

From Implied Reader to Moral Actor: Reconfiguring Narrative Consciousness in Video Games

Dr. Debobani Biswas

Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Neotia University.

Email: debobani.biswas1121@gmail.com

Dr. Aliya Halim

Assistant Professor, Department of English, The Neotia University.

Email: aliya.chowdhury@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how video game storytelling reshapes the connection between the human psyche and narrative by bringing immersion and moral choice together. Unlike traditional literary texts, where readers observe events from a distance, video games require players to participate actively in shaping the story. Their decisions influence outcomes, relationships, and even the fate of entire narrative worlds. In this way, moral reflection is no longer abstract. It becomes something the player performs. Drawing on cognitive narratology and affect theory, the paper argues that interactive storytelling deepens psychological engagement by turning ethical dilemmas into lived experiences. Using insights from Sigmund Freud's idea of inner moral conflict, Jacques Lacan's concept of identification, and Wolfgang Iser's reader-

response theory, the study suggests that video games transform the traditional “implied reader” into an ethically accountable participant. By placing video game narratives within the broader framework of digital humanities, the paper proposes that interactive storytelling represents a new stage in narrative evolution. Here, immersion is not just emotional absorption but moral involvement. Ultimately, the study argues that video games redefine how stories engage the contemporary psyche. They offer a powerful model of experiential ethics in the digital age.

Keywords: Narrative immersion, Digital psyche, Reader-response theory, Experiential ethics.
