Characterization through character design in competitive multiplayer games

A comparative analysis of League of Legends and Valorant

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Abstract

League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009) and Valorant (Riot Games, 2020) are both team-based competitive multiplayer games that do not feature any form of story-based game mode, but both feature a large cast of fleshed-out playable characters, each with their own design, backstory, and set of abilities. This study focuses on comparing both games’ approaches to characterization to understand how they incorporate elements of characterization in their character design. This was done with the hope of informing future developers of multiplayer hero games, as well as identifying similarities in their character design despite how different both games are. This study compared two sets of two characters, one from each game, which featured similarities with each other. These similarities served as this study’s starting point to analyze, and then compare both games’ approach to characterization. Many similarities were found between both games in their approach to characterization, despite their core gameplay differences. But it also found many differences, both gameplay-dependent, and dependent on other factors.

Keywords: characterization, hero games, League of Legends, multiplayer, narrative, storytelling, Valorant
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<tr>
<td>Angle</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>Position from which a player can survey a portion of the map, therefore taking control of said part of the map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha / Omega counterpart</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>Valorant’s primary conflict in its lore involves the fight between Alpha Earth and their interdimensional counterpart, Omega Earth. Each Valorant agent has an Omega counterpart, who is characterized identically as the Alpha agent, save for differences in their backstory. The extent of said difference is unknown to players at the time of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botlane</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>The bottom-most part of the playfield. This is where both teams’ marksman and support spend the first part of the match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diver</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A subclass given to champions who excel at positioning themselves in the middle of a fight to kill easy targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry Fragger</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>Unofficial player role. An entry fragger is the first to enter a portion of the map their team wishes to control and is expected to get the necessary kills to gain said control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killfeed</td>
<td>Valorant, League of Legends</td>
<td>User Interface which informs all players of who killed who during a match</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lurker</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>Unofficial player role. A lurker explores the map separately from most of their teammates in order to either flank the enemy team or distract them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marksman (Role)</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A role given to champions who excel at delivering fast, high damage ranged attacks. Their defenses are low which makes them an easy target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>A sniper-type weapon in Valorant, that can kill enemies in one shot regardless of them having armor with a shot on most parts of the body. Has the slowest time between shots, and the highest price of any weapons in Valorant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ping</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A communication system which lets players signal to their allies in order to grab their attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>The act of a group of players from the same team moving from one point of the map to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>Valorant</td>
<td>A revolver-type weapon in <em>Valorant</em>, the only handgun in the game to be able to kill enemies in one headshot regardless of armor. It’s also characterized by high inaccuracy on consecutive shots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stats</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>Base attributes determining the strength, health, etc. of a champion or in-game item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stun</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A status effect which makes a player unable to cast abilities, attack, or move for a short period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamfight</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A battle in which both teams fight against other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toplaner</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>A role given to champions who excel in duels. Their assigned position on the playfield is in the toplane, the top-most part of the map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>League of Legends</td>
<td>An item a player can place on the map to gain vision in a small radius for a shorter period of time.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Characterization through character design in competitive multiplayer games

Games which let players choose a “hero” character with a defined personality, look, and set of abilities to engage in team-based competitive multiplayer action have been widely popular on Twitch. Games such as Dota 2 (Valve, 2013), Apex Legends (Respawn Entertainment, 2019), Valorant (Riot Games, 2020) and League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009) were respectively the eighth, fifth, third and first most watched games on Twitch in 2022 (Norton, 2023). While none of these “multiplayer hero games” as this study will now call them feature a narrative-centered mode, they all prominently feature their heroes as part of their marketing and brand identity, from promotional material to transmedia endeavors.

League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009), from here on referred to as LoL, and Valorant (Riot Games, 2020), from here on referred to simply as Valorant, both feature rich and layered characterization for their respective heroes, and this study aims to analyze how both games achieve such characterization. Through this study, the researchers hope to provide a better understanding of multiplayer hero games and the process through which they characterize their heroes. Analyzing such widely different games made by the same company can hopefully provide knowledge on both the similar methods multiplayer hero games use for characterization regardless of their gameplay differences. This research also hopes to show how each games’ approach to characterization differ due to their core gameplay differences. It may also help future developers in creating memorable and engaging characters despite the lack of a narrative-centered experience in their game.

This research aims to answer the question: What are the similarities and differences between the way League of Legends and Valorant characterize their player characters? What qualities of these games drive these differences?
Characterization can be described as the construction of a fictional character (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). For this study, characterization refers to anything that informs or relates to a character’s personality and narrative background.

The theoretical frameworks are narrative theory and character design. Narrative theory is relevant in many different fields and mediums since it relates to human experiences of our world, how we make sense of it through stories, and of stories themselves (The Ohio State University, n.d.). Character design consists of many different elements, including visual appearance, personality, body language and speech (Bartholdy, 2008).

In order to answer the research question, a formal analysis was conducted to examine the character design of four characters in total, two from the game LoL and two from Valorant. We look at how their characterization and narrative background are reflected in their character design showcased in the two games.

As for limitations, character design is broad, but this research focuses on voicelines, abilities, and outfits of the chosen characters and look at them through the lens of narrative. The researchers’ familiarity with the games and their external material may also impact the work. Additionally, both LoL and Valorant are developed by Riot Games which means some findings may be limited to Riot Games and not as easily transferrable to other games.

This research performed an in-depth qualitative analysis of two characters for each game and used this in-depth analysis as meaningful points of comparison for each game’s approach to characterization. This allowed the researchers to outline important similarities and differences in each game’s approach to characterization.
2 Background

This section first summarizes *League of Legends* and *Valorant*. Secondly, it describes characterization in forms of narrative in video games and character design.

2.1 League of Legends

Published in 2009 by Riot Games, *League of Legends* is a competitive MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) set in the fantasy world Runeterra with over 160 playable characters, or champions as the game calls them. Each character is meant to fit certain roles, but they each have a distinct design and a distinct set of abilities. Two teams consisting of five players each, battle against each other (See Figure 1) with the goal of destroying the opponent’s base, called the Nexus. In order to do so, players need to work together, using their chosen characters and strategy to win. *LoL* is a 3D game with an isometric camera view played on PC. Riot Games released a modified mobile version of *LoL* called *League of Legends: Wild Rift* (Riot Games, 2020). However, this study exclusively looks at the PC game.

Figure 1
*In-game screenshot of an ongoing fight in League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009)*
2.1.1 Description of the world of Runeterra in League of Legends

*LoL* takes place in the fantasy world of Runeterra which is divided into different regions such as the expansionist empire Noxus who value strength and power, the port city Bilgewater ruled by outlaw gangs, and the eastern isles of Ionia known for its spirituality. All playable champions hail from a certain region, often impacting their visuals, story, and relationship to other champions. Some regions and champions are more connected story-wise than others, such as Noxus and Ionia due to the war between the two regions. The war broke out after Noxus invaded Ionia, wreaking havoc across the isles for many years until Ionia successfully drove them away. Though successful, Ionia was now divided by groups seeking to either return Ionia to what it was before the war, or heavily militarize it to prepare for future invasions (Riot Games, 2009).

2.1.2 Description of roles and abilities in League of Legends

There are over 160 playable champions in *LoL*. Each of them fit into one or several of the existing team roles based on their abilities and base stats. The 5 roles are: toplaner, jungler, midlaner, marksman and support. Every role has their own playstyle and mini objectives during a match. For example: a support is meant to aid their allies by helping them get out of danger or enabling them to secure a kill on an enemy. The marksman is often a ranged champion who deals high amounts of damage but are vulnerable to enemy attacks. The marksman and support both go into the botlane during the laning phase (See Appendix A). A toplaner on the other hand fights alone for the first part of the match. They are usually a melee tank or fighter who excels in 1v1 combat.

Champions are picked once both teams are formed, and all players enter champion select. This is where all players are assigned a role and pick a champion accordingly. This is also where players can select champion skins. These are uneditable sets of outfits which
changes the look of a champion. Once everyone picked their champion (or the timer runs out), every player loads into the match.

As previously mentioned, every champion has its own set of abilities which help determine their role. Every ability is different from champion to champion. The abilities include:

- Basic attack: melee or ranged attack.
- Passive: always active, triggered when certain conditions are met.
- Basic abilities: referred to in game by their preferred input Q, W, and E.
- Ultimate: The most powerful ability with a long cooldown.

By obtaining experience points (XP) from minion, monster, or enemy kills, you level up your champion. When leveling up you gain ability points to both unlock and upgrade your abilities as the match progresses.

2.2 Valorant

Valorant is a competitive first-person shooter published by Riot Games in 2020. Players take on the role of Agents of Valorant, as they fight their counterparts (See Figure 2) from another universe in a team based five versus five round-based matches. Before the start of every match, players get to choose between a selection of more than a dozen characters, each with their own distinct abilities, designs, and personalities. Each character is also part of a class, which defines which role they are supposed to fulfill in gameplay. At the time of writing, Valorant is a PC-only game, but console versions are currently in development.
2.2.1 Description of the world of Valorant

*Valorant* primarily takes place in a near-future fictionalized version of the real world called Alpha Earth, where a new energy source has been discovered called radianite. A few years after this discovery, people from another dimension called Omega Earth, started travelling to Alpha Earth and stealing radianite. To stop them, the Valorant Protocol was organized, and their goal was to investigate the attacks of Omega Earth and stop them from taking radianite. At the time of writing, the Valorant Protocol made its way for the first time into Omega Earth only recently.

2.2.2 Agents in Valorant

Central to *Valorant’s* gameplay loop are its playable agents. Each agent has a specific set of abilities that they can use for various strategic purpose. They are separated into four categories:

- Passive: a passive is an ability that cannot be bought, and is constantly in effect
• Basic: a basic ability can usually be bought during the buy phase of a round and used using its designated ability key.

• Signature: a signature ability is an ability that the agent always has at the start of a round, and that can usually be recharged during the round.

• Ultimate: an ultimate ability cannot be bought by the player; it has to be charged using ultimate orbs. Ultimate orbs can be found in set locations of each map, or can be earned by planting the spike, defusing the spike, completing a round, or killing an enemy player.

Of note is that while every agent has an ultimate and at least one signature ability, not every agent has a passive, and some agents have more than one signature ability. Each agent is also assigned a role meant to inform players about the agent’s role in a team environment. These include:

• Duelists. Duelists are described in the game as “self-sufficient fraggers who their team expects, through abilities and skills, to get high frags and seek out engagements first.” (Riot Games, 2020). Their role is to get as many kills as possible on the map and to be at the forefront of any given gunfight.

