



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

**Understanding Interactive Narrative's Potential to Shape
Experiences of Minority Identity in *Queerskins: A Novel
and Experience***

Xilong Zhang

A research Paper submitted to the University of Dublin,

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science Interactive Digital Media

2021

Declaration

I have read and I understand the plagiarism provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year, found at: <http://www.tcd.ie/calendar>

I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready, Steady, Write', located at <http://tcd-ie.libguides.com/plagiarism/ready-steady-write>

I declare that the work described in this research Paper is, except where otherwise stated, entirely my own work and has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university.

Signed:



Xilong Zhang

03 June 2021

Permission to lend and/or copy

I agree that Trinity College Library may lend or copy this research Paper upon request.

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature.

Xilong Zhang

03 June 2021

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my immense gratitude to my supervisor, Jennifer O’Meara, for her advice in locating relevant case studies, and her practical advice on the construction and revision of the paper.

The pandemic has posed a huge challenge to all the students and staff of the IDM courses, to whom I also express my deep gratitude, for their support in helping me accessing the lab facilities during the lockdown.

I also want to express my gratitude towards my course mate Pragya Vashishtha, who has accompanied me and supported me significantly during my paper writing process, lifting my spirits up when I felt down.

Finally, I am forever profoundly indebted to the nurture of my parents, who have loved and supported me unconditionally.

Abstract

Narrative and storytelling have long been regarded as valuable resources in identity construction. The incorporation of interactivity enhances this value. Interactive narratives (INs) offer the audience the opportunity to interact with and assert agency in the fictional world. This paper explores the role of IN in the identity construction of socially disenfranchised groups and individuals. The engagement of IN will be analysed and compared with the construction of identity, in order to demonstrate that IN provides a backdrop against which virtual social interaction could be conducted and identification process could be performed.

The methodology employed is scholarship-based research and case analysis. I will draw on the Russian Formalist view on narrative construction and a socially constructionist view on identity formation. Through two case analysis on queer identity and immigrant identity, this paper demonstrates that IN possesses potential in minority identity construction.

Characterised by frequent changes in social structures and increased mobility of social members, today's society issues an urgent demand for cultural and identity diversity, yet the lack of social recognition has led some identities into marginalisation. IN could be an effective tool in accelerating the process of fulfilling this demand.

Keywords: Interactive Narrative, IN, Identity Construction, Socially Constructed Identity, Fabula, Syuzhet, Social Interaction, Symbolic Interactionism, Queer Identity, Immigrant Identity, Identity in Modern Age

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Permission to lend and/or copy.....	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract.....	v
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Abbreviations	viii
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2. Interactive Narrative	5
2.1 Introduction to Narrative and Narrative Fiction	6
2.1.1 Narration, <i>Récit</i> and <i>Histoire</i>	8
2.1.2 <i>Fabula</i> , <i>Syuzhet</i> and Style.....	9
2.2 Interactive Narrative	11
2.2.1 Interactivity in Storytelling.....	11
2.2.2 Dynamic in Audience Engagement	13
2.2.3 Interactive Digital Narrative	16
Chapter 3. Identity Construction in Interactive Narrative.....	18
2.1 Socially Constructed Identity.....	19
2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism and Identification	20
2.1.2 Identity Verification.....	23
2.1.3 Identity and the Mind.....	24
2.2 Identity in Modern Age.....	25
2.3 The Role of Interactive Narrative in Identity Construction	27
2.3.1 Interactive Narrative as a Platform for Social Interactions.....	27
2.3.2 Interactive Narrative as a Platform for Learning	30

Chapter 4. Case Studies.....	32
4.1 <i>Queerskins</i> and Queer Identity.....	32
4.1.1 <i>Queerskins</i> : Narrative Content and Structure	33
4.1.2 <i>Queerskins</i> : Interactivity and Engagement	36
4.1.3 <i>Queerskins</i> : Identity Construction	40
4.2 <i>Experience</i> and Immigrant Identity	43
4.2.1 <i>Experience</i> : Content and Structure	43
4.2.2 <i>Experience</i> : Interactivity and Engagement	45
4.2.3 <i>Experience</i> : Identity Construction	49
Chapter 5 Conclusion	51
References	54
Figure References.....	60

List of Figures

Figure 1 Navigation bar of Queerskins	36
Figure 2 Each reload of page rendering different positions of elements	38
Figure 3 Only audio clips left after Sebastian's death.....	39
Figure 4 Third-Person perspective in Sebastian's journal.....	42
Figure 5 Navigation page of Experience	45
Figure 6 Historical images with texts	46
Figure 7 Li Wei's Journey	47
Figure 8 Submission page for more experiences	48

List of Abbreviations

IN	Interactive Narrative
----	-----------------------

Chapter 1. Introduction

The story – from Rumpelstiltskin to War and Peace – is one of the most basic tools invented by the human mind, to gain understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.¹

In its widest sense, the narrative is the use of signs, such as language, picture, and even music, to elicit a sort of representation of the world, known as ‘story’.² It is through storytelling that we are taught from an early age what makes a hero or a villain. Narratives have an impact on how we think about ourselves and the world around us.³ The majority of narratives available online, on television and in print media are fixed stories that cannot be modified by the spectator during or after production. Interactive narratives (INs), on the other hand, tries to give the viewer the ability to affect or change the story, allowing for potentially more visceral and personal narrative production. Media scholar Kevin Veale holds that INs, such as interactive films, have offered an affectively significant experience that is neither ‘played’ nor ‘watched’.⁴ Peter Lunenfeld, on the other hand, thinks of it as a myth, as what interactivity promises is the creativity of the viewer, but it is simultaneously limited to the pre-planned and pre-filmed narratives that belong to the artistic creation of the author.⁵ Divided opinions have not hindered narrative attempts that distinguish themselves by their

¹ Ursula K. Le Guin, *Language of the Night: essays on fantasy and science fiction* (London: Women’s Press, 1989), p.22.

² Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Narrative.’ in *A companion to critical and cultural theory* ed by Imre Szeman, Sarah Blacker, Justin Sully (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2017) pp. 517-530 (p. 518).

³ Harry M. Benshoff and Sean Griffin, *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2006).

⁴ Kevin Veale, ‘Interactive cinema is an oxymoron, but may not always be’, in *Game Studies: the international journal of computer game research* (2012), <<http://gamestudies.org/1201/articles/veale>> [accessed 24 April 2021].

⁵ Peter Lunenfeld, ‘The Myths of Interactive Cinema,’ in *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (USA: University of Nebraska, 2004), pp.377-390.

call for audience participation. IN remains an exciting experience for the public, a step further to the creation of realistic media, and an emerging field of study.

Gonzalo Frasca holds that the design for IN should not only be focused on a more entertaining experience, but also on improved critical thinking regarding ideological concerns and social problems of identity and behaviour.⁶ Evidence shows that narrative offers potential to aid identity expression. Storytelling is a significant way to learn about identity and the self, allowing individuals to explore their inner world while also practising language and social skills.⁷

Although researchers have been aware of the necessity of incorporating humanistic studies in the design of IN, they have yet to explore its impact on social exchange and the identity construction processes. Revolving around issues of its interactive nature and increasingly digital character, previous studies primarily focus on the fields of technical construction, the theoretical quest for new interactive narratology, and creative narrative presentation to balance the interactivity and narrative.⁸ Therefore, moving away from the technical aspects, this paper offers a humanistic context in the discussion of IN, aiming to examine how this new form of interactive storytelling leads to a better engagement of emotions, and how individuals, especially the socially marginalised and disenfranchised who have little access to social resources, can resort to IN as part of their identity construction process.

To explore how IN engages with the audiences and its role in helping with identity construction, it is important to understand the nature of the narrative under analysis and how narrative achieves interactivity. Borrowing Edward Branigan's four prototypes of narrative:

⁶ Gonzalo Frasca, 'Rethinking agency and immersion: video games as a means of consciousness-raising', in *Digital Creativity*, 12:3 (2001), pp.167-174 (p.1), < <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ndcr20> > [accessed 24 April 2021].

⁷ Marina Umaschi Bers and Justine Cassell, *Interactive Storytelling System for Children: Using technology to Explore Language and Identity* (Master's Thesis. MIT Media Laboratory), p. 2.

⁸ Hartmut Koenitz, 'Five Theses for Interactive Digital Narrative' in *Interactive Storytelling*, ed by Alex Mitchell, Clara Fernández-Vara and David Thue (Switzerland: Springer, 2014), pp.134-139 (p.134).

narrative fiction; *narrative nonfiction*, *nonnarrative fiction*, and *nonnarrative nonfiction*, this paper narrows the discussion of narratives to *narrative fiction*, as it is the type that has the most flexibility of content and thus affords the co-authorship with the audiences.⁹ According to Russian Formalist, the narrative momentum of *narrative fiction* is accomplished by the creative employment of *fabula* and *syuzhet*. This paper examines the power of narrative and the achievement of ‘agency’ (the audience’s ability to make choices and participate in the narrative) through the concepts of *fabula/syuzhet* and similar discussions. According to Janet Murray, apart from the concept of ‘agency’, the fundamental effects of interactive story products are its distinct type of ‘immersion’.¹⁰ Laurie N Taylor’s concept of ‘situated immersion’ and Weinbren’s method of dream analysis will therefore be employed to describe the affective immersion of IN.

