

Place Representation and Player Perception in an In-Game City:

The Case of Revachol in *Disco Elysium*

Jung-Eun Yu¹, Jung Yoon Kim^{2*}

Abstract

This study compares place representation in the in-game text with place perception in Steam reviews, focusing on Revachol, a central in-game city in the narrative-oriented RPG *Disco Elysium*. A total of 812 in-game text entries containing 'Revachol' were collected from *Disco Elysium* Scribe, and 702 English Steam reviews mentioning 'Revachol' were selected from 53,099 reviews using the Steam Reviews API through Python. The data were manually coded into six categories: Physical and Environmental Place, Relational and Lived Place, Affective and Sensory Place, Historical, Political, and Social Place, Symbolic and Personified Place, and Unclassified. The results show that Historical, Political, and Social Place was the most frequent category in the in-game text (40.4%), indicating that Revachol is constructed as a central site of world-building shaped by revolution, occupation, class conflict, policing institutions, and ideological tensions. In contrast, Affective and Sensory Place was the most frequent category in Steam reviews (27.5%), suggesting that players tend to articulate Revachol as an affective place associated with melancholy, nostalgia, immersion, beauty, and loss. This study suggests that place meanings in narrative-oriented games are not completed solely by designed textual and spatial structures, but are reconstructed through players' experience, memory, and linguistic articulation.

Keyword : Place meanings, Sense of place, Game space, Player reviews, Digital place attachment

1. Introduction

In place theory, space becomes place through human experience, memory, emotion, and meaning-making [1]. From this perspective, video game spaces are not merely backgrounds or navigable maps, but can function as experiential places that form a sense of place through interaction, exploration, and immersion [2]. Video game spaces can also organize and represent social and political meanings, and the sense of place formed by players may influence their appreciation and evaluation of a game [3][4]. In narrative-oriented games, players engage with the game world through spatial movement,

¹ Department of Game and Interactive Media, Gachon University, Seongnam, Korea [Graduate Student]
e-mail: je20102810@gachon.ac.kr

² Department of Game Media, College of IT Convergence, Gachon University, Seongnam, Korea [Professor]
e-mail: kjoyoon@gachon.ac.kr (Corresponding author)

* This research was supported by the Regional Innovation System & Education (RISE) program through the Gyeonggi RISE Center, funded by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Gyeonggi-do, Republic of Korea. (2025-RISE-09-A01)

Received(April 26, 2026), Review Result(1st: May 19, 2026), Accepted(June 13, 2026), Published(June 30, 2026)



© 2026 The Authors. Published by NCSS.
This is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.
To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.

narrative events, character relationships, choices, and emotional responses [5]. Thus, a specific game space can be perceived as a place where emotional and narrative meanings accumulate through repeated exploration and narrative experience.

However, the way a game constructs a meaningful place may differ from how players perceive, evaluate, and articulate it. In-game text and environmental cues can present place meanings through history, politics, character relationships, sensory atmosphere, and symbolism [3][6]. Players, in turn, may interpret these meanings through their own experiences and emotions and reconstruct them in the evaluative language of reviews [7][8]. Therefore, analyzing placeness in game spaces requires examining both in-game place representation and player perception as articulated in reviews.

Previous studies have discussed game spaces as meaningful place experiences and shown that user-generated texts such as Steam reviews can reveal players' interests, complaints, and evaluations [9-11]. However, direct comparisons between place meanings constructed through in-game text and place perceptions articulated in player reviews remain limited.

This study examines *Disco Elysium*, a narrative-oriented RPG, by focusing on Revachol and analyzing how the game constructs place meanings and how players articulate and reconstruct them in Steam reviews. Place meaning refers to how a location is understood and interpreted as a place, and has been discussed as an important unit for analyzing placeness and place experience [12]. In this study, place representation refers to the way the in-game text constructs the place meanings of Revachol, while place perception refers to the way players evaluate and rearticulate those meanings through Steam reviews. This study reveals how the place meanings of an in-game city are selected, condensed, emphasized, and reconstructed through player reception.