• Sentinels. Sentinels are described in the game as “defensive experts who can lock down areas and watch flanks, both on attacker and defender rounds.” (Riot Games, 2020). Their role is to reinforce key positions with their abilities as well as setting up measures to stop the enemy team from flanking your position.

Players can pick a new agent at the start of every match through the agent select screen. Players are not forced to have a certain number of every agent role, however multiple players on the same team cannot choose the same agent. Furthermore, an efficient team needs to have at least one agent of each role in the team.
2.3 Literature review

Characterization through character design sits at a crossroad between narrative and character design, which is why it is important that this study looks at previous works encompassing both fields of study.

2.3.1 Narrative in video games

Narrative in video games can be looked at from two broad structural rubrics: embedded narrative is pre-generated narrative content that exists prior to a player’s interaction with the game, whereas emergent narrative arises from the set of rules governing interaction with the game system (Salen & Zimmerman, 2003). This study primarily analyzes narrative events, which are part of the embedded narrative. These are events whose content the player cannot change, although they may be able to change whether they occur or not (Adams, 2014). Some elements of emergent narrative are also considered, such as how a character’s role in gameplay reflects their personality. However, Salen and Zimmerman (2003) make a rather strict separation between what they call crafted interactive story versus improvised play experience. This might prove to be a disadvantage when looking at elements that blur that line.

Previous studies on narrative in multiplayer video games specifically include an attempt by Spawforth and Millard (2017) to create a framework for multi-participant narratives based on multiplayer game interactions. Through their research, Spawforth and Millard identified nine characteristics through which they analyzed multiple multiplayer games’ interactions: Interaction Likelihood, Type, Synchronicity, Explicit Awareness, Deductive Awareness, Explicit Feedback, Deductive Feedback, Initiator Identifiability, and Recipient Identifiability.
2.3.2 Character Design

Character design refers to the creation of a character and its visuals by defining their personality, appearance, behavior, and aesthetic while making sure it ties into the overall narrative and story established by the writers (Stefyn, 2022). The goal with character design is by using color theory, shape language, animation, character personality (e.g. vocabulary), and even psychology, to create memorable and appealing characters (Nashville Film Institute, n.d.).

As with storytelling in general, character design can be conveyed by letting the audience interpret the character’s behavior and physical appearance, so called implicit characterization. Explicit characterization instead tells the audience about the character directly through the narration or use of dialogue. Character design is used in both films and games and is often made by concept artists tasked to sketch, draw and/or model a character. Other roles involved in the character design process can be writers, game designers and character artists (Lundwall, 2017). Apart from visual aspects of character design, the voice of a character can also help convey a story to the audience. The voice should match the visual appearance and their personality to avoid any clashes. The voice is a tool to convey feelings and make players empathize more with the characters (Sabbagh, 2015).

Characters can also be categorized by certain archetypes and stereotypes based on their recurring appearances in different mediums. In their work, Sloan (2017) identifies some of these archetypes while also stating that they are not definite or absolute. However, archetypes can help players quickly get a sense of a character’s role within a game. In narrative theory, the importance of the relationship between character and story is highlighted since a character’s actions are what makes them interesting. Archetypes are therefore important since they set up guidelines for character behavior and story role (Sloan, 2017). This study analyzes how characters from LoL and Valorant relate back to different tropes and conventions used for archetypes and stereotypes as seen in other media.
2.3.3 Section summary

In conclusion, characterization in video games can be achieved in different ways such as embedded or emergent narrative. Character design is an important part of games to convey narrative elements and make characters more interesting. No previous research has attempted to weave in embedded and emergent narrative in the context of multiplayer competitive games, and using previous research on embedded and emergent narrative in single player games, as well as multi-participant narrative and character design, this research fills this gap.
3 Methodology

This study aims to answer the question: What are the similarities and differences between the way League of Legends and Valorant characterize their player characters? What qualities of these games drive these differences?

This research centers on a formal analysis of two characters from LoL and two characters from Valorant, comparing the different approaches to characterization. Formal analysis is the name for research in which an artifact and its specific elements are examined closely, and the relations of the elements are described in detail (Lankoski, 2015).

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive coding which is a method in which a researcher assigns codes to categorize the interpreted meaning of a piece of data (Saldaña, 2016). The analysis looks at the following aspects of the characters through the lens of narrative: voicelines, abilities, and their clothing and accessories. This study also analyzes the text of the voicelines and investigates what element of explicit narrative they give players. This paper also examines how each character’s abilities provide elements of implicit characterizations through their function, as well as how each character’s outfit may harken back to specific character archetypes in order to provide elements of implicit narrative. This research analyzes Jhin (See Figure 3) and Irelia (See Figure 4) from LoL and compares them respectively to Chamber (See Figure 6) and Jett (See Figure 5) from Valorant. The characters were chosen due to their similarities which include: Jhin and Chamber, two marksmen who feature a lot of visual flourish, and Jett and Irelia who are both women wielding floating blades/knives.

Figure 3
Jhin, The Virtuoso character model in League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009)
Figure 4
Irelia, The Blade Dancer character model in League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009)

Figure 5
Jett from Valorant (Riot Games, 2020).

Figure 6
Chamber from Valorant (Riot Games, 2020)
3.1 Data collection methods

Both LoL and Valorant were played to get first-hand experience and gain a better understanding of the game as it is being played using the selected characters. In-game material was collected during play by taking screenshots, notes and recording in-game footage. Afterwards, external material such as character background stories was collected from fan wiki pages and the games’ official web pages. These web pages were consulted to bypass the need for some interactions to be triggered in game when gathering in-game material.

3.2 Data analysis techniques

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive coding. First, each individual character was analyzed based on the collected in-game material. For each character these are the elements of explicit characterization that this study analyzes:

- In-game character description, which is part of the embedded narrative.
- The content of the character’s in-game voicelines, which is also part of the embedded narrative.

This study also analyzes the following elements of implicit characterization:

- How each character’s clothing may rely on pre-established tropes or stereotypes often used in different media. This is part of the embedded narrative.
- Each character’s in-game abilities and how their function informs said character’s personality. This is part of the emergent narrative.

Secondly, the characters’ background lore from external material were analyzed. For Valorant, the Iyi Geceler trailer (Valorant, 2022a), L’Accord trailer (Valorant, 2021) and Warm-up trailer (Valorant, 2022b) were analyzed, all coming from Valorant’s official YouTube channel. For LoL, the champion biographies and short stories found on the official
*LoL* website, champion release teasers, trailers and champion spotlights for Jhin and Irelia, from the official *LoL* Youtube channel were analyzed.

The in-game elements of characterization collected from each game were cross referenced with the characters’ background from external material. After all characters were analyzed individually, a comparative analysis was performed between characters from each game that have similarities both in playstyle and characterization, meaning comparisons were made between Jhin and Chamber and between Jett with Irelia. Every step was done by both researchers together.

In order to find meaningful points of comparison for both games’ approach to characterization, this research categorizes data based on the similarities between characters, which are:

For Jhin and Chamber, these are:

- Their roles as Marksmen,
- The fact that they are aesthetically minded,
- Their high-class background,
- Their job as weapon designers.

For Irelia and Jett, these are:

- Their high agility
- Their bravery
- Their role as the frontline fighter in their team
- Their aggressiveness
- How supportive to their teammates they are.

The researchers use these character similarities as a basis to identify similarities and differences in the games’ approach to conveying the same idea. The data coding may be found in appendix K.
3.2.1 Data coding of the voicelines:

Voicelines for each character were analyzed qualitatively using the following coding:

- In the Collected data section, voicelines were grouped into the main thematic content specific to each character.
- When analyzing each character’s voicelines, they were grouped into voicelines that reinforce ideas put forward by the gameplay, and voicelines that offer additional information about characters not deducible through gameplay.

3.3 Limitations and ethical considerations

The researchers have been exposed to the games being researched and their external material before this study. However, an important limitation is the fact that one researcher has played LoL since 2010 but with no experience of Valorant prior to this study. The other researcher has no prior experience of LoL but has played Valorant since 2022.

Additionally, both LoL and Valorant are developed by Riot Games which means some findings may be limited to Riot Games and not as easily transferrable to other games. These factors may lead to bias during the analysis.

As character design and how it relates to narrative is an extremely broad subject, this study is limited in its scope by how it only aims to analyze the elements listed earlier.

Additionally, both LoL and Valorant have multiple game modes, but this research only looks at the Standard 5v5 First to 13 Rounds mode in Valorant, and Summoner’s Rift 5v5 Draft Pick mode.
4 Results and discussion

This section firstly introduces the collected data from all four characters from *LoL* and *Valorant*, followed by an in-depth analysis of each character. The section is concluded with a comparison between both games and their approaches to characterization. This is done in order to find answers on how *League of Legends* and *Valorant* incorporate characterization in their character design.

4.1 Collected Data

For each character, data were collected regarding their in-game outfits, as well as their voicelines. For voicelines, the researchers looked at the main talking points of each character within the voicelines, as well as some of the in-game actions that trigger them.

4.1.1 Jhin from League of Legends

Jhin values visual elegance. He wears a tight black suit, a white cloak, and golden armor (See Figure 7). Both of his weapons are decorated with intricate patterns (See Figure 8 and 9). Some parts of his outfit resemble certain archetypes. His mask resembles a psychopathic killer archetype similar to Michael Myers in Halloween (Carpenter, 1978) while also playing into his love for theatre. The golden armor pieces and intricate details on several parts of his clothing reflect how he places a high value in aesthetics.
As with all LoL champions, his voicelines are triggered by different in-game events and player actions. These include but are not limited to moving on the map, attacking, casting abilities, buying items, and encountering enemies. The voiceline amount and when they are triggered can differ from champion to champion. More specific to Jhin are the voicelines...
triggered on a first encounter with an enemy. These voicelines are mostly negative in tone, showcasing Jhin’s thoughts on another champion’s appearance, weapon, or lore. He has the same negative tone for voicelines triggered by enemies from Noxus and Ionia. His roughly 245 voicelines overall mention his “performances”, dancing, theater, perfection, beauty or art (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.c).

