

Kafka in Games

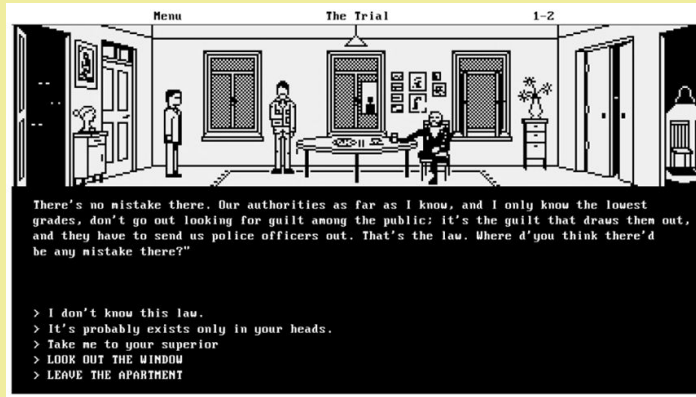
Zur Spurensuche nach Kafka-Referenzen
in digitalen Spielen

Digital Humanities Day Leipzig 2025

Dilan Canan Çakir (Freie Universität Berlin), Manuel Burghardt (Universität Leipzig)
Poster Design: Mark Schwindt (Freie Universität Berlin)

1. Textnahe Adaptionen

“The Trial” (unpublished)



https://store.steampowered.com/app/594260/The_Trial/

“Playing Kafka” 2024



https://store.steampowered.com/app/2911850/Playing_Kafka/

2. Freie Adaptionen: Zwischen Hommage und Klischee

“Matmorphosis” (2020)



<https://store.steampowered.com/app/1025410/Metamorphosis/?l=german>

“Mad Mojo” (1996)



<https://steamcommunity.com/app/255960/?l=german>

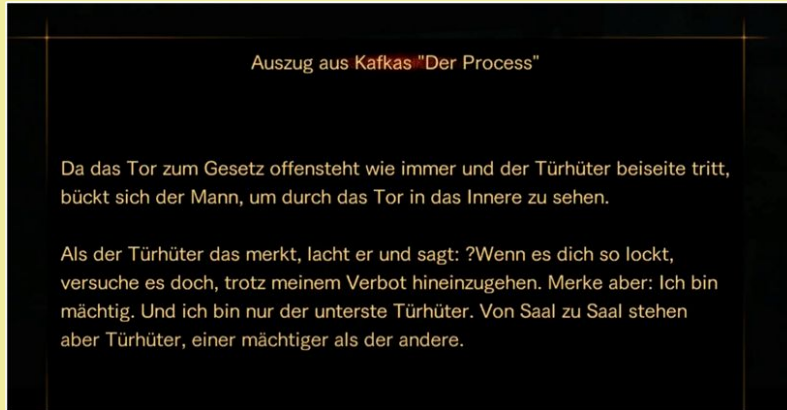
“The Frank Kafka Video Game” (2017)



https://store.steampowered.com/app/392280/The_Franz_Kafka_Videogame/

3. Einzelne Referenzen

„Resident Evil. Revelations 2“ (2015)



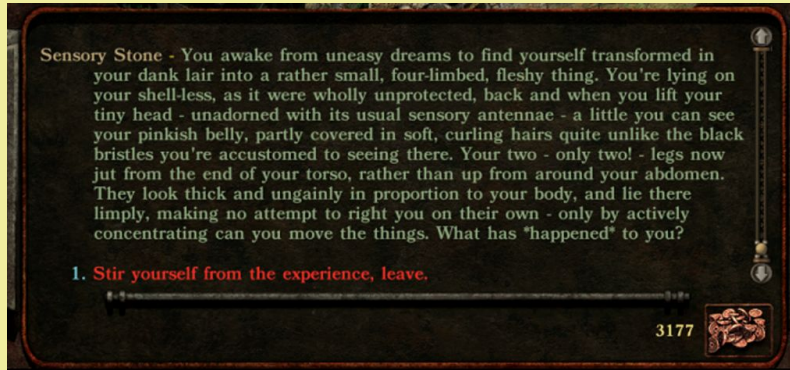
<https://store.steampowered.com/appcheck/app/287290/?l=german>

„Despotism 3k “ (2018)



https://store.steampowered.com/app/699920/Despotism_3k/

“Sigil”