Disco Elysium is a text-centered RPG in which dialogue, inner monologue, choices, and skill voices form the core of the play experience rather than combat or action. The official artbook also notes the enormous word count of the original release and its repeated rewriting process [13]. This textual density allows Revachol to function not merely as a visual background, but as a city continuously given meaning through language and utterance. *Disco Elysium* won Best Narrative, Best Independent Game, Best Role Playing Game, and Fresh Indie Game at The Game Awards 2019, and Debut Game, Narrative, and Music at the BAFTA Games Awards 2020 [14][15]. These awards indicate that its narrative structure and writing were internationally recognized. Revachol is therefore a central space where the history of revolution and occupation, class and poverty, political ideology, sensory atmosphere, and symbolic expressions converge.

The analytical materials consist of dialogue and descriptive passages from the in-game text of *Disco*

Elysium that mention "Revachol," along with English Steam reviews that mention 'Revachol.' The dataset includes 702 reviews mentioning 'Revachol' out of 53,099 English Steam reviews and 812 in-game text entries containing 'Revachol.' These materials are classified into Physical and Environmental Place, Relational and Lived Place, Affective and Sensory Place, Historical, Political, and Social Place, Symbolic and Personified Place, and Unclassified cases. This study compares place representation in the in-game text with place perception in Steam reviews to reveal how Revachol is constructed through place meanings and how those meanings are evaluated and reconstructed by players.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Game Space and Placeness

Tuan distinguished space from place, arguing that space becomes meaningful as place through human experience, perception, and value [1]. Relph also described place identity as being formed through physical setting, activities, and the meanings assigned by individuals and groups through experience [16]. These discussions suggest that place is not a mere physical background, but an experiential object formed through environment, action, events, and meaning.

Video game spaces are likewise not limited to visual backgrounds or navigable maps. Players engage with game worlds through movement, exploration, interaction, narrative events, and choices, and these experiences allow game spaces to function as experiential places that form a sense of place [2][5]. Game spaces can also convey narratives, organize play experience, and serve as virtual spatial experiences in which social and political meanings are constructed. The sense of place formed in this process may influence players' appreciation and evaluation [3][4][6].

This study compares how the in-game text constructs Revachol's physical environment, social relationships, affective atmosphere, historical and political contexts, and symbolic expressions as place meanings, and how these meanings are selected, condensed, and reconstructed in Steam reviews.

2.2 Place Meaning and Digital Place Attachment

Place meaning is an analytical unit that shows how a space is understood and remembered as a place through experience, events, relationships, emotions, and symbols, beyond being a mere location or background [1][12][16]. Place meaning is also related to place attachment, as repeated experience and emotional memory can contribute to the formation of emotional bonds with place. Studies on place

attachment show that emotional bonds with place can be formed through personal memories, community relationships, connections to the natural environment, and social activities [17]. This suggests that place is not simply an object of use, but also a site of emotional and symbolic relationships.

These discussions can also be extended to digital game spaces. Although game spaces do not physically exist, players can remember specific virtual spaces as meaningful places through repeated exploration, narrative events, relationships with characters, choices, and sensory atmosphere [2]. In digital game spaces, attachment may be expressed not through physical revisiting or residence, but through replaying, returning to the game world, writing reviews, and participating in related discourse [11].

Therefore, to understand how game spaces are remembered and extended into objects of attachment, it is necessary to examine both the place meanings constructed in the in-game text and the ways players perceive, evaluate, and reconstruct those meanings in reviews.

2.3 Classification Criteria for Place Meaning Types

Based on previous studies, this study classifies place meanings in games into six types: environmental conditions, character relationships and lived worlds, sensory and affective memory, historical, political, and social contexts, symbolic or personified expressions, and Unclassified cases [16][18-24].

Physical and Environmental Place refers to cases in which game space is given meaning through physical and visual conditions, such as streets, buildings, terrain, weather, lighting, and colors. Stedman discussed how physical landscape can serve as a basis for place meaning and influence place attachment and satisfaction [18]. Relational and Lived Place refers to cases in which space is given meaning as a lived world through character relationships, communities, conversations, events, labor, crime, and interactions. This relates to Relph's discussion of place in terms of experience, activities, situations, and events, and to Manzo and Perkins's discussion of place, community, and everyday life [16][19].

