus' story as well as other greater metanarratives as Buddha's enlightenment path, and the ancient epic Greek heroes (Campbell, 1988; Alexander, 2011, p.8; Menzies, 2014, p. 144). Hence, Campbell inspired Carl Jung's archetype about how stories across the globe can share common patterns. This archetypal model is similar to Lyotard's metanarrative construction which was previously used to establish why Christianity will be considered as a narrative.

Additionally, the importance and benefit of having selected Campbell's model are due to the monomyth's focus on the hero's journey. It is through this road of purification that the hero can become a higher being and leave behind its ordinary status. This transformational journey that the hero does is crucial to comprehend the Christian narrative. Just as in the monomythical narrative, Jesus' journey through Earth was an epic odyssey which implicated a road of trials, coming across with temptation, fighting over death and, supposedly, conquering it by resurrecting. A further description of the monomyth's seventeen stages is described in Appendix A.

After describing the benefits of using Campbell's monomythical structure, we can move on to explore the transmedial attribute of religious myths and its potential for remediation. This particular point regarding the remediation capacity of transmedia narratives will be further developed in the third section of this chapter.

1.1.3 Transmedial religion: the ability to unfold in multiple platforms

Another key point in the discussion of religion and narrative is transmedia. The concept of transmedia narrative is a cornerstone definition intrinsically related to the remediating factor of popular culture and that enables the understanding of Christian narrative as a multiplatform experience across several interfaces. This part of the discussion will serve to compare the inherent monomythical component in Christian narrative and which permits its extrapolation into a transmedia narrative universe.

According to Henry Jenkins, one of the authors that define the concept of transmedia, a transmedia narrative is a story that can unfold across multiple platforms and provides in each of these orbital texts a unique and valuable contribution to the main storyline (Jenkins, 2006, p. 96). There are some other criteria to define transmedia storytelling, which is linked to the idea of a unified narrative experience that provides multiple media channels to obtain a story and avoids giving redundant information in each channel (Phillips, 2012, pp.15). In the case of Christianity, while the Bible is one of the sources of revelations and contains most of the Christian doctrine is not the only basis of its narrative.

Other sources for finding the canonical Christian storyline are from the Catholic Church's traditions and the Church's ecclesiastical magistry, which provides a contemporary vision of faith and threats all the aspect that cannot be found in the other sources of revelation (Pricket, 2002, p.134). Each of these platforms provides a unique experience of the same narrative structure and supports the major narrative discourse which is the salvation of the human soul.

As well as other theocentric religions, such as Judaism or Islam, Christianity offered to its followers the 'definitive' answer to everything from Universe's creations until its ending in the book of Apocalypse. From ways to act and moral codes to marriage laws. From the stories

about Jesus' miracles and demons being cast out of people. Every single part of the Christian narrative seemed to be integrated into an all-articulated ecosystem (Prickett, 2002, p.128). The relevance of this particular religious narrative is because Christianity is a complex transmedial narrative structure which can compound multiplatform stories, as the ones described Jesus, to other ethical and moral code systems and even biological and cosmological arguments about how the world was created.

The Christian storyworld is provided with all these sources that allow the user an immersive non-fictional universe. Christianity's canonical plot includes the damnation or redemption of souls; characters such as priests, Jesus himself and even ourselves; and even certain basic understandings about how the world works and how we should behave (Handler, 2014, pp.163). Furthermore, this Christian story world is consistent in each of these platforms, because the discourse is controlled by the hegemonic sphere which comes from the Vatican and that publishes the official narrative texts. Nevertheless, in a prospective segment, we will deepen in other non-canonical texts that circulate around this Christian narrative.

Following this same thought, religious practices can be similar to multiplatform storytelling since they present some multimodal aspects that come from different platforms. For example, the symbolic figures which can be statues or ornaments, or even some participatory celebrations with multisensory components (Handler, 2014, pp.9). A Christian mass has a moment where the ones who are pure can receive the body and blood of Christ in the form of a host. This immersive multisensorial experience empowers the believed narrative and shows the enriching multiplatform background.

Nevertheless, while the hegemonic hierarchy in the Christian Church may desire to remain with the ownership of the narratives' orbital text, one of the features of transmedia narratives is their capacity to encourage members to collaborate with the content, which often

expands the core narrative (Handler, 2014). However, this sharing economy can be difficult to support when not giving the proper attention, as fan's discourse can sometimes twist the canonical structure and lead to misinterpretations.

On the other hand, even though Christian narrative had a transmedia potential, there was a breaking point that shook its narrative foundation. In the consecutive part, there will be an examination of the feared death-of-God metaphysics and Nietzsche's impact on post-modern society. Also, the last section of explaining the death-of-god theology, a theological school of thought born in response to Nietzsche's statement and gained notoriety in the 20th century.

1.2 Calling all the metaphysical! Modern philosophy and Christianity

As we can deduct from Campbell's monomythical theory, most narratives have a crisis, an apostasis where our hero finds himself between death and life and is within this struggle, where either he resurrects as a higher being or perishes forever. In the case of the Christian religion, this ultimate moment occurred during the late nineteenth century, in the hands of Friedrich Nietzsche and the madman, when they proclaimed the death of the Christian God and, therefore, that the believed in Him has become 'unbelievable' (Nietzsche, 2008, p.199). Is from this Nietzschean annihilation that I will discuss the consequences of the divine demise in post-modernity since the statement became a key plot point within the linear Christian story. Thus, this will contextualize in a later part of the research the resurrection of the Christian God within popular culture.

It is worth observing that Nietzsche's statement was constrained to its philosophical formation, his experiences in Christianity during the nineteenth century Protestant Germany, and his own preconceptions. Nevertheless, he prognosticated the death of the Judeo-Christian

God and its irrelevance for forthcoming times. Even though Nietzsche's historical context did not allow him to know the potentialities of multiplatform systems, his predictions have not become a reality yet. Whereas there are several critical arguments over Christianity's narrative structure, its utter eradication seems to be still far ahead.

Hence, the goal of this chapter is not to take sides in the endless debate about proving the existence of a judge-all, law-giver God, for the main argument is not too related to proof a divine presence. Yet, the purpose is to explore how the negation of the divinity in Nietzsche's ultimate proclamation contextualizes a specific scenario for post-modern philosophy and theology. Besides, since Descartes, Hegel and Marx, there has been a long-term tradition of questioning the existence of God and its foundations. Nonetheless, it is Nietzsche who gives the final lunge against Christianity.

Thence, by proclaiming the death-of-God, Nietzsche is going against other cornerstone thoughts in German philosophy that come by the hand of Georg Hegel and Immanuel Kant. Contrary to Hegel, Nietzsche's death of God does not come from a critique of the self-accepted death that happened on the cross. For Hegel, the 'pseudo-suicide' that is Jesus' crucifixion is the ultimate death of the divinity. But, while Hegel contemplates it as the triumph of death, he also accepts that the crucifixion can lead to a renewal of the faith because some Christian followers believe that Jesus did conquer death and resurrected on the third day (Hegel, 1929). While Hegel saw a possible post-mortem reconstruction of theology, Nietzsche determine a historical euthanistic destruction.

On the other hand, Immanuel Kant follows another philosophical path against the Christian institution. For Kant, Descartes' ontological argument about God's existence, or Leibniz's cosmological statement about an intelligent design fall short to validate the presence of a supernatural being. Even Hume's physicotheological proof, which tries to forge from the

ashes the construction of moral theology based on the similarities of religion with universal moral laws, is too weak according to Kant's own parameters (Smith, 2011). But, where Kant tried to construct moral categorical imperatives from the identification to Christian morality, Nietzsche saw the foundation of morals through inherent anthropological basis.

Unlike Hegel or Kant, Nietzsche's refutation of the faith does not come from God's existence. The major difference between Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas is that he argues that God's existence debate has been used as a way a survival rather than longing for the Creator's transcendence (Smith, 2011). Nietzsche's historical refutation focuses on a narrative-centric defiance of God, since its parts from a non-philosophical nor theological argumentation against its inexistence, and acts as a breaking point within its storyline. Nietzsche points out the contradictorily Christian discourse about creating transcendental meaning from an exterior supernatural Being when it should be a man trying to generate his own sense. This same line of thought would be the inspiration for Nietzsche's ideas of the greater man, a godless being without the necessity of superior power.

1.2.1 The death-of-God: Nietzsche's perspective on Christianity

Following with the death of God discussion, it is crucial for its understanding to introduce the passage of 'The Gay Science' (Nietzsche, 2008) which presents the quintessential statement of post-modernity: the death of the Christian God. In the passage, the character who announces this dire death is the madman. At first, when the madman walks the streets announcing the death of God it seems like nobody has noticed its disappearance, even some believe is the madman's own doing as he likes to make things up for his own amusement. Yet, while his cry transforms into an endless scream and he starts calling the churches the tombs of God, people around wonder in silent without truly understanding the claims of this delusional prophet (Nietzsche, 2008, pp.119-120). Through this literary metaphor, Nietzsche introduces the

metaphysical concept of the death of God and describes how his Christian followers watch this announcement stunned, unable to do anything to save their deity.

Nietzsche uses the figure of the madman to incarnate and proclaimed his metaphysical statement. The reason for choosing such character is because, in that specific period, most of the people would see this announcement as a lunatic's acts. Furthermore, there is another literary figure within the madman's passage in 'The Gay Science' which is as important as the messenger itself: the sceptical crowd that is unconvinced about God's death. This cynical crowd is alike the 'Pharisees', a group of radical Jews who plot to murder Jesus during his preaching period and now have murdered the same God they worship with their reluctant orthodoxies (Heller, 1967, p.95). But, while their deity is rotting in the church, they persist in unrecognizing this act and please themselves in claiming to be in a living-God time.