4.1.2 Irelia from League of Legends

Irelia wears a lightly armored attire allowing a freer range of movement while protecting her in battles (See Figure 10). Some parts of Irelia’s clothing alludes to her dancer roots such as the pink ribbons flowing from both her sleeves and from her metallic headdress. These ribbons resemble the ones seen in certain traditional Chinese dances (Harris, 2022), or a ribbon stick ballerinas may use. Parts of her outfit such as the boots, shoulders and arms are armored, alluding to her warrior background.

Figure 10
Irelia's clothing and weapons.
Irelia’s has roughly 216 voicelines in total (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.b). They often refer to battle tactics, her homeland Ionia, her deceased family members, or dancing. As with any *LoL* champion she has voicelines when moving to any destination on the map alone. What is not so common for other champions is how Irelia has voicelines for moving close to her allies and being the last survivor on her team. Other uncommon triggers are: ally pinging her or places a ward near her. These cause her to mention battle tactics or the invasion of Ionia. Many of her voicelines are also triggered after scoring a kill (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.b).

### 4.1.3 Chamber from Valorant

Chamber’s outfit (See Figure 11) resembles that of an archetypical businessman, but with details that harken back to his background as a weapons designer. Chamber wears a suit and a pair of glasses typical of businessmen, but the bullet-like shape of his suit’s buttons, and the golden tattoo that turns into his sniper rifle Tour De Force are reminders of Chamber’s primary occupation as a weapons designer. Chamber’s business logo (See Figure 13) appears on the back of his jacket, his shoes and on his belt. It also appears on Tour de Force (See Figure 12), his ultimate’s icon, and the business cards he throws to summon Trademark. The logo looks like an eye on top of an M shape. Chamber also uses what looks like another style of business card when summoning Rendez-Vous.
Chamber has a total of 339 voicelines, not counting all the voicelines addressed to him. Among the other playable agents whom he has voiceline interactions with are Brimstone, Cypher, Kay/O, Killjoy, Neon and Viper. Among the voicelines, these are the main reoccurring talking points that can be found. Secrets and distrust are often talked about with Cypher and
Brimstone, but Neon also addresses him in an untrustworthy fashion. Fashion is also a reoccurring theme, with comments on Killjoy’s jacket, Kay/O’s industrial looks, how well dressed his omega counterpart is, and how ruined his suit is if he takes a lot of damage and survives the round. Chamber can make flirting advances to Viper, which mostly fall on deaf ears. Viper however mentions that she finds him charming if she kills an enemy Chamber.

Chamber is, at the time of writing, the only agent who has a developed relationship with his omega counterpart, whereas all the other agents only express animosity towards their omega counterpart. Chamber can for example compliment his omega counterpart’s looks, as well as his marksmanship when facing him in a match.

Prior to Neon’s release, Chamber had special lines teasing her upcoming arrival to the game, by talking up her skills to other agents as the match starts, depending on who was on his team. For example, he could tell Killjoy he found someone with the kinds of powers that could make a good electric power source.

4.1.4 Jett from Valorant

Jett’s outfit (See Figure 14) is reminiscent of the assassin archetype, with a modern twist to it. For example, the kunai (See Figure 15) of her ultimate ability are weapons classically associated with assassins, but she wears a grey crop top hoodie, a modern interpretation of the hooded garment that is typically part of the assassin’s outfit. Several elements of her outfit are throwbacks to her abilities, such as the kunai of her ultimate that are attached to her belt, and the stylized Tailwind symbol on her back, complete with the two Xs that symbolize the number of kills Jett needs to get to recharge her Tailwind during the round. Flowing blue energy lines also appear on her arms when she uses one of her abilities in-game, though they seem to only appear when she performs Updraft in external material.
Jett has a total of 361 voicelines, plus those directed at her. Among the other playable agents whom he has voiceline interactions with are Chamber and Phoenix. Among the voicelines, these are the main reoccurring talking points that can be found. A lot of Jett’s voicelines have her talk up her speed (“Race you to the spike sites!”, “Try to keep up! Who am I kidding? You know you can’t keep up” (Riot Games, 2020)). On the topic of Jett’s speed, Chamber mentioned a character to challenge her when teasing Neon’s arrival to the game, as mentioned above. Neon in turn features voicelines challenging Jett’s speed in a friendly way.

Jett has many interactions with Phoenix, with her regularly complimenting his appearance, even when killing Phoenix’s omega counterpart.
A lot of Jett’s voicelines are about taunting enemies and teammates alike for example when she defuses the spike, or when the game considers her the match’s most valuable player.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion

Each character was analyzed individually first as a basis for the researchers to draw points of comparison between each game’s approach to characterization.

4.2.1 In-Depth Analysis of Each Character

The researchers drew connection between the external material, gameplay elements and voicelines of each character in order to paint a complete picture of each character’s characterization.

4.2.1.1 Jhin from League of Legends

Jhin is characterized as a psychopathic killer obsessed with visual flair, theatrics and his performances.

External material analysis

What can be learned about Jhin from his external material (See Appendix C) is that he is a serial killer who sees his murders as an artform, calling them “performances”. Rich contractors hired him after his imprisonment, supplying him with weapons of his own design. While technically working as a hired assassin, he still values elegance, beauty, and creativity, which all play a big part in how he murders his victims. His blade traps are shaped like flowers and explode into a purple sparkly cloud similar to fireworks upon activation (League of Legends, 2019). His gun Whisper uses magical bullets which can morph a person’s body however Jhin see fit, creating artworks (Austin Shafer, 2016). Unlike his in-game abilities, the
descriptions of his attacks seem much more complex and detailed. Examples of what the magical bullets can do are: smoke shaped like butterflies, fiery flowers, blue sparkles, and branches and leaves (League of Legends, 2019). While Jhin sees his murders as pieces of art, the remains of the victims horrify people who are unfortunate enough to see them, as explained in his short story (See Appendix C2) (Austin Shafer, 2016). This can be interpreted as the magical effects wearing off after some time, or every visual depiction of his murders are from Jhin’s point of view.

The number four plays a central part in his behavior. Killing (in multiples of) four people each time, cleaning his weapon with four wipes, and placing lanterns every four yards to calculate distance (Austin Shafer, 2016). While an explanation to his obsession with the number four remains to be seen in his lore, it is mentioned in a devblog about the making of Jhin. The goal was to limit the number of shots so that every shot had a bigger impact, both by deciding who to target, and how much damage each shot would deal. The developers settled on four shots, which was then incorporated into more of Jhin’s abilities and personality, making four a central part of Jhin (FIZZNCHIPS, 2016).

**Gameplay and abilities analysis**

Jhin’s role is marksman, meaning his playstyle mainly revolves around his ranged basic attacks. Marksmen generally attack in quick succession and deal large amounts of damage with their basic attacks (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.d). Jhin however, is unique in this regard with his limited ammo (four bullets) and long reload times. This means he needs to be more deliberate with his attacks and target choice. As with any marksman in *LoL*, positioning out of reach is crucial since their defenses are low. Marksmen teams up with a support in the botlane for the first part of the match (See Appendix A). While Jhin deals high amounts of damage and has a kit to aid in escaping and catching targets, he is still a vulnerable target. This is where his
ability kit (See Appendix B2) excels. His long-ranged ability Deadly Flourish roots an approaching or escaping target, making it easier for him to get out of harms reach or to finish off a kill. Jhin’s Captive Audience ability places down an invisible trap, alerting him and his allies if an enemy steps on it. This allows him to plan around the enemy movement and positions, as well as slowing them down if they try to catch him or run from him. Lastly, his ultimate ability Curtain Call allows him to finish off targets from extremely far away, thanks to its long range. It is safe to say that Jhin’s kit allows him to be in control, if played smartly. Staying out of reach or even catching up to targets is his strong point.

Of note is that four is a recurring number for Jhin’s abilities, showcasing his obsession with it. For example: Dancing Grenade can hit targets up to four times, Captive Audience reveals units for four seconds, Curtain Call can fire up to four shots, and his basic attacks can shoot up to four bullets before having to reload.

In conclusion, Jhin’s gameplay is focused on adjusting his position to stay out of harm’s way when up against strong enemies, using his long-ranged abilities to deal damage from afar. His slow attack- and reload speeds force him to be more deliberate in his attacks. He has tools to both escape and catch opponents, but still somewhat relies on allies supporting him due to his low defenses as a marksman.

**Voiceline analysis**

Apart from the standard voiceline triggers for LoL such as moving on the map and casting abilities, Jhin’s more unique trigger is when encountering certain enemies. Common themes for these voicelines are poor visual appearance, such as the voice line “Why would anyone listen to a creature so ugly?” (Riot Games, 2009) triggered when encountering the champion Tahm Kench. Another common theme is the lack of flourish in the enemy’s fighting style (e.g. “You shout and throw machetes? How quaint.” (Riot Games, 2009) When
encountering the champion Draven). These two themes hints at how much Jhin values the aesthetic of things. While he generally speaks negatively towards other champions, he talks about himself in a positive manner. This is especially true regarding his “performances” as he likes to call his killing sprees. An example is: “With my technique, killing blooms into artwork!” (Riot Games, 2009). Another line more focused on himself rather than his work: “I have risen from the filth and muck. I am the lotus blossom. I am beauty.” (Riot Games, 2009) is a good indication of his opinions on himself.

**Outfit analysis**

As previously mentioned, Jhin is a character who values the visual appearance of himself, others, and even his work. He wears golden armor and many parts of his outfit have intricate details, showcasing his interest in aesthetics. Furthermore, all of his weapons also follow the same visual style and flair as his clothing. His outfit is also functional with his ultimate weapon built into his shoulder pad, using his gun as a cane, and his mask to cover one of his eyes for better aim (Odin Austin Shafer, n.d.).

**4.2.1.2 Irelia from League of Legends**

Irelia is characterized as a strong fighter and leader who fought during the Noxian invasion of Ionia.

**External material analysis**

Based on her external material, Irelia is a skilled fighter who dedicates her life to learn and perform the ancient dances of her homeland. After her entire family was killed during the Noxian invasion of Ionia, she learned how to use her knowledge in dance to levitate blades and
use them as a weapon. The blades are shards from her family crest shattered by the invaders. She joined the rebellion and helped bring victory to Ionia, which is now in shambles. Irelia is still mourning her family’s death and feeling the rising pressure from the people who expect her to lead them to better times (Riot Games, 2018).