Affective and Sensory Place refers to cases in which game space is remembered through senses and emotions, such as sound, music, wind, rain, cold, atmosphere, melancholy, longing, beauty, immersion, and nostalgia. Studies on sensory-rich and emotion-generating place experiences provide a broader theoretical basis for this category [20][21]. Historical, Political, and Social Place refers to cases in which space is given meaning through historical, political, and social contexts, such as revolution, war, occupation, ideology, class, poverty, labor relations, institutions, power relations, and urban culture. This category is connected to the view that place includes social rootedness and landscape continuity, while also being negotiated within power and social relations [22][23].

Symbolic and Personified Place refers to cases in which game space is expressed beyond a simple

background, as a symbol, mirror, microcosm, character, living being, speaking city, or subject with will and emotion. This category is supported by studies on the symbolic dimensions of place meanings, the role of place in identity formation, and the contribution of urban symbols to place identity and sense of place [24-26]. Discussions of the city as symbol and of landscape as a meaningful narrative or symbolic element also support this category [27][28]. Finally, Unclassified refers to cases in which game space appears only as a place name, district name, place of origin, short slogan, meme, or functional mention, making it difficult to identify a specific place meaning. However, expressions that condense affection or belonging toward place, such as "Revachol forever," "Welcome to Revachol," and "For Revachol," are discussed separately in the interpretation of the results. The types of place meaning and their coding criteria are summarized in [Table 1].

[Table 1] Types and Coding Criteria of Place Meanings in Game Spaces

Category	Definition	Coding Criteria
Physical and Environmental Place	Meaning through physical, visual, and environmental conditions	Streets, buildings, walls, lighting, colors, weather, terrain, maps, districts, coastlines, spatial structures
Relational and Lived Place	Meaning as a lived world of relationships, activities, events, and interactions	Residents, NPCs, communities, conversations, quests, relationships, daily activities, crime, bonds, and social interactions
Affective and Sensory Place	Meaning through sensory atmosphere and emotional experience	Melancholy, longing, beauty, immersion, nostalgia, sound, music, wind, rain, cold, smell, atmosphere
Historical, Political, and Social Place	Meaning through history, politics, social structures, power relations, and institutions	Revolution, war, occupation, ideology, class, poverty, class-based labor relations, policing, institutions, urban culture, social conflict
Symbolic and Personified Place	Symbolic meaning or representation as a subject-like entity	City voice, living place, symbols, mirrors, microcosms, characterization, will, emotion
Unclassified	Mentioned without identifiable place meaning	Place names, district names, origins, location codes, quoted lines, slogans, memes, or functional mentions without sufficient contextual meaning

3. Research Method

This study uses qualitative coding and quantitative frequency analysis to compare the in-game text and English Steam reviews, focusing on Revachol, the in-game city of *Disco Elysium*. The in-game text was collected from Disco Elysium Scribe, a searchable dialogue archive, by searching for 'Revachol' and extracting dialogue and descriptive passages containing the term [29]. After duplicate entries with the same speaker and sentence were removed, 812 in-game text entries remained.

Steam review data were used as reception data reflecting players' responses to the game and were collected from the Steam Reviews API using Python's requests library [30][31]. The target application was *Disco Elysium's* Steam App ID 632470, and the language parameter was set to English. From 53,099 English Steam reviews collected on May 10, 2026, 702 reviews containing 'Revachol' were selected through case-insensitive keyword matching. Each selected review was split into sentences, and the sentence containing 'Revachol' was extracted together with one preceding sentence and two following sentences. Repeatedly selected sentences were removed and combined in their original order.

Each analytical unit was manually coded into one primary category, in line with prior classification-based approaches in digital content research [32]: Physical and Environmental Place, Relational and Lived Place, Affective and Sensory Place, Historical, Political, and Social Place, Symbolic and Personified Place, or Unclassified. Because place meaning requires contextual interpretation beyond keyword frequency, the analysis examined how Revachol was represented or articulated in each unit [12]. Finally, category frequencies and percentages were calculated to compare place representation in the in-game text with place perception in player reviews.

4. Results

4.1 Place Perception of Revachol in Steam Reviews

[Table 2] shows the classification of 702 Steam reviews into the six types of place meaning. Quoted reviews retain their original spelling and sentence structure.