The madman's wisest proclamation has still haunt Christianity throughout post-modernity. Even on Good Friday 1966, while Christians were preparing themselves for the memorial of Jesus' crucifixion, one of the most important newspapers in the US reinserted the Nietzschean persistent question: is God dead? (see Figure 1). This mediatic highlight marks the transcendental relevance of Nietzsche's ideas even in our times.



Figure 1: 'Is God dead?' Cover (Times, 1966)

Nietzsche's critical perception of the Christian faith exposed a non-filter religion for the judging look of post-modernity whose radical resistance to metanarratives, especially the ones connected to a religious discourse and whose credibility has been lost, is one of its key characteristics (Lyotard, 1984; Prickett, 2002, p.17). Moreover, it is due to this metaphysical metanarrative detriment that philosophy found its way to critically analyse religion. In addition, the fact that the religious metanarrative format and morality system was weak, according to Nietzsche, also led to the end of this dominant fiction (Derrida & Vattimo, 1996). A central aspect of this fallen narrative system is its repercussions in post-modern thought, which will be further explored in the next part of the discussion.

1.2.2 The era of disbelief: consequences over a fallen divinity

After contextualizing Nietzsche's statement and historical significance, we can continue

with the reverberations of this crude murder. Indeed, the cry of the madman in the streets, weeping God’s death, was not only a critical response to Christianity but a historical event where God died in a certain point in time within this humanity’s communal linear story (Heller, 1967, p.93; Altizer, 1968, p.102). From the ashes of the fallen God, the era of misbelief arises, where there cannot be conceived an understanding of the world in terms of Creator and its creation.

Table 1: Consequences of the death-of-God (done by the author, based on Hudson, 1967)

Type	Society’s repercussions	Theological consequences
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man rises as the center of knowledge. • The era of self-empowerment, self-consciousness, and self-production. • Narrative expressions flourish to take the place of old metanarratives. 	The possibility to understand God through experience has turned null and, therefore, any religious practice has vanished in the absurdness of its ways.
Sociological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The removal of the meaning-giver creates a sociological unbalance. • All institutions that used God’s premise for imposing their ideas have no longer a source in which to sustain themselves. 	With the death of God, the sustenance of its narrative storyline has lost its course
Ontological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The religious symbols, narrative, and language that was used to represent or define the Christian divinity in society had now expired. 	The ecclesiastic terminology, the old rituals, Latin prayers and moral definitions have known being put in the box of oblivion.

Furthermore, the common factor in all these thoughts about God’s death is that the death of the trinitarian deity has left the post-modern man with secularism, a state which lacks any afterlife consolation and lays its secularistic foundations in human experience (Holcomb,

1967). This change of thought generated that subsequent researches about metaphysics and Christianity were based on experiential knowledge instead of celestial validation. Moreover, it was during the proliferation of secular thought that a new way of doing theology resurfaced and was called the death-of-God theology, a canonical narrative construction to avoid the decline of God's narrative.

1.2.3 The Fenix ashes: the death-of-God theology

While the psychological, sociological, ontological and philosophical consequences of the death of God are important attributes to understand the scenario that was left for constructing a society without a deity. Other consequences of God's death affected the mere roots of its canonical narrative which was Christian theology. Parishes, bishops, catechists, the whole ecclesiastical body had to fill the emptiness left by God and generate a new narrative to sustain their credo.

Evidently, if Christian narrative set its footprints in the Western chronological dating system by establishing B.C. and A.C., as the dividing point in history, then, theology has also set a line of thinking 'before Nietzsche' and 'after Nietzsche'. The future of Christian narrative after Nietzsche may be standing without the presence of God but resting upon faith, or perhaps is time for restoring human experience in the centre of the religious narrative (Hamilton, 1967, p.276). Moreover, the theological discourse known as the death-of-god-theology was left with some major questions to answer in order to survive the secularistic period and that will be further explained in Table 4:

Table 2: Consequences in the death-of-God theology (done by the author, Hudson, 1967; Moulton, 1967; Vahanian, 1967)

Category	Challenge	Theological repercussion
Humanistic approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the attention from the not-known face of God to the familiar facades of man. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theology had to focus on men as the cornerstone of its storyline. • The psychological consequence of Nietzsche exalted the role of believers and encouraged them to continue with the metanarrative.
Jesus' humanity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the historical prophet who lived, Jesus, instead of an ethereal God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of speaking about the death of God, canonical structures spoke of the life of Jesus. • Was easier for believers to identify with Jesus as a human being.
End of Christian domestication in Western culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves space for brand-new concepts of God, forcing Christian narrative to think out of its Occidental cage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinvention of the metanarrative through cultural appropriations with other cultures.

Henceforth, looking back to the dramatic climax that post-modernity has left and having examined the psychological, sociological, ontological, philosophical and post-theological responses to it. We cannot help to wonder if this belief in God has any future whatsoever, or if its survival is this the last attend of Christianity to not entirely disappeared all the sudden (Küng, 1928). Thus, is this religious narrative destined to fail due to Nietzsche's proclamation? Or, perhaps, there is a possibility within the cultural remediations in contemporary practices to resurrect its storyline? The next part will expose further these questions inside the popular culture's theoretical framework.

1.3 Popular culture remediation and remixing practices

So far, the discussion has led to the analysis of the monomythical component within the Christian narrative and the consequences of its storyline due to the death-of-God. This theoretical examination has allowed establishing a basis for the next point, which is related to the popular consumption of the Christian narrative and its noncanonical orbital text. This last piece of the puzzle will help to contextualize how remediation and remixing systems enable an everlasting source of power that permits a narrative's transcendence through time.

First of all, whereas popular culture can be understood by the contraposition among 'high' and 'low' culture, where the first one is related to art expressions for a selective populational group and the other is for massive consumption (Storey, 2015). The definition of popular culture that will be considered is related to the massive success of a cultural object and how this reverberating consumption contributes to a transmedial narrative (Rockett, 1993, p.150; Stout, 2001, p.3). Moreover, the definition linked to products of massive consumption is also related to leveling up subcultural expressions to the same place as 'high culture'.

Furthermore, the term of remediation within a popular culture can be understood as a new medium transformed or inspired by an older media, or even an old media trying to adapt to the new media landscape (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). The act of remediation is known as a remixing practice and is described as the action of reconstructing old media into new media forms. Once there is a reconstruction of an old media format into a new media a proliferation of narratives occurs, and users find themselves with a saturating offer of orbital text within the same narrative structure.

1.3.1 Remixing practices and digital media: the prosumer's era

Moreover, in this proliferating stage, new actions are created in the consumption sphere. Some consumers can become participants of the new narratives, a sort of spectators of the new

processes of meaning-making or we can become prosumers, active producers of new narrative forms (Deuze, 2006) An active prosumer is the consumer who enthusiastically contributes in his beloved narrative by appropriating and reconstructing its narrative according to his own vision (Toffler, 1980; Mato, 2007). Therefore, the prosumers are a key part of remediation and remixing practices.

Furthermore, the prosumeristic cultural convergence also has its roots in the death of God philosophy, as one of the psychological consequences of God's demise was the empowerment of the people. In this sense remixing practices can enable the feeling of being in control of the narrative structure (Scolari, 2013). Consequently, remixing remediation enables the user to continue a transmedia narrative throughout a vast field of mediums if he possesses the appropriate tools to do so.

Another component that has enabled the proliferation of remediation and remixing practices within popular culture is digital media. In the digital universe, the user feels more empowered by the tools that are now within reach and allow them to involve in a participatory narrative (Konczal, 2010). While the digital empowerment is linked to the Internet accessibility and economic factors, for the purposes of this discussion there will be no focus on the debate about the digital divide, but how digital media is also a vital component of remixing practices in popular culture.

A significant aspect of digital media and remediation is digital narrative and how certain digital features enable and transform the orthodox narrative. The purpose of detailing more about digital narrative within this section is to discuss the main aspects and key features that a remediation can have over a canonical narrative. Having this in mind, one of the most fundamental features of remediation by using a digital media narrative is the chance to enable the user with a certain reactive power over the story. The multisensorial digital environment

provides the use of symbols, semiotic codes, tactile feedback, and another stimulus with adds a sense of immersion within the storyworld (Ryan, 2004; Handler, 2014). Therefore, a digital narrative remediation enables the user's involvement within the narrative structure.

Along with digital media, the remixed cultural product can be a collective source of meaning that can enable users to understand better the transmedia universe (Irvine, 2015, p.27). In the case of the Christian religion, the Bible is a canonical part of the narrative, but a blog post about a Bible's passage is a noncanonical orbital text that can generate a new understanding of the Christian narrative. This remixing approach can be of use for the believers to find the ecclesiastical text closer to them.

In the following section, there will be a further study about particular remediating and remixing elements of the Christian narrative within popular culture. These examples will serve to set the scenario and understand what types of remediating practices had taken place within the noncanonical Christian narrative and to introduce the possibilities of noncanonical Christian remediation.

1.3.2 Pop Christianity: noncanonical religious remediation in popular culture

From Jesus action figures to films about the Pasion of Christ, to board games about the war between religions and rock music that leads to massive concerts, to indie videogames. All these elements are part of the so-called popular culture. Thereby, inside the religious popular culture, there are certain elements that characterise this cultural appropriation practices which are the submersion of religious symbolism in the massive sphere.

While certain symbols like the crux or the dove were only used for specific Christian rituals, today this religious sphere has broken down and all these symbolisms can be used for self-expression, vandalism or for other nonreligious reasons (Hoover, 2001, p.56).

Remediation shows how metanarratives old hierarchical and distant symbology can become acquire a secular view in a remixed environment.

Some of these borrowed symbolisms can be seen from the most massive art expressions, such as tattoos or car stickers, to the most glamorous fashion events as the MET Gala. The following examples of remediation within Christian narrative are to illustrate the vast transmedial structure that Christianity possesses and how its story can be used in completely different mediums: from fashion to comics.