In the discussion of identity construction in IN, this paper adopts the social constructionist’s view. The analysis of identity is based on George Herbert Mead’s framework of ‘symbolic interactionism’ and its later development and extensions. Digital technology has loosened the social constraints for interaction, offering a virtual site for identity to be constructed.¹¹ IN possesses a similar ability to transport the audience into a fictional world, revolutionising the spatiality of interaction and help with the identification process.

Furthermore, based on the previous exploration, this paper will analyse two applications of specific IN products in the context of queer and immigrant identity construction: *Queerskins: A Novel* and *Experience*. Laden with a longing for home and love, *Queerskins: A Novel* combines profound emotions of homosexuality with intense Catholic guilt. It deals with social issues such as identity construction, social justice, and diversity of sexualities. The protagonist’s attempt to reconcile his sexuality with his religion and family provides avenues

⁹ Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (USA: Routledge, 2013), p.1.

¹⁰ Janet H. Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, 2 ed. (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2017), p.114.

¹¹ Karen A. Cerulo, ‘Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions’ in *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 23 (1997), pp.385-439 (p.398).

for reflection from both inside and beyond the LGBT+ culture. Similarly, *Experience* presents the desire of a variety of immigrants to rebuild their lives against social exclusion, depicting the struggles of immigrants in deciding who they are and how their lives should be. The two narratives intersect and engage the audience with the quest for identity for members of minorities.

Chapter 2. Interactive Narrative

Inevitably, the emergent art form of the twenty-first century, like cinema was for the twentieth century, will be some manifestation of an immersive and interactive narrative form of story creation.¹²

Before recording, narratives that predominate are live performances, in which ‘the risk of variability is an essential ingredient of the thrill... audiences were always aware of their potential power.’¹³ Performers are inevitably affected by the reactions of the audience. Modern society, on the contrary, has witnessed a rise and multiplication in recorded time-based mediums, such as films and television programmes, for which, the inability of the audience to affect the narrative contributes to its narrative value. Why there is a need to bring back the risk of the variability of narrative? According to Birk Weiberg, IN has developed for two reasons: the fear of being controlled by media and being imposed of external values, as well as a greater demand for realistic representation.¹⁴

Game theorist Jesper Juul has claimed that narration and interactivity are impossible to be maintained simultaneously.¹⁵ He bases his assertion primarily on the lack of ability of IN (game) to present a pre-scribed artistic narration, as events represented to the viewers will be controlled by them and flashback and flashforward could be seldom performed.¹⁶ Veale also points out that ‘the experience of [narrative] is defined...by the audience’s lack of ability to

¹² Daniel MacKay, *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performance Art* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), p.157.

¹³ Grahame Weinbren, *Navigating the Ocean of Streams of Story* <https://www.guggenheim.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/guggenheim-navigating-ocean-of-streams-weinbren-grahame-erl-king.pdf> [accessed 12 April 2021]

¹⁴ Birk Weiberg, ‘Beyond interactive cinema’ in *Keyframe. org: Cinema in the Digital Age* (2002): pp. 5-7 (p.2).

¹⁵ Jesper Juul, *A Clash Between Game and Narrative* (Master thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1999. Translated by Jesper Juul in 2001), p.1.

¹⁶ Gordon Calleja, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation* (USA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011), p.115.

alter events unfolding within the film's diegesis.'¹⁷ When the viewers are given the right to participate, they lose the affective quality of being on tenterhooks for the suspense. IN faces the challenge to achieve co-authorship with the audience while at the same time enabling the narrative to unfold in a dramatic arc. Therefore, this chapter tries to explore how IN tackles such challenges by answering questions such as what type of narrative is fit for interactivity, where does interactivity lie, and what contributes to the audience engagement in IN works?

2.1 Introduction to Narrative and Narrative Fiction

Narrative is intuitive to being human. Monika Fludernik believes that narrative is related to the action of 'narrate' and is thus found 'wherever someone tells us about something'.¹⁸ Essentially, we are all participants of certain narratives on a daily basis. Film theorist Edward Branigan argues that narrative is one of the ways for a human to perceive and conceive data, and that 'making narratives is a strategy for making our world of experiences and desires intelligible'.¹⁹ We engage a perceiver of our narration when we have conversations with others; we conceive the narratives of other narrators when we read books, attend lectures, and watch television. Narrative is therefore a prevalent and oftentimes unconscious activity, enunciated from all forms of mediacies (linguistic, theatrical, pictorial, etc).²⁰

Inclusive as narrative is as a social activity, Branigan divides all narrative texts into four basic types: narrative fiction (novels); narrative nonfiction (history), nonnarrative fiction (most kinds of poetry), and nonnarrative nonfiction (essay).²¹ Different types of narratives such as historical chronicles, lyric poetries and novels represent the world in distinct ways. Chronicles, for example, 'does not so much conclude as simple terminate', while lyrics

¹⁷ Veale, 'Interactive cinema is an oxymoron', 1.

¹⁸ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (USA: Routledge, 2009), p.1.

¹⁹ Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*, p.5.

²⁰ Susana Onega and José Angel García Landa, *Narratology: An Introduction* (USA, Routledge, 2014), pp.1-35 (p.3).

²¹ Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension*, p.1. (Italics by me).

poetry is filled with authorial subjective experiences.²² Therefore they can afford so little to be led to whichever directions preferred by the audience. On the other hand, novels distinguish themselves by their ability to report and make up ordinarily unavailable information, such as fictional content or people's inner thoughts. On the level of discourse, novels can employ a wide range of techniques, including unchronological storytelling, unreliable narrators, the multiplicity of the narrator's point of view, slowing or speeding up the tempo of narration, and so on.²³ Novels represent a new world independent from reality, enjoying considerable freedom to capture multiple branches of experiences and 'stories'. Therefore, this paper narrows down the scope of analysis to novels, and more precisely, 'narrative fiction', as proposed by Branigan.

Narrative fiction involves such processes as establishing a sequence of actions, creating a timeline, and impress the spectator of such actions.²⁴ According to film historian David Bordwell, it deals with 'a cause-effect chain of events'.²⁵ Similarly, literary theorist Mieke Bal prescribes its criteria as follows:

It should contain both an actor and a narrator; it also should contain three distinct levels consisting of the text, the story, and the fabula; and its 'contents' should be 'a series of connected events caused or experienced by actors'.²⁶

²² Ryan, 'Narrative', p.519.

Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality' in *On Narrative* ed by W. J. T. Mitchell. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) pp.1–23 (p.16).

²³ Ryan, 'Narrative', p.519.

²⁴ Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension*, p.192.

²⁵ David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (USA: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p.236.

²⁶ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.8.

Assuming a close attitude with Bal, Marie-Laure Ryan further describes narrative as the speech-act approach, which requires the distinction of actor and narrator, the separation of story and presentation.²⁷

Therefore, they both pointed to how ‘narrative fiction’ assumes a distinction between two layers: the presentation of narrative and the content that it represents.²⁸ When audiences watch a film, they appreciate the way the narrative is assembled (the presentation), yet they ‘tend to remember the story in terms of categories of information stated as prepositions, interpretations, and summaries, rather than remembering the way the story is actually presented (the content)’.²⁹

In the following, to better illustrate the two layers of *narrative fiction*, I discuss two theorisations of this distinction (the term ‘narrative’ is henceforth used as a shorthand for ‘narrative fiction’).

2.1.1 Narration, *Récit* and *Histoire*

Gerard Genette dissects the essence of narrative and categorises three concepts that form it: the narration, the *récit* proper and the *histoire*. The narration refers to the narrative act of the narrator, while the *récit* proper is ‘the narrative text or utterance’. These two components contribute to the explicit presentation of the film. The *histoire*, on the other hand, is the ‘story that the presentation signifies’.³⁰

Therefore, by splitting the narrative act, discourse and the story itself, the same story can be of different presentation, and consequently achieves different semantic and dramatic values. Narrative fiction is never an objective recount of history. For instance, the Arabic folk tale of

²⁷ Marie-Laure Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 41.

²⁸ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, 49.

²⁹ Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension*, 14.

³⁰ Fludernik, *Introduction to Narratology*, p.2.

Aladdin has gone through many adaptations, in various mediums, resulting in different experiences for the viewer. The recent film *Aladdin* (2019), takes on a purposeful feminist perspective, showing an effort to incorporate feminism into pop culture. In the adaptation, the *histoire* of Aladdin remains unchanged: Princess Jasmine of Agrabah falls in love with Aladdin, a poor street rat. Aladdin is enlisted by Jafar, an evil sorcerer attempting to overthrow the kingdom, to find a powerful oil lamp and along the way, Aladdin becomes a friend with a genie that makes him a prince. He then embarks on a dangerous mission to stop Jafar from his evil agenda. After saving the kingdom, Aladdin and Jasmine live happily ever after. But the *récit* is reconstructed. There is an emphasis on princess Jasmine, and how her actions are among the key events that bring about the narrative. Instead of following the crowd, she stands out to Jafar when his father is captured, demonstrating that she, as a girl, should have the same right to rule the kingdom and have her voice listened to. This update in princess Jasmine reveals the update of values of gender equality. Different adaptations take on different *récit*, and thus focus on different aspects of the same *histoire* to reflect issues and concerns in the current world.

