When the Audience Becomes the Storyteller: Role Identification and Emotional Experience in Interactive Films

Zilin

Abstract. Interactive films (a.k.a. interactive narratives or interactive narratives) are characterized by their extensive use of filmic video sequences (referred to as Full Motion Video or FMV), cinematics, and gameplay elements, creating a sense of immersion through dialogue. The purpose of interactive storytelling is to modify the environment or interact with the characters. They also allow users or players to intervene, thereby creating a unique narrative experience that fundamentally differs from traditional films. This paper explores the research on interactive films and offers guidance for creators to produce more engaging and interactive narratives. This paper provides new insights into understanding the impact and future development of interactive films and its impact on role identification and emotional experience. By analyzing works such as Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, this paper reveals how interactive films provide a unique mode of narrative participation. During this interaction, the participant’s decisions have impactful results, where their decisions have an impact on the narrative. The study also discusses the complex impact of interactive films on audience emotional experience and offers suggestions for the future development of interactive films, including exploring new narrative strategies, technology integration, and the importance of personalized participation. During this interaction, the participant’s decisions have an impact on the narrative. The study also discusses the complex impact of interactive films on audience emotional experience and offers suggestions for the future development of interactive films, including exploring new narrative strategies, technology integration, and the importance of personalized participation.

1 Introduction

Interactive films have captured global fame at the 1967 Montreal World's Fair, produced in Czechoslovakia and named Kinoautomat, heralding a new era of interactive narrative in television, as declared by [1]. Subsequently, in 2018, Black Mirror: Bandersnatch achieved global fame. Since their inception, movies have been regarded as the offspring of commercial and technological evolution. Interactive films are primarily characterized by their extensive use of filmic video sequences (referred to as Full Motion Video or FMV), cinema and gaming. Interactive films have served as a mechanism for audience participation and, to some extent, redefine the relationship between audiences and films. The research finds that role identification and emotional experience in interactive films fundamentally differ from traditional films, thereby accurately determining the impact of interactive films on audience role participation. During this interaction, the participant’s decisions have an impact on the narrative. The study also discusses the complex impact of interactive films on audience emotional experience and offers suggestions for the future development of interactive films, both as a subject and as a commercial product. Understanding the emotions of viewers while watching interactive films is crucial, as it has become a significant topic in aspects of role identification and emotional experience. Modes inevitably alter audience experiences, particularly in film studies [6]. Moreover, such emotional experiences can evoke various emotions in the audience, within film studies [6]. Furthermore, interactive films utilize Interactive Digital Narratives (IDN), a form of narrative expression [4].
2 The current state and issues of interactive films and their audiences

2.1 The narrative complexity and changing roles of audiences in interactive films

Emotions can be detected through significant physiological signals such as pupil dilation, heart rate, body temperature radiation, and brainwaves [12].

Despite current technological constraints in emotion analysis of emotional information, such as audience external perceptions. Films provide not only content experiences within the story or game world, as well as narratives (IDN). In this framework, the concept of narratives (IDN) is referred to as distributed, and interactive nature of Interactive Digital Cinema and Video Games, they inherently possess interconnected [9]. Studies show that identifying human processes, and decision-making contexts is tightly linked to the “source story,” a phrase that encompasses a broader range, including emotions related to emotional experience.

2.2 The impact of interactive storytelling on audience role identification and emotional experience

Audience emotional experience and role identification is constantly present in interactive films and must be analyzed separately in the study of interactive films. Furthermore, different emotional experiences can be observed among audiences, due to different choice factors. Therefore, different emotional experiences. Moreover, different audiences, due to different choice factors, inevitably cause different emotional experiences for the same interactive film. Therefore, as a whole, the same interactive film necessarily has multiple stories and potential of interactive films need to provide each storyline with a logical and reasonable complete ending, which directly affects emotional reactions [10]. Therefore, emotions is challenging because external perceptions. Films provide not only content experiences within the story or game world, as well as narratives (IDN). In this framework, the concept of narratives (IDN) is referred to as distributed, and interactive nature of Interactive Digital Cinema and Video Games, they inherently possess interconnected [9]. Studies show that identifying human processes, and decision-making contexts is tightly linked to the “source story,” a phrase that encompasses a broader range, including emotions related to emotional experience.

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meaningful story experience. Improvement and fails to provide a smooth and
"waste" of time indicates that decision points enhance rather than diminish the
interactive narratives generally appreciate the enjoyable part of the narrative experience rather than
interruptions [1]. This means that participants in Black Mirror: Bandersnatch's high frequency negative
emotional experiences. However, decision points in interactive narratives are considered an
aspect of traditional narrative engagement. Participants in interactive stories might experience a heightened sense
of accountability for the characters' behaviors, meaning
"interactivity," which many people believe causes emotional experience of not identifying with the world in
conventional narratives, particularly uncommon in conventional narratives, particularly
films, the audience's ability to control character decisions can reduce the audience's immersion, as t
other on the anticipation of future stories. This division can be found that viewers experienced negative
emotions of "repetition" and "boredom." The biggest variable between traditional and interactive
storytelling experience. Therefore, the cause of such negative emotional experiences is not the interactive
form itself but the continuity, logic, and coherence. This external form of interaction also affects the level of immersive experience. Andrew Perkis indicates that different subjective dimensions affect the level of immersive experience.
Research on IMDb, their intuitive evaluation of the film.
However, as a product or commodity, the "customer," or audience feedback.
The audience of interactive films, can directly showcase their intuitive evaluation of the film.
Fig. 1. Figure 1 shows that "Again" appeared 146 times, which as of February 22, 2024, had a rating of 7.1 and
diffrent platforms, revealing some differences in
In traditional narratives, audience empathy for a character may simply be due to liking, but in interactive
games, the audience's ability to control character decisions opens up other possibilities. Audience decisions can be
modeled by three choices of participation will inevitably lead to a boring un
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films, the audience's ability to control character decisions opens up other possibilities. Audience decisions can be
modeled by three modes of participation avail
Interactive stories can elicit psychological reactions, role identification, ultimately leading to a boring
emotional experience of not identifying with the world in
interactive stories, to ensure that
a test or game, the situation changes. According to
Buselle and Bilandzic's psychological model theory, the audience empathize with a character or project themselves
in the game. However, once the audience views the interactive film as
a game, merely choosing what they believe
coherence of the story experience and hindering their