**Gameplay and abilities analysis**

As a toplaner, Irelia spends the first part of the match dueling against the enemy toplaner while carefully planning for possible ambushes by the enemy jungler. This includes placing down wards granting the player vision over the map to spot enemies and positioning closer to the player’s turret to defend them. Champions in this role tend to excel in duels, but Irelia’s high mobility makes her excellent in larger fights as well. Due to this, her class is categorized as being a Diver. This categorization is mainly due to her Bladesurge ability in which she can dash to enemy champions and minions, enabling her to both swiftly catch up to targets and escape from them. This paired together with her Flawless Duet ability which stuns enemies makes her excel even more in these aspects. Since diving into an enemy team equals high risks of being targeted and killed, her defensive ability Defiant Dance is a good tool for limiting the damage she would normally take.

To summarize, Irelia’s high mobility and defensive abilities makes her excel in both duels and teamfights, without having to rely on teammates to engage in most battle situations.

**Voiceline analysis**

Irelia’s more unique voiceline triggers are: moving close to allies, using the ‘On The Way’ ping, placing wards, and being the last ally to survive a teamfight. As for interactions with enemies, all of them are notably taunts. Example of a taunt to Swain: “Did you wanna lose the other one too?” (Riot Games, 2009) referring to Irelia cutting off his arm during the war.
Another voiceline showcasing her aggressive attitude is: “Raise a hand to us, and you'll find it missing.” (Riot Games, 2009)

Common themes for her voicelines revolve around dancing, battle tactics, the war, and her family. Of note is how she either shouts or speaks softly, depending on if the line relates to battle or dancing and family respectively. Irelia has a voiceline triggered when moving which highlights her two sides: “I am both the tranquil sea and the tempest.” (Riot Games, 2009).

**Outfit analysis**

Irelia’s outfit alludes both to her fighter and dancer backgrounds. Her armor protects her in battles, while still being light enough allowing a freer range of movement which is necessary for her dance-heavy fighting style.

**4.2.1.3 Chamber from Valorant**

Chamber is characterized as a scheming man full of secrets, as well as someone with great confidence in his marksmanship and craftsmanship.

**External material analysis**

In the L’Accord (Valorant, 2021) trailer (the title of which can be translated to “the deal”), Chamber and his omega counterpart are cooperating to free Brimstone (See Appendix H). This is the first and so far, only time any official piece of Valorant material has shown an agent cooperating with their omega counterpart, which informs us on why Brimstone would dislike Chamber. This trailer also continues raising questions on the nature of Chamber and his counterpart’s relationship, as the idea of them cooperating and having a deal is reinforced. The nature of that deal remains a secret. The Iyi Geceler (Valorant, 2022a) trailer only serves to add
more confusion, as it seems to indicate through a vision that Chamber’s deal with omega
Chamber is still going and Chamber’s greatest fear involves losing that deal, despite Chamber
saying "Oh, our deal? It's over. Sorry for the late notice." (Riot Games, 2020), when getting the
final kill of the round on the enemy Chamber. Chamber is therefore characterized as shrouded
in mystery.

**Gameplay and abilities analysis**

Chamber is classified as a Sentinel class agent, which would imply his abilities are
generally made to help hold positions and watch flanks. However, one of his basic abilities and
his ultimate are additional guns (See Appendix G2), befitting of his weapons designer
background teased in one of the emails (See Appendix G3). Both Headhunter and Tour-de-
Force are stronger versions of guns you can buy during the buy phase (See Appendix F),
respectively the Sheriff and the Operator. This demonstrates Chamber’s proficiency in his
profession, weapon design. One could argue having more guns does in fact help in holding
positions, but sentinels tend to feature abilities that do not require good aim, but rather
knowledge of intelligent ability placement. Chamber’s Trademark is a trap-like ability that is
more conventional for Sentinels, and is a good way to warn of flanks, as well as making enemies
easier to kill thanks to the slowing field that it creates on activation. Chamber’s signature ability
Rendez-Vous is a teleporting device that needs to be placed ahead of use, allowing him to
teleport back to it near instantly. This allows Chamber to challenge angles more brazenly, since
he will be able to return to cover quickly, but unlike Jett’s or other agents’ movement abilities,
Chamber players need to plan things in advance as the teleportation requires careful set up.

In conclusion, Chamber’s gameplay characterizes him as a careful and scheming person, thanks
to his focus on strong planning and game knowledge, but it also paints him as someone who is
highly confident in his craftsmanship and marksmanship, as Chamber’s abilities rely primarily on aim to actually be useful, as well as confidence in challenging angles and winning fights.

Voiceline analysis

Chamber’s confidence and scheming nature are both exacerbated in his voicelines. When activating Tour-de-Force, Chamber says “They are so dead!” (Riot Games, 2020), displaying his confidence that he will get kills using his ability. Chamber can also say a variety of voicelines upon teleporting away with Rendez-Vous after a kill, including “Au-Revoir” (goodbye), or “Away!”, hinting to a form of nonchalance from him. This is further reinforced by some of his match start lines, including “These new friends of ours are not too friendly.” or "It seems these strangers want me dead. Et bien (Well), they are not the first." (Riot Games, 2020).

Chamber’s scheming nature is developed through the voiceline, mainly in the ways he is shown to be untrustworthy and full of secrets by him and the remark of his peers. Chamber makes remarks on how Brimstone “should at least pretend to like [him].” clearly indicating Brimstone does not like Chamber very much, and he mentions his secrets when talking to and about Cypher, be it the alpha version or the omega version. Of note is also the fact that at the time of writing, Chamber is the only agent to have a relationship with their omega counterpart that is not purely vitriolic, even mentioning the deal on an occasion.

Outfit analysis

As mentioned earlier, Chamber’s outfit harkens back to his background as a businessman and weapons designer, with the golden tattoo turning into Tour-de-Force. Chamber’s business suit is uncharacteristically unathletic in that unlike most Valorant characters, he is wearing an outfit that seems rather difficult to move in and unsuited for combat.
This alludes to his current main profession not being in the battlefield anymore, but also to the fact that his gameplay is focused on holding positions rather than moving around the map a lot, like for example Jett.

4.2.1.4 Jett from Valorant

Jett is characterized as someone who usually acts alone but is still caring for the people around her. She is also characterized as a bombastic and arrogant person, who is not scared of provoking her opponents.

External material analysis

In the Warm-Up trailer (Valorant, 2022b) Jett is presented as a caring teammate. In this trailer, Jett continuously bets against Yoru in favor of her friends being able to beat a custom battle robot (see Appendix J) despite her friends’ continuous failures, hinting at an unwavering belief in her teammates’ skills.

Gameplay and abilities analysis

Valorant’s in-game description may call duelists “self-sufficient” (Riot Games, 2020) but that does not mean their abilities are unable to help their teammates. In fact, most duelists have more than one ability that can assist teammates in some way that is not just facilitating kills for the duelist player. However, Jett’s ability kit is one of the most “egotistical” kit on Valorant’s roster due to her abilities (See Appendix I2) having little use for her teammates. Her Updraft and Tailwind abilities are movement abilities that only allow her to reach new places, and her cloudburst is one of the shortest lasting visual blocking abilities in the game, making it hard to use to cover teammate rotations. These elements seemingly contrast with her representation as a caring teammate in the external material.
Instead of featuring abilities primarily made to help the team, Jett’s kit is instead defined by its ability to synergize with itself to let her move quickly and take unorthodox angles. The cloudburst lasts long enough however to be combined with the tailwind so Jett can dash sneakily into enemy territory or retreat to cover quickly. Her multi-functional kit allows her to excel as both an entry fragging duelist and a lurking duelist, as well as being one of the agents of choice to wield an Operator.

Jett’s gameplay therefore characterizes her as someone who acts alone, and whose greatest contribution to the team is her own killing performance rather than helping her team perform in any way.

But Jett’s abilities also make her capable of pulling off flashy maneuver and spectacular plays, characterizing her as an aggressive and bombastic person. Jett’s blade storm ultimate is a one-shot headshot set of flying knives that recharge on kill, and don’t lose any accuracy while moving or in mid-air, unlike most firearms in Valorant. This makes them highly potent in conjunction with her movement abilities (Tailwind and Updraft) in getting fast kills while disorientating her opponents. Her ability to retreat quickly as discussed previously also makes Jett an agent of choice to hold the Operator, a sniper type weapon that is high risk due to the long time to scope in, and time between shots, while also being high reward, thanks to its damage output and the best range in the game. The operator is an important weapon to get opening kills and challenge angles and its nature as a high-risk high reward weapon makes every kill earned with it impressive, so Jett’s ability to use it with less risk than other agents reinforces the idea of her being a flashy person.

**Voiceline analysis**

Jett’s voicelines reinforce the idea of her being a bombastic and aggressive person by punctuating kills with mocking (“Aww, thought you’d try harder”, “Night night” (Riot Games,
and/or aggressive voicelines (“Stay down”, “There you are you little shit” (Riot Games, 2020)). Jett’s updraft and tailwind abilities do not come with a spoken voiceline, instead just featuring a grunt. This is uncharacteristic for an ability in Valorant to not feature a voiceline, and players and researchers can infer that the lack of voiceline is to reinforce the stealthier nature of these two abilities, as they can be used to get into positions that aren’t reachable by most agents for the effect of surprise. It can also be inferred that unlike other abilities in Valorant, Jett’s use of updraft and tailwind does not need to be communicated as she is expected to be playing on her own.

However, some of Jett’s voicelines also allow her to express elements of her personality that do not appear through the gameplay, such as her more childish side, as well as her valuing and caring for her teammates. Jett has a few lines in which she openly cares for her teammates, such as “I know I dash around a lot but I promise I’m looking out for y’all. Take them out while they’re busy with me.” (Riot Games, 2020), and her voicelines feature a lot of friendly banter with her teammates. For example, Jett has a few enthusiastic commend lines if one of her teammates performs well, and she has developed banter specifically between her and Phoenix. She generally engages with her teammates in a friendly and laid-back manner, finding the time to comment on how “cute” she finds Sova’s robot owl at the start of a round, and proposing “lunch on Brimstone after this [mission]” (Riot Games, 2020), seemingly unbothered by the life-or-death stakes of her mission.

**Outfit analysis**

Jett’s outfit seems easy to move in, with military pants and a sleeveless hoodie that lets the skin breathe. This makes for a good representation of Jett’s focus on movement in gameplay. The various references to the assassin archetype also help to visually represent her stealthier and lone wolf nature in her design.
4.2.2 Identifying patterns and tools in each game’s approach to characterization

A look at each character in depth allowed the researchers to outline patterns and tools that are used throughout both characters within each game. It also allowed them to find differences in the ways the games may approach each of their characters.