2.1.2 *Fabula, Syuzhet* and Style

Similar to the distinction between *récit* and *histoire*, the Russian Formalists proposed two influential narrative concepts: *fabula* and *syuzhet*. The *fabula*, meaning ‘story’, constructs the action ‘as chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field’ and is the all-revealing chronological sequence of events.³¹ It is composed in the framing and testing of the hypothesis of the spectator as they collect fractions of narrated content in the film. It is not based on imagination or a whim, but rather, on the patterns of time, space, and causation.³² Thus, *fabula* is implicit. The perceivers of a narrative take pleasure in assembling the *fabula* themselves through a given plot.

³¹ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 49.

³² Ibid.

The plot itself, on the contrary, belongs to the *syuzhet*, which is described as ‘the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula in the narrative’.³³ Similar to how *récit* shows the authorial view in the narrative, the *syuzhet* reflects the artistic choice of the creator. Boris Tomashevsky holds that ‘*syuzhet* respects the order in the work and the series of information processes which designates them.’³⁴ In addition to the dichotomy of *fabula* and *syuzhet*, Bordwell differentiates between *syuzhet* and style, another concept that mobilises and organises components in narrative. *Syuzhet* is universal in all mediums. The same *syuzhet* can be applied to fictions, dramas, and films, while style is specific to the medium. For example, in films, style refers to the systematic use of cinematic devices and techniques in order to achieve the construction of *syuzhet*.³⁵

For instance, in the film *Arrival* (2016), the *fabula* is a simple one: Linguistics professor Louise Banks is invited to find ways to communicate with the extra-terrestrial visitors—Heptapods. In this process, she learns the language of the Heptapods, and acquires the power to ‘remember’ the future, which helps her to stop a potential war, but also enables her to see her daughter's inevitable death. In terms of *syuzhet*, the film is presented in a non-linear way. The plot unfolds, hiding information from the viewers to build suspense. The past, present and future are presented simultaneously. Only to the very end of the film can the viewers gather enough information to bring together the cause-effect chain of Banks’ journey, which belongs to the *fabula*. The style points to the use of techniques in the film, such as mise-en-scène, sound and editing. The muffled sound indicates that Banks are experiencing the obscurity of memories. The editing has created a non-linear structure. It is based on these techniques that the *syuzhet* can be successfully achieved.

³³ Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 50.

³⁴ Boris Tomashevsky, ‘Thematics’ in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, ed., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 66-98 (p.66-7).

³⁵ Bordwell, p. 50.

To summarise, *fabula* should be ‘guessed at, but not given’, while *syuzhet* is the materials and forms that are given to the viewer.³⁶ Therefore, the same story (*fabula*) can be introduced and presented in different forms of *syuzhet*. Depending on different mediums, different techniques (styles) are used to amplify the *syuzhet*.

2.2 Interactive Narrative

According to Janet H. Murray, the key to interactivity in narratives is the power of the audience, which she refers to as ‘agency’ – ‘the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices’.³⁷ It is inherently opposite to traditional linear experience, in which we can do little to avoid or alter the character’s destiny when we sense their impending calamity and ‘the most we can do is to look away’.³⁸ As mentioned in 2.1, there exists a double-layer distinction in narrative: *récit/histoire* and *fabula/syuzhet*. Therefore, this chapter examines how audiences achieve agency by altering either or both layers in an IN product, and its effect on audience engagement and immersion. In future analysis where *récit/histoire* and *fabula/syuzhet* could both be applied, the concept of *fabula/syuzhet* will be used to avoid repetition.

2.2.1 Interactivity in Storytelling

The popular notion of IN is to allow the audience to change the *fabula*. Traditionally, in a linear narrative, the *syuzhet* and *fabula* are fixed, making the narrative a simple path with a certain number of small dots that are plot marks, which are incidents that are designed by the author to change the course of the story.³⁹ In IN, these plot points become nodes, generating several forking paths that one incident could lead to, thus giving the audience agency.

³⁶ Yuri Tynianov, ‘Plot and Story-Line in the Cinema’, in *Russian Poetics in Translation* 5 (1978), p.20.

³⁷ Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, p.159.

³⁸ Veale, “‘Interactive Cinema’ Is an Oxymoron”, p.4.

³⁹ Veale, p.2.

A classic example is *Kino-automat* (1967), which is regarded as the first attempt to achieve interactivity in cinema. Directed by Raduz Cincera, it was shown at the Expo 67 in Montreal. It is a combination of cinema and live performance, which ‘involved live actors performing in tandem with a projected non-linear film entitled “One Man and His House” in a custom-built 123-seat cinema’.⁴⁰ The film contains five forking paths as Raduz Cincera stops his film at five plot points, with a moderator appearing on stage and asking the live audience to choose how Mr Novak, the protagonist, should act. The narrative situation that follows is determined by the majority of audience votes. Cincera has made all the choices all lead to one ending—the burning building, making everyone feel that the film is a satire of democracy.⁴¹

Alongside the popular notion of changing the story content itself, narratives can also give audiences the right to participate in the creation of *syuzhet*. Nearly a century ago, the ‘Kuleshov Effect’ scenario offered interesting ideas about how the manipulation of context can evoke different feelings towards the same facial expression.⁴² Similarly, the manipulation of *syuzhet* changes how the narrative information is presented to the audience, altering narrative experiences.

The experimental cinematic project *Lan Yue/Blue Moon* (1997), by Taiwanese director Ko-I-Chen is a good illustration of how *syuzhet* could be manipulated to render interactivity. He divides the story into five episodes, each containing one set of narrative situations of the three protagonists that are involved in a love triangle. The five episodes can be screened in any sequence. Different sequences lead to different endings, as explained by Chen, ‘either the trio walk down the road holding hands, or they separate, or the woman rejects both men, or she

⁴⁰ Chris Hales, ‘Interactive Cinema in the Digital Age’ in *Interactive Digital Narrative -History, Theory, and Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2015), p.37.

⁴¹ Jeffrey Stanton, ‘Experimental Multi-screen media’ (1997) <<https://www.westland.net/expo67/map-docs/cinema.html>> [accessed 03, March 2021].

⁴² Michael Russell, ‘The Kuleshov Effect and the Death of the Auteur’, in *FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts* (12/12/2005), p.2.

falls for one of the two men. 120 versions, 120 possibilities'.⁴³ Each possibility produces a complete and distinct *fabula*. This multi-*syuzhet* structure symbolises the precariousness of fate.

2.2.2 Dynamic in Audience Engagement

Having discussed how IN generates interactivity in storytelling, it is necessary to explore what changes it brings for the audience. Is it a drift toward better viewer immersion and increased realism or incorporation of interactivity into narratives risks ruining both?⁴⁴ According to Ryan, the audiences engage with the interactivity on three levels, with their power of agency in increasing order and from unintentional to intentional participation. The lowest level of agency is called passive/reactive interaction, in which the audiences show little consciousness towards their action, such as an artwork that displays differently based on the surrounding noise. The highest level is productive interaction, which allows the audiences to reasonably change and add their own thoughts to the fictional world, such as the employment of avatar in most role-playing video games.⁴⁵ This paper focuses on the middle level on the scale, described as selective interaction, where the audiences deliberate on the choices that they make but they cannot predict or control the consequence of such choices. Selective interaction is the most common in interactive cinematic experiences and hyper-text-based narrative.

Selective interactions offer the audience a different type of immersive experiences. The audience's level of immersion is determined by how much he or she feels connected to the fictional world. Laurie N. Taylor distinguishes between two types of immersion for linear narrative and interactive narrative:

Linear stories offer diegetic immersion, which occurs when the viewer is fully immersed in the twists and turns of the plot as the story unfolds. and interactivity

⁴³ Ko-I-Chen, *Titanic film festival program*, (Budapest: 1999).

⁴⁴ Juul, *A Clash Between Game and Narrative*, p.1.

⁴⁵ Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality*, p.205.

leads to intra-diegetic or situated immersion, in which the viewer is immersed in 'playing the game and in the experience of the game space as a spatial and narrated space'.⁴⁶

Diegetic immersion is a feeling of 'being lost in a good book',⁴⁷ while interactive cinema, similar to video games, offers 'situated immersion'. The two distinct forms of immersion provide different ways of affective experiences.⁴⁸ The audiences are granted more 'affective mediation' when they are given the agency. Since 'feeling a character feeling is different than feeling yourself', the audience feels more empathy towards the narrative. Interactivity introduces the feeling of responsibility, when the decision of audiences directly acts upon the narrative situations.⁴⁹ As Stacey Hand and Duane Varan hold, situated immersion of IN means that the audience 'enacts rather than sees the story', which allows them to 'more deeply [internalize] and personalize the narrated events'.⁵⁰ Instead of presenting a whole story, IN proposes a possible world of stories, in which the audiences explore. Calleja notes that the key to understanding such affective quality in interactivity is the 'feedback' that happens between the viewer's active input and the story's output.⁵¹ The feedback loop reinforces the affective process.

According to Bob Rehak, psychoanalysis is another entry point into the engrossment of IN.⁵² As IN is both participatory and spectatorial, giving the audiences two identities: the one that

⁴⁶ Laurie N Taylor, *Video games: Perspective, point-of-view, and immersion* (Master thesis, University of Florida, 2002), p.12.

