The Evolution of Storylines in Video Games

Van Alvin P. Dino

School of Teacher Education and Liberal Arts/ Master of Arts in English

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the evolution of video games, their unique features in Storytelling, and their effects in the presentation of modern narrative through modern video games, namely: The Last of Us, Dark Souls, Skyrim, The Walking Dead, and 3 sample visual novels through content analysis: a method used to analyze works through its narrative structure. The results show how video games help construct Storytelling with how it is intertwined through interactive narrative and fiction for topics regarding critiquing and analyzing narrative in video games to be considered in future research and applied in education.

Keywords: Branching plot, Player choice, Interactive narrative, Gameplay

INTRODUCTION

With the advancement of technology and its inclusion in everyday life, Literature has also taken the step into innovation. From book format to digital, ancient and modern tales have been adapted into different media through E-books. Defined as books for reading on any electronic device, E-books have intertwined with other fields through their use in Education and Nursing (Armstrong, 2008).

These formats even intertwine with different facets of other forms of knowledge. One such form is in Information Technology and Literature intertwining through media such as video games, visual novels, and choose-your-own-adventure type models.

These forms of media have seen growth these recent times, with one of the most profitable methods of income being streaming games on Twitch and Youtube, providing revenue of Three thousand (3000) to five thousand (5000) dollars a month playing for 40 hours a week (Geyser, 2022). Furthermore, with more and more games being developed each year, newer stories are also being told, even those with a more literary background. Moreover, as these stories are adapted, the traditional idea of Literature, words in a book, have slowly transformed into that which have taken on different faces, with the keyword of this transformation as "choice."

Literature Review

The following study focuses on video game narratives. As such, Literature concerning Storytelling in video games and its evolution was reviewed.

The evolution of video games as a storytelling medium and the role of narrative in modern games. An article by Stone (2019) tackles a similar topic as this paper, albeit with a different focus and examples. The article investigates video game narrative, its evolution, and its role in modern game storytelling using Telltale Games and Dark Souls as examples.

From Super Mario to Skyrim: A framework for the evolution of video game consumption. The paper shows a framework for understanding the consumption of video games by examining the intersection of

player, narrative, and gameplay. The findings suggest that video game technology and design advancements have gradually increased the degree of integration among these domains.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The paper's framework on video game storytelling is based on the four different types of narratives in video games.

The first is the String of pearls method, where the story is shown to the player between static periods of gameplay through text without player interaction, i.e., cutscenes and game logs, and resumes gameplay afterward. RPGs like Final Fantasy and Genshin Impact are examples of video games that use this model.

The second model is known as the story machine. It is a narrative method where the game generates a story for the player by interacting with the game's world. Skyrim uses this model for its system.

The third model is called Branching Narrative, where the player goes through the story through story scenes, with the player's choices and other factors determining which story scenes are presented. Visual Novels like Fate/Stay night and Higurashi no Naku Koro ni have branching plot structures in their games.

The fourth model is called the amusement park model. Known for its application in open-world games like Grand Theft Auto and MMORPGs like World of Warcraft, this method of narrative design is used in a large game world littered with activities often termed missions or quests, and the player can freely choose which activity to embark on.

Significance of the Study

As a student in the English department, it has come to the researcher's interest to delve deeper into these formats and how they can offer new perspectives in studying and critiquing Literature in different ways. In this paper, the researcher discusses how video games have constructed a form of Storytelling that not only interpret literary works in a different format but also how it impacts the academe's ideas of the structure of modern Storytelling.

Objectives of the Study

At the end of this study, the researcher aims:

- To explain the history of Storytelling in video games and their storyline.
- To discuss the role of the players' experiences in video game storylines.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The paper is qualitative as it does not require a sample population and numerical data. The researcher chose Content Analysis as the basis for the study of its relevance in analyzing narratives in video games.

Source of Data

The origins of data to be gathered come from the games the researcher will play. Moreover, as no human subjects are involved, population and locale are substituted with the data source.

Data Gathering Tools

The paper explains and discusses interactive fiction through examples of modern adventure games and how these games interact with the player to tell a story. As such, 4 modern video games were chosen to be analyzed: The Last of Us, Dark Souls, and Skyrim. For Adventure games, The Walking Dead: A

Telltale Series was picked, while 3 sample titles were selected for Visual Novels, namely: Katawa Shoujo, Sakura Angels, and Nekopara Vol. 0. These video games were chosen after finding related research from each title.

Data Gathering Procedures

The games were played with a PS4 and Nintendo Switch and played to the end of the story while noting relevant information concerning narrative changes and player interaction affecting said changes.

Treatment of Data

The data and experiences gained from these games were then compiled and analyzed to be placed in their respective type of video game narrative.