4.2.2.1 League of Legends’ approach to characterization

After analyzing Jhin and Irelia, the findings suggest that LoL incorporates hints to lore and background into champion voicelines. The fact that these champions have unique voiceline triggers also adds to their characterization. Both Jhin and Irelia’s playstyles and roles reflect their background and personality to some extent. For example, Jhin as a marksman focuses on long ranged high damage attacks, taking out targets easily with his traps. In his lore he hunts down his victims by carefully planting traps and staying out of reach with his guns. What might not completely translate over from lore to gameplay is the fact that a marksman plays with the support for the majority of the game (See Appendix A), while his lore suggests he works alone. In Irelia’s case the connection between lore and gameplay is more obvious. In her lore she is a fighter who enjoys solitude but picks up the mantle as leader if necessary. In her gameplay she can easily fight on her own or help her allies in teamfights.

But voicelines and gameplay are not the only characterization tools LoL seem to use. Jhin and Irelia’s outfits hints to their role and background as well. Jhin with his golden armor, mask and guns indicate his wealth, mysterious personality and his fighting style. Irelia’s silver detailed armor with flowing ribbons suggests she is a close combat fighter and a dancer. Additionally, LoL’s top-down perspective leads to an emphasis on unique character silhouettes to discern champions quickly while playing. What stands out from Jhin’s silhouette is his hidden gun on his shoulder, while Irelia’s floating blades stand out in her silhouette.
4.2.2.2 Valorant’s approach to characterization

Across both Jett and Chamber, Valorant mostly uses the same tools for their character’s characterization.

Valorant seems to use its voicelines primarily as a means to explore the different relationships between each of its cast members. In particular, the Commend voicelines, which are uttered by teammates when the player has performed above expectations, inform players of the relationships between each agent both by their reaction to certain agents’ performance, but also their lack of reaction to others’.

Across the two characters studied, Valorant uses its first person perspective to show small details in its character’s visual design that help with their characterization. For Jett, this primarily translates in players being able to see her energy lines clearly flowing as she uses updraft and tailwind, and for Chamber this means the logos on his business card and gun are both visible from the player’s point of view.

Both characters’ place in the lore can be contrasted with each other, mostly due to their release date. Jett was released during Valorant’s open beta, which means she was a mainstay of the game before external material even started building up Valorant’s overarching narrative, and she has only appeared in the Duelist (Valorant, 2020) and Warm-up (Valorant, 2022b) trailers, neither of which give us much detail about her importance in the overarching narrative. Chamber’s relationship with his omega counterpart in the L’Accord trailer (Valorant, 2021) is in contrast an important plot point to Valorant’s overarching narrative, and it is referenced regularly in voicelines. This highlights a contrast in the different levels of importance each character can have within Valorant’s narrative.
4.2.3 Comparing approaches to characterization

LoL and Valorant are two widely different games within the multiplayer hero games umbrella. While LoL is a MOBA with a focus on managing three lanes and a jungle with different purpose, Valorant is a round-based tactical shooter. These fundamental differences in core gameplay make it notable that they share a variety of characterization processes.

4.2.3.1 Notable similarities in each game’s approach to characterization

When games cannot resort to explicit narrative, the visual design is a good implicit narrative shorthand (Lundwall, 2017). Both games use this specifically with clothing and accessories. For example, Jhin’s mask alludes to his past in theater, while Chamber’s business cards throw back to his main occupation as a private weapons designer.

One similarity is the way both games can use the dichotomy between the voicelines and the character’s gameplay, like with Irelia and Jett. As mentioned earlier, both Irelia and Jett fit the solo aggressive role of their respective games, namely toplaner and duelist. Their gameplay is highly aggressive and solitary, with few abilities helping their teammates. But their voicelines show that despite their “lone wolf” gameplay, both truly care for their teammates. For example, Irelia encourages and comforts her teammates when walking close to them by saying "I will not let them harm you” (Riot Games, 2018). Jett can profusely compliment her teammates, like by saying “There's my bombshell! Crushed it girl.” (Riot Games, 2020) to Raze if Raze gets multiple kills and the round is won. This opposition between Jett’s and Irelia’s embedded and emergent narratives, as defined by Salen and Zimmerman (2003) make Irelia and Jett three-dimensional characters. Three-dimensional characters have multiple emotional states that can produce conflicting impulses (Adams, 2014), and this opposition reflects these characters’ three-dimensionality. In Valorant, Jett’s friendship with her teammates gets to be explored in
another way thanks to the game’s commend voicelines, voicelines that can trigger when a teammate has performed exceptionally well in a previous round, such as the one mentioned earlier.

Another similarity is how LoL and Valorant subvert gameplay expectations to incorporate elements of characterization, as can be seen for Jhin and Chamber. Marksmen in LoL are focused on delivering fast ranged attacks, which Jhin subverts by using a revolver with a four-bullet limit, and long reload times. This not only impacts Jhin’s gameplay, but also makes him stand out from all other marksmen. In Valorant, Chamber also subverts gameplay expectations with his unique upgraded guns, harkening back to his weapon designer background. Not only does this make him stand out from other agents as the only one at the time of writing with two guns as abilities, but them being also stronger versions of guns that you can buy as part of Valorant’s gameplay loop emphasizes Chamber’s skill as a weapons designer.

4.2.3.2 Notable differences in each games’ approach to characterization

However, LoL and Valorant’s approach to characterization feature key differences related to their gameplay loop.

Differences related to the importance of sound

A big part of Valorant’s gameplay relies on spatial sounds to detect the enemy team and their abilities. This limits the different possibilities for voicelines to trigger during a round without them being intrusive, resulting in voicelines mostly occurring in between rounds instead. LoL can focus more on their champion voicelines for characterization since the game does not rely on spatial sounds the same way. This creates a noticeable difference between the
two games. *LoL*’s voicelines are triggered more frequently than they are in *Valorant*, but *Valorant* features performance-triggered voicelines, lines that only appear after a good player performance during a round or over the course of a match. Additionally, both games have roughly an equal number of voicelines per character, but a bigger portion of them are gameplay related in *Valorant*. Voicelines are focused on referring to a character’s background or lore to a larger extent in *LoL*. Using voicelines for characterization is therefore an easier tool in *LoL* compared to *Valorant*.

**Differences in approaches to voiceline incorporation**

On one hand, *LoL*’s regular voicelines allow its characters to show their characterization more regularly, but on the other *Valorant*’s performance-related voicelines allow it to make characterization feel like a reward to players. *Valorant*’s approach does have the issue of making voicelines easily missable. For example, while the kill feed updating in *Valorant* is an informational interaction that is guaranteed and always has explicit feedback, per Spawforth and Millard’s framework (2017), to hear a character’s kill voiceline the player must be standing close or being the one getting the kill, which is only a possible likelihood. This means players, especially low performing ones, may miss out on a lot of the characterization that comes with performance-related voicelines.

**Differences related to the player’s point of view**

Each game’s visual design has to abide by gameplay requirements related to the player’s point of view when playing the game. Since *LoL* is played from a top down perspective, whereas *Valorant* is played from a first person perspective, this explains some of the differences in the visual design of each game’s characters.
This includes the way each game tackles their characters’ silhouette. Silhouettes are an important part when designing a character to convey their personality, function, and make them stand out from each other (Sloan, 2017). However, due to LoL and Valorant’s differing gameplay requirements, the approach and the extent to which the designers can get creative with characters’ silhouette is different in each game. LoL emphasizes every character’s unique silhouette from a top-down view, in order to distinguish them quickly while playing. Champions can therefore be different sizes, heights and shape. On the other hand, all characters in Valorant must abide by a standardized vertical range as evidenced by the patch notes addressing said vertical range (Riot Games, 2023). This means characters must be the same height in-game in order to facilitate crosshair placement for players.

One way Valorant makes use of its first-person perspective in order to incorporate elements of characterization is by including details in its character and weapon design that would have been much harder to see with LoL’s top-down perspective (See Figure 16). Examples of this include Jett’s energy lines on her arms, and Chamber’s logo on the card he throws for his Trademark ability and on his gun (See Figure 17).
**Figure 16**
*Ingame screenshot of League of Legends (Riot Games, 2009) showing Irelia and Annie in the midlane.*

**Figure 17**
*Ingame screenshot of Valorant (Riot Games, 2020) showing Chamber using Tour-de-Force. Chamber’s logo on his gun is circled in red.*
Moreover, another key difference between *LoL* and *Valorant* is the amount of focus on external material, which is more pronounced in *LoL*. Many champions are released together with a short text-based story, teaser trailer, and champion spotlight explaining their role, background, and abilities. These all help to flesh out a character and deepen their lore. *Valorant* does not focus on external material the same way. This may explain the limited lore-related voicelines in *Valorant* since the amount of material for them is smaller.

**Differences in premise**

*LoL* and *Valorant* have fundamental premise differences in their lore. *Valorant* shows an ensemble cast with a narrative evolving “in real time”. They all are expected to know each other and the expectation of them working together despite their differences is baked into their story and lore.

The champions of *LoL* all live in the fictional world of Runeterra, a place with history and lore that has been expanded greatly over the course of *LoL*’s fourteen-year lifespan at the time of writing. However not all champions are closely related to each other in any way other than living in Runeterra, and their reason for fighting in-game is unexplained.

### 4.2.3.3 Section summary

In conclusion, both *LoL* and *Valorant* feature clear differences in the ways they approach characterization, most of which stem from their stark differences in gameplay, but some of them also stemming from the much longer lifespan *LoL* has had so far. But despite both games being so vastly different, there are some notable similarities in their approach to characterization that seem to indicate the existence of shared principles that multiplayer hero games can follow in order to feature complex and engaging characterization.
5 Conclusion

This study aims to answer the question: What are the similarities and differences between the way *League of Legends* and *Valorant* characterize their player characters? What qualities of these games drive these differences?

Important to note is that only two characters from each game were analyzed, resulting in a limited data pool. Since *LoL* and *Valorant* has a very large number of playable characters, this study cannot verify if the characterization tools used in both games are prevalent or not as a whole.