⁴⁷ Taylor, *Video games*, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Misha Kavka, *Reality Television, Affect and Intimacy* Basingstoke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁴⁹ Kevin Veale, 'Making Science-Fiction Personal: Videogames and Inter-Affective Storytelling' in *The Projected and the Prophetic: Humanity in Cyberculture, Cyberspace & Science Fiction*, ed. Jordan J. Copeland (2001) <<https://www.interdisciplinarypress.net/my-cart/ebooks/ethos-and-modern-life/the-projected-and-prophetic>> [accessed 28 April 2021].

⁵⁰ Stacey Hand and Duane Varan, 'Interactive narratives: Exploring the links between empathy, interactivity, and structure' in *Changing television environments*, ed by M. Tscheligi, M. Obrist, & A. Lugmayr (Berlin: Springer, 2008), pp. 11–19 (p.13).

⁵¹ Calleja, *In-Game*, p.136.

⁵² Bob Rehak, 'Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar' in *The Video Game Theory Reader-Routledge* ed by Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2003), pp.103-129 (p.120).

is looking, when they join in the fictional world and make the choices, as well as the one that is being looked at, when they identify with the characters and witness the events happening to them. The alternation between the two identities functions similarly to the human mind in action. Grahame Weinbren shares the same idea. He borrows Freud's interpretation of dreams to explain the non-linearity of interactive cinema, as dream is 'a narrative-type based on a hermeneutic method'.⁵³ The interlocking and often illogical psychological activities of human unconsciousness are hard to describe but can be unravelled by observing the dreams. Dream is not a narrative that unfolds in time, all of whose elements are simultaneously present. Similar to IN, the underlying narrative of the dream can be revealed in any order (*syuzhet*) and a story (*fabula*) emerges accordingly.

In his canonical work *Sonata* (1990), Weinbren has utilised the concept of dreams, so that sequences of images and sounds do not play an important role anymore, offering the audience a 'subjunctive mental state', and making the narrative merge with the perceptions and personal memories of the audiences.⁵⁴ Weinbren argues that a detailed account of even the tiniest event in reality (with the accompanying mental activity) would take far longer than the event itself.⁵⁵ Viewing from this perspective, IN is a more authentic representation of reality as it renders the human mental world that is disordered and unconstrained but that is an integral part of the events.

To summarise, both the affective possibilities and expressive structure of IN differs from linear narratives. It offers a feedback loop so that the user is more responsible and more empathetic towards the fictional. The incorporation of the human mind into narrative generates a more visceral experience.

⁵³ Weinbren, 'Navigating Oceans of Dreams', p.3.

⁵⁴ Weinbren, p.12.

⁵⁵ Weinbren, p.11.

2.2.3 Interactive Digital Narrative

When the first interactive film Kino-automat was released in 1967, narrative alternatives were still realised by live performance. It was, as Chris Hales states, ‘an entertaining means to add novelty to traditional fiction film in which facilitating audience interaction was much more difficult to achieve than today’⁵⁶. The advent of digital technology has brought significant historical changes to the ways that IN can be enacted. It is evolved to a form of intertextual linking and self-navigating. Weinbren’s work *Sonata* (1990) is an example, in which the interface technology was appropriated into realising digital interactive cinema. It consists of three stories, whose images and sound can be changed by the audience when pointing at the screen at any time. By the mid-2000s, video was commonplace on the Internet and video-sharing platform such as YouTube began their operation, which has greatly contributed to an overflow of an interactive presentation of film making. According to Hales, the development in technologies in IN has three stages: from a film-based phase, a laserdisc phase, to the rise of the personal computer and the Internet.⁵⁷ Benefiting from the growth in personalised computers and mobile devices, IN has never become such a mainstream activity.

Critics of digital narratives, such as Rodowick, claim that ‘although digital technologies are having large effects in the realms of style, narrative has nonetheless remained classical’.⁵⁸ Digital narratives have inherited the narrative quality made up of the story (*fabula*) and the presentation of such a story (*syuzhet*). The three fundamental concerns of interactive digital narratives remain to be the offering of choice (narrative architecture), the mechanisms of user interaction (interactivity), and how the combinations of the two keep the intended narrative meaning delivered.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hales, ‘Interactive Cinema in the Digital Age’, p.36.

⁵⁷ Hales, p.46.

⁵⁸ Kristen Daly, ‘Cinema 3.0: The Interactive-Image’, in *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Fall 2010), p.84.

⁵⁹ Marie Laure Ryan, *Avatars of Story* (Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p.100.

Hypertext fiction, a mixture of game and literature, was the first genre of IN to develop and run completely in a digital environment. Therefore, in the case studies presented in Chapter 4, I discuss IN in the context of two hypertext fiction projects.

Chapter 3. Identity Construction in Interactive Narrative

Each world is created by human beings ... in the sense that this world has evolved as a result of human interaction in society, through [narrative], with ideas, using language.⁶⁰

As explored, narration is a common occurrence in human society. The narrator takes on a certain identity when constructing a narrative. It not only reflects their perception of their own sense of being but also involves how others interpret such perception.⁶¹ It could be that they are scientists, delivering a report at a conference, or that they are historians, re-enacting stories from historical evidence, or that they are simply gossipers – whichever role the narrator takes on, they will ‘act to protect and verify their conceptions of who they are’.⁶² When it comes to fictional characters in a narrative, the protection and verification of identity are also present. Characters as believable individuals inevitably possess a set of meanings that define them and separate them from the other characters and they will protect such meanings to assert their individuality. Bordwell argues that the characterization is primarily based on a character’s occupation, social status, behaviour, political opinions, etc.⁶³ The characterization, in this case, points to the construction of a character’s identity. Identity is therefore at the intersection of reality and the fictional world. The expression of identity presented on screen is built on the basis of identities found in reality, which in turn, provides the audiences with ways to make sense of their own experiences. Narrative acts as a mirror, through which we can meet and observe ourselves in the same way we meet others in real life.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Wayne Moses and Torbjorn L. Knusten, *Ways of Knowing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p.193.

⁶¹ Scott V. Savage and Jan E. Stets, ‘Identity and Exchange: Person Identities and Power Use’ in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed, Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.107-135 (p.109).

⁶² Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets. *Identity Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p.3.

⁶³ David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p.235.

According to Charles Cooley, identity is constructed on the basis of human interactions.⁶⁴ Yet the landscape of social interaction is not equally distributed for every individual and social group. Social inequality caused by homophobia racism, misogyny and xenophobia compel certain culture and identities to be dismissed and even disdained. In contrast with heterosexual cisgender white male individuals, a journey of identity construction for the minority groups is fraught with challenges and uncertainties. In this context, marginalised individuals have become accustomed to deal with the uncertainties through the consumption of narratives, which enables them to put their own histories and desires in parallel with the ones introduced to them.⁶⁵ IN, as a new form of narrative expression, adds agency and situated immersion to the audience experience, having great potential in helping with the construction of identity.

Therefore, this chapter deals with the role that IN plays in identity construction, examining how identity is socially constructed, the characteristics of identity in the modern age and how IN possess the potential to help with the construction and verification of minority identities.

2.1 Socially Constructed Identity

Social constructionist ideas on identity have developed since the 1980s. Similar to how narrative creates a new fictional world, constructionists believe that the physical world and social world are ‘material, concrete and given by nature’.⁶⁶ Each world is created by human interactions, which leads to a variety of multi-layered social totalities that composes the society on a larger scale. Identities are perceived as meanings produced from social interactions.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and Social Order* (New York: Scribner, 1902).

⁶⁵ F. Hollis Griffin, *Feeling Normal Sexuality and Media Criticism in the Digital Age* (USA: Indiana University Press, 2016), p.1.

⁶⁶ Moses and Knusten, *Ways of Knowing*, p.193.

⁶⁷ Burke, *Identity Theory*, p.11.

According to Peter J Burke, an identity is a set of meanings that characterises oneself as a particular occupant in a societal role, a member of a group, or a unique individual.⁶⁸ He argues that identities are used to differentiate each other as people occupy different social roles, such as the role of student/professor, and display different personalities, such as the characteristics of being outgoing/shy. Yet this meaning that define one as a unique person is oftentimes shared by all members of the society (there is more than one outgoing student). It points to the two significations of the term ‘identity’, the former is the quality that differentiates us from the others in a social occasion, while the latter refers to the shared meanings that connect us from the others, as what Paul Ricoeur holds, identity refers not only to the selfhood, but to the sameness.⁶⁹

Therefore, identity is embodied by a set of meanings that both signifies one’s differences as well as similarities. The two meanings of identities are henceforth referred to as individual identity and group identity respectively. I explore in the following how identities are constructed by social forces and affected by the mind.

2.1.1 Symbolic Interactionism and Identification

It is generally accepted that constructionist identity theory is pioneered by the works of sociologists George Herbert Mead, who holds that identity is a social product. After his death in the 1930s, Herbert Blumer, one of the main disciples of Mead, pulled together his ideas and named his framework ‘symbolic interactionism’, which later became the dominant framework in identity investigation for the past century.⁷⁰ Mead rejects the idea that one can achieve self-understanding by contemplating on one’s own, as identity is only composed by the expressions of oneself towards others.