[Table 2] Types of Place Perception of Revachol in Steam Reviews

Category	Representative Examples [30]	N	%
Physical and Environmental Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The graphics are a stylish blend of noir and fever dream. The city of Revachol is a character in itself, with crumbling buildings, neon lights, and enough graffiti to make Banksy blush." "Visually, "Disco Elysium" is a masterpiece of art direction and design. From the gritty streets of Revachol to the neon-lit halls of the Whirling-in-Rags hotel, every environment is rendered with meticulous attention to detail, immersing players in a world that is as hauntingly beautiful as it is deeply atmospheric." "Art - The art of this game is absolutely stunning and just wandering around Revachol is a visual delight, from the glowing neon sign of the Whirling in Rags to the run down fishing village not far from the town proper, everything feels like it has been built from the ground up, destroyed and then built again on top of the remnants of what was left which fits in extremely well with the history of the area that you explore." 	19	2.7

Relational and Lived Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I loved every moment of my time in Revachol, from the main story to the small side quests; everything kept my attention. Every small interaction absolutely drips with character, from the dock workers drowning their sorrows at the Whirling-in-Rags to the speed-fueled ravers at the abandoned Dolorian Church." "I spent 60 hours wandering through Revachol, talking to people, doing side jobs while ignoring man hanged just right to my hotel window view, arguing with children and mourning my long lost love in fever like communist dream" "Some of my favorite parts of the game were the simple, slower motions -- like doing karaoke after a long day or talking to Kim after dark. These human moments are what make the game, what makes it feel like you are truly living through Disco Elysium and exploring Revachol on your own two feet." 	120	17.1
Affective and Sensory Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The story itself is nothing but compelling, and the setting itself is so full-of-life that you could almost feel the saltiness of the evening breeze, hijacked by a hint of nicotine leaking from the Whirling-in-Rags linger in your nostril." "Yet any time I hear the somber horns in the frigid outdoors of Revachol, I am immediately transported back to this point in my life. Those were terrible times, but this game was absolutely not the terrible part of those times, it was the antidote." "Don't know how and why, but this game really brings out some bittersweet nostalgia in me. Revachol feels like home, like somewhere I've been before a million times in my life. And it's really hard to let go and move on from it." 	193	27.5
Historical, Political, and Social Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Tensions are high in Revachol, a place ... torn apart by a revolutionary war, followed by an occupation headed by a foreign coalition of nations, decades worth of generational trauma, inequality and unsettled scores." "Set in the decaying seaside district of Martinaise, in a post-revolutionary city called Revachol, the game immerses you in a place soaked with political ghosts, class anxiety, and philosophical malaise. It's not just world-building - it's world-weary building. Every location, every item, every scrap of dialogue feels loaded with meaning." "Specifically, the game takes place in Martinaise, district of great city of Revachol. Martinaise is poor, neglected, highly influenced and shaped by conflict between local dockworker union and their employer, corporation called Wild Pines. Martinaise is also decadent, filthy, lawless piece of land, dominated by shades of ruined buildings and craters from recent (failed) revolution." 	170	24.2
Symbolic and Personified Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "That's a rare kind of magic. Revachol deserves its own paragraph. It isn't a backdrop, it's a living wound that refuses to stop being beautiful." "One bad roll can spiral into a chain reaction of absurd comedy, heartbreaking tragedy, or both at once. Your psyche reflects the world you walk through - Revachol. The city you wander, is a ruined, rusting corpse of failed revolutions and broken people, but still standing. So are you." "As I watched my in-game avatar-a rotund, ageing alcoholic-dance madly in an abandoned church to a bleeding-edge, emerging trend in electronic music, the city spoke. The booming voice of Revachol, typed in all-caps of course, was a sincere and all-encompassing declaration of love." 	82	11.7

Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Welcome to Revachol!," "Revachol Forever," "Revachol," "Viva la Revachol" "Disco Elysium: The Final Cut" by ZA/UM takes place in Martinaise, a fictional district in the fictional city of Revachol." 	118	16.8
Total		702	100

In the player reviews, Affective and Sensory Place accounted for the largest share with 193 cases (27.5%). This suggests that players tended to articulate Revachol less as a physical urban background than as an affective place associated with music, coldness, smell, melancholy, nostalgia, and immersion.