Fig. 2. Late Shift's ratings for various platforms as shown on Metacritic across
different forms of role identification. Clearly, when
participants in a novel game rather than true
movie, they isolate themselves from the
mental process of constructing a story model. If story
at the story's logic needs autonomy and fittingly set branching options are cleverly set. The sense of
lacking positive changes, especially in how interactive
the story narrative not adapting to the interactive form,
the audience sees themselves fully in the story. Balancing coherent story
more rational external thinking, rather than immersing
themselves fully in the story. Balancing coherent story
development with the audience's emotional needs is a
result of their narrative journey while maintaining its

Fig. 1. The number of keyword occurrences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>boring</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loop</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>again</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2. Latest Critic Reviews for Late Shift on Metacritic.
3 The future of interactive films: personalized narratives and new challenges in audience experience

Based on the analysis of the current situation, it is clear that interactive films have a unique advantage in terms of audience identification and emotional experience. However, there are still many challenges in this field. One of the key challenges is determining the optimal release time and audience for interactive narratives. The timing and audience for which interactive narratives yield the highest effectiveness can guide potential filmmakers or creators in assessing if the advantage of interactive narratives justifies the extra expenses.

Different audiences have different needs. For example, Black Mirror is exclusively broadcast on Netflix, while Erica and Late Shift are sold on Steam and various platforms. Different platforms have different characteristics and requirements. Therefore, interactive films need to categorize in advance to meet the needs of different audiences. Minimizing the negative impact of different expectation differences is necessary. Just as the personalized narratives of different games require different skills, such as motor skills, cognitive abilities, etc., categorizing interactive narrative coherence may be a specific issue for creators in assessing if the advantages of interactive narratives justify the extra expenses.

For instance, narratives in different interactive films have different development branches or endings. If these choices do not affect the narrative coherence and completeness of the story, the narrative development branches or endings may be meaningless. Therefore, how to ensure that each choice leads to a logically consistent plot and complete ending is a critical consideration for interactive films. Similarly, how to understand different plots for the same character is also an important consideration. For example, only this can evoke the audience's emotional experience and role identification.

Meanwhile, the audience's narrative experience is influenced by their attitude, whether they want to undergo a test or enjoy a relaxing experience. For example, in the case of Erica, PC audiences have a higher rating than PS4 audiences. This is due to the larger screen and better picture quality of the PC platform. On the contrary, the immersive experience and emotional experience of different platforms also affect the experience. When users have different expectations, the playback platform can also affect the results of interactive stories. Specifically, some external factors may affect users' emotions. For example, users may not understand the film in the way it intends, or users may have a default emotional response to watch the film as the type of film inherently expressing anger. Thus, if the narrative coherence and completeness of the story are not established, the audience may not understand the film in the way it intends, or users may have a default emotional response to watch the film as the type of film inherently expressing anger.

Furthermore, the more personalized demands of different platforms lead to a more personalized narrative and new forms of narrative. Therefore, better immersion and deeper immersion will inevitably enhance the involvement of our senses and emotions in an experience. Immersion can be described as the profound sensation that makes users feel as if they are in a parallel world. Immersive. Therefore, it is more important that virtual reality users have the impression of controlling the parallel world, are logical issues that creators need to plan in advance. It is important to note that while interactive films allow audiences to participate in story development, whether to make them identify different plot developments, then such choices are obviously a form or perhaps a gimmick, the storyline and role identification still face many challenges. Determining different audiences and their needs necessitating filmmakers or creators to refine film genres to cater to the personalized demands of different platforms. For example, interactive film games have different expectations for interactive films, different choices generally lead to different branches or endings. If these choices do not affect the narrative coherence and completeness of the story, then such choices are meaningless. Therefore, how to ensure that each choice leads to a logically consistent plot and complete ending is a critical consideration for interactive films. Similarly, how to understand different plots for the same character is also an important consideration. For example, only this can evoke the audience's emotional experience and role identification.
4 Conclusion

In this study, this paper delved into the phenomenon of narrative participation. This mode, to some extent, provides a unique mode of immersive and participatory experience for audiences. However, this immersive and participatory experience fundamentally challenges the boundaries of traditional narratives. Interactive films are not just a form of entertainment; they reframe the relationship between audiences and films, providing a fresh perspective on narrative participation. This perspective challenges the boundaries of traditional narratives, redefining the relationship between audiences and films.

Additionally, our analysis revealed that the impact of interactive films on audience emotional experience is undoubtedly significant. The emotional experience in interactive films fundamentally redefines the relationship between audiences and films. The decision-making process in interactive films not only increases the sense of investment in the plot but also deepens the emotional experience in interactive films. This emotional experience fundamentally redefines the relationship between audiences and films.

In summary, as an emerging media form, interactive films offer a rich field for research and provide a unique mode of immersive and participatory experience for audiences. With continuous technological advancements and changing audience demands, interactive films will undoubtedly continue to evolve, offering richer and more diverse narrative experiences for audiences.

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