Ethical Consideration

The study does not subject humans to experiments nor involves a population for data gathering as the data sources is public domain, so no ethical issues are violated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction to Video Games

According to Espacito, during a conference in 2005, Video games are defined as audio-visual apparatus based on a story that people play, meaning that if a form of media includes a person interacting with said media through audio-visual means, it can be related to video games. For example, one type of media which carries these elements are visual novels. Nevertheless, general examples of video games range from classic games like Super Mario Bros. to life simulators like The Sims, to MMORPGs like World of Warcraft, and indie games like Celeste. This paper will focus on visual novels and a few chosen console games focusing on narrative gameplay.

History of Video Games

There is no exact moment in time when video games were created. Some sources trace it as early as the 1940s, during Condon's computer design presented at the World's Fair. Others say it began with the electronic version of the game "Nim" introduced at the Festival of Britain's Exhibition on Science in 1951. Some go later, in 1952, with A.S. Douglas' creation of the simple game called Tic-tac-toe. However, for consistency, the paper will begin with its origins in 1958. William Higinbotham, a physicist at Brookhaven's Lab, created "Tennis for Two." Played with two controllers and an oscilloscope display (Brookhaven National Library, 2006). Tennis for Two will eventually become a heavy inspiration for the game we all know now as "Pong," released in 1972. Pong would be the first record of interaction between a console and player and will soon transform into a relationship between work and reader.

Tennis for Two is known as the base for what video games are. However, the first official digital video game came from a game called "Spacewars!". Created by Peter Samson and Steve Russell in 1961, the space-themed game revolved around a player fighting against another player. The graphics are not the same as modern games have today, given the limitations of the time, but this will eventually give birth to modern video games. In 1974, the first official game company, "Atari," was created (Brandom, 2013).

In 1978, Taito introduced Space Invaders. In 1980, Pac-man was created by Namco's Toru Iwatani. In 1981, Shigeru Miyamoto created Donkey Kong and inadvertently introduced Mario, one of the iconic video game characters. In 1984, Tetris was created by a mathematician named Alexey Pajitnov. In 1987, The Legend of Zelda came out, showing the first glimpse at role-playing games. In 1991, Sega stepped into the industry and created Sonic the Hedgehog, another iconic face in video games.

Introduction to Adventure Games

Traditional Storytelling was not added into video games until adventure games were introduced in the 1970s, with the text-based adventure game named "Adventure". Created by Will Crowther, the game interacted with the player to tell the game's story, giving birth to the term "interactive fiction" (Hosch, n.d.).

Introduction to Visual Novels

Visual novels are quite complex as there is no clear definition. Some sources define it as a kind of video game from Japan that contains more narrative elements (Mikos, 2015). Others say it is an interactive medium for reading with little gameplay (Kaser, 2015). Because of its broad definition, some sites and sources bound themselves to rules of consideration when defining visual novels.

One factor that has led to different definitions is the cultural aspect. Visual novels make up 70 percent of the P.C. gaming market in Japan. However, in the west (particularly the United States), it is not entirely recognized. The reason is that the visual novels need to be translated into English. In an interview with Lipschultz in 2009, The group had to read the Japanese text, describe it the way it is presented, and find the English counterpart that fits the image it presents (Ohlew, 2014).

Visual novels are often confused with other game genres, such as Adventure Role-playing Games. The reason might be because Visual novels may be divided into two categories: V.N. (a.k.a. Visual novel proper) and ADV (a.k.a. Adventure visual novels). VPNs are text heavy and have more narrative elements, while ADVs focus more on gameplay.

Plot-wise, the elements of Visual novels are similar to a novel; only certain elements make it unique among other fiction forms: Multiple endings and Branching plot.

History of Multiple Endings and Branching Plot

The idea of multiple endings was introduced as early as the 1940s. In 1941, Jorge Luis Borges, an author from Argentina, published a book entitled Examen de la Obra de Herbert Quain, A story with three (3) independent parts branching off to two (2) points and leading to nine (9) endings. He then began to write other stories made for the reader to find the endings for themselves without instructions.

Borges' use of multiple endings soon gave birth to Branching plot. In the 1950s, books with branching plotlines were introduced and used for education. An American psychologist, B.F. Skinner introduced the idea as a type of programmed learning where students would answer multiple-choice questions. Choosing the correct answer lets the students move on to the next page, while choosing the wrong answer leads them to a commentary and tells them to return to the previous question to choose another answer.

Between 1958 and 1972, The United States and the United Kingdom used the method to create TutorText, a series of interactive books. It aimed to teach various public subjects.

In the 1970s, the branching-plot method was popularized in a new genre of LiteratureLiterature called Gamebooks. Also known as Choose-your-own-Adventure, it is a printed fiction with the readers making choices to proceed with the story. Its popularity declined in the 1990s as the method developed from printed books to digital media (Wikipedia, 2016).