⁶⁸ Burke, *Identity Theory*, p.3.

⁶⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *On Paul Ricoeur: narrative and Interpretation*. (London: Psychology Press, 1991), p.18.

⁷⁰ Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe, ‘New Directions in Identity Theory and Research: Looking Back and Moving Forward’ in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.1-27 (p.2).

Blumer has conceptualised symbolic interactionism via three core principles. The first one deals with meaning. Based on the meanings we assigned to people or things, we make interpretations of them and act accordingly.⁷¹ Identity is fluid and changeable, as our interpretations tend to be variable. The second principle focuses on the employment of language, as meanings occur from our interactions with one another, to which the key is exchanging our definitions with each other using language. Through thousands of interactions between humans, a shared meaning is constructed and makes the identity. The final principle concerns the concept of ‘minding’.⁷² The interpretation and definition of things are altered by our conversations with ourselves, but this step must be preceded by our interaction with others. In the soliloquy we have on our own, we take the role of others and observe our identity from such a position.

With constant social interaction, identity construction is thus a time-consuming operation. Richard Jenkins holds that identity is both a noun and a verb, both a product and a process. The social process of identity construction is known as the individual’s ‘identification’ with a certain set of meanings.⁷³ Eric H. Erikson argues that individuals will struggle with identity problems for the rest of their life if they do not develop a satisfactory sense of self through the identification process. They will subsequently suffer from a general sense of isolation or fragmentation, as well as identity confusion, which may lead to low self-esteem and a loss of direction in life.⁷⁴

On the basis of the necessity of making meaning and interpreting, sociologist Sheldon Stryker thinks of symbolic interactionism as a frame of reference for later social constructionist theory.⁷⁵ Since the last two decades, social constructionist research has had an increasing

⁷¹ Emory M. Griffin, *A first look at communication theory*. (United States, McGraw-hill, 2006), p.56.

⁷² George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), p.43.

⁷³ Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p.2.

⁷⁴ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968), p.87.

⁷⁵ Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic interactionism* (Caldwell: Blackburn Press, 2002).

focus on the discussion of group identities.⁷⁶ Drawing on one's self-understanding and meaning-making, researchers are concerned with how identity is shaped by group membership.

Regarding group identity, Erving Goffman proposes the concept of 'dramaturgical' account of identity, describing identity as a performance.⁷⁷ It points to an individual's longing to be united with others. In hoping to collaborate and impress other social members, we tend to conform to the social norms and the standardised expectations available to us and play a role that is defined by such norms. Goffman clarifies that 'performance' refers to all the actions of an agent (a participant in a social activity) that provides implicit influences for other participants of the same activity.⁷⁸ Individuals are continuously obfuscating their inner motivations, passions, and fears in order to adopt their required and respective positions by the sway of popular opinion and social expectation. Psychologist Jolande Jacobi put forward the term 'mask/masking' to describe such identity that we forcefully create for ourselves in this process. Masking is compelled by the increasing complexities of social relationships, as they create more demands from society.⁷⁹

Therefore, the difficulty of the construction of certain identities can be anticipated. Queer-phobia, racial discrimination and misogyny are still resonated in the current discourse of our society. Minor identities thus run the risk of being denied and hide behind their masks due to the lack of social interactions available.

⁷⁶ Cerulo, 'Identity Construction', p. 386.

⁷⁷ Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life* (London: Harmondsworth, 1978), p.121.

⁷⁸ Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, p.26.

⁷⁹ Mirosław Filiciak, 'Hyperidentities: Postmodern identity patterns in massively multiplayer online role-playing games' in *The Video Game Theory Reader*, ed. by Mark J. P. Wolf & Bernard Perron (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2003), pp.87-102 (p.93).

2.1.2 Identity Verification

Identity theorists believe that there is an automatic self-reflective process central to the identification process. People seek to maintain consistency between how they perceive themselves and the perception that they receive from others.⁸⁰ This pursuit is embodied by the concept of identity verification. Identity verification posits a central role in the construction of identity, dealing with the feedback from other social members in regard to one's identity.⁸¹

Burke states that we perceive an identity standard, which embodies the self-meanings we have assigned towards ourselves. The identity standard will be compared with the verbal and non-verbal social feedback we receive from other social members (which he calls 'environmental input'). Identity verification is what occurs when the feedback matches identity standard. If such environmental input proves to be different from the identity standard, identity nonverification occurs, resulting in negative emotions and psychological distress. It produces a defence mechanism, forcing individuals to take actions to reconcile the environmental input with their own meanings in identity standard. Ultimately, if the identity nonverification persists and the conflicts seem unable to be resolved between self-meanings and environmental input, the individual will experience identity change. The identity standard will be modified and remoulded under the guidance of the environmental input.⁸²

Practically, we can see identity change happens when an individual fails to see confirmation of his own identity. It could be that he has an incorrect vision of how he should be, but oftentimes, it can be used to explain why certain individuals encounter self-doubt. A queer child growing in the heteronormative world may wear the mask of heterosexuality when he is persistently informed that heterosexual masculinity is at the top of the social hierarchy. In

⁸⁰ Ryan Trettevik and Matthew Grindal, 'Self-Guides and the Affective Consequences of Identity Verification' in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed. Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.601-616 (p.601).

⁸¹ Stets, and Serpe 'introduction', 11.

⁸² Burke, 'Identity Processes and Social Stress', 845.

Mary L. Gray's research, she found out that 'many [queer individuals] shared the belief that their identities... remained buried under the baggage of community norms and expectations of...traditional heterosexual fashion.'⁸³ Emotions such as denial tend to dominate and guide identity construction and social interaction, which calls for a remedy to reset the boundaries of their identity.

2.1.3 Identity and the Mind

Identity is constructed through the meanings we assigned to the external world, while at the same time we communicate and reflect on such meanings in our mind. On the basis of social interaction, Mead views human as having the capacity for shaping their own behaviour independent of classical conditioning or operant conditioning processes.⁸⁴ Mead's notion of the self as composed of an 'I' and a 'Me' points to the connection between perception, action and identity. The 'Me' is formed by what is acquired via interaction with others and the environment, such as the attitudes and feedback of others. Hence, 'Me' holds the understanding of the individual's action. It is a self-awareness that has the potential to change the 'I'. On the other hand, the 'I' is employed to account for the spontaneity, creativity, and unpredictability in human behaviour.⁸⁵ The 'I-Me' duo must work in parallel and maintain the balance to achieve the identity construction.

Apart from a purely sociological approach, psychological study has shed light on the link between mind and identity. Sociologist Carolyn Vogler has developed a framework that connects psychoanalysis to the social construction of identity. Vogler argues that sociologists need to take feelings as an integral component in identity construction. Unconscious psychological processes and emotions are so compelling that they 'may now be articulating with sociological processes' and working in tandem towards one's self and social

⁸³ Mary L. Gray, *Out in the Country" Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America* (New York and London, New York University Press, 2009), p.122.

⁸⁴ Burke, *Identity Theory*, p. 35.

⁸⁵ Burke, *Identity Theory*, p. 23.

understanding.⁸⁶ Steph Lawler borrows the Freudian concepts in arguing that identity is also a ‘product of the unknown unconscious motivations’.⁸⁷ The real world does not align each social member to a specific social role and activities happening inside our mind is not available for others.⁸⁸

Psychoanalysis thus offers insights into both conception of IN, which Weibren describes as a condensation of dreams in Freudian analysis. Without a perfectly assigned sequence, dreams are not chronologically significant narratives that can show obscure and illogical aspects of identity.

2.2 Identity in Modern Age

Among the newly risen trends in identity research discussed above, Cerulo has also noted digital technologies have influenced identity construction since the 1980s. In the increasingly digitalised society, it is necessary to discuss the nature of identity issues in the modern age.

The social structure of the pre-modern world is fairly fixed, where individuals were circumscribed to interacting with a limited number of social members around them. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, social roles seldom change, so individuals have their specific frames of existence within the society.⁸⁹ In modern society, social roles such as gender, profession are no longer fixed, and the path of social interaction is multiplied, which makes identity more fluid and diverse than ever. Douglas Kellner, one of the leading theorist of media culture, described ‘identity crises’ as a concept only fit for the modern world as a result of the multiplication of identities and radical identity alterations.⁹⁰ The conventionally

⁸⁶ Carolyn Vogler, ‘Social identity and emotion: the meeting of psychoanalysis and sociology’ in *The Sociological Review*, Vol.48, No.1, (2000), p.19.

⁸⁷ Steph Lawler, *Identity: sociological perspectives* (UK and USA: Polity Press, 2014), p. 20.

⁸⁸ Lawler, *Identity: sociological perspectives*, p. 114.

⁸⁹ Filiciak, ‘Hyperidentities’, p.93.

⁹⁰ Douglas Kellner, *Media Culture. Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (USA and Canada: Routledge, 1995), p.201.

stable identity is ground down, the quest for self has become more pronounced and more complicated. To respond to the rapidity of societal transition, individuals may need to find more ways to identity construction.