In 2018's MET Gala, the theme surrounding the occasion was Catholic fashion and all the Hollywood stars dressed in eccentric religious clothing related to this subject area as seen in Figure 2:



Figure 2: MET Gala 2018 (Ramos, 2018)

The most common elements of Christian symbolism that appeared in the MET Gala where the image Virgin Mary, with the seven swords trespassing her heart, an angel's wings, and even the Pope's skullcap. This first example focusses on the Christian narrative as a fashion expression and relates to the psychological and ontological consequences of the death-of-God.

The Christian symbols have escaped their religious environment (ontological consequence), while the people have raised themselves to the level of the divine and can wear the clothing that was once reserved for the restrained religious metanarrative (psychological consequence).

These remediations of the Christian narrative can be considered as didactic efforts to retell the narrative and even increased publicity towards religiosity. Thus, through remixing, the narrative content does not concentrate on a specific group but becomes more accessible to others and increases its popularization (Clanton, 2007). However, they can also be seen as twisted versions of the narrative by detaching its original purpose, that it was salvation, and trivializing it for a fashionable red carpet.

On the other hand, in the comic ‘God is Dead’, created by Jonathan Hickman and Mike Costa, is a noncanonical narrative structure where the ancient gods are trying to claim the Earth’s sovereignty. The noncanonical storyline begins with Zeus arriving at Vatican City and claiming the domain of humankind. The comic is a sort of Nietzschean satire about the mortality of a god by mocking his ‘almightiness’, and even presents a scene where the Christian God is found dead (Figure 3). Furthermore, an important aspect of this particular noncanonical narrative is the additional meaning that provides, as it divests itself from the orthodox Christian narrative and immerses the user into an alternative transmedia world.



Figure 3: God's death in 'God is dead' comic (Costa & Hickman, 2013)

While pop culture ensures the proliferation of the transmedia narrative throughout its boundaries, it does not guarantee the same canonical story throughout all its cultural platforms and adaptations, as a key aspect of this cultural appropriation is the user's own vision. On the other hand, cultural remixing practice are also another element to comprehend the popular culture phenomenon and how, by this same remediation process, the prosumeristic practices around Christian narrative are spread within the popular.

Throughout the literature review, I have discussed and contrasted diverse theories about Christianity as a story-driven structure, the consequences in its canonical storyline due to Nietzsche's ideas, and the salvific potentialities of popular culture remediation. These three angles will serve to nurture the comparative analysis in the third chapter. Hence, the following

chapter will frame the methodological context to be used for the analysis.

Chapter 2. Methodology: a way to dissect God

In the present chapter, I will describe the methodological tools selected in order to be able to contrast a canonical source of the Christian narrative, which will be a passage from the Bible, with another noncanonical narrative, illustrated by the indie game 'Fist of Jesus' (FOJ).

2.1 Rationale

So far, in the literature review the discussion has followed a thread from defining Christian religion as a narrative structure, to later characterized this narrative as a monomyth with a potential for transmedia. Then, there was an examination about Nietzsche's death of God statement and how its repercussions affected society's vision of metanarratives and the canonical Christian narrative. The last part of the discussion was about popular culture and remixing practices and how do remediations enable a new scenario for noncanonical Christian narrative structures. All of these was to prove how Christian narrative, the death-of-God metaphysics, and popular culture remediation were intertwined and generated the appropriate scenario for creating noncanonical narrative structures. Thus, the comparative analysis will examine how an unorthodox digital narrative remediation can contribute or harm the canonical Christian monomyth.

Hence, to further entail this discussion, the first stage of the analysis will be an overall methodological approach to compare the Bible's and videogame's overarching narrative structures. The established evidence will help to argue the transmedia and remixing potential of the monomythical Christian narratives, and how can easily be remixed in multiple noncanonical platforms. On the other hand, the consequences of the death-of-God persist on these remediation practices and will feed the analysis by being the focus of the examples

chosen. In that sense, God's mortality and the detriment of its divine power will be the theme that will surround the samples from the canonical and noncanonical sources to illustrate the analysis.

The second stage of the analysis will be divided into three parts: a specific analysis of a particular segment of the Bible and a level of FOJ, to move on to the contrasting narrative components that characterized both storylines. A further explanation of what methodological tools will be used and how the analysis will be handled can be found in the following sections.

2.2 The artefact of contrast: justification and methodology

The comparative analysis will be of used to explain the points of agreement and dissonances of both narrative structures and establish if remixing practices can truly help a canonical narrative or, as Nietzsche stated, the Christian narrative is destined to die. In order to comprehend the overall storyline of each narrative, Campbell's monomyth will be used to establish the canonical and noncanonical narrative coincidences. Then, to contrast both orthodox and unorthodox stories, a particular segment of each narrative will be examined under a narrative-centered method that will allow deconstructing the storyline and its communicational purpose.

As described above, the first stage consists of a global analysis of each narrative according to the monomythical framework. The overall part that will be analysed in the canonical narrative will be the Bible's Gospels, whereas in the noncanonical will be the videogame. In the second stage, the comparison will be done based on the event of Lazarus' raising and considering for the canon side the specific biblical passage that describes that miracle, while in the case of FOJ transmedia universe, the videogame level where Lazarus is

discovered as the level boss. Besides, the benefits of having two stages of analysis are to benefit from analysing the overarching narrative that is presented in both narratives and then focuses on the contrasting points.

Even though the Christian narrative has another source of canonical storylines due to its transmedia characteristic, the chosen orthodox narrative was the Bible, also known as the Sacred Scripture. The selection was because of the Bible's transcendence as a written source or revelation in the Christian religion and that it is one of the first evangelization elements used by Christianity to spread its credo (Catholic Church, 1995). Furthermore, for the analysis of the Bible, the part that will be taken into consideration is the Gospels. This four-book compilation is also known as *Evangelion* or 'good news', which refers to the announcement of the long-awaited Messiah that will come to save us from damnation (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, p. 1637). The ultimate purpose of the Gospels was to spread the word about Jesus life, death and resurrection and his message about the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Gospels are born from the oral tradition, whose first stage was Jesus preaching in his mother tongue, Aramaic, and being accompanied by the apostles in his multiple preaching journeys through Galilee. The second stage of the Gospels development happened after the death of Christ when the apostles took charge of the preaching and reproduce Jesus' message as the had understood it. The third stage occurred years later when followers of the apostles decided to write the oral traditions and history about Jesus for its preservation (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, p. 1638). Additionally, each Gospel lectures a specific community from that time and, therefore, has a specific catechizing message.

Likewise, the motive for choosing 'Fist of Jesus' as the remediated noncanonical narrative is because of its transmedial prosumeristic characteristics. The FOJ narrative universe consists on one short-film known as 'Once upon a time in Jerusalem', a videogame for PC and

mobile phones, a series of short videos in YouTube, merchandising, and even its own action figure (Fist of Jesus, 2018). Therefore, just as the canonical Christian narrative, FOJ also presents a transmedia feature. On the other hand, FOJ is also a digital media remediation as the videogame medium provides the player with a multisensorial experience that provides a certain degree of freedom and gives feedback from the actions he realizes within the game world.

Moreover, FOJ is a remixed cultural product that responds to the situate cultural environment, but the reason for choosing this game is because it uses a representative Western pop cultural expression: zombies. The story-driven structure of the living dead represents the failure of the metanarratives as there is no ultimate transformation nor truth to be told, just a story about surviving the zombie's outbreak (Mastropietro, Miscevi, & Vervaeke, 2017). Accordingly, the zombie's topic also surrounds the death-of-God statement as its closely related to the idea that God, or in this case Jesus, is a humanly figure that can be harmed and get killed.

2.2.1 The methodology for analysing the Bible

On the other hand, there are two ways to interpret the Scriptures from the Bible. One of them is exegesis, which comes from the Greek and means to “to lead out of”. The exegetical process of interpretation aims to understand the original meaning of the text within their historical and literary contexts.

For that reason, this process uses analytical questions to disaggregate the text. The other way of analysing the Bible is through hermeneutics, which is an interpretive methodology that focuses on the underlying principles behind the scriptural texts. (Just, 2009). Therefore, the selected methodology will be exegetical, as by using this method one can analyse a more objectified and historical interpretation of the biblical passage. A full description of the exegetical method can be found in Appendix B.

2.2.2 The methodology for analysing ‘Fist of Jesus’

In the case of the transmedia universe of FOJ, the methodology considers that game design not always develops a storyline, as games tend to be centered on objectives rather than on plot-linear structures. Hence, emergent narratives such as videogames tend to use world-construction, spatial design, and different game elements to tell the story (Jenkins, 2004). Consequentially, this ‘environmental storytelling’ generates an involving narrative space, where players can understand the storyworld and its rules through the art design (Smith & Worch, 2010). Therefore, for analysing the environmental storytelling of a videogame is necessary to disaggregate all the game compositional objects that are used to tell the story.

While there are a vast literature and methods from where videogames can be analysed, from aesthetic to game mechanics, the key component that will be taken in consideration is the distinctive level objects that generate a sense of environmental storytelling. Among some of the elements considered to dissect the videogame are: weapons, power-ups, abilities, characters, enemies, actions (Björk & Lankoski, 2015). The main reason for choosing those level objects is due to their symbolical and image-centred approach, which will serve as a contrasting point with the literary figures from the biblical passage. Thus, the criteria involved to select a particular level from FOJ was based on developing the same narrative event as in the canonical storyline.

Chapter 3. Analysis: deconstructing God's narrative

In the previous chapter, there was a description about the methods that will be used for the comparative analysis, as well as the specific parts of the canonical and noncanonical narrative that will be examined with these methodological tools. In this chapter, a contrasting analysis will be developed to further understand each of the discussed points in the literature review: Christian narrative, the death of God, and remediation in popular culture.

Henceforth, the examination of both narrative sources will determine if noncanonical remediated narratives can influence the downfall of the Christian narrative or not. Once this analysis has finished, the conclusions of the discussion will show the comparative outcomes that the two stages of the analysis revealed.