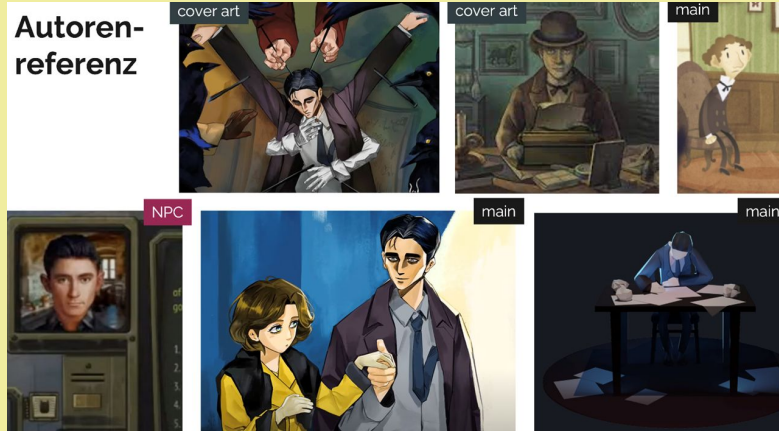
<https://store.steampowered.com/app/1063940/Sigil/>

“Death Stranding” (2019)



https://store.steampowered.com/app/1850570/DEATH_STRANDING_DIRECTOR_S_CUT/

Autorenreferenz



“Metamorphosis” (2020)



»Was ist mit mir geschehen?«, dachte er. Es war kein Traum. Sein Zimmer, ein richtiges, nur etwas zu kleines Menschenzimmer, lag ruhig zwischen den vier wohlbekannten Wänden. Über dem Tisch, auf dem eine auseinandergepackte Musterkollektion von Tuchwaren ausgebreitet war – Samsa war Reisender – hing das Bild, das er vor kurzem aus einer illustrierten Zeitschrift ausgeschnitten und in einem hübschen, vergoldeten Rahmen untergebracht hatte. Es stellte eine Dame dar, die mit einem Pelzhut und einer Pelzboa versehen, aufrecht dasaß und einen schweren Pelzmuff, in dem ihr ganzer Unterarm verschwunden war, dem Beschauer entgegenhob.

4. "Kafkaeske" Rezeptionsphänomene

“Stanley Parable”



https://store.steampowered.com/app/221910/The_St Stanley_Parable/?l=german

“Papers Please”

https://store.steampowered.com/app/239030/Papers_Please/

Reviews

Spielende berichten ihr Erlebnis in Reviews Systematische. Eine Suche nach Reviews mit dem Keyword „kafka*“ auf Steam ergaben insgesamt 915 Reviews für 391 unterschiedliche Spiele.

915 matches of „kafka“ in reviews for **391 games** (total number of **games: 134,076**).
690 matches of „kafka“ in **German or English** speaking reviews for **391 games**

Top games with „kafka“ mentions in German or English language reviews:

1. **„The Franz Kafka Videogame“**, 130 German or English / 217 all languages
2. **„Metamorphosis“**, 71 / 103
3. **„Resident Evil 2 – Revelations“**, 27 / 39
4. **„Papers, Please“**, 14 / 19
5. **„The Stanley Parable“**, 12 / 17
6. **„Pathologic 2“**, 13 / 13
7. **„Disco Elysium“**, 11 / 13
8. **„Kentucky Route Zero (PC Edition)“**, 8 / 11
9. **„Hearts of Iron IV“**, 2 / 10
10. **„Inside“**, 7 / 9
11. **„Beckett“**, 7 / 8
12. **„Hamlet or the Last Game without MMORPG Features, Shaders and Product Placement“**, 3 / 7
13. **„Bad Mojo Redux“**, 5 / 7
14. **„Paradise Killer“**, 3 / 5
15. **„Death and Taxes“**, 3 / 5
16. **„Milk inside a bag of milk inside a bag of milk“**, 5 / 5
17. **„NORTH“**, 5 / 5
18. **„Cyberpunk 2077“**, 4 / 4
19. **„My name is You and its the only unusual thing in my life“**, 3 / 4
20. **„Limbus Company“**, 3 / 4

Ausgewählte Reviews

This was pure art. Like a playable David Lynch dream sequence with a little **Kafka** thrown in for good measure. Best \$12 I've spent in a LONG time.

A surreal experience with an uncanny, **Kafkaesque** vibe evocative of Twin Peaks, Deadly Premonition, and how I spend my weekends.

This game has consumed me and transformed in a **kafkaesque** mockery of the man I once was. I have neglected personal relationships and outings to stay in and play the sims 4, it scares me. I am becoming someone who I fear. Also the packs are overpriced.

... However, while the game did NOT deliver as promised, it did deliver a **Kafkaesque** story, that balances perfectly between empowering and disempowering you. You feel motivated when you get beat down, and you feel like you have a stake in this - like you have a message to deliver.