According to Roland Barthes and Jean Baudrillard, there is no distinction between ‘reality’ and its symbolic representation. All human civilizations have thus existed in a symbolic environment. As a result, ‘reality as experienced, has always been virtual because it has always been perceived through symbols’. It is thus feasible to place the audience engagement of IN in the same dynamic of social interaction in reality. Joshua Meyrowitz, one of the pioneers in investigating digital influence on identity, argues that digital technology has reassembled the interactions available to individuals by cutting off the ties between physical and social presence.⁹¹ It ushers abundant new avenues for social performances. The marginalised and disenfranchised, despite their physical absence in social discourse and activities, are now have ready access to social information, from which they can see the identity of self and the society in a better light. As such, the interactive digital narrative presents itself as a potential avenue of identity construction.

Social networks give rise to virtual identity, where individuals can manipulate their expressions and create self-meanings that they cannot experience in reality. Although the discussion on the virtual identity of social media is out of the scope for this paper, it offers a glimpse of the space where ‘identity is self-defined rather than pre-ordained’.⁹² The boundaries between real and virtual are blurred. IN, similarly, creates a complementary virtual world to reality for identity construction.

⁹¹ Joshua Meyrowitz, ‘Media and community, Critical Studies’ in *Mass Communication* (1989), pp.326-334, DOI: 10.1080/15295038909366757

⁹² Elizabeth Reid, “Text-based Virtual Realities: Identity and the Cyborg Body,” in *Cultural Formations in Text-Based Virtual Realities* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1994), pp. 75–95.
<<http://www.rochester.edu/College/FS/Publications/ReidIdentity.html>> [accessed 10 May 2021].

2.3 The Role of Interactive Narrative in Identity Construction

As explored, identity is both a product of social interactions and a yardstick by which social reality is measured. The social formation of identities and participation of INs share close similarities. The involvement of IN generates affective qualities and psychological activities that are essential in the identification process. Thus, the question raised is, to what extent can INs contribute to shaping the identity of every individual and the society, and what role may IN play in helping with the identification process for minority identities that are historically and temporally underrepresented in social discourse?

Mirosław Filiciak holds that IN is the instrument that most closely mirrors our reality and expresses how the modern human 'identity' functions.⁹³ The interactions in the fictional world are complementary for the lack of social discourses in the real world, in which individuals negotiate and reflect on their sense of self. Moreover, the emotions and meanings generated from the fictional world form a reacting force to reality. IN is conducive to create a learning environment for individuals to learn each other's multiplicity of identities. As noted by Sarah Lynne Bowman, IN permits the audience to learn about different experiences of identities by encouraging them to experiment with the narrative that either strengthen or challenge aspects of their recognition of selfhood.⁹⁴ IN may help social members to be conscious of and appreciate each other's existence and identity.

Therefore, IN thus exerts a twofold influence on identity construction. I explore in the following such dual role of IN.

2.3.1 Interactive Narrative as a Platform for Social Interactions

Identity construction is always achieved in reference to others. IN can generate the environment for creating the potential others, by which individuals take their cue for

⁹³ Filiciak, 'Hyperidentities', p.101.

⁹⁴ Sarah Lynne Bowman, *The functions of role-playing games: How participants create community, solve problems and explore identity* (USA: McFarland, 2010), p.127.

identification. As discussed in 2.2.2, IN presents selective interactions, which allows the viewers to navigate through a fictional world by making choices to input their own narratives. It shares the same dynamic of the interactions happening in social life. Social performances are not creative processes. Individuals take actions and make choices whose outcomes are beyond their control. It serves as our freedom to assert agency in our daily life, which Anthony Giddens refers to as filled with and composed of ‘narrative of the self’.⁹⁵ Our daily activities, he argues, consist of reinforcing and regenerating a series of beliefs based on social interactions and feedbacks. Individuals unconsciously adopt the same symbolic structures when acting out a social self, both in fictional narratives and in the physical world. The boundary is increasingly blurry between the fictional reality in IN and the reality in the real world. Manuel Castells proposes the idea that the ‘reality’ has become the ‘real virtuality’, while the virtual is becoming a hyper-reality, in which the line between the physical and the imaginary has largely vanished.⁹⁶ Therefore, it seems logical to apply the power of IN to that of social interactions.

Socially, IN emphasises the concept of ‘pretend play’, an idea normally employed to describe a cognitive development process amongst children.⁹⁷ It stresses the significance of narrative in the creation of self. In an interactive ‘pretend play’, the audiences are granted a chance to explore their current and future social positions and group identities by contemplating moral values, lifestyles, desires, laughter, sorrows, and various ways of knowing associated with them. Narrative folds collective memories into a set of concepts correlated with specific identity groups, and interactivity allows them to check them against themselves and receive feedback. For example, for queer youths who are raised in a religious or homophobic

⁹⁵ David Gauntlett, ‘Anthony Giddens: The theory of structuration,’ extract of *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). <<http://www.theory.org.uk/giddens2.html>> [accessed 10 May 2021].

⁹⁶ Filiciak, ‘Hyperidentities’, p.96.

⁹⁷ Bowman, ‘The Functions of Role-Playing Games’, p.128.

environment, IN may offer a variety of ideas and sensations about queer desire and queer sociality, problematizing the ‘mask’ that they hide behind, verifying their sense of belonging.

Moreover, in symbolic interactionism, Meads has proposed an ‘I-Me’ dialectic, in which the ‘I’ is the subject of spontaneity and the ‘Me’ refers to the sociality embodied in the mind. It is the unconsciousness and consciousness working in tandem. Such collaborative work is present in the engagement of IN. When immersing in the narrative, the audiences identify with the character and feel the character, while themselves are projected as the ‘other’, initiating the construction of ‘Me’, which is continually described and refined as a result of interactions along with the interactive participation in the narrative.⁹⁸ The viewers will exercise various facets of selfhood, all of which are archetypal in reality, and then critically assess the difference between their sense of self and the performed self-identity in the narrative. This enactment process encourages them to reflect on the choices made by the ‘I’, allowing them to rethink their sense of self socially.

The involvement of agency and affection distinguishes IN from traditional linear media. Griffin describes the function of interactive media forms as offering both ‘psychic investment’ and ‘bodily experience’.⁹⁹ The affective facets of the audience to engage with film, television, and internet media rarely work in organised and sequential ways. For instance, in terms of minorities, the feelings of recognition, a sense of belonging, and equality are categories of emotions that can be depicted, but each of them has his or her own subjective experience that makes their individual pursuits distinct from each other. As Misha Kavka argues, to pin down an emotion is conceivable, but to label the affective nature of an experience is significantly more complicated.¹⁰⁰ As seen from 2.2.2, IN proposes dream-like

⁹⁸ Filiciak, ‘Hyperidentities’, p.91.

⁹⁹ Griffin, *Feeling Normal*, p.3.

¹⁰⁰ Kavka, *Reality Television*, p.32.

participation, pointing to the unreasonable and disorganised unconsciousness of the human mind. It creates an environment for the affective definition to be sensed.

2.3.2 Interactive Narrative as a Platform for Learning

As explored, IN offers opportunities to experiment with the characters whose personality traits either amplify or refute their primary identities, making them conscious of the multiple new ways of self-expression. Researchers such as Frasca have shown that this consciousness generated by the fictional narrative is maintained in the real world as a reacting force to change social interactions in the real world.¹⁰¹

Melanie C. Green and Keenan M. Jenkins have explored the pervasive influence of IN.¹⁰² Immersion, as an integral aspect of interactive experience, helps generate both excitement and compelling effects, is seen to have a persuasive psychological effect on the audience. As a result, audiences tend to bond with the characters by putting themselves in their shoes, which is linked to the attitude alteration of the audience. Similar to consciousness-raising, it makes them conscious of the social identities that are vastly different from their own. In the physical world, this attitude change would result in more validations of identities to happen among social members. As a result, it potentially generates more verifications for identities that are socially misrepresented and underrepresented in discourse, aiding the construction of such identities. Furthermore, Griffin argues that the persuasive effect makes the political become personal and the systematic questions become individuated and private endeavours.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Frasca, 'Rethinking agency and immersion', p.170.

¹⁰² Melanie C. Green, and Keenan M. Jenkins, 'Interactive narratives: Processes and outcomes in user-directed stories' in *Journal of Communication* 64.3 (2014), pp.479-500.

¹⁰³ Griffin, *Feeling Normal*, p.3.

Jacob Cohen has found out that, compared to linear forms of narrative, IN can be more conducive in eliciting narrative persuasion.¹⁰⁴ Audiences are able and encouraged to fully participate in the character's goals in interactive storylines. Identification of a character broadens the audiences' view so they can see events in a new light. Green has also found out that situated immersion facilitates attitude and behaviour change.¹⁰⁵ The audiences are more prone to modify their real-world opinions in reaction to the fictional facts, claims, or events if interactivity is presented to them.

As the above analysis suggests, IN may be effective in rendering positive social attitudes towards disenfranchised social groups and helping the construction of identification of minor identities.

¹⁰⁴ Jacob Cohen, 'Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters' in *Mass Communication and Society*, 4(3), (2001), pp.245-264.
doi:10.1207/S15327825MCS0403_01.

¹⁰⁵ Green and Jenkins. 'Interactive narratives'. p.483.