The second most frequent category was Historical, Political, and Social Place, with 170 cases (24.2%). Players understood Revachol as a city shaped by revolution, foreign occupation, class anxiety, political ghosts, and conflicts between the dockworkers' union and the corporation. This indicates that the complex historical and political background presented in the in-game text was taken up in Steam reviews, but reconstructed through language describing the city's depth, tragedy, dense world-building, and emotional immersion.

Relational and Lived Place appeared in 120 cases (17.1%), where Revachol was remembered as a lived world of conversations, side quests, relationships with Kim Kitsuragi, and encounters with various characters. Symbolic and Personified Place appeared in 82 cases (11.7%), with players describing Revachol beyond a simple background through expressions such as "a living wound," "a ruined, rusting corpse," and "the city spoke." By contrast, Physical and Environmental Place was the least frequent category, with 19 cases (2.7%), suggesting that the city's visual environment was more often linked to affective atmosphere or symbolic impressions than mentioned independently.

Unclassified cases accounted for 118 cases (16.8%) and included place-name mentions, background explanations, slogans, memes, and functional mentions. Among them, expressions such as "Revachol forever," "Welcome to Revachol," "Viva la Revachol," "Long Live Revachol," and "For Revachol" lack concrete place description, but condense affection and a sense of belonging toward Revachol. "Revachol forever" appeared 28 times, "Welcome to Revachol" 20 times, and "Long Live Revachol" 5 times, showing that Revachol is reproduced in player discourse as a slogan-like expression of attachment.

4.2 Place Representation of Revachol in the In-Game Text

The results of classifying 812 in-game text entries using the same criteria are shown in [Table 3].

[Table 3] Types of Place Representation of Revachol in the In-Game Text

Category	Representative Examples [29]	N	%
Physical and Environmental Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "All around you, rain falls on the great city of Revachol. Rain drips from the eaves and floods the gutters, washing the filth away." "The harbour seawall endures the wash of the freezing waves. Many things wash up against it and onto the beaches of Revachol. Some inanimate, some just no longer alive... You shudder." "Midtown, across the bay of Revachol. Cold rain falls on forty-story towers. Above them -- Lausanne Central Aerodrome; a cocoon suspended in the grey sky by a web of suspension wiring, encircled by hybrid aircraft." 	100	12.3
Relational and Lived Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I was born and raised Revacholian. So was my mother. As for my father, I didn't know him, I don't know who he was. And I don't care. From what I've heard, he wasn't a very pleasant person to be around." "Only the coolest goods in Revachol. I've got sneakers, speakers, extremely comfy pants too. Try them on right here. No shame -- only freedom." "I was financing a group of poets in East Revachol who were developing a new, universal poetic language... but then it all went to shit..." He looks toward the bay." 	157	19.3
Affective and Sensory Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "A merciful wind blows in from the Bay of Revachol, dusting the ground at your feet and raising newspapers far away. You feel the card slipping into it..." "The winds are silent. The streets are empty of her. She is no longer in the city of Revachol." "Winter, slow to let go of Revachol, flecks some more wet snow from above..." 	17	2.1
Historical, Political, and Social Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Revachol is the disgraced former capital of the world, divided into zones of control under foreign occupation -- half a century after a failed world revolution. She is central to our moment in time." "The RCM, or the Revachol Citizens Militia, is the police force you and him are part of. A self-organized peace corps of the occupied city of Revachol, the RCM operates within a legal twilight, yet its authority is rarely questioned." "Moralism is the ideology of foreign occupiers. Revachol must be governed by Revacholians!" 	328	40.4
Symbolic and Personified Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "You will be free to love Revachol like no one has ever loved her. You will be her champion, and she will be faithful to you." "Revachol is the capital of the world. Jamrock is the capital of Revachol. Droplets form on your eyelashes." "Like I said, the genius loci of Revachol told me while I happened to be dancing in an abandoned church." 	68	8.4
Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "It's a *Belle-Maggrave*," he says, taking the rifle. "4.46 calibre, breech-loading, Revachol-made. Good weapon, accurate and reliable." "That's us. The Citizens Militia. We're the police in this city." "We're in the city of *Revachol*, dear." She flashes you a worried look." 	142	17.5
Total		812	100

In the in-game text, Historical, Political, and Social Place accounted for the largest share, with 328 cases (40.4%). This shows that Revachol is constructed primarily as a historically and politically layered city shaped by revolution, occupation, policing institutions, class relations, and ideological conflict.