Multiple endings are found in gamebooks, visual novels, fanfictions, and video games. However, visual novels carry multiple endings more than any other form. Its multiple endings increase the word count of the whole script, making them longer than novels. An example of this is Fate/stay night, which exceeded the word count of the Lord of the Rings Trilogy.

Virtual Relationships in The Last of Us

In 2013, a game that defined modern Storytelling in video games through tough choices in harsh environments was introduced. Naughty Dog Studios developed The Last of Us, a game revolving around a man surviving the apocalypse with a young girl. The player controls Joel, a man who lost his daughter at the outbreak's start. As an aside, the first chapter of the game reveals what kind of game the player will experience, showing loss and chaos in the world and mankind. The game begins with the player controlling a child named Sarah. The player can interact with the items around the suburban household until Joel carries Sarah outside due to the sudden outbreak. From here, the player must make their way to safety while carrying Sarah. After a while, Joel ends up surrounded by the military, and, unfortunately, they shoot Sarah. Being one of the saddest parts of the game, it shows just how powerless Joel, and by extension, the player, was in that situation.

Some time pass, and Joel is seen in a camp of survivors. Zombie-like creatures called clickers roam the entire continent, and society has fallen into chaos. Here, we meet Ellie, a girl with immunity to the clicker virus, which must be transported to the other side of the country for fireflies, a group dedicated to eradicating the virus, to find a cure. Throughout the game, the player journey with her while regaining the father-daughter relationship that Joel once had. Throughout the game, the two get closer to the point that they almost act like an actual family.

Furthermore, at the game's climax, where the fireflies capture Ellie, Joel raids their headquarters and brutally murders everyone. He does not want to lose another daughter, and unlike Sarah in the beginning, the player can now save a loved one. At the end of the game, Joel lies to Ellie about not having a cure and that what the fireflies are doing is evil, leading to Ellie expressing confusion, doubt, and appreciation simultaneously, leaving players to expect how their relationship will go in the future.

The researcher's experience of the game revealed the effects of controlling characters in different states of the story, to the point that even the player themselves could empathize with them. While Joel is not presented as the typical hero, with him murdering an entire headquarters to save one person, it makes the player relate to him. The player knows that what they are doing is wrong, but the player does it because that is what Joel thinks is the right course of action. The moral dilemma of the characters is also held by the player, leading to the player having to go to decisions and actions made by said characters, providing more interaction between the two instead of just top-bottom or bottom-up reactions.

Games such as "Valiant Hearts," "Before your Eyes," and "Disco Elysium" share this kind of interaction between the player and source material. Valiant Hearts take the player into the shoes of a World War veteran in a one-way linear platformer, telling the story as the player progress through the straight road. "Before your eyes" uses the player's blinks to progress the story, so the story automatically progresses every time the players themselves blink. The game presents a unique form of Storytelling only possible through modern consoles. Lastly, Disco Elysium lets the player explore a dystopic world through items and other interactable prompts, letting the player learn about the world by looking around and investigating items. However, one game, in particular, wields the idea of item gathering and Storytelling in a way most media would not be able to replicate.

The Unconventional Storytelling of Dark Souls

Dark Souls is known for its estranged difficulty and vague Storytelling. Developed by From Software and directed by Hidetaka Miyazaki, Dark Souls tells the story of a world ruled by one named Lord Gwyn, a ruler known to have brought forth the Age of Fire. However, the fire is slowly fading, which is where the player is thrown into. Moreover, the player only knows this because of the opening cinematics. Everything

else in the lore is not explained to the player because Dark Souls has a unique feature not found in any other game of the same genre, so much so that this feature and the game elements it fostered led to the new genre of "Souls-like."

The game's lore is attached to items the player finds during exploration or defeating enemies, making every item relevant to the mythos and not just a random accessory. Defeating a boss, for example, will reward the player with the boss' soul. And the soul's description contains the owner's backstory and his/her relevance in the lore.

The narrative is not told directly to the player. Instead, the player actively seeks the history of the world and its current condition.

Acquiring certain items and interacting with certain NPCs will lead to different endings. For example, in Dark Souls 3, after defeating the Lord of Cinder, the player can rekindle the flame and keep the age of fire going even when it is too weak to sustain the age. However, after acquiring a certain item at a certain location, the player can let the flame die out and let the Age of Dark take over. The player will know the significance of the items through their descriptions and what the NPCs say about the said item when presented to them. Some will react unflinching, while some will actively share their knowledge of that item. For example, in Dark Souls 3, showing the firekeeper's eye to the player's firekeeper will lead to a dialogue wherein the firekeeper will use the eyes for her own and permanently trigger the Age of Dark ending.