Chapter 4. Case Studies

The analysis in previous chapters has shown the ability of interactive narratives (INs) in shaping both individuals' sense of self and their group identities. Despite sharing similar affective potential, every narrative is distinct from each other, generating variations in terms of how interactivity and narrative engagement are used to affect identity construction. As a result, this chapter introduces two case studies that address the theme of queer identity and immigrant identity respectively, in order to show how specific identity experiences are embedded in INs. The two narratives delineate similar but not identical experiences, both representing the yearning for a real sense of belonging and marking the histories of identity formation for members of minorities.

4.1 *Queerskins* and Queer Identity

Queerskins (2012-2018) is one of the first interactive projects that place the viewer in an intimate position with a member of the queer culture, allowing them to discover and appreciate the conflicting inner world of a queer individual growing up in rural Catholic culture in Missouri, United States. Consisting of three parts (and more parts in development), it maps out territories of social justice, social activism, identity construction, as well as an appreciation for sexual diversity. Martínez-Cano et al. describe this work as 'clearly activist in nature', as it invites the audience to contemplate and learn.¹⁰⁶ The first part of the project, titled *Queerskins: A Novel* (2012), builds up the basis of the whole narrative. Made up of a multimedia collage of text, and, audio, image and video, it is an interactive experience that allows the audience to explore the narrative each in their own way. It transports the viewer to a material reality that leads to a platform of contemplation, affirmation, and encouragement both from within and beyond the queer culture. The last two parts of the project are virtual reality experiences where the participant is placed on the backseat of the car of Sebastian's

¹⁰⁶ Francisco-Julián, Martínez-Cano and Roselló Tormo Emilio. 'La dirección y realización audiovisual de realidad virtual. Análisis de *Queerskins*: a Love Story, una aproximación al cine volumétrico.' ASRI: *Arte y sociedad*. Revista de investigación 18 (2020 translated by Google translate), pp.111-125 (p.120).

grieving parents. Given the length of the paper, this chapter focuses solely on the first part of the project – *Queerskins: A Novel* (the term *Queerskins* is used as a shorthand in the following analysis).

4.1.1 *Queerskins*: Narrative Content and Structure

The story of *Queerskins* is a revisit of the HIV outbreak in the 1980s and early 1990s. It presents the poignant struggle of Sebastian Adler, a young homosexual surgeon of a small-town Catholic upbringing in Missouri, whose religious faith conflicts with the rising consciousness of his homosexuality. Sebastian's mother, Mary-Helen Adler, is a devout Catholic whose college and career aspirations are cut short by her sudden pregnancy and her duty to serve God and his family. Ed Alder, Sebastian's father, is a figure that represents toxic masculinity and homophobia, who shows obvious disgust for Sebastian's sexuality and his lack of 'masculinity'. Witnessing the domestic abuse inflicted on his mother, Sebastian feels his home has been shattered to pieces. As a result, He decides to never go back and spend his entire life looking for a place in which he can feel at 'home'. The narrative is divided into eight chapters. In the following paragraphs, I first present the *fabula* of the narrative and then summarise its *syuzhet*, in order to offer a background in the discussion of interactivity and audience engagement.

The audiences navigate through the chapters of multimedia displays. Texts are presented as pages of Sebastian's journal entries. Audio and video clips are employed to amplify the narrative process. The chapter titled 'Mother' talks about Sebastian's childhood and adolescence. During his childhood, Sebastian is 'slightly fondled' by a priest when serving as an altar boy. From an early age, he feels out of place with the masculinity defined by his father and friends. However, he does not publicly disobey such values, but forces himself to watch and be part of it, as he writes in his diary: 'this is what real men did. If I turned away, they would think of me as a coward'.¹⁰⁷ He observes his mother's daily worship towards the

¹⁰⁷ Illya Szilak and Cyril Tsiboulski, *Queerskins: A Novel* (2012), section 3 <<http://online.queerskins.com>> [accessed 23 May 2021].

shrine of the Virgin Mary, and also towards his father's patriarchal authority. As his consciousness of identity developed, he begins to challenge the indoctrinated heterosexual ideals. College life marks the start of his new life, where he meets his first lover James. Conscience-stricken, the relationship troubles his heart as he feels like 'he has a mark of the devil on his forehead' after having sex with man.

The next chapters are titled 'Alex' and 'Carlos', after the name of Sebastian's second lover and his lawyer. Sebastian becomes a surgeon after college and moves in with Alex. One day at work, he treats a Hispanic patient named Jesus with HIV. The story begins with Sebastian catches Alex on the spot having sex with another man. In a fit of anger, the two lovers have a row and separate. A day later, Sebastian tries to look for Alex but finds himself lost in a dangerous block of west L.A. When he goes out of the car to ask for help, the hooligans on the street mock his homosexuality and hit him with cement. He is found barely alive the next morning. Jesus is among one of the attackers, which Sebastian later identifies with the police. Carlos prepares Sebastian for trial, only on the day of trial, he refuses to testify. He does not want to be treated as *Exhibit A* that destroys a man who has already been suffering from HIV and who is someone's son, brother and a member of the family that they hold dear. He may not see Jesus' crime as justified, but he sees his forgiveness as his sacrifice for God. The Jesus incident leads to the break-up of Sebastian's second relationship. He decides to rebuild his world and reinvent himself in a continent 'smashed by civil war and devoured by famine'.¹⁰⁸

It is in Mali that Sebastian meets his third lover Jean-Marie, and the end of his life. Not long after he begins exploring Africa with J-M, Sebastian is tested HIV positive. He feels peaceful about his destiny, but he prays to God for the life of J-M. When the result of J-M comes back negative. He feels that God is indeed grateful and has spared his lover from death.

¹⁰⁸ Szilak and Tsiboulski, *Queerskins*, section 39.

When Sebastian dies, his belongings are sent back to Missouri, where Mary-Helen arranges a small funeral for him. Conscious of Sebastian's love life, she invites Alex to come, but not the other friends. Ed is abhorred and refused to turn up. Mary-Helen asks Father Jim if he can hold the service for the funeral for Sebastian, and whether her son has committed a mortal sin, to which Father Jim replies, 'If Sebastian had shown repentance before he died, he would be pardoned', so she begins reading Sebastian's journals that have been sent home, in which she learns personal information of his childhood while reminiscing on memories from the past.¹⁰⁹

When viewed from the first chapter 'Missouri' to the last one 'Return', the narrative begins with Mary-Helen receives Sebastian's belongings from Africa and then ends at the same point. The narration in between the starting and ending point follows a sequence that is deliberately made random. Each scene is shown as a flashback. The timeline of the whole narrative is ruptured by disparate pieces of flashbacks, which the audience needs to join together themselves.

¹⁰⁹ Szilak and Tsiboulski, section 60.

4.1.2 *Queerskins*: Interactivity and Engagement

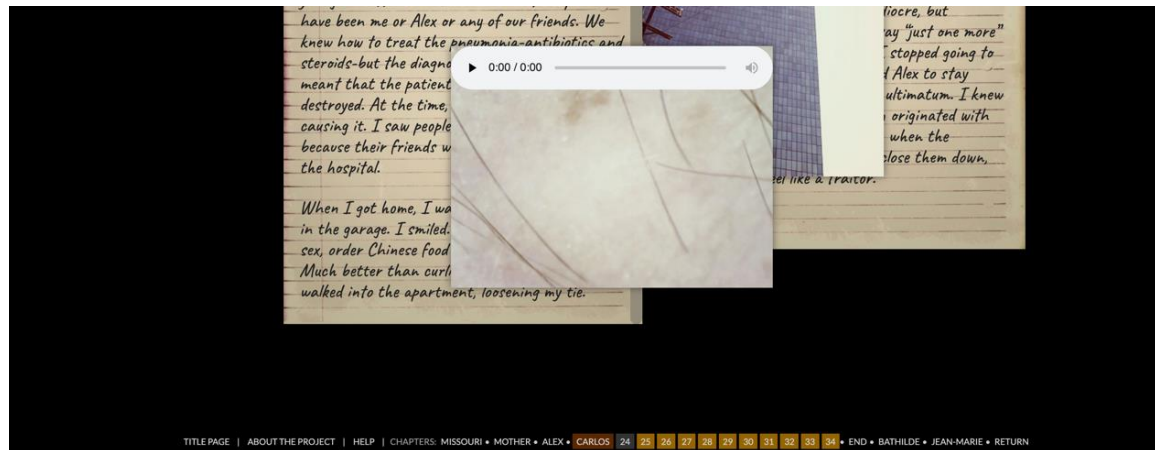


Figure 1 Navigation bar of *Queerskins*

As discussed above, the analysis of the *syuzhet* is based on the viewing default order from the first to the last chapter linearly, which is just one of the thousands of possible ways to navigate through the narrative. *Queerskins* has given the audiences the ability to change the *syuzhet* of the narrative. The audience is not restricted to a single linear path of understanding.

There are chapter numbers that would show the multimedia display when clicked, which is located at the bottom of the page. The texts are shown in the form of Sebastian's journal entries, and multiple images, audio clips overlays and video clips are stacked on top of each other in an unordered manner, as shown in the screenshot (fig.1). Within each page, the multimedia components provided can also be manipulated. There is no pre-set sequence of which should be read first. Each media type can be selected and engaged, such as listening to an audio file, reading text, or watching a video clip.