Relational and Lived Place was the second most frequent category, with 157 cases (19.3%). Here, Revachol is presented as a lived world of birth, family history, commercial and cultural activity, and everyday practices of local communities. Physical and Environmental Place accounted for 100 cases (12.3%), constructing Revachol's physical conditions through rain, the harbor, the coast, high-rise buildings, infrastructure, and industrial ruins.

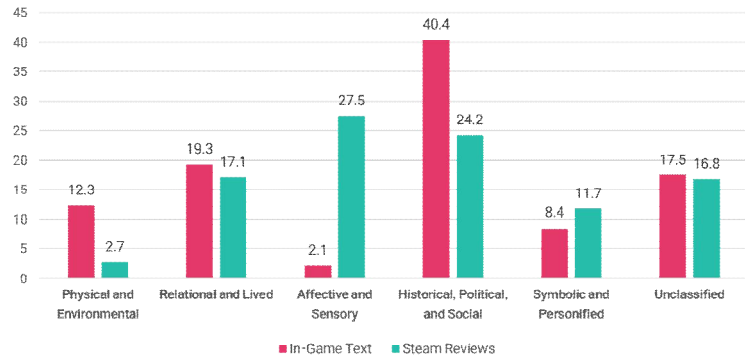
Symbolic and Personified Place accounted for 68 cases (8.4%). Revachol appears as an object of love and loyalty, the center of the world, and a genius loci. Expressions such as "You will be free to love Revachol" and "genius loci of Revachol" show that Revachol is constructed not merely as an urban background, but as a place with its own spirit or emotional relationship. By contrast, Affective and Sensory Place was the least frequent category, with 17 cases (2.1%). Although the in-game text includes expressions of wind, snow, silence, and loss, texts organizing Revachol's historical and political background and social structure accounted for a larger share overall. Unclassified cases accounted for 142 cases (17.5%) and included simple place-name mentions, manufacturing origin, and functional descriptions in which specific place meanings were difficult to identify.

4.3 Comparison between In-Game Text and Player Reviews

[Table 2], [Table 3], and [Fig. 1] show clear differences in place meaning distributions between the in-game text and player reviews.

In the in-game text, Historical, Political, and Social Place accounted for the largest share (40.4%), whereas Affective and Sensory Place was the largest category in the Steam reviews (27.5%). This shows that the game constructs Revachol as a city where revolution, occupation, institutions, class, and ideological conflict overlap, while players reconstruct it through atmosphere and emotional memory.

Although Historical, Political, and Social Place was prominent in both datasets, the modes of expression differed. The in-game text directly describes Revachol's history and political structure, whereas the Steam reviews connect these elements to the city's depth, tragedy, dense world-building, and immersion. Affective and Sensory Place accounted for only 2.1% of the in-game text but formed the largest category in the Steam reviews, indicating that the historically and socially structured placeness of Revachol was often transformed into emotional memory and sensory immersion in player responses.



[Fig. 1] Distribution of Place Meaning Types in the In-Game Text and Steam Reviews

Physical and Environmental Place also differed sharply, accounting for 12.3% of the in-game text but only 2.7% of the Steam reviews. This suggests that players remembered the atmosphere and emotional impressions produced by the space more strongly than its physical form. In Symbolic and Personified Place, expressions such as "genius loci," "her," and "capital of the world" in the in-game text were reconstructed in the Steam reviews through more emotional and metaphorical language, such as "living wound," "rusting corpse," and "the city spoke."

The Unclassified items in the Steam reviews included slogan-like expressions such as "Revachol forever," "Welcome to Revachol," "Viva la Revachol," and "Long Live Revachol." Although these expressions lack concrete place descriptions, they condense affection and a sense of belonging toward Revachol. In sum, the place meanings of Revachol are not completed unilaterally within the in-game text; rather, they are affectively transformed, rearticulated, and reconstructed through player reception.

5. Conclusion

This study compared how the in-game text of *Disco Elysium* constructs place meanings and how these meanings are articulated and reconstructed in English Steam reviews, focusing on Revachol as an in-game city. To this end, 812 in-game text entries and 702 English Steam reviews mentioning 'Revachol' were classified into six types of place meaning.