3.1 First stage: contrast with the monomythical structure

The first stage comprehends the overall analysis of both narratives within the monomythical theory. Therefore, the biblical section that describes fully Jesus' journey is the Gospels. The central structure chosen to guide the whole narrative discourse within the Gospels is Matthew's, which is considered as the most 'humanising' of the Gospels and it is often represented by the symbol of the winged man (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). Thus, the narrative structure of Matthew's Gospel has an intertwine framework that uses Jesus message to connect all the plot point within this story. The Gospel's backbone can be divided into five discourses and it is fully detailed in Appendix C. Nonetheless, as some events of Jesus life are not considered within Gospel of Matthew, particular fragments of other Gospels were chosen to complement the canonical narrative.

On the other side, the videogame FOJ tells the story of Jesus and Judas that find themselves suddenly at the beginning of a zombie outbreak. The motive of this epidemic in the old Jerusalem is because of one of Jesus' miracles, the raising of Lazarus, went wrong and now Lazarus is turning everyone into devouring-brains zombies (Fist of Jesus, 2014). As described in the methodological chapter, the purposes of choosing to examine during the first stage the overall videogame structure is to understand the noncanonical universe and Jesus' monomythical journey within it. Then, the specific analysis will help to focalize the analysis on a particular quest of Jesus' journey.

Without further ado, in Table 6 there is a deeper description of the overall structure of Matthew's Gospel, plus the complementary fragments of the other Gospels; and the videogame narrative of FOJ in contrast with the Campbell's monomyth.

Table 3: The monomyth's separation contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Call to adventure	Jesus meets John the Baptist at the Jordan River (Matthew, 3:13).	After raising Lazarus from the dead, he starts attacking everyone and converting them into zombies.
Refusal of call	John the Baptist refuses to baptize Jesus because he considers himself unworthy of the task, but he accepts at the end (Matthew, 3:14-15).	Jesus does not directly refuse the call to fight the zombies but asks for Judas to help him, even though he is an ordinary human.
Supernatural Aid	During Jesus' baptism, the 'heavens open' and a voice from above identify him as the Son of God (Matthew, 3:16-17).	At first, Jesus and Judas must fight the zombies with their hand but, as the level-up, they gain supernatural powers (from above) which help them in the killing.

The call to adventure starts from two opposite callings. While in the canonical text, the mission of Jesus is a divine plan and has been foretold since ancient times by the prophets, in FOJ the quest is something that unpredictably happened. Besides, when Jesus begins his ministry of preaching, this action is linked to heaven and metaphysical matters and, in a sense, to the immortality of the soul through conversion. Whereas in the game, the action of killing zombies is related to the death and the fragility of Jesus in light of the zombies. Thus, Jesus' vulnerability is a topic linked to the death-of-God theology, as comprehending Christ as a perceptible human being is of the aspects on which this theology was based.

During the refusal part, in both narratives, Jesus does not directly reject the call to adventure, but he shows willingness to accept it. However, both stories present other characters who are also involved in this acceptance. In the canonical line, John the Baptist refuses to baptize Jesus as he feels unworthy. In the noncanonical storyline, Jesus tells Judas to help him battle the zombies. John and Judas cannot reject Jesus' request, this demonstrates the authority of Christ over both characters.

In addition, in both stories, the characters are elevated to Jesus level. John baptizes the 'son of God', in spite of being a common mortal, and Judas fights side by side with Jesus, despite not having divine powers on his own. Thus, this elevation has a connection to the psychological consequence of the death of God, where man has reached a superior level in contrast to the divinity.

In relation to the supernatural aid, both in the canon and noncanon storylines, the characters receive the help from the first *persona* of the Holy Trinity, God Father. In the canon universe, Jesus obtains recognition from God during this baptism and that act validates his ministry. At the same time in the noncanon world, Jesus gains the aid from the powers that are given to him from Heaven. While in the canonical text we see a direct voice from above that

presents Jesus as ‘his son’, in the canonical text the humanistic approach takes over the narrative, as the Father of Christ not an active participant of the story. This passive presence is similar to the second characteristic of the death-of-God theology and the preaching discourse that Catholic Church used after Nietzsche’s allegations, which is to pass from theological dogmas that sustain over the unknown face of God, to a narrative centred on the salvific aspect of man and his doings.

On the other hand, one of the highest contrasting points of the adventure’s beginning is Jesus’ sidekick in the videogame: Judas. Even though Judas is seen as the ultimate traitor, in FOJ Judas is Jesus’ best friend and helps him fight the zombie’s hordes. This can be as an act of character vindication on behalf of the noncanonical narrative, and the remixing practice provided the prosumer who created the noncanonical storyline the ‘power’ to change Christianity’s historical tradition. In Table 6 there is a wider description of the initiation part within the Campbellian monomyth.

Table 4: The monomyth’s initiation contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Crossing the first threshold	After his baptism, Jesus goes into the desert and spends forty days and nights fasting and being tempted by the devil (Matthew, 4:1-11).	Jesus finds the first boss of the game, Lazarus. The same one who was resurrected by him and who started the zombie epidemic.
Belly of the whale	Once Jesus defeats temptation he starts he begins to preach. He leaves his ordinary life as a carpenter to start his preaching ministry (Matthew, 4:12-25:46).	Judas and Jesus defeat Lazarus, but he claims he will resurrect again. At this point, the player is aware that Lazarus will return later in the game.

Table 4 (Continued A): The monomyth’s initiation contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Road of trials	During Jesus’ preaching phase he encountered problems with the Pharisees, masters of the Jewish law, and with other detractors. Thus, he selected a group of faithful followers that he called the apostles (Matthew, 4:18-25:46).	Judas and Jesus keep killing distinct types of zombies and other menaces: exploding lepers, cowboy zombies, Roman zombies, a Kraken, sheep, etc.
Meeting with the Goddess	Jesus chose Peter as the leader of the Church and shows the trust and affection he has for him (Matthew, 16:13-18).	In the videogame, there is no meeting with the goddess or temptation side, as
Temptation	Jesus predicts his death, but Peter tries to convince him that such an event will never happen. So, Jesus turns to reclaim him that his thoughts are not from God, but from Satan, the highest tempter (Matthew, 16:21-27)	Jesus has already skipped the temptation of running away from the zombies.

Once he is cleaned by the water of baptism, Jesus can confront the first threshold of his preaching journey: be tempted by the devil in the desert. In the noncanonical narrative, Jesus must use the abilities he has learned so far to defeat Lazarus. In this scenario, two types of baptism happen: the first baptism is by water and symbolises peace, as Christ had come to Earth to save us from sin; whereas the second one is through zombie’s blood and Jesus is preparing for a war against the zombies. Once again, the topic of Jesus’ humanity and his fragile state against the unnatural forces of death is related to the Nietzschean criticism over the canonical Christian narrative.

In both narratives, Jesus is aware that from the belly on the whale onwards the journey will get harder. In the Gospels, Jesus finds himself leaving behind his profession and family to preach God's intentions in contrast to the videogame, where a recently winning Jesus has just defeated Lazarus for the first time and is aware that he has been turning many into zombies. In the new mysterious world that is presented, our hero is unaware of the risks of his preaching or the zombie mutations that will appear.

Furthermore, during the road of trials, while in the canonical storyline, Jesus continues to gain respect as a master, in the noncanonical story, Jesus is constantly fighting weird zombie types, converting water into beer (see Figure 4), and even battling a kraken. The road of trials is the part where the noncanonical narrative extended its satirical vision over Jesus's canonical narrative and used it for creating comedy. Moreover, this comical side has to lead the remixing practice into the ontological consequence of the death-of-God, where the old religious symbols and figures of Jesus' miracles have been transformed into a more modern version. This desecration of the sacred popularises the canonical narrative by converting the 'high culture' symbols of the wine conversion into a popular object, which is beer.

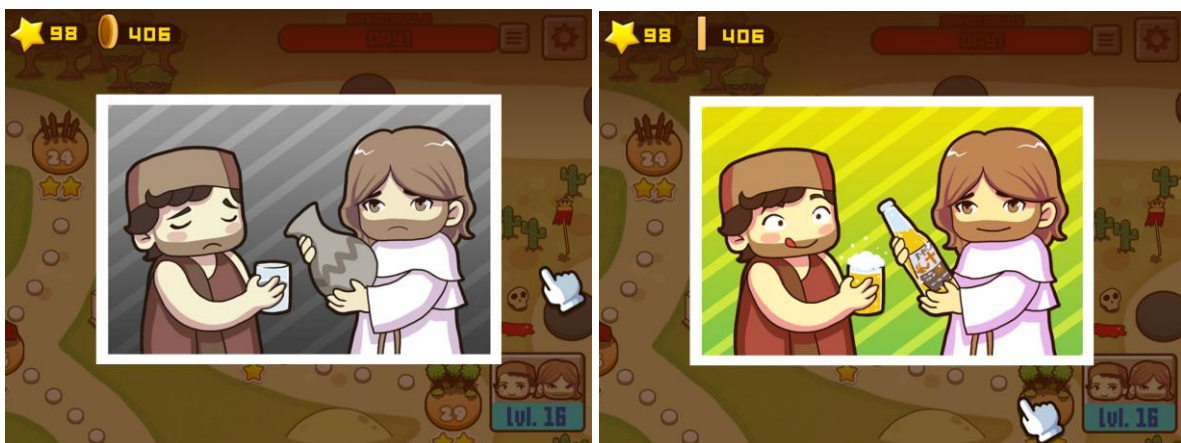


Figure 4: Water into beer miracle (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

The meeting with the Goddess as well as the Temptation stage is not found in FOJ. The

peculiarity of both stages is that the provided the hero the chance to prove himself during the journey. The noncanonical narrative dispenses these stages since its hero does not need to validate himself as someone worthy of the mission. The unorthodox Jesus is a rather picaresque Messiah who handles his affairs with a unique style. Nonetheless, for the canonical narrative, to pass the temptation is an important side of the journey, as it rectifies Jesus' pureness and his divine condition to not be turned into sin.