As a single-player game, Dark Souls have very few multiplayer aspects that would affect a player's game experience. However, its multiplayer and community aspects impact how some players play and which endings are chosen. A study by Callum and David (2017) revealed that in a single game like Dark Souls, players can enrich each other's worlds and exchange information through the in-game message system and forums, and even directly influence player choice chosen endings. In this manner, we can observe the story of Dark Souls not just as an individual reading a text but as a cooperative feat with other readers experiencing the same text.

Elden Ring, a game made by the same developer and written by George R. R. Martin, takes this idea differently. The message system in the game is more fleshed out, and anyone can leave a message anywhere when playing online. The ability of players to leave a small quantity of themselves in the world gives this feeling that the player and the messages left are now a part of the story being told.

Other games like Nier Automata, Developed by Platinum Games and created by Yoko Taro, take this feature and mold it in the game itself. At the end of the game (specifically after completing endings C and D), the player is tasked to shoot through the credits. Furthermore, as the difficulty spikes throughout, other ships help the player. It is later revealed after completing the credits that the ships that helped the player were other players, and the player is also allowed to help others the same way but with a price. After completing the game, the game gives the player a prompt asking if they want to give up their save file to help other players. Answering "no" will return the player to the title screen with nothing changing. However, answering "yes" will completely erase their save file, including all of your progress, to help other players struggling with the game's ending. This choice represents the act of permanently ending the game with the player being part of the narrative, albeit a small part of the ending.

Going back to Dark Souls 3. Thematically speaking, rekindling the fire could be synonymous with not being able to let go of the past and keep the legacy alive while letting the fire fade opening up to a new age, fully accepting change, and keeping hope alive that the flames will return one day. There is another

ending wherein if the player accomplishes specific tasks with specific NPCs, it will trigger the Usurper of Flames ending, where the player takes the fire for his/her own and leads a world of darkness in a soulless world.

The music is also somewhat related to the theme of the story. In Dark Souls 1, Lord Gwyn's theme is played with only white keys, indicating his rejection of darkness and not wanting to end the Age of Fire.

A paper by Vella (2015) goes in-depth into the themes and intricacies of Dark Souls and how the player reaches the sublime through playing it. However, the paper is quite a lengthy piece in that the researcher referenced the simple parts, so the researcher must instead recommend it to those interested in learning more about Dark Souls and its relevance in modern media and Literature.

Experiencing Worldbuilding with Skyrim

The Elder Scrolls is a series developed by Bethesda and produced by Todd Howard. Its fantasy settings and vast lands make for a setting that players can dive into, especially with how the story of the worlds in each iteration of the series is told.

Skyrim, the fifth and most recent title in the elder scrolls series, tells its story with its world. The scattered NPCs provide the dialogue of not only their daily lives (to make the world more realistic and make them feel like actual citizens) but also the events and occurrences around their respective towns and Skyrim as a whole. The story also diverts during certain parts of the story. For example, halfway through the game, the player is invited to a political meeting between the colonizing army of the Empire and the opposing tribesmen of the Stormcloaks. In this meeting, the player acts as the mediator between these two factions, helping decide which territory must belong to whom and how much resources should be provided to certain areas. At that moment, the player is no longer just a quiet observer of the land and is now making decisions that will drastically change the world of Skyrim as they know it. Having biases over a faction will lead the opposing faction to label scrutiny on the player and vice versa. Later on in the game, the player is given a choice of which faction to join. Moreover, the effects of the player's decision will be reflected in the open world. For example, joining the Empire will make Imperial forces pacifist, but Stormcloaks will attack the player when approached.

Skyrim is but one game that makes use of this feature. Infamous is a game that takes the player's actions into account. Doing good deeds rewards the player with skills that immobilize enemies, while doing evil deeds rewards the player with skills that can kill enemies.

Catherine also has a morality system, despite being a puzzle game. The game has a scale feature wherein the player's choices are weighed on a scale, deciding which ending the player will get. The left side shows an angel and the right side shows a devil, and it is up to the player to scale it on their preferred side through their decisions and actions.

Player choice in Telltale Games' The Walking Dead

As an example of how adventure games tell a story with player choice in mind, the researcher examined The Walking Dead. Known for the long-running T.V. series of the same name, The Walking Dead takes place in a world filled with "Walkers," human corpses that have risen from the dead. The player takes control of Lee, a convict on his way to prison when the outbreak began. Along the way, he meets Clementine, and the two journey together, meeting other people and losing some throughout.

In this game, the player can interact with the environment using a reticle, similar to traditional adventure games. However, this reticle allows the player to interact with certain things differently depending on the designated action assigned to each button.