The results showed that Revachol was represented differently in the two datasets. In the in-game text, Revachol was constructed as a city shaped by failed revolution, foreign occupation, policing institutions, class conflict, and ideological confrontation. In player reviews, however, it was more often reconstructed

through affective and sensory impressions associated with melancholy, nostalgia, immersion, beauty, and loss. This suggests that the in-game text provides the historical, political, and narrative structure of place, while players transform it into sensory and emotional memory through their experience.

This difference indicates that placeness in narrative-oriented games is not completed solely by developer-designed world-building or textual structures. Rather, place meaning is selected, condensed, and rearticulated through player reception. Steam reviews did not simply repeat the spatial or political information provided by the game; instead, they described Revachol through its depth, tragedy, dense world-building, and political immersion. Symbolic and personified expressions also supported this process. While the in-game text presents Revachol as a genius loci, an object of love and loyalty, and the center of the world, Steam reviews also used slogan-like expressions such as "Revachol forever," "Welcome to Revachol," and "Long Live Revachol," which suggest affection and a sense of belonging, even when they lack concrete place descriptions.

The significance of this study lies in analyzing the in-game text and user-generated reviews to show how the place meanings of an in-game city are constructed, received, and transformed. The case of Revachol suggests that game spaces can extend beyond backgrounds or world settings into places that players evaluate and rearticulate. These findings provide a reference for narrative game space design that considers reception, including immersion, recollection, replay desire, and review writing.

However, because this study analyzed Revachol as a single city-level unit, it did not fully examine differences among specific locations within the city. Future research should distinguish locations such as the Whirling-in-Rags, the Boardwalk, the abandoned church, and Land's End to examine how their events, character relationships, and emotional atmospheres affect place meaning formation. This would further clarify how specific place experiences contribute to immersion and lasting emotional impressions in game spaces.

References

- [1] Y. F. Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- [2] S. Uzunogullari, J. Johnson, and N. Pappas, "From controllers to immersion: Exploring the sense of place in video games," *International Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 27, no. 2, Art. no. e70019, Apr. 2025, doi: 10.1002/jtr.70019.
- [3] J. Denham and M. Spokes, "The right to the virtual city: Rural retreatism in open-world video games," *New Media & Society*, vol. 23, no. 6, pp. 1567-1583, Jun. 2021, doi: 10.1177/1461444820917114.
- [4] N. D. Bowman, A. Vandewalle, R. Daneels, Y. Lee, and S. Chen, "Animating a plausible past: Perceived

- realism and sense of place influence entertainment of and tourism intentions from historical video games," *Games and Culture*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 286-308, May 2024, doi: 10.1177/15554120231162428.
- [5] G. Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation*, MIT Press, 2011.
- [6] H. Jenkins, "Game design as narrative architecture," in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game*, N. Wardrip-Fruin and P. Harrigan, Eds., MIT Press, 2004, pp. 118-130.
- [7] T. Guzsvinecz and J. Szűcs, "Length and sentiment analysis of reviews about top-level video game genres on the Steam platform," *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 149, Art. no. 107955, Dec. 2023, doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2023.107955.
- [8] R. S. Jacobs and Z. Duyvestijn, "Discourse at play: Construction and professionalism of video-based game reviews," in *Proceedings of DiGRA 2019 Conference: Game, Play and the Emerging Ludo-Mix*, Kyoto, Japan, Aug. 6-10, 2019, doi: 10.26503/dl.v2019i1.1071.
- [9] B. Wang, Z. Gao, and M. Shidujaman, "Meaningful place: A phenomenological approach to the design of spatial experience in open-world games," *Games and Culture*, vol. 19, no. 5, pp. 587-610, Jul. 2024, doi: 10.1177/15554120231171290.
- [10] D. Lin, C.-P. Bezemer, Y. Zou, and A. E. Hassan, "An empirical study of game reviews on the Steam platform," *Empirical Software Engineering*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 170-207, Feb. 2019, doi: 10.1007/s10664-018-9627-4.
- [11] J. E. Yu and J. Y. Kim, "Extending place attachment into digital spaces: An analysis of Life is Strange reviews," *Journal of Computer Games and Contents*, vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 82-89, Oct. 2025, doi: 10.22819/kscg.2025.38.6.009.
- [12] M. A. Davenport and D. H. Anderson, "Getting from sense of place to place-based management: An interpretive investigation of place meanings and perceptions of landscape change," *Society & Natural Resources*, vol. 18, no. 7, pp. 625-641, Aug. 2005, doi: 10.1080/08941920590959613.
- [13] ZA/UM, *Disco Elysium Digital Artbook*, iam8bit, Inc., 2021.
- [14] The Game Awards, "2019," *The Game Awards*, <https://thegameawards.com/rewind/year-2019> (accessed May 14, 2026).
- [15] BAFTA, "Winners announced: British Academy Games Awards 2020," *BAFTA*, <https://www.bafta.org/media-centre/press-releases/winners-announced-british-academy-games-awards-2020/> (accessed May 14, 2026).
- [16] E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, Pion, 1976.
- [17] C. M. Raymond, G. Brown, and D. Weber, "The measurement of place attachment: Personal, community, and environmental connections," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 422-434, Dec. 2010, doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.08.002.
- [18] R. C. Stedman, "Is it really just a social construction?: The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place," *Society & Natural Resources*, vol. 16, no. 8, pp. 671-685, Sep. 2003, doi: 10.1080/08941920309189.
- [19] L. C. Manzo and D. D. Perkins, "Finding common ground: The importance of place attachment to community participation and planning," *Journal of Planning Literature*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 335-350, May 2006, doi: 10.1177/0885412205286160.