After analyzing all four characters, our findings suggest that *LoL* and *Valorant* use similar tools to incorporate characterization, both in-game and in external material. These similarities seem to indicate the existence of shared principles that multiplayer hero games can follow in order to feature complex and engaging characterization. These are:

- Subverting gameplay expectations in order to make a character stand out,
- referencing a character’s past through their outfit,
- using voicelines to add personality and links to background lore featured in external material,
- creating a dichotomy between gameplay and voiceline to add character depth.

However, some differences in approaches related to their gameplay loop can be seen when comparing these two games. *LoL* seem to focus on frequent lore-heavy voicelines, while *Valorant’s* need for spatial audio awareness means it has to rely more on performance related voicelines in-between rounds instead. Additionally, *LoL* has a larger amount of external material for its world and characters compared to *Valorant*, which may be explained by *LoL* being an older game than *Valorant*. Despite their gameplay differences, *LoL* and *Valorant* both star characters who share similarities in personality and playstyles, as can be especially seen for Jhin and Chamber.
The results suggest design similarities between *LoL* and *Valorant* and reinforces the validity of talking about games such as these two under a single umbrella, that of multiplayer hero games, despite their core differences. For example, both games used their characters’ outfit accessories to allude to both their occupations in the lore and their in-game abilities.

But the results also highlighted key differences in the way *LoL* and *Valorant* approached characterizations. Some of it stemmed from their differences in core gameplay as expected. For example, the differences in each game’s player point of view impact character model heights and silhouettes. *LoL*’s top down view means it has to rely heavily on unique silhouettes for distinguishability, whereas *Valorant*’s first person gameplay limits characters on a standardized vertical range for balance reasons regarding placement of crosshair and cover. It was however less expected of the research to realize the impact that a given game’s longevity could have on its approach to characterization. Namely the amount of external material *LoL* has compared to *Valorant*.

Important insights gained from this study is how characterization and narrative in multiplayer games such as *LoL* and *Valorant* use subtler means to add story inside their games. External material serves as a prominent way of deepening the world and its characters in both games. Creating interesting characters and narrative is an important part of these types of games despite their competitive nature.

It would therefore be an interesting complement to this research to study the ways in which video games in general have used external material as an additional element of their storytelling, and how this usage has evolved over time.

Furthermore, considering the limited amount of analyzed characters compared to their playable character pool, conducting a more extensive analysis of the characters in *LoL* and *Valorant* in order to verify if the findings of this study are prevalent throughout both games is recommended.
6.1 Articles


The Ohio State University (n.d.). *What is Narrative Theory?* Project Narrative. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from https://projectnarrative.osu.edu/about/what-is-narrative-theory

6.2 Books & Academic Papers


### 6.2 Computer Software


### 6.3 Images


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6.4 Videos


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**6.5 Websites & Miscellaneous**

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(https://map.leagueoflegends.com/en_US?_gl=1*trf7o8*_ga*OTg0NjM1NzkwLjE2NgzExODk5MDg*_ga_FXBJE5DEDD*MTY4NTY5ODM2NC40Ni4xLjE2ODU2OTgzODQuNDAuMC4w&_ga=2.101612673.1250605149.1685698365-984635790.1671189908)
Appendix A

Description of a match of League of Legends

A1 The phases of a League of Legends match

- Champion Select: All players are tasked with banning one champion they wish to not play against. Everyone is designated a role and pick their desired champion before loading into the match.

- Match start: Both teams spawn in their respective starting points, so called the fountains in their base. Here you buy items from the shopkeeper which enhances your stats. Afterwards, every player moves into their designated lanes based on their role in the team.

- Laning phase: Once the minions have spawned and arrived to the lanes, players will focus on killing the minions to gain gold and XP, while fighting their lane opponent if the need arises. This phase usually lasts for the first 10-15 minutes of a match.

- Midgame: Once players have earned more and more gold and become stronger with new items and ability levels, you start moving to different parts of the map. Teams usually compete for epic monster buffs by killing the Baron and/or Dragon in the jungle.

- Lategame: After around 30 minutes you reach the lategame stage. At this point most players have bought all their necessary items and are now strong enough to end the game quickly if an opponent makes a mistake.

- Victory/defeat: The game ends when a team’s Nexus is destroyed or if a team surrenders by a majority vote.
A2 Description of the Summoner’s Rift map and game goal

The main mode of LoL takes place on the map of Summoner’s Rift which is divided into different parts: The ally and enemy bases on each side of the map, the three lanes (top, mid, bot) connected to each base, the jungle in-between each lane, and lastly the river which indicates the enemy and ally side of the map. In both bases you have a structure named the Nexus, which is the heart of each base and is the main goal. Destroy the enemy Nexus and you have won the match. In order to reach the opponents Nexus, you first need to destroy their Inhibitors and Turrets. Located on the three lanes and in each base, the turrets are powerful structures shooting high damage projectiles to enemies who enter its territory without minions. Minions are tiny soldiers who spawn in waves from the Nexus and walk into every lane. Killing them grants XP and gold which is crucial to buy items and level up your abilities.
Appendix B

In-game material of Jhin from League of Legends

B1 In Game Description

“Jhin is a meticulous criminal psychopath who believes murder is art. Once an Ionian prisoner, but freed by shadowy elements within Ionia's ruling council, the serial killer now works as their cabal's assassin. Using his gun as his paintbrush, Jhin creates works of artistic brutality, horrifying victims and onlookers. He gains a cruel pleasure from putting on his gruesome theater, making him the ideal choice to send the most powerful of messages: terror.” (Riot Games, 2016)

B2 Role & Abilities

Role: Marksman/adc

Abilities:

- Basic Attack: Ranged
- Whisper [Passive]: “Jhin’s hand cannon, Whisper, is a precise instrument designed to deal superior damage. It fires at a fixed rate and carries only four shots. Jhin imbues the final bullet with dark magics to critically strike and deal bonus execute damage. Whenever Whisper crits, it inspires Jhin with a burst of Move Speed.”
- Dancing Grenade [Q]: “Jhin launches a magical cartridge at an enemy. It can hit up to four targets and gains damage each time it kills.”
• **Deadly Flourish [W]:** “Jhin brandishes his cane, firing a single shot with incredible range. It pierces through minions and monsters, but stops on the first champion hit. If the target was recently struck by Jhin’s allies, lotus traps, or damaged by Jhin, they are rooted.

• **Captive Audience [E]:** “Jhin places an invisible lotus trap that blooms when walked over. It slows nearby enemies before dealing damage with an explosion of serrated petals. Beauty in Death – When Jhin kills an enemy champion, a lotus trap will bloom near their corpse.”

• **Curtain Call [Ultimate/R]:** “Jhin channels, transforming Whisper into a shoulder-mounted mega cannon. It is able to fire 4 super shots at extreme range that pierce through minions and monsters, but stop on the first champion impacted. Whisper cripples enemies hit, which slows them and deals execute damage. The 4th shot is perfectly crafted, especially powerful, and guaranteed to critically strike.” (Riot Games, 2016)

**B3 Emotes**

• **Joke:** Jhin spins his gun causing him to drop it on the ground. It fires all four bullets towards him, but misses. During the animation this voiceline plays: “Only perfectio-gah!” (garbles incoherently) (clears throat)"... only perfection is acceptable.”

• **Taunt:** Jhin aims his weapons and looks around in different directions. One out of six voicelines will randomly be played during the animation.

• **Dance:** He performs a dance and then he twirls at the end.

• **Laugh:** Spins around and performs a bow. He then grabs his mask, starts to laugh and then lifts up the mask, laughing towards the sky. (Riot Games, 2016)
Appendix C

External material of Jhin from League of Legends

C1 Biography

In his biography, Jhin works as a stagehand in a travelling theater in Ionia. When not working, he kills innocents in gruesome ways, but in his eyes it is a work of art. The people believes the murderer to be the Golden Demon, not realizing it is the work of a human psychopath. The champions Zed and Shen encounters Jhin and imprisons him for his crimes. However, he is later freed and becomes a hired assassin. This grants him access to powerful weapons of his own design. (Riot Games, 2016)

C2 Short Story

Jhin’s short story “The man with the steel cane” (Odin Austin Shafer, n.d.) takes place after the events of his biography. It focuses on him preparing for one of his murders, which he refers to as “performance”. Additionally, it explains Zed and Shen’s relationship which was crumbled after their encounter with Jhin and the murder of Shen’s father. Despite this, they team up to track down and stop Jhin from killing more innocent people. However, Jhin is cunning and has already planned to lure them to him and ultimately kill them both. It ends with Jhin murdering a maid, terrifying anyone witnessing the deed and aftermath.

C3 Comic

The comic “Zed” (Odin Austin Shafer, 2019) features some of the events in the biography and short story of Jhin, despite its main focus being on Zed. He acts as the main antagonist in the comic.
C4 Videos

- **Jhin Promotional Teasers:** Before his release, Riot Games published four short videoclips featuring the playable champions Zed, Sona, Vi, and Garen. In every clip you can hear a gunshot followed by a choir singing and each champion appearing, wounded. (SkinSpotlights, 2016)

- **Jhin Champion Teaser “Mind of the Virtuoso”:** Similar to the short clips, the longer video teaser “Mind of the Virtuoso” also showcases four of Jhin’s murders (who may or may not be the same four champions he killed in the previous clips). Orchestral music accompanied by a choir can be heard in the background. For each kill, a different effect can be seen: fiery flowers on a woman’s back, glittering particles emanating from a man’s face, smoke and butterflies from a woman’s mouth, and branches wrapping around a man’s body, forming a tree. The teaser ends with a closeup of Jhin’s mask.

- **Jhin Champion Spotlight:** In his spotlight you can see Zed, Sona, Vi and Garen moving across the Summoner’s Rift map. At the end of the video you see them again, but this time they are doing their death animation while Jhin is laughing.

- **Awaken (Season 2019 Cinematic):** As one of many starring LoL champions, Jhin is seen in a dark theater, sitting down playing piano when suddenly Camille (playable champion) and her troops enter the building. As they approach, some guards step into Jhin’s lotus traps, and a fight breaks out between Camille and Jhin. As Jhin’s explosions detonate into purple clouds, he bows to Camille as she attempts to get close to him.
C5 Relationship to other champions

- **Shen & Zed**: Both were a part of capturing Jhin and sending him to jail. Jhin has plans to kill both of them.