The feature to make the player choose what happens in the story is more interesting, however. During parts of the story, the player is given choices, be it in dialogue or command format, which will drastically change the story's events. Every action and decision the player makes will influence how the story will flow. The fate of the characters in the story will also depend entirely on the player's choices. For example, if the player chooses to side with one character, the opposing character will either leave or kill the character with whom the player sides. Also, every action and decision made during the previous episodes will be reflected in the next episodes, meaning that characters that have died due to the player's decisions will not return, and relationships with other characters, be they friendly or hostile, will remain.

The game requires the player to pay proper attention to each character's dialogues, personalities, and interests to help them in their time of need and vice versa. Choosing the right or wrong decision during decision points will prompt the player that certain characters will remember which action the player took or whose side the player chose, leading the story to branch along a path exclusively made for the player's choices.

Some choices delve into a more personal and moral aspect, such as whom to save in a split-second decision. By doing this, the game not only tells a story for the sake of telling a story but also serves as a test of the player's takes on certain aspects of ethics and philosophy. There is also a community-based feature where at the end of every game episode, the player is presented with the statistics of other people's choices during critical parts of the story.

The Walking Dead is one example of a modern adventure game dealing with moral dilemmas. Detroit Become Human is another adventure game that deals with Human Rights and A.I. advancing to a point where they, too, would declare rights for themselves.

Until Dawn is another modern adventure game that takes a horror-themed approach to the format, with a feature called the "butterfly effect" every action the player makes will drastically affect the fate of every character.

Multiple Endings and Branching Plot in Visual Novels

To further bring the point of how visual novels construct Storytelling in a modern perspective, the researcher conducted his undergraduate study delving into multiple endings and branching plots in visual novels and how they changed the traditional plotline of fiction. Through Formalism, the researcher analyzed the differences between 3 visual novel samples: Nekopara vol. 0, Sakura Angels, and Katawa Shoujo.

The study's results are in the table below for simplicity. Note that Nekopara vol.0 follows a linear plot, Sakura angels follows a branching plot, and Katawa Shoujo follows the branching plot and contains multiple endings.

Table 1: The similarities and differences of linear plot and branching plot & multiple endings

Sample visual novel	Katawa Shoujo	Sakura Angels	Nekopara vol. 0
Plot structure	Branching Plot & Multiple Endings	Branching Plot	Linear Plot
Exposition	Introduction of heroines/	Introduction of heroines/	Introduction of characters

	Characters; choosing a route through choices	Characters; exposition of situation	
Conflict	Introduced after deciding on a route	Introduced during the exposition	Each chapter had its own conflict
Rising Action	Follows the same format as traditional	Choices between two characters are provided	Follows the same format as traditional
Climax	Outcome of ending relies on choice made	Outcome of character in epilogue relies on choice made	Outcome or ending remains the same
Resolution	Only appears for good end when conflict is resolved through a certain choice	Follows the traditional format	Conflict is resolved
Denouement	Either a good end,bad end, etc. Depending on results of choices	Only a change in character dialogue	Simple ending; arranged with no twists and turns

The first element that was analyzed was exposition. In terms of the introduction of characters, all the sample visual novels displayed similar methods except for one feature. In both Sakura Angels and Nekopara, the exposition was simply an introduction and explanation of events leading to the present and current happenings in the story. The only difference is that Sakura Angels explained the conflict much earlier during the exposition and was officially introduced afterward. What made Katawa Shoujo's exposition unlike the other two was its exposition that led to another exposition.

The next section of the plot, which was analyzed, was the rising action accompanied by the conflict. In Katawa shoujo, the rising action followed the same design as the traditional linear plot. However, the complication addressed itself once the reader decided on the route. Several characters approached the protagonist (in this case, the reader) and asked them questions about the current route's situation. In Sakura Angels, however, the researcher was given the choice of which character to choose during the rising action. Because the series was character-centered, the choices given were the characters' names. For Nekopara, the complications differed in every chapter.

After the complication followed, the climax was the story's most interesting part. For Katawa shoujo, more than choosing one decision-making scene was needed for some offered development in the plot and the characters. The first climax point was during the scene "The beginning of the end," where the researcher was to choose whether he should end the day or go to the city with Hanako. The second climax point was during the scene "Faraway Presence," where the researcher had to decide whether to follow Lily's advice or trust the protagonist's judgment. For Sakura angels, the choices made only made a slight change to the

climax, that being which heroine comes up and helps the protagonist during the sealing. In Nekopara, each chapter had its climax, which became decision points for resolving the conflicts.