- [20] E. Kastenholz, M. J. Carneiro, C. Eusébio, and E. Figueiredo, "Place attachment through sensory-rich, emotion-generating place experiences in rural tourism," *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, vol. 17, Art. no. 100455, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100455.
- [21] H. Ramkissoon, R. Van Der Veen, A. Salaripour, Z. Seif Reihani, and A. Aflaki, "The impact of sensory experiences on place attachment, place loyalty and civic participation: Evidence from Rasht, Iran," *City, Culture and Society*, vol. 38, Art. no. 100592, Sep. 2024, doi: 10.1016/j.ccs.2024.100592.
- [22] J. Agnew, "Space and place," in *The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*, J. Agnew and D. N. Livingstone, Eds., SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011, pp. 316-330, doi: 10.4135/9781446201091.n24.
- [23] J. Qian, L. Qian, and H. Zhu, "Representing the imagined city: Place and the politics of difference during Guangzhou's 2010 language conflict," *Geoforum*, vol. 43, no. 5, pp. 905-915, Sep. 2012, doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2012.04.004.
- [24] K. Rajala, M. G. Sorice, and V. A. Thomas, "The meaning(s) of place: Identifying the structure of sense of place across a social-ecological landscape," *People and Nature*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 718-733, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.1002/pan3.10112.
- [25] C. L. Twigger-Ross and D. L. Uzzell, "Place and identity processes," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 205-220, Sep. 1996, doi: 10.1006/jevp.1996.0017.
- [26] R. B. Hull IV, M. Lam, and G. Vigo, "Place identity: Symbols of self in the urban fabric," *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 28, no. 2-3, pp. 109-120, Apr. 1994, doi: 10.1016/0169-2046(94)90001-9.
- [27] B. Bogdanović, "Symbols in the city and the city as symbol," *Ekistics*, vol. 39, no. 232, pp. 140-146, Mar. 1975.
- [28] K. I. Helphand, "Landscape films," *Landscape Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1-8, Mar. 1986, doi: 10.3368/lj.5.1.1.
- [29] Disco Elysium Scribe, "Disco Elysium Scribe," *Disco Elysium Scribe*, <https://disco-elysium-scribe.pages.dev/> (accessed May 10, 2026).
- [30] Valve Corporation, "Steam app reviews API: Disco Elysium," *Steam*, <https://store.steampowered.com/appreviews/632470?json=1> (accessed May 10, 2026).
- [31] J. G. Kim and Y. H. Kim, "Analyzing art collaboration preferences on characteristics and consumer types," *Journal of Digital Media & Culture Technology*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 35-43, Jun. 2023, doi: 10.29056/jdmet.2023.06.05.
- [32] D. J. Kim, "Classification of types through case analysis of HoloLens-based production contents," *Journal of Digital Art Engineering & Multimedia*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 371-381, Dec. 2022, doi: 10.29056/jdaem.2022.12.04.