Table 4 (Continued B): The monomyth's initiation contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Atonement with the father	Jesus is aware that soon the Roman soldiers will capture him. He goes to Gethsemane to pray with his apostles and to speak to 'God' (Father) about his doubts. In the end, he decides to be captured and face a trial (Matthew, 26:36-46).	The atonement with the heavenly father is constant, as Jesus and Judas are always 'praying' for special power to defeat the zombies. Yet there is an encounter with another fatherly figure, Melchor, one of the wise men that visited Jesus when he was a baby.
Apostasy	After having an illegal trial and being tortured, Jesus is crucified in the Golgotha. His body is later moved to a tomb (Matthew, 27:27-66).	After the second fight with the Kraken, Jesus must resurrect Judas, his fighting partner. He does so by kissing him on the cheek.
The ultimate boon	On the third day, Mary Magdalene, one of the women that followed Jesus, finds out that his body is no longer there. She finds an angel in the tomb who warns her that Jesus has resurrected (Matthew, 28:1-8).	The ultimate blessing that the player can get from the game is levelling up and getting all the divine powers at their maximum.

On the other hand, the canonical 'atonement with the father' happens when Jesus speaks directly to his heavenly father while praying in Gethsemane. This intimate spiritual moment

settles the intrinsic relationship among the ‘Son’ and the ‘Father’, and how they connected into a higher metaphysical level where the Father’s intentions convert into Son’s actions. During this contemplational prayer, Jesus decides to accept the father’s plan that will lead him to death and, later on, to his resurrection. Thus, the canonical narrative displays God as the meaning-giver or greater planner, a sociological sense that is lost due to Nietzsche.

The other ‘atonement with the father’ occurs when Jesus runs into Melchor, one of the wise men who visited him while being a baby, who tells him about a giant octopus that lives in the Death Sea and guards some secret scrolls. While the act of validation through the father does not have the same intimate meaning as in the canonical narrative, since it is of a jocular nature, Melchor gives Jesus the task to annihilate the creature and, therefore, sustains a sort of authoritarian fatherly role.

In the case of the apostasy, in the biblical text, we see the touching narration of Jesus’ Pasion and excruciating crucifixion. Hence, in the crux, Jesus finds two conclusive results from his mission which are the redemption of sins, according to Christian canonical tradition, and the ending of his historical figure. This transcendental metaphysical meaning is lost in the noncanonical narrative, where the apostasy is Judas’ death after the second battle with the Kraken. In contrast to Jesus’ resurrection, Judas is resurrected by a sleeping-beauty style kiss from Jesus.

The parodical side of this remediation reaches a deeper canonical level, as according to the Christian tradition, Judas betrays Jesus and identifies him for the Romans with a kiss, the same action that brings him back to life in the noncanonical narrative (see Figure 5). Thus, both stories develop the subject of death through their own perspective, in the first one is Jesus that will resurrect once he has died by the hands of the Romans whereas in the noncanonical story is Judas who resurrects to continue with his mission of killing zombies. While the first

resurrection has a deeper and spiritual meaning for Christian canon, as it presents Jesus as the one who ‘conquer death’ and ‘life giver’. In the second one, Judas comes back to keep on providing more death by killing zombies.



Figure 5: Jesus resurrects Judas (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

The last stage of the initiation is related to the ultimate blessing gained by the hero once the decisive battle is over. For the canonical narrative, the earned boon is Jesus’ resurrection. The importance of this act in the Christian canon is so transcendental that is the breaking point with other religious traditions. For Muslims or Jewish, Jesus was one of the great prophets yet not the ‘Son of God’. For Christians, as Jesus was indeed the Son sent from Heaven, he conquered death and came back to life to prove what he was the awaited Messiah.

In contrast to the theological and metaphysical approach that the orthodox Christian beliefs establish in its canon, the unorthodox narrative describes the ultimate boon as the maximum level the player can accomplish in the game and obtaining all the powers to their utmost stage. In this sense, the achievement of unlocking all the special abilities provides a psychological meaning of superiority which is connected to the psychological consequence of the death-of-God. The figure of the man raises to its higher splendour by his own means and even he can reach the same level as God, in this scenario represented by Jesus. Finally, in the

following table, a further description of the returning part of the hero's journey can be found.

Table 5: The monomyth's return contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Refusal to return	There is no refusal from Jesus to engage in contact with the ordinary world.	Throughout the levels, Jesus is constantly refusing to join the zombie forces and become part of this newly established zombie order.
Magic flight	In this case, after his resurrection, Jesus has become the ultimate blessing. The ones that are in danger are the apostles, who are escaping the Roman government and the Pharisees, (John, 20:19).	After defeating Lazarus and the Roman zombie empire, Jesus and Judas must have an ultimate battle with the kraken.
Rescue from without	While Jesus does not need any help to return the land of the left. But, the first meeting with Mary Magdalene helps to spread the news that he has returned from death (John, 20:11-18).	The 'rescue' comes the divine powers gained through the levelling up, without these powers defeating the Kraken is impossible.
Crossing the return threshold	Jesus appears to the apostles as a sign of his return to the ordinary world (Luke, 24:36-43) Jesus commands his apostles to continue his teachings and to baptise others. (Matthew, 28:16-20).	After defeating the Kraken, Melchor appears and tells Jesus that now the can cook the creature with the recipe from the Death Sea scrolls.

In the first stage of the return part, both in the canonical as the noncanonical narrative, Jesus does not refuse at any moment to return to the ordinary world. Thus, in the orthodox storyline, during the 'magic flight' stage, the apostles are the ones in danger since they believe that Jesus' was the true Messiah. The feared of being recognized as disciples of Jesus is such

that they remain hidden during the days that followed Jesus' death. The unorthodox 'magic flight' stage is related to the decisive battle that Jesus and Judas must have against the kraken.

In the 'rescue' stage, Mary Magdalene helps Jesus to spread the news about his resurrection. The importance of the encounter with Mary is its transmediational meaning, as Mary Magdalene translates into words her encounter with the resurrected Jesus. Contrary to this proclaiming event, the 'rescue' stage in the unorthodox narrative is gained through having completed the maximum level of all the divine powers. According to this, whereas the power's sources come from above, achieving these benefits can only be obtained through the fruit of the player's effort.

Finally, the 'crossing the return threshold' stage happens in the canon when Jesus appears to his disciples and ask them to continue his teachings. In the unorthodox storyline, Jesus defeats the gigantic creature and wishes to celebrate his victory by cooking a kraken stew using the Death Sea's scrolls recipe, as Melchor required. Once again, the prosumeristic control that remixing practices enable for the users can make them re-write the story and turn an elevated metaphysical encounter with a resurrected man into a cooking kraken fest.

Table 5 (Continued A): The monomyth's return contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Master of two worlds	Thomas, one of the apostles, does not believe that Jesus has resurrected (John, 20:24-29).	Jesus and Judas have killed the last menace and have reached the maximum level. They have become zombie-killer experts.

Table 5 (Continued B): The monomyth’s return contrast (done by the author, based on Campbell, 1949)

Stages	Gospels from The Bible (Kanachikuzhy, 2012)	Videogame (Fist of Jesus, 2018)
Freedom to live	Jesus ascends to heaven in body and soul to live through eternity. Jesus freely decides to go after leaving the task of preaching to his apostles (Luke, 24:50-53).	Judas and Jesus now can continue living in a zombie-free Jerusalem, while the last message from the authors is that the game is ‘very similar’ to the original story.

Within the canon narrative, Jesus achieves to master the two worlds by presenting himself to the apostles. During his apparition, Jesus displays the wound of the cross’ nails in his palms. This gesture exemplifies how Jesus has conquered the spiritual and physical world. In the noncanonical narrative, Jesus and Judas have also reached to overcome the physical world, as they have defeated all the zombies from Jerusalem. In the last stage, freedom to live, this event is reached in the canon when Jesus ascends to Heaven to live by His Father’s side. In the noncanonical narrative Jesus and Judas can live peacefully now that the zombies died, nonetheless, apparently, there is no one else to preach to.

On top of all the monomythical stages that involved the canonical and noncanonical narratives, the remediated unorthodox object also presents certain popular culture references within its storyline. For example, throughout the videogame, Jesus can have a duel with cowboy zombies, recover life by eating an appetizing hamburger, and even fight a fearsome kraken (see Figure 6).



Figure 6: Noncanonical popular culture events (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

Among those popular elements inserted in the game universe, there are some that belong to other narrative canons. In the case of the kraken, this mythological creature also appears in ancient Greek culture, while cowboys are part of the North American history. The act of grabbing elements from other narrative expressions and introducing them into a new medium is an essential characteristic of remixing practices and exemplifies the prosumers control over a multi-universe of canon stories.

3.2 Second stage: specific analysis of both narratives

The second stage of the comparative analysis compares further the dissonances of a biblical passage with a videogame level. The biblical passage selected comes from the Gospel of John, which is characterized for its spiritual and theological references to the life and teachings of Jesus. Moreover, this Gospel is also symbolically represented with the ‘eagle’, as the evangelist expands in the mystery of Jesus Christ through a heavenly look, close to the mysteries of Christ’s divinity, but another eye fixed on the ground and the mortality of Jesus (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, p. 1872). Thus, as John’s Gospels benefits from symbology to describe the theological principles in the *persona* of Christ, environmental storytelling uses symbols and

images as well to immerse the user within the storyworld. For that reason, the Gospel of John was chosen as the specific canonical narrative to be the point of contrast with the game level.