The resolution of Katawa shoujo was complicated, as only the route leading to the good end possessed it. The other routes did not have a resolution because the results of their choices were determined via different conditions. The bad ending did not resolve the problem, and the choices only resulted in more problems for the protagonist. For the neutral end, the plot went straight to the conclusion, where the problem was not resolved, nor did it intensify. For Sakura angels, there were no observed changes regarding the plotline. Either character chosen would lead to the same outcome, that being the defeat of Yuzuki and the eradication of dark magic. Yuzuki would still befriend the protagonist, whatever choice the researcher made. The same could be said with Nekopara. Because there were no choices, there was no need to change the plotline.

Of all the three sample visual novels, Katawa shoujo featured the most endings, with a total of 3 for one heroine. Sakura angels presented one similar ending but two different epilogues. For Nekopara, there was only one ending despite being divided into many chapters.

The researcher also broke down the elements of each title and the changes that multiple endings and branching plots afflicted, but that topic is beyond the objective of this paper. Instead, the figures below are the study's results comparing Freytag's Pyramid, the structure commonly visualized for plot structure, and the pyramid the sample visual novels created.
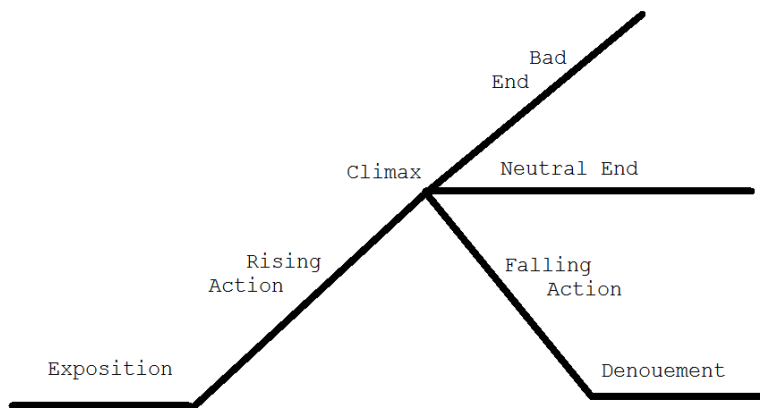
Figure 1. Freytag's Pyramid
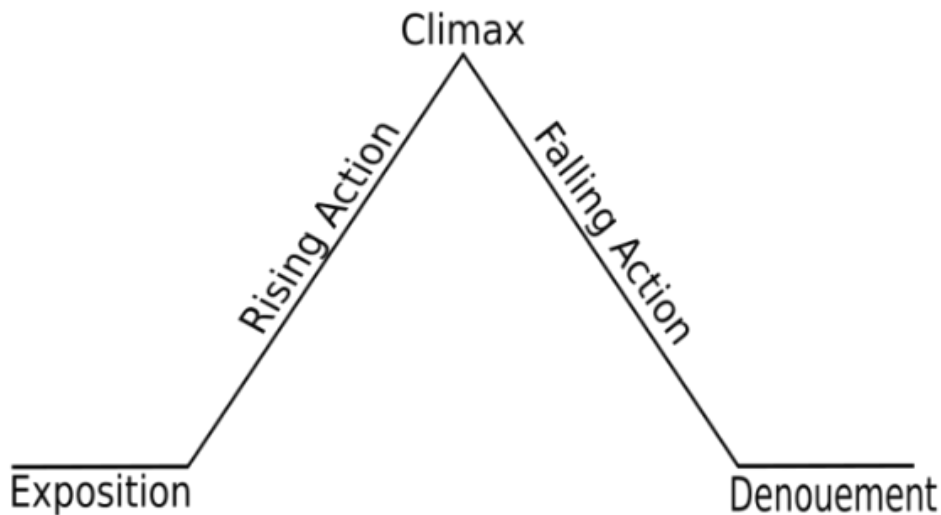
The researcher discovered that Multiple endings and Branching plots did not follow this figure. Instead, it followed a unique figure which represented itself. Combining all the data gathered made it possible to construct a new figure that did not follow Freytag's Pyramid.

Because of the existence of Branching plots and Multiple endings and the addition of having the reader choose the path which would soon result in the indicated ending in Katawa Shoujo, it was discovered that Freytag's pyramid would not be able to explain the three branches, which carried a similar origin but different outcomes. Taking in the idea of different climax points and it resulting in a good end, neutral

end, or bad end, while corresponding to the findings about how the problem is either resolved, unresolved or complicated even further, the researcher was able to come up with the figure presented below.
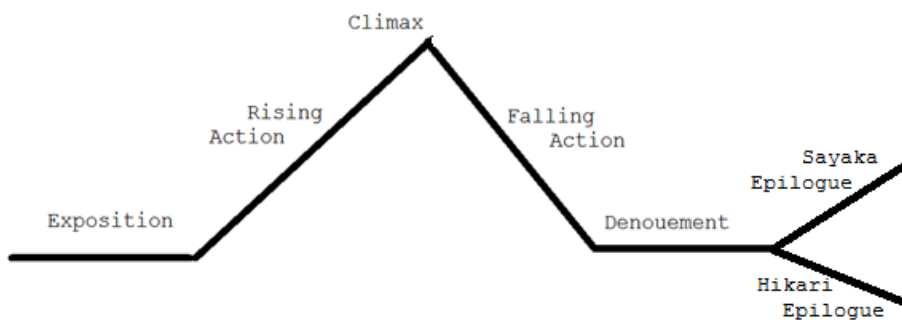
Figure 2. Katawa Shoujo Plotline (Hanako's Route)