- **Akali**: Jhin captured Akali when she tracked him down. Zed and Shen rescued her. (Odin Austin Shafer, 2019)

- **Sona**: Since Sona is a famous artist, Jhin feels as if she takes the spotlight away from him. His “first encounter” voicelines highlight this idea (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.). Jhin also kills Sona in his champion teasers (SkinSpotlights, 2016).

- **Vi**: She is killed in Jhin’s champion teasers (SkinSpotlights, 2016).

- **Garen**: He is killed in Jhin’s champion teasers (SkinSpotlights, 2016). Jhin has only one “first encounter” voiceline with Garen: “The always-enchanting tale of star-crossed lovers.” (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.).

- **Katarina**: Jhin has a single “first encounter” voiceline with Katarina which is: “Your finale will be a duet”. Hinting to Jhin planning on killing her (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.).

- **Camille**: In the cinematic Awaken (League of Legends, 2019), Camille is looking for Jhin to capture him and a fight breaks out between them.

- **Tahm Kench**: Jhin’s “first encounter” voicelines with Tahm Kench are extremely mean spirited, calling him “ugly” and “fat”. (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.)
Appendix D

In-game material of Irelia from League of Legends

D1 In Game Description

“The Noxian occupation of Ionia produced many heroes, none more unlikely than young Irelia of Navori. Trained in the ancient dances of her province, she adapted her art for war, using the graceful and carefully practiced movements to levitate a host of deadly blades. After proving herself as a fighter, she was thrust into the role of resistance leader and figurehead, and to this day remains dedicated to the preservation of her homeland.” (Riot Games, 2009)

D2 Role & Abilities

Role: Fighter, toplaner

Abilities:

- Basic Attack: Melee
- Ionian Fervor [Passive]: “When Irelia strikes enemies with spells she gain stacking bonus Attack Speed. At maximum stacks she also gains bonus damage on hit.”
- Bladesurge [Q]: “Irelia dashes forward to strike her target, healing herself. If the target is Marked or dies to Bladesurge, its cooldown refreshes.”
- Defiant Dance [W]: “Irelia charges a strike that deals more damage as she charges. She takes reduced physical damage during the charge.”
- Flawless Duet [E]: “Irelia sends out two blades which converge on each other. Enemies caught in between are damaged, stunned and Marked.”
• Vanguard’s Edge [Ultimate/R]: “Irelia fires a massive number of blades that explode outward upon hitting an enemy champion. Enemies hit by the blades are damaged and Marked. Afterwards the blades form a wall that will damage and slow enemies that walk through it.” (Riot Games, 2009)

**D3 Emotes**

• Joke: Irelia plays a tune on her blades, as if they were an instrument.

• Taunt: She says 1 of 4 possible lines in a serious tone, as she points forward and then to the side.

• Dance: She puts her hands together as if to focus, then she swirls her blades around her.

• Laugh: Moves her hand to her chin and the other resting on her stomach and lets out a short giggle.
Appendix E

External material of Irelia from League of Legends

E1 Biography

Her biography tells us about how her grandmother taught her the ancient dances of her homeland at a young age. When the armies from Noxus invaded and killed her entire family, she was determined to fight back. After her family crest was destroyed by the invaders, she was filled with anger, but also a strange beat. She could suddenly levitate the shards from the crest and used them to fight back. The broken shards are now her weapons, powered by the ancient dances. Irelia joined the resistance and many saw her as a leader. During an attack she was captured by the champion Swain but managed to free herself, cutting off his arm in the process. The resistance successfully fought off the invaders, but Ionia was now in shambles. While Irelia longs to be on her own, many still want her to lead the people for better times (Riot Games, 2018).

E2 Short Story

Irelia’s short story takes place after the events in her biography. The war between Noxus and Ionia is over, but Ionia is not as it used to be. It is now separated by different factions fighting between themselves. One faction being the Navori Brotherhood, who sent assassin’s targeting Irelia for her unwillingness to join them. Irelia is determined to make Ionia go back to its spiritual roots and stop all the violence. She killed the assassin targeting her but felt upset that she had to do it. Burdened by expectations from others to be their leader, along with her grief of family members, she felt lost. Irelia is also worried about disappointing her late family, especially with the violence she had to do in order to protect her home (John O’Bryan, 2018).
E3 Videos

- **Irelia Champion Spotlight:** Video showcasing her abilities and playstyle. The champions she is shown fighting against in the video are Noxians such as Swain, Darius, Draven and Sion.

- **Awaken (Season 2019 Cinematic):** Irelia is one of many starring champions in this cinematic trailer. People look up to her on the battle field in her homeland Ionia. Invading forces are attacking and Irelia can be seen at the frontline to fight them.

- **Irelia Champion Trailer:** The trailer starts off by showing Irelia dancing on a cliffside while she talks about the traditional dance she dedicated her life to. (League of Legends, 2018)

- **Irelia Teaser Trailer “The Defiant Blade”**: This short video gives a quick overview of her lore. It shows her family crest shatter and turn into her blade weapons.

E4 Relationship to other champions

- **Swain:** Swain was a part of the Noxian invasion of Ionia. In an encounter with Swain, Irelia cut off his arm. This led to Swain becoming the Grand General of Noxus. (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.a).

- **Riven:** Riven was also a part of the Noxian invasion, causing Irelia to resent her. (League of Legends Wiki, n.d.a).

- **Sion:** Sion was a part of the second invasion of Ionia and fought for Noxus. Both can be seen fighting in the Awaken 2019 cinematic trailer. (League of Legends, 2019)

- **Akali:** They fought together in the second invasion of Ionia. (League of Legends, 2019)

- **Karma:** They fought together in the second invasion of Ionia. (League of Legends, 2019)
Appendix F

Description of a match of Valorant

- Valorant matches are round based and asymmetric. The attacking team can win a round by fulfilling at least one of these criteria:
  - The entire defending team has died within the two minutes of the main phase.
  - The attacking team has planted the spike within the two minutes of the main phase and the spike has detonated.

The defending side can win a round by fulfilling at least one of these criteria:

- The entire attacking team has died within the two minutes of the main phase.
- The attacking team has failed to plant the spike within the two minutes of the main phase.
- The attacking team has managed to plant the spike within the two minutes of the main phase, but the defending team has managed to defuse it before it detonates.

Each player only has one life per round, though Sage’s ultimate ability can resurrect an ally during a round.

To help players achieve their goals, they can buy abilities specific to the agent they are playing as well as guns with credits. Credits are earned by killing an opponent, planting the spike, or defusing the spike. Players also earn credits at the end of a round, depending on whether they won it or lost it and whether they survived the round. Credits and unused abilities carry over from one round to the other, regardless of if the player has survived the round. Guns and armor however do not carry over from round to round if the player has died in the previous round. After twelve rounds, the two teams switch side, and the game goes on until one team has
won a total of thirteen rounds. None of the player’s purchases, nor their credit, carry over when switching side.

Players first start by picking which agent they would like to play as. Players can choose agents from any role they wish to play, however no two players in the same team can choose the same agent. After every player has chosen an agent, they are then spawned in their side’s spawn point on the map. Each round is made up of three phases:

- The buy phase. During the buy phase, players can use their credits to buy guns, armor and ability uses. They can also buy a gun for a teammate if said teammate has requested it beforehand. Players can navigate a section of the map corresponding to the side on which they spawned. Players can use some of their abilities during the buy phase. The buy phase lasts twenty seconds.
- The main phase. Once the timer of the buy phase reaches 0, players can roam around the map in order to complete their objective. The attackers have two minutes to plant the spike or else they lose the round. After the spike is planted, the defenders have forty seconds to defuse it before it detonates and the defenders lose the round.
- The post round phase. After a round ends, players have ten seconds before the beginning of the next round, during which they can use that time to find and kill an enemy player who survived the main phase or pick up a weapon found on the ground.

The game also notifies specific winning situations, if some conditions are met. These include:

- Clutch: a round is won by the last player alive.
- Flawless: a round is won by a team that hasn’t suffered any casualty.
• Ace: a round is won in which a player in the winning team has killed every enemy player at least once (Sage’s ability to resurrect an ally with her ultimate means one player may be killed twice.

• Thrifty: a round is won where the winning team had a significantly less valuable loadout than the losing team.

**Story material from Valorant**

**Voicelines**

Voicelines are triggered in a variety of scenarios in Valorant. Some are of these triggers are shared between characters while others are very specific to each character. This research will separate these triggers into three categories:

• **Agent related triggers**: these triggers are purely related to the presence of another agent in the player’s team or the enemy team. These trigger voicelines during the buy phase or as the main phase is about to start. Each agent will only react to the presence of specific agents.

• **Gameplay related triggers**: these triggers relate to the player performing specific actions in the game. Some triggers are common to all agents, but the voiceline that they give on these triggers are different in content. Said triggers include:
  
  o The start of a match
  o The start of a round
  o Getting a kill
  o Defusing the spike at the last minute
 Winning the round on low health points

Other gameplay related triggers can be specific to agents and will be discussed on each agent’s section.

Mixed conditions triggers: these are triggers that involve both the presence of an agent, and a player specific action. These include:

- Commend triggers: if an agent in the player’s team has performed exceptionally well by getting multiple kills in one round, or winning a clutch round, another agent in said team can commend the performance at the start of the next round. Each agent can only commend a few other agents.

- Special kill triggers: each agent has special lines depending on which enemy agent they kill. Each agent only has lines for some other agents and not other. Agents may also have specific lines triggered when specific agents are killed as the final kill of the round.

**Hidden material in the Range**

Valorant features a training level called The Range featuring a variety of activities such as aim training and a jumping challenge. But there are also hidden pieces of lore that can be found across the range, that will change depending on the update. These fall into categories:

- Emails: emails are written pieces of lore that can be found in the range. They are a collection of emails written to Brimstone by other characters of the Valorant universe, primarily other agents.

- Voicemails: voicemails are audio pieces of lore that can be found in the range. They are addressed to Brimstone and are mostly sent by other agents.
• Dossiers: Prior to Fade’s release, she was teased as a new agent through a storyline involving her blackmailing the agents of the Valorant protocol. This led to Fade sending ominous messages that could be read in The Range. These were the dossiers, and each of them offered a detailed look at an agent’s background.
Appendix G

In-game material for Chamber from Valorant

G1 In game description

“Well dressed and well armed, French weapons designer Chamber expels aggressors with deadly precision. He leverages his custom arsenal to hold the line and pick off enemies from afar, with a contingency built for every plan.”