On the other hand, FOJ can be considered as a casual game, since the game objectives are clear and easily achievable in a brief period of time, whereas the game concepts tend to be of a lighter subject as comedy or satire (Trefry, 2010). The light-centred aspect of casual games is a distinctive contrasting point to the Bible, as the first entails an occasional playing time, while the second one requires the user to be concentrate and aware of the multiple text interpretations to decode the theological message. Besides, FOJ also belongs to the “Beat ‘em up” genre, where the player must face the continuous enemy waves that keep attacking (Rogers, 2010). In the case of the ‘Fist of Jesus’, the zombie hordes appear from the left and right side of the screen while the player must use the appropriate abilities to defeat them.

Furthermore, the segment that will be analysed within the game narrative is a boss-fight. In a game, levels are the dividing stages where characters are constantly learning about how to master the worlds environment and its mechanic, thus, levels are continuously increasing their difficulty while the player advances in the game (Schell, 2008). A boss-fight level is a specific point in the quest where the hero must defeat the upgraded version of a regular enemy.

Likewise, both orthodox and unorthodox narratives narrate one of Jesus’ greatest miracles: the raising of Lazarus. The main reason for choosing this passage is due to its theme related to the death, and that is linked to Nietzsche’s statement about God’s mortality. The relation to the Nietzschean death-of-God is because this miracle precipitated the arrest of Jesus, as he was seen as a treat by the high Jewish priests of the Sanhedrin and, later on, lead to his crucifixion (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, p. 1909). The biblical fragment expands on the image of Jesus being the light and the resurrection, whereas in the game Jesus is battling the saviour that defeats death by killing the undead. The complete biblical passage can be read in Appendix D.

As the objective of the analysis was to establish the essential narrative structure among canonical Christian storyline, the exegetical categories selected are the focus in the narrative’s development of events rather than on the linguistic side of the text. Furthermore, the specific analysis will not consider all the exegetical categories for examine the biblical text, as the comparison among different transcriptions, textual criticism in the use of specific words in the translation, source criticism in relation to the diverse sources that inspired the text, redaction criticism in contrast to other parallel text, Jewish interpretations, among others.

3.2.1 Historical-Critical contrast

In the following tables, each relevant component of the exegetical analysis is categorized in a systematic way. After detailing the canonical narrative elements in the tables, they will be contrasted with FOJ’s game objects, which are the cornerstone components of the environmental storytelling. Is through these objects that the game world presents upon the player, and from which he can unfold the game’s meaning.

Table 6: Historical-critical for the exegetical analysis (based on the Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993; Kanachikuzhy, 2012)

A) The Historical-Critical Method	
Socio-historical Criticism (What parts of the story are presented as facts?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The place where the story unveils is Bethany, a city two-miles-away from Jerusalem. • The raising of Lazarus is presented as a fact.
Traditional Literary Criticism (What images or symbols are presented in the text?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Son of God’ • ‘Let us go to die with him’ • ‘I know that he will rise in the resurrection of the dead on the last day’ • ‘I am the resurrection and the life’ • And Jesus wept.

As described by Lyotard, the metanarratives state some parts of their storylines as truths.

In the case of the canonical example, the evangelist uses existent places to locate the characters from the story. Also, whereas the biblical text presents Lazarus' raising as a miraculous historical event, the videogame does not claim to be truthful to reality and detaches itself from any historical validation. The lack of historicity is an opposing point and criticism of the metanarrative's needed search for authentication.

In the case of the literary symbols, in the canon Johannine text one of the recurrent images is Jesus being described as 'the Son of God' (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). This intimate fatherly relationship amid Jesus and the first *persona* of the Holy Trinity, God Father, introduces the reader into the theological mystery of Jesus' divine affiliation. By contrast, in the noncanon remediated story, Jesus' relationship to God is limited to praying requests (see Figure 7). Even though God Father continues to favourably respond to the commands of his son and provides him with the heavenly powers to multiply bread or acquire weapons, the relationship is not of a fatherly nature. This remediating aspect of the noncanonical narrative associates to the sociological Nietzschean consequence of God's death where, by removing the intimate purpose of Jesus and God's relationship, the Father becomes an objectivised being turned into a genius who grants wishes.



Figure 7: Jesus prays to multiple the objects (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

Another phrase that constructs a symbolical figure within the biblical passage is the one said by Thomas, one of Jesus apostles, which is ‘Let us go to die with him’ (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). When the apostle says this line is to express the others his readiness to remain with Jesus even if that means to die as a martyr (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). The concept to die in benefit of the Gospel characterizes the Catholic Church’s first years, where Christians were persecuted by the Romans due to their beliefs. Thus, the act of dying in Jesus’ name still exists on the unorthodox narrative, because when the player fails in the mission of defeating Lazarus and loses, a resembling image to Michelangelo’s *Pietà* is presented. In this image Judas lies dead in the arms of Jesus (see Figure 8). This image represents not only the risk of the adventure but the limitations of the noncanonical Jesus to instantly revive the player.

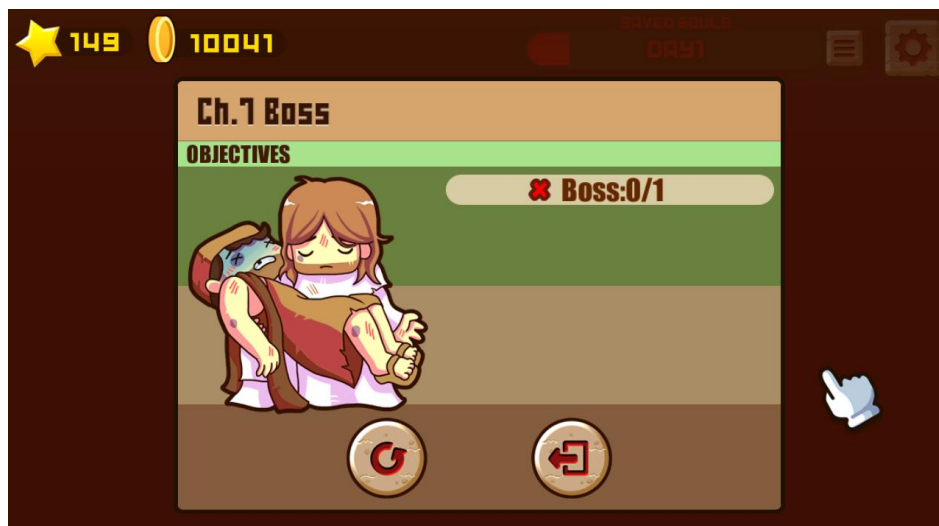


Figure 8: Judas’ death in the arms of Jesus (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

On another part of the orthodox text, one of Lazarus’ sisters, Mary, claims that her brother will rise again ‘in the resurrection of the dead on the last day’ (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). Mary’s words are an asseveration of her deep beliefs on Jewish metanarrative tradition about resurrection and introduce the reader into the socio-cultural context in the Jerusalem of that time. The theme of the resurrection is also treated in FOJ, but through a warning from Lazarus to the player:

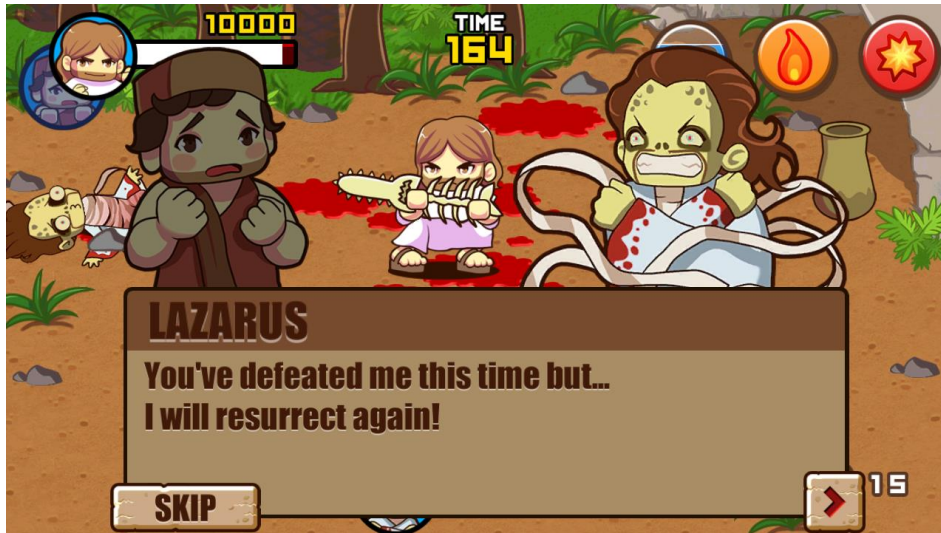


Figure 9: Lazarus warns about his return (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

In the scene, the user has just defeated Lazarus, however, the boss seems not to be completely defeated and warns the player about his return. In this sense, the word ‘resurrection’ implies that the character will reappear as a boss in a higher level and with improved powers. Furthermore, another symbolical narrative element that is related to the resurrection is Jesus’ phrase ‘I am the resurrection and the life’ (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). With this iconic phrase, Jesus teaches that the Jewish resurrection is a present reality in him and, at the same time, the active voice of his discourse reveals his divine authority and security.

However, Jesus’ mortality is radically presented in the unorthodox narrative. While Jesus’ humanity is a recurrent topic of the death-of-God theology, in FOJ this subject theme has reached an extreme dimension as Jesus can be beaten by the enemies (see Figure 10). Nonetheless, creating the noncanon Jesus as a beatable character gives balance to the game, since providing Jesus with endless divine powers will generate an undefeated game state and the player would not face any challenge.



Figure 10: Jesus lies dead near Lazarus (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

The final selected figure of John's Gospel is a verse that describes Jesus weeping for having lost Lazarus. The action of crying constructs a humanising side of the Messiah and represents him as someone who shares the same emotions as others. Is from this and other biblical passages that the death-of-God theology tried to reconstruct the canonical narrative and presented Jesus as a historical figure to whom everyone could relate to, someone who deeply loved his friends that he even mourned them.