Sakura angels was a special case. It did have different choices or routes for a while, but it still followed the traditional pattern. In layman's terms, the sample's intention of using a branching plot was not to change the story but to change the reader's perspective from one heroine to another.
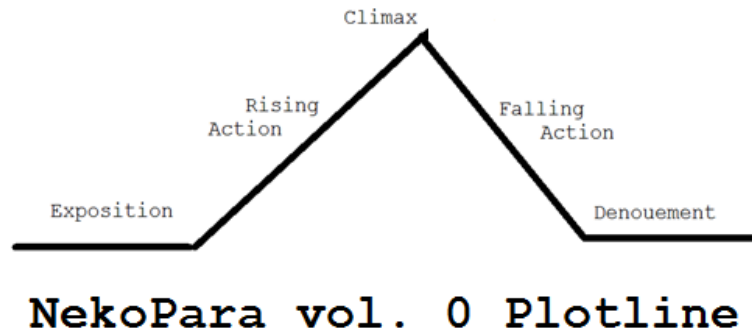
Figure 3. Sakura Angels Plotline

The same could be said for Nekopara, which followed the linear plot for a simple reason: no outside material interrupted the continuum of the story, unlike Katawa shoujo which had both a branching plot and multiple endings.

Figure 4. Nekopara vol. 0 Plotline

Through this study, the researcher identified that Freytag's pyramid was not the only format available in Storytelling and that multiple endings in visual novels changed the traditional plotline of fiction.

CONCLUSION

The paper presents how technology, such as video games, helps construct Storytelling through modern means. It also discusses the history of how Storytelling is intertwined with games through interactive narrative and interactive fiction, with visual novels and adventure games, respectively. The Walking Dead had players make crucial decisions that would affect the progression of the narrative and the consequences of said decisions through character deaths and player-character relationships, creating multiple endings catered to player choices. Meanwhile, visual novels such as Katawa Shoujo presented how a branching plot can recreate the common plot structure by having players choose which route to take and the consequences of said route.

It also discusses how video games tell a narrative throughout history until modern times. It talks about how The Last of Us presents relationships between character and player and how said relationships can lead the player to empathize with said character by controlling them. Dark Souls shows that the story can be sprinkled worldwide without the game directly explaining the lore and having the player search for it actively. Finally, Skyrim made the player an active part of the lore by having them make choices that would directly change the world and narrative of the entire game.

Through this paper, the researcher believes that the audience will have a broader perspective on how LiteratureLiterature can be presented and how video games and other forms of interactive media impact Storytelling's structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper introduced many aspects of video games that intertwine with Literature, and it is through it that the researcher recommends that topics for critiquing and analyzing narratives in video games be considered in research. As we have seen, there are plenty of examples of how video game narrative can be interpreted through different means due to games' features that no other forms of media do: Interactive narrative. Thus, the researcher believes that the academe would be able to broaden its horizons if we treat

these pieces as more than entertainment pieces and as a work of art made up of different facets of knowledge: from music to programming, too, as mentioned before, Literature.

The researcher also believes that the academe has thought of new ideas for applying video games in education through this paper. For example, The researcher and former classmates developed a game that would work as an entertainment and educational tool. This game was presented to a group of students and introduced to a teaching method through video games. As shown by B. F. Skinner's experiments during the discussion on branching plots and multiple endings, video games can be used in the field of education in more practical ways. It may also reveal accessibility issues and the effects of the application of games in education. Students could research the effects of games in an educational setting and how teachers can use this knowledge when creating modern teaching tools for modern students.

The paper also shed light on branching plots and multiple endings, which only a few studies have been conducted on. With the advancement of technology and modes of Storytelling changing throughout the times, the university could conduct studies on the effects, relevance, and implications of branching plots in literary media.

Moreover, our researchers must adapt to said advances to understand and preserve Literature for future endeavors.