G2 Role and Abilities

Role: Sentinel

“Sentinels are defensive experts who can lock down areas and watch flanks, both on attacker and defender rounds.”

Abilities:

- Basics
  - Trademark: PLACE a trap that scans for enemies. When a visible enemy comes in range, the trap counts down and then destabilizes the terrain around them, creating a lingering field that slows players caught inside of it. The trap can be picked up to be REDEPLOYED.
  - Headhunter: ACTIVATE to equip a heavy pistol. ALT FIRE with the pistol equipped to aim down sights.
• Signature: Rendez-vous: ACTIVATE to equip a heavy pistol. ALT FIRE with the pistol equipped to aim down sights.

• Ultimate: Tour de Force: ACTIVATE to summon a powerful, custom sniper rifle that will kill an enemy with any direct hit to the upper body. Killing an enemy creates a lingering field that slows players caught inside of it.

G3 Findable documents

These will be ordered chronologically in order to make the progression of the storyline more apparent:

Email from patch 3.10 (release patch). Sent to Brimstone by Cypher. Details Chamber’s past: former military, then became a PMC marksman, then became a weapon’s designer at Kingdom Corporation. It is also revealed that Chamber created a blueprint for a portal.

Voicemail from patch 3.12. Sent by Chamber. Mentions how Chamber recommends someone from Kingdom with a particular set of abilities, but with whom he had “a past misunderstanding”. That agent is later revealed to be Neon.

Voicemails from patch 4.03. Sent to Brimstone by Chamber. He advises Brim to remove Neon’s power caps for her to be able to power the portal.

Voicemails from patch 4.03. Sent to Brimstone by Neon. Neon advises against following Chamber’s advice as she believes her uncapped power would destroy half of the headquarter.
Email from patch 4.03. Sent to Brimstone by Chamber. Chamber admits to being wrong about Neon’s power levels. Talks about apologizing to her, but her not being receptive.

Dossier from patch 4.04. Fade mentions that Chamber seems to have some form of greater goal that he is dedicated to pursuing, though he doesn’t know what it is.

Email from patch 5.10. Mentions the work on the portal being done, and a set up a first travel with a few other agents.
Appendix H

External material of Chamber from Valorant

- L’Accord trailer: Shows Chamber and his omega counterpart working together to free Brimstone. This is the first and so far only instance of seeing omega and alpha agents working together.

- Iyi Geceler trailer: In this trailer, Fade prods through a few agents’ mind in order to reveal their fear. Chamber’s fear sequence sees his deal with omega chamber broken and all the other agents giving both of them accusatory looks.
Appendix I

In-game material for Jett from Valorant

I1 In-game description

“Representing her home country of South Korea, Jett's agile and evasive fighting style lets her take risks no one else can. She runs circles around every skirmish, cutting enemies before they even know what hit them.”

I2 Role and abilities

Role: Duelist

“Duelists are self-sufficient fraggers who their team expects, through abilities and skills, to get high frags and seek out engagements first.”

Abilities:

- Passive: Drift: Holding the jump button while falling allows you to glide through the air.

- Basics:
  - Cloudburst: INSTANTLY throw a projectile that expands into a brief vision-blocking cloud on impact with a surface. HOLD the ability key to curve the smoke in the direction of your crosshair.
  - Updraft: INSTANTLY propel Jett high into the air.

- Signature: Tailwind: ACTIVATE to prepare a gust of wind for a limited time. RE-USE the wind to propel Jett in the direction she is moving. If Jett is standing still, she propels forward.
- Ultimate: Blade Storm: EQUIP a set of highly accurate throwing knives. FIRE to throw a single knife and recharge knives on a kill. ALTERNATE FIRE to throw all remaining daggers but does not recharge on a kill.

I3 Findable documents

These will be ordered chronologically in order to make the progression of the storyline more apparent:

Email patch 4.01: sent by Breach. Footage of the Venice incident (see Duelist trailer) are being leaked on conspiracy websites, Cypher is trying to delete them.

Dossier patch 4.07: Jett ran after after the destruction of the restaurant she worked for by a “freak storm”, and she was accused of being the main culprit of the events of Venice (see Duelist trailer) even though she claims her innocence (we know by that point that the Jett in the trailer was Omega Jett, and therefore Alpha Jett is indeed innocent).

Email patch 4.08: sent by Jett. Jett is highly critical of Fade being hired by brimstone after she had blackmailed all the Valorant protocol.

Email patch 6.03: sent by Jett. Jett decides to take a day visiting her friend in Los Angeles after he had mentioned a peculiar drops in customers in his restaurant.
Appendix J

External material for Jett from Valorant

Videos

- Duelist trailer: Omega Jett is seen battling Alpha Phoenix in Venice over a spike. Jett prevails, “killing” Phoenix while he is using his Run It Back ability and detonating the spike. The final shot reveals that part of Venice was sent floating over the rest of the city.

- Warm-Up trailer: a group of the agents of Valorant are trying to fight a training robot built by Raze and Killjoy. Meanwhile Yoru and Jett place bets on whether their teammate may or may not defeat the robot. They eventually defeat it by teaming up all together.
# Appendix K

## Coding tables for all characters

### K1 Jhin from League of Legends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gameplay elements</th>
<th>Voicelines</th>
<th>Background lore</th>
<th>Clothing and accessories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marksman</strong></td>
<td>- Two guns as weapons.</td>
<td>- Mention shooting/trigger/guns.</td>
<td>- Uses his guns and traps to kill.</td>
<td>- Carrying two guns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Traps for catching targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Ranged attacks.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Limited ammo, long reload.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Class</strong></td>
<td>- Mentions him “rising from the muck”</td>
<td>- Access to a lot of funds from his patrons</td>
<td>- Golden armor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Called “the golden demon”</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Calls his clothing “finery”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetically minded</strong></td>
<td>- Visually appealing animations and ability effects.</td>
<td>- Commenting on other champions’ visuals.</td>
<td>- Golden armor and weapons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Dislikes “ugliness”.</td>
<td>- Intricate details.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- References art.</td>
<td>- Well-kept clothing.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Matching weapons to his attire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Calls his clothing “finery”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons designer</strong></td>
<td>- Uses his designed guns and trap.</td>
<td>- Mentioning his designs are “better-crafted”.</td>
<td>- Designs weapons which his patrons make with their funding.</td>
<td>- Matching weapons to his attire.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**K2 Chamber from Valorant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marksman</strong></td>
<td>- Two guns as his abilities.</td>
<td>- High esteem of his double’s aim.</td>
<td>- PMC Marksman.</td>
<td>- Guns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Long range of said guns.</td>
<td>- Compliments his own shot.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Long time between shots, high accuracy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Has a trap that makes it easier for him to take</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shots at enemies .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Class</strong></td>
<td>- His guns are better versions of normal Valorant guns</td>
<td>- Implications about his guns’ prices.</td>
<td>- Business suit, with additional golden</td>
<td>- Business suit, with additional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Measured way of speaking ie calm demeanor, not letting himself be</td>
<td>ornament.</td>
<td>golden ornament.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>emotional.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Golden watch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Golden weapons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Aesthetically</td>
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<tr>
<td>minded</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons designer</strong></td>
<td>- His guns are better versions of normal Valorant guns.</td>
<td>- Lots of fashion related voicelines</td>
<td>- Business suit with intricate golden</td>
<td>- Chamber’s branding features on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses a trap and teleporter of his own design.</td>
<td>- “You must keep up appearances”.</td>
<td>detailing .</td>
<td>his guns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;None of this &quot;a win is a win&quot; nonsense. We should win big and look</td>
<td></td>
<td>- His guns are upgraded versions of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>good doing it”.</td>
<td></td>
<td>the normal Valorant guns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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K3 Irelia from League of Legends

<table>
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<td></td>
<td>- Bladesurge ability. - animations for abilities, emotes, etc are dance-y and flowy.</td>
<td>- Using dancing terms or referring to dancing.</td>
<td>- Explains how she has dedicated her life to learning the ancient dances. She incorporates movement into her fighting style.</td>
<td>- flowy ribbons on headaddress and arm sleeves (similar to ballerinas or chinese dancers). - Lighter armorpieces to increase mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
<td>- Toplaner and diver role, need to duel and be in the heat of the battle.</td>
<td>- Speaks courageously about battle/war and fighting. - Taunts enemies.</td>
<td>- Fought and killed invaders as a young girl. - Joined the rebellion. - Leader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duelist &amp; Toplaner roles</td>
<td>- Toplaner - Solo lane. - Big focus on 1v1 battles in first part of the match.</td>
<td>- Mentions not wanting to be a leader, it just happened.</td>
<td>- Becomes a leader even though she dislikes being one. - Wants to be on her own. - Sole survivor in her family.</td>
<td>- Wears armor, battle-ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>- Diver role, be in heat of battle.</td>
<td>- Loud voice. - Battle/war related lines. - Taunt’s enemies.</td>
<td>- Fighter. - Will kill people if necessary to defend herself and her home.</td>
<td>- Levitating blades behind her. - Wears armor, battle-ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive to her teammates</td>
<td>- Ability to disrupt enemies.</td>
<td>- Encouraging lines.</td>
<td>- Joins the resistance to fight for her people and homeland. - Becomes a leader even though she dislikes being one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## K4 Jett from Valorant

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<td></td>
<td>Updraft, Tailwind and Drift</td>
<td>Lots of speed related voicelines</td>
<td>She uses her movement abilities in the various trailers to fight</td>
<td>Light easy to move in clothes, sports shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave</td>
<td>Duellist Role, good for lurking and for entry fragging</td>
<td>- Clearly not caring about the danger (ex: “Race you to the spike sites”) - self assured</td>
<td>- Warm-Up trailer: taking on the Max robot even after her teammates failed, front of the pack in the final assault</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duelist &amp; Topplaner roles</td>
<td>- “egotistical” ability kit</td>
<td>many positive commend lines, lots of supportive lines as well at round starts</td>
<td>Betting in favor of her friends in the Warm-Up trailer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>- Tailwind recharges after two kills, - movement allows her to take challenges more efficiently, - ultimate is a weapon recharges on kills</td>
<td>Taunting voicelines and aggressive voicelines</td>
<td>As with most agents, she is depicted as aggressive in the various trailers</td>
<td>Flying kunai’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive to her teammates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lots of supportive voicelines including commend</td>
<td>Betting in favor of her friends in the Warm-Up trailer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>