Figure 11: Lazarus hits Jesus (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

Nevertheless, in the noncanon storyline, Jesus humanising side is not as emotional as in the Gospel. Instead, Jesus is presented as a vulnerable being to Lazarus' attacks. Someone who not only cries but bleeds (see Figure 11). Once again, the recurrent weakness of God, signified in Jesus, appears once again as criticism for believing in him to be the 'Son of God'.

3.2.2 Literary analysis contrast

Continuing with the analysis, in the following table the rhetorical and narrative elements of the exegetical analysis are described.

Table 7: Literary method for the exegetical analysis (based on the Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993; Kanachikuzhy, 2012)

B) Methods of Literary Analysis	
<p style="text-align: center;">Rhetorical Analysis</p> <p>(What is the purpose of the text?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purposes of the Johannine literature are to explore the relationship between Jesus and God. • The central message of this Gospels is God's definitive self-revelation in the person of Jesus.
<p style="text-align: center;">Narrative Analysis</p> <p>(Which character are part of the story?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus • Martha, resistant and stuck to the Jewish metanarrative • Mary, more open-hearted to believe • Jesus' disciples • Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus • Other Jews from the community of Bethany

Despite John's Gospel centred its narrative discourse in relation to Jesus self-revelation as the son of God. The purpose of the videogame is far from this spiritual meaning as the noncanonical narrative was created as a lucrative source for a prosumer's team and their new unorthodox transmedia universe. In this way, man is reborn through the prosumeristic initiative of profiting from God's narrative and exhibits how a prosumer has surpassed the metanarrative system.

Within the category of narrative analysis, among the characters found in the biblical passage are Jesus, Martha, Maria, amid others. They all serve to give purpose to God’s salvific message and contribute to Jesus’ mission. On the contrary, in the noncanonical storyline, the characters that appear in the first boss-fight level are either Jesus’ ally (Judas) or enemy (Lazarus). This binary opposition transforms the scenario into a two-alternative ending, it is a win or losing possibility. The player does not have other contributors to his adventure and must rely on his abilities to play the game through the mechanics.

3.2.3 ‘Based on the tradition’ contrast

The last contrasting point of the specific analysis considers the canonical approach of the exegetical analysis and its contrast to the noncanonical narrative foundation.

Table 8: Based on tradition method for the exegetical analysis (based on Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993; Kanachikuzhy, 2012)

C) Approaches Based on Tradition	
Canonical Approach (How is the text related to the biblical canon?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the Gospel of John was written later than the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). • The passage belongs to the second part of John’s Gospel, which is called ‘The Book of Signs’.

John’s Gospel contributes to the canonical Christian narrative in terms of introducing Jesus miracles as ‘signs’ that reveal he is the true Messiah. Besides, the Gospel contains a deeper theological thought regarding the Christ-mystery than the other Gospels (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). In the case of the noncanonical story, this one uses canonical elements to nurture its narrative world. Amid the multiple canon narrative figures that are introduced in the unorthodox storyline, the two most representative game objects are the star of Bethlehem and the cross.

For instance, the star was the one that guides the wise men of Orient to the place where Jesus was born, Bethlehem (Kanachikuzhy, 2012). However, FOJ narrative remediation has twisted this sign from the Heaven to find the awaited Messiah into a lethal zombie-killing weapon (see Figure 12). A similar circumstance has happened to the cross, used in the Christian canon as a redeeming sign, and which is featured in the game as deadly armament (see Figure 13). In the cross' example, the remixing practices have severely affected the metaphysical connotation for the salvation of sins and degraded its level to a mere object. Whilst in the canon the cross is a symbol of salvation, in the noncanon it is a sign of death through violence.



Figure 12: Judas uses the stars of Bethlehem (Fist of Jesus, 2018)



Figure 13: Jesus uses the cross (Fist of Jesus, 2018)

Although the ontological consequence of Nietzsche's death-of-God was the discontinuation of religious symbols, the renewed mediated narrative brought to life these devotional symbols into a contemporary context. The remixing practice of recycling old media narratives into new media environments has enabled the symbols to regain their strength in the noncanonical narrative universe.

Chapter 4. Conclusions: a remediated God

“You awake us to delight in your praise; for you made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” (Augustine, 2014)

The Roman philosopher, Doctor of Theology, and Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, considered in his *Confessions* that humans were born with an intrinsic need for a divine transcendence, therefore, they were constantly called upon to satisfy this appetite by introducing themselves into the religious narrative. Thus, this heavenly necessity remains standing in the contemporary unorthodox remediation of the Christian canon. Somehow, humankind keeps finding in God’s story an engaging and living narrative structure. However, despite this seemingly everlasting effect that Christianity produces, this discussion found certain aspects that affect its canonical storyline in the comparative analysis.

Although the noncanonical narrative carries certain canonical elements in its story and presents these components within popular culture, possibly to a population’s segment who is not linked to the canonical message, its unorthodox narrative marks a distance from the ultimate purpose of its original canon: the redemption of souls. This detachment became evident in the comparative analysis, where on one side the biblical passage contained an emotional and theological symbology, while the videogame tended to popularize the elevated religious concepts of the Christian canon through parody. Hence, the act of transmediating the ‘high cultural’ narrative components of Christianity, into a casual game genre is a characteristic of the remixing practices.

In addition, remixing practices not only bring a cultural product closer to an audience but empower the prosumer responsible for remedying the unorthodox narrative. In this sense, the

proliferation of new and digital media tools has led to a remediating environment, in which the prosumer can interact and appropriate the diverse metanarrative canons. Therefore, without an interested prosumer in the canonical text, there would not be a resultant remediation. On the other hand, the fact that Christianity is a monomythic narrative with a transmediatic potential developed a suitable story environment for these remediations.

Furthermore, the importance of the prosumer in the remediation is also related to Nietzsche's death-of-God metaphysics. Whereas the Nietzschean postulate predicted that the Abrahamic God would be annihilated by his own followers, together with an inactive and spectating society, it is through the prosumer's active role of engaging in remixing practices that Christian's canon carries on through our times.

Nonetheless, due to the limitations of this theoretical discussion, there cannot be complete asseveration that indeed popular culture remediations are the only resurrecting source for Christianity. Moreover, the remixing practice is not entirely a healing antidote for Christianity, as the previously mentioned detachment from a canon source can affect the narrative's perception. In a future research, it would be useful to consider the user's insights over noncanonical remediated products in contrast to the Christian canon and how both narratives nurture or unnurtured his religious practice.

Setting aside the importance of the prosumer in remediation, a significant point of the analysis and latent topic within the discussion was the death-of-God consequences. The psychological, sociological and ontological corollaries continuously appeared throughout the analysis. Although the noncanonical author of the videogame has not detailed his Nietzschean influence, nor the purpose of this research was to verify this assumption, Nietzsche's denoted influence in society could have created this inherent and imperceptible critical sense toward the divine narrative.

Another comparative point aspect of the theoretical discussion and that was present along with the Nietzschean consequences, was the death-of-God theology. While this canonical response to Nietzsche was not profoundly examined, since the central point was the consequences, certain aspects of its orthodox structure arose in the comparative analysis. The modest influence that this canonical line of thought had in the noncanon text can make us infer that it was not popularly successful and might have been even ignored. However, a deeper examination of the death-of-God theology's scope would be needed to validate this hypothesis.

4.1 Further considerations for prospective researches

For this discussion, I considered a canonical literary source of revelation to exemplify the orthodox narrative for the comparative analysis. Nevertheless, for further researches, it would be beneficial to contrast other components of the Christian transmediatic narrative and compare them with the same noncanonical element, or even others. The importance of analysing other orthodox source is due to benefit from Christianity's enriching and multisensorial experience.

An interesting path for a future research would be to ask again the question about 'why Christianity?' and what denote difference can be found in this monotheistic credo compared to other all-embracing metanarratives. Hence, if within other religious discourses one can find remediating noncanonical examples, and if these conceived remediations share similar attributes to Christianity's unorthodox remixing practice or not.

Furthermore, 'Fist of Jesus: the bloody Gospel of Judas' was a remediated cultural product born in a European context and which critically responses a certain extension of the Christian canon: The Catholic Church in Spain. Therefore, other remediated objects of study

can present distinctive characteristics according to their own backgrounds. Additionally, the digital medium in which 'Fist of Jesus' was created, and its independent production were some of the factors that contributed to encourage the prosumer remixing practices. Other non-independent remediations, like examples mentioned in the literature review, may contain different contrasting features. Nonetheless, at the end of this study, the author found out that the videogame was no longer available for its download or purchase on Steam's online videogame platform. Although the causes of that extraction may have been several, these are not relevant for the objective of this analysis.

Moreover, further studies can use other contrasting points to reflect on the similitudes and differences between canon and noncanon narratives. Some of those topics that may be applied can be the theological meanings of the canonical narrative, the linguistics' uses in other biblical translations, how did the independent production practices mould the noncanonical prosumer product, the videogame's aesthetic in contrast to the character's description in the biblical text, and so on.

Finally, even though the resultant analysis concluded that Nietzsche's fatal assertion over Christianity has not yet accomplished, I would not completely agree on calling a victory for Christian narrative. The most significant recommendation for a prospective analysis would be verifying if Christianity is still standing through time or, from noncanon remediation to unorthodox remix, it's slowly deteriorating and disappearing.