REFERENCES

1. Ang, C. S. (2006). *Rules, gameplay, and narratives in video games*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878105285604
2. Armstrong, M. & Landers, R. (2017). *An Evaluation of Gamified Training: Using Narrative to Improve Reactions and Learning*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878117703749
3. Bizzocchi, J. & Woodbury, R. (2003). *A Case Study in the Design of Interactive Narrative: The Subversion of the Interface*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878103258204
4. Brandom, R. (2013). *'Spacewar!' The story of the world's first digital video game*. Retrieved from: https://www.theverge.com/2013/2/4/3949524/the-story-of-the-worlds-first-digital-video-game
5. Breivik, A. (2022). *What are the different types of narratives in video games?*. Retrieved from: https://worldsterra.com/what-are-the-different-types-of-narratives-in-video-games/
6. Brookhaven National Library (2008). *The First Video Game?*. Retrieved from: https://www.bnl.gov/about/history/firstvideo.php
7. DiGRA. Digital Games Research Association. Puente, H., Tosca, S. (2013). *The Social Dimension of Collective Storytelling in Skyrim*. Proceedings of DiGRA 2013, Atlanta, Georgia Tech. 26-29 agosto 2013.
8. Dikkers, S. (2012). *Unbroken Immersion: The Skyrim Experience*. Well Played: a journal on video games, value and meaning (vol. 2, 1). http://www.etc.edu/etcpress/wellplayed
9. Dino, V. (2016). *Multiple Endings and Branching Plot in Visual Novels: Changing the Traditional Plotline of Fiction*. University of Baguio
10. Esposito, N. (2005). *A Short and Simple Definition of What a Videogame Is*. DiGRA 2005: Changing Views: Worlds in Play, 2005 International Conference
11. Geyser, W. (2022). *How much do Twitch Streamers Make?*. Retrieved from: https://influencermarketinghub.com/twitch-money-calculator/
12. Hosch, W. (n.d.). *Electronic Adventure Game*. Retrieved from: https://www.britannica.com/topic/electronic-adventure-game

13. Kaser, R. (2015). *Game? Book? Or both? 4 Visual Novels You Should Play*. Retrieved on February 8, 2016 fromMakeuseof website: http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/game-book-4-visual-novels-play/

14. Kuo, A., Hiler, J. & Lutz, R. (2016). *From Super Mario to Skyrim: A framework for the evolution of video game consumption*. Journal of Consumer Behavior (vol. 16, 2). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1620

15. Larsen, L. (2017). *Play and Gameful Movies: The Ludification of Modern Cinema*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412017700601

16. Leo, C. J. (2021). *Narrative Design : Storytelling methods in video games*. Retrieved from: https://cjleo.com/2021/06/14/narrative-design-storytelling-methods-in-video-games/

17. Mikos, J. (2015). *An Entry Guide to Visual Novels*. Retrieved on February 8, 2016 from gameinformer website: http://www.gameinformer.com/b/features/archive/2015/02/24/an-entry-guide-to-visual-novels.aspx

18. Ohlew, T. (2014). *Text Adventures: The story of Visual Novels in America*. Retrieved on February 8, 2016 from USgamer website:http://www.usgamer.net/articles/visual-novels-in-america

19. Pope, J. (2010). *Where Do We Go From Here? Readers' Responses to Interactive Fiction: Narrative Structures, Reading Pleasure and the Impact of Interface Design*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856509348774

20. Pope, J. (2017). *Further on down the digital road: Narrative design and reading pleasure in five New Media Writing Prize narratives*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517726603

21. Radchenko, S. (2020). *Metamodern Gaming: Literary Analysis of The Last of Us*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.12697/IL.2020.25.1.20

22. Spawforth, C. and Millard, D. (2017) Multiplayer games as a template for multiplayer narratives: a case study with Dark Souls. In, Rubart,Jessica and Yesilada, Yeliz (eds.) *Workshops Proceedings and Tutorials of the 28th ACM Conference of Hypertext and Social Media(HT 2017), Prague, Czech Republic, July 4-7, 2017.* (CEUR Workshop Proceedings, 1914) CEUR-WS.org.

23. Stone, C. (2019) *The evolution of video games as a storytelling medium, and the role of narrative in modern games*. Retrieved from: https://www.gamedeveloper.com/design/the-evolution-of-video-games-as-a-storytelling-medium-and-the-role-of-narrative-in-modern-games

24. Vella, D. (2015). *No Mastery Without Mystery: Dark Souls and the Ludic Sublime*. The international journal of computer game research (vol. 15, 1). ISSN:1604-7962

25. Yamada-Rice, D. (2021). *Children's interactive storytelling in Virtual Reality*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/2634979521992965

26. Zarzycki, A. (2016). Epic video games: Narrative spaces and engaged lives. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1478077116663338

27. Zeman, N. (2017). Storytelling for Interactive Digital Media and Video Games (1st ed). CRC Press, New York