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Appendix

Appendix A: The seventeen stages of the monomyth (based on Campbell, 1949)

Parts	Stages	Description
Separation	Call to adventure	The hero begins the story with a daily life in a mundane world. His environment is familiar and stable, known to him. In this initial phase, the audience can know the hero's limitations, his ambitions and identification ties. Then, the breaking point of this status quo is the call to adventure, a call usually introduced by a character known as the herald.
	Refusal of call	Whether due to the fear of the unknown, insecurity, a sense of obligation towards the ordinary world, or the radical change his about to made, the hero decides to reject the call to adventure.
	Supernatural aid	The hero makes a first contact with a source or support figure that gives him more information about the adventure and the challenges ahead. This supernatural aid provides the hero with proper tools to start the adventure and, with this security, the hero decides to accept the call.
Shared by separation and initiation	Crossing the first threshold	Crossing the threshold means completely leaving behind the mundane universe and entering the realm of unknown, where the rules and limits are not yet fully defined. The threshold is the first real danger that the hero must pass.
Initiation	Belly of the whale	Once the threshold has been crossed, the hero is absolutely swallowed by the unknown world. This stage represents the final separation between the hero

		and his previous world, as well as his previous way of being. Now the hero is ready to begin his metamorphosis.
	Road of trials	After the hero has decided to take the decisive step, the road of trials begins. During his journey, the hero meets certain test that delay his adventure, but help him to gain strength for the final test. The hero not only get allies during the trials, but also gains enemies. While he does the trials, the hero is learning more about the new world he has entered.
	Meeting with the Goddess	At this point, the hero experiences an unconditional and powerful love that could resemble the love a child feels for his mother. This presence or person he falls in love with usually helps him with his quest.
	Temptation	The temptation can be shown as material or immaterial goods that can lead the hero to leave his mission. This temptation can start from the goddess, who has become an impure being and wishes to stop the hero in his mission.
	Atonement with the father	In this part, the hero is confronted with that person who has the maximum power over his life. In many myths this person is the father or a fatherly figure. The atonement with the father is a crucial point in the story, where the hero confronts, persuades or seeks the approval of this figure.
	Apostasy	In the apostasy, the hero moves beyond his ordinary state to reach a profound knowledge. Is within this realization that the hero obtains a higher place in the narrative and is ready to overcome the final test.

	The ultimate boon	In this stage, the hero achieves the goal of the quest, the maximum blessing he was hoping to win. All the previous steps have served so that the hero is ready and pure to receive this gift. The blessing can be an object specifically created for the mission.
Return	Refusal to return	After winning the final blessing, the hero wants to stay in the place where he has found comfort and serenity. Compared to the thunderous adventure, the monotony of the 'normal life' seems unacceptable to the hero, which makes him want to embark on another adventure.
	Magic flight	Occasionally, the hero must escape with the treasure he has obtained in the ultimate blessing stage. The action that follows the escape can be as dangerous as the adventure itself. Also, this can be a race against time which may involve the fear of losing the blessing.
	Rescue from without	Sometimes the hero needs a guide that can bring him back on track, especially if they have been wounded during the escape or last trial. It is particularly useful if the rescuer turns out to be someone who knows the hero from a previous part of the trip.
	Crossing the return threshold	Finally, the hero returns home where he is safe from further persecutions. To cross the threshold of return is not a simple task because a last confrontation can appear. Thus, crossing the threshold means retaining all the knowledge acquire during the quest and be open to share it with the rest of the world.
	Master of two worlds	Once the adventure is completed, the hero has become the master of two worlds: the ordinary and

		<p>extraordinary. After having crossed the final threshold, the hero has purified himself. The hero returns to the ordinary world in a higher being than when he left.</p>
	<p>Freedom to live</p>	<p>At the end of the adventure, and after having conquered the demons inside and outside him, the hero has earned the right to choose how to live the rest of his days. One of the paths he can choose is to become a mentor for other heroes or settling down. The hero is transformed is fully transformed and shares what he has gained with his allies, the community or the world.</p>

Appendix B: Methods of Biblical Exegesis (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993)

A) The Historical-Critical Method	Questions Typically Asked:
Composition History Questions	<p>Who is the author of the work? What do we know about him/her/them?</p> <p>Is the attributed author the actual author, or is the work pseudepigraphic?</p> <p>When, where, and under what circumstances was the work written?</p> <p>Who were the original recipients? Where did they live?</p>
Traditional Literary Criticism	<p>What words are used, and what range of meanings do they have?</p> <p>What images and symbols are used, and what do they signify?</p> <p>What characters appear in the story? What do we know about them?</p> <p>How are the characters related to one another in the story?</p>
Comparison of Translations	<p>Are there any significant differences between various modern translations?</p> <p>When were these translations done, using which translation philosophies?</p> <p>Which ancient Hebrew or Greek texts underlie the various translations?</p> <p>Has anything been lost or obscured in the process of translation?</p>
Textual Criticism	<p>Are there any variant readings in the ancient manuscripts?</p> <p>Are the variants negligible (mere spelling) or significant (affecting meaning)?</p>

	<p>Can the variants be explained as intentional changes or as accidental ones?</p> <p>How do the literary or historical contexts help explain the variant readings?</p>
<p>Source Criticism</p>	<p>Does the text have any underlying source or sources?</p> <p>Which version of a source was used, in case there is more than one?</p> <p>What do the sources actually say and mean in their original contexts?</p> <p>How are the sources used (quoted, paraphrased, adapted?) in the later text?</p>
<p>Form Criticism</p>	<p>What is the literary form or “genre” of the whole work and the particular text?</p> <p>Does the text follow or diverge from the usual expectations for this genre?</p> <p>What is the normal purpose/goal of this genre?</p> <p>In what social context would texts of this genre have been used?</p>
<p>Redaction Criticism</p>	<p>How has the author used the source(s) in shaping this text?</p> <p>Are there any parallel texts, and how is this text similar and/or different?</p> <p>What particular views or theological emphases does this author show?</p> <p>How did the author’s life circumstances affect the shaping of the text?</p>
<p>Socio-Historical Criticism</p>	<p>If the story claims to be historical, what really happened?</p> <p>What social, historical, or cultural information can be gleaned from the text?</p>

	<p>What is background information necessary to better understand the text?</p> <p>What was life like for the common people, not just the ruling elites?</p>
B) New Methods of Literary Analysis	Questions Typically Asked:
Rhetorical Analysis	<p>What message is the author trying to convey?</p> <p>Is the author attempting to instruct, inspire, defend, or persuade the reader?</p> <p>What rhetorical techniques does he use to achieve his goals?</p>
Narrative Analysis	<p>Who are the characters in the story? What roles do they play?</p> <p>What is the plot sequence? What narrative time is covered?</p> <p>What is the author's and/or narrator's point of view?</p>
Semiotic Analysis	<p>What are deeper patterns of meaning conveyed by the words and symbols?</p>
C) Approaches Based on Tradition	Questions Typically Asked:
Canonical Approach	<p>Where does this text belong in the literary context of the entire Bible?</p> <p>How is this text related to prior texts and/or later texts in the Bible?</p> <p>How does its location in the Canon affect the meaning of this text?</p>
Using Jewish Interpretative Traditions	<p>How do traditional Jewish methods of interpretation read this text?</p> <p>Are there any parallel or similar stories in Rabbinic</p>

	<p>literature?</p> <p>Do Jewish and Christian interpretations of this text differ significantly?</p>
<p>History of Interpretation (Wirkungsgeschichte)</p>	<p>How was this text interpreted by the “Church Fathers” and in later centuries?</p> <p>Is the text interpreted differently by various churches and denominations?</p> <p>How has the text been interpreted in art, music, liturgy, and popular culture?</p>
<p>D) Apps. Using the Human Sciences</p>	<p>Questions Typically Asked:</p>
<p>Sociological Approach</p>	<p>What insights from Sociology can help in the interpretation of the text?</p> <p>What patterns of human social behavior are evident in the text?</p>
<p>Cultural Anthropology Approach</p>	<p>What can the model from Cultural Anthropology help us understand the text?</p> <p>What cultural presuppositions/patterns affect the interpretation of the text?</p>
<p>Psychological/Psychoanalytical Apps.</p>	<p>How can the text be interpreted using various theories from Psychology?</p> <p>Can the text help us understand the human psyche better?</p>
<p>E) Contextual Approaches</p>	<p>Questions Typically Asked:</p>
<p>Liberationist Approach</p>	<p>Has this text been used for domination of oppressed people? How?</p> <p>Can this text be used for the liberation of the poor/disadvantaged? How?</p> <p>Can other texts counteract the detrimental effects</p>

	of oppressive texts?
Feminist Approach	Does the text evidence gender bias? Was later interpretation also biased? How is the meaning of the text affected if read from a feminist perspective? What can other texts be recovered and used to balance out biased texts?

Appendix C: Matthew's Gospel narrative structure (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, p. 1641)

The infancy narrative (1:1 – 2:23)		
1	Narrative	The beginnings of the Ministry of Jesus (3:1 – 4:25)
	Discourse	The Sermon on the Mount (5:1 – 7:29)
		The Lifestyle of the Discipleship
2	Narrative	A collection of miracles (8:1 – 9:38)
		The Signs of the Kingdom
	Discourse	The mission discourse (10:1 – 42)
		The conditions of the Christian mission
3	Narrative	The growing conflict with the Jews (11:1 – 12:50)
	Discourse	The parable discourse (13:1 – 58)
		The Separation of the True and False Israel
4	Narrative	Jesus and His disciples (14:1 – 17:27)
		The building up of the community
	Discourse	The community discourse (18:1 – 35)
		Some rules for the community
5	Narrative	The conflict and the consolidation (19:1 – 23:39)
	Discourse	The eschatological discourse (24:1 – 25:46)
		How to await the Lord
The Passion Narrative (26:1 – 28:20)		

Appendix D: The raising of Lazarus (Kanachikuzhy, 2012, pp. 1907-1909)

The Bible is a collection of a many books written by several authors and distinctive literary genres. All the Bible's books are divided in numbered verses. In the following passage of John's Gospels, we can also find this numbered division along the text:

1 Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
2 Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.³ So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill."⁴ When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."¹¹ He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."¹² So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved."¹³ But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. ¹⁴ So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵ And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him."¹⁶ So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. ¹⁹ And many

of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." 24 Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." 29 As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 For Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still where Martha had met him. 31 So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed* and deeply troubled, 34 and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." 35 And Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." 37 But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?" 38 So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord,

by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days.” 40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. 42 I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice,* “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.”