Some of the audio clips are testimonies from Sebastian's loved ones (Mary-Helen, Alex, Carlos, etc), providing a perspective to the story other than Sebastian's, while others are songs and melodies that accompany the reading experiences. The images and videos are

semi-archival. Some are sourced from YouTube, pointing to the age of the HIV pandemic, while others are original, created to set the mood and help the audience to immerse in Sebastian's battle.¹¹⁰ The different components provide the user with an engaging interactive experience.

As discussed, the whole narrative is in fragmented pieces and needs to be constructed by the audiences themselves. Most of the journal entries are not in chronological order, and the accompanying images, videos and monologues are sometimes inconsistent with the journals on the same page. This helps cultivate an inner affective response in the audiences, as they position themselves in the fictional world, trying to figure out what and who is Sebastian. As Monika Górka-Olesińska argues, the interactivity of multimedia element that renders the memories of Sebastian offers audiences the emotion of being virtually there.¹¹¹ It is worth noting that the composition of journal images and audio clips are often stacked on top of each other, deliberately disrupts the natural flow of reading. Each time a chapter re-opens, the media type will be re-arranged in a disorderly manner different from the last time, requiring the audience to move 'objects' across the screen (fig.2). As it seems that the audience is rummaging through Sebastian's belongings as someone who is from Sebastian's private and intimate life, the narrative offers 'situated immersion', creating a more immersive experience.

¹¹⁰ Packard Courtney, 'Individual Work Queerskins' (2012), in <<https://directory.eliterature.org/individual-work/5048>> [accessed 23 May 2021].

¹¹¹ Monika Górka-Olesińska, 'Pamięć (współ) tworzona i (współ) doświadczana – partycypacyjne i cielesne wymiary doświadczenia VR.', *Rzegląd Kulturoznawczy* 2(44) (2020 translated by Google Translate) pp.107-116 (p.111), in <www.ejournals.eu/Przegląd-Kulturoznawcze/> [accessed 23 May 2021]



Figure 2 Each reload of page rendering different positions of elements

As more journal entries read, and monologues heard, the life events and struggle of Sebastian feel more complete. The overall experience has a puzzle-solving or ‘crime-solving’ feel to it, which contributes to an immersive and engaging experience. It is emotionally and affectively powerful as this style of interactivity encourages the audience to return to previous and different parts of the narrative to collect narrative cues and connect the pieces of *fabula*. As such, they are affectively responsible for the construction of Sebastian’s fate. When we reach the chapter where Sebastian passed away, there are no more journal articles and only audio and video clips are shown on screen which are others’ monologues, as if we are experiencing Sebastian’s life as we interact with him and finally, he leaves us permanently (fig.3).

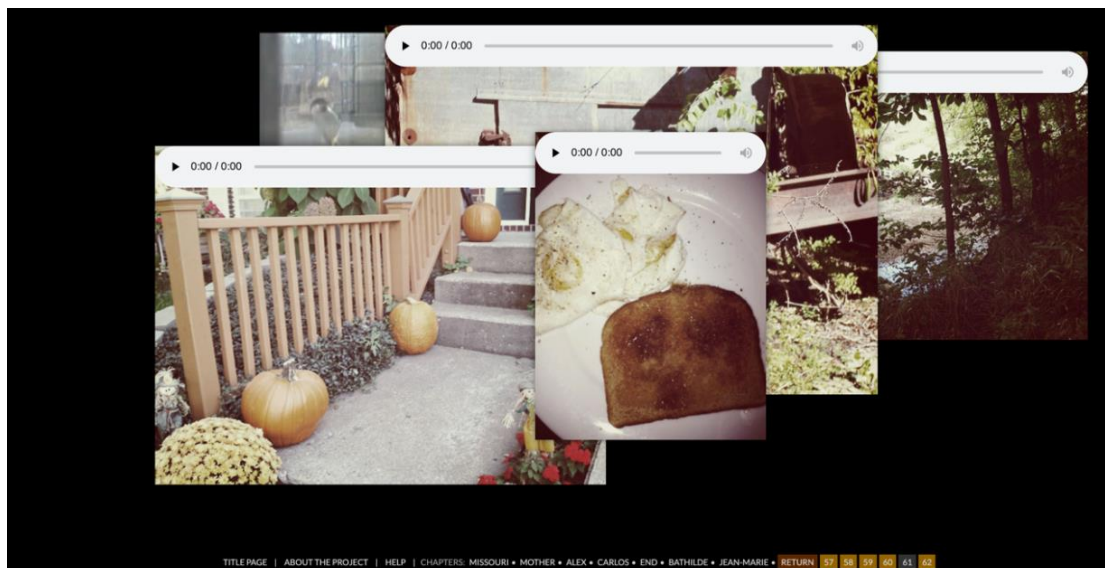


Figure 3 Only audio clips left after Sebastian's death

Cyril Tsiboulski, the creator of *Queerskins*, explains his creation rationale as ‘a layered experience that feels almost like a dream’.¹¹² The monologue presented in the audio clip seems to be from someone speaking in an airless void. The journals look dusty and yellowed with time. Every object is in disorder, both in terms of time and space. As Sebastian writes in

¹¹² Illya Szilak, *Queerskins: A New Multimedia Novel That Looks at the Beginning of the AIDS Epidemic* (2017), in <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/queerskins-a-new-multimedia-novel-that-looks-at-the-beginning-of-the-aids-epidemic_b_2106771> [accessed May 23 2021].

the journal, the endurance of a dream, is ‘not from recalling something lost, but in ever having forgotten it’, the narrative thus engages with the audience’s consciousness.¹¹³ The stories, like dreams, unfolding in mind, seems to be nothing more than a random snapshot of daily occurrences, but when examined more closely, it reshapes one’s inner desire. No matter which path the viewer chooses to embark on, he cannot change Sebastian’s inevitable death. This powerlessness forms a contrast to the agency. The pervasive heteronormativity is never brought down by any individual effort. It is like the dream, where you assert your own consciousness, but the narrative of the dream is not solely dependent on your mind.

4.1.3 *Queerskins*: Identity Construction

Deriving from the interactions of the multimedia collages, the narrative focuses on letting the viewer construct an intimate relationship with Sebastian, who is struggling to reconcile his inner feelings. As a socially other, we interact with his mother and friends, and it is up to us to build our relation and impression of him. From this perspective, the narrative is expressed from a social perspective. The audiences engage with the development of this immersive narrative in a similar way when they are engaging with other social members with a trial-and-error process of figuring out who they are. Some viewers may show aversion if they agree with the Catholic Church’s view on homosexuality as a sin, while others might feel heart-rending by the poignancy of Sebastian’s battle, as Szilak and Tsiboulsk have explained: ‘Who was he, what was his life? Was he worthy?... wherever you come from, you will construct him a different way.’¹¹⁴ Therefore, *Queerskins* has the potential for identity construction for everyone, and every identity is reshaped in different ways.

For a queer individual who grows up in the same rural religious background, they experience the ‘realness’ of identity.¹¹⁵ In her interviews with several queer youth individuals from rural

¹¹³ Szilak and Tsiboulski, *Queerskins*, section 1.

¹¹⁴ Illya Szilak and Cyril Tsiboulsk, ‘Queerskins: a love story—a haptic cinematic VR experience’, (2018) in <<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/climate-impacts/urban>> [accessed 23 May 2021]

¹¹⁵ Gray, *Out in the country*, p.124.

America, Gray discovers that the ‘gay realness’ readily available online is often found clashing with the religious obligations that engross the teenagers locally.¹¹⁶ *Queerskins* is thus providing verification of a specific individuated experience, belonging to individuals like Sebastian. As Lauren Berlant notes, identities produced by social ranking is based on individuation, but at the same time, society tends to transform the identity of social members as generic expressions, making most of us ‘underdescribed’ by the identities that we identify with.¹¹⁷ It is significantly harder for rural queer youth to assert their agency into the discussion of LGBTQ culture available on mass media. *Queerskins* offers them the specific desire and self-meanings that would often get lost in real life, eliciting feelings of affirmation and recognition. It was an identification of a group that was often unrecognized and widely portrayed as incompatible with both the local traditional values and the widespread genres of ‘LGBTQ’ culture. *Queerskins* has created the world in which rural queer individuals are offered a sense of agency in a world in which they otherwise encounter powerlessness and confusion.

Among Sebastian’s journal entries, there are a few that are not written in the usual first-person point of view (fig. 4). The second person point of view is employed to express his declaration of love to Jean-Marie, while the detached third-person perspective echoes Sebastian’s words that ‘I was a stranger to myself... Sebastian. I say the name, but do not capture myself. I am no longer tethered to the word.’¹¹⁸ When viewers become immersed in the story, they engage with and feel for the characters, establishing a connection of the ‘I’, which offers the spontaneity of desires and emotions. At the same time, via the navigation of narrative, they absorb feedbacks about his sexuality, religious faith, etc, constructing the ‘Me’, the part of self that looks at Sebastian in a more objective third-person point of view. For individuals that find Sebastian’s identity does not accurately echo their own, and this

¹¹⁶ Gray, p. 139.

¹¹⁷ Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p.1.

¹¹⁸ Szilak and Tsiboulski, *Queerskins*, section 9.

process allows them to go through the identity formation of socially marginalised others, encouraging them to join a common understanding of the queer identity. Such understanding will, in turn, become part of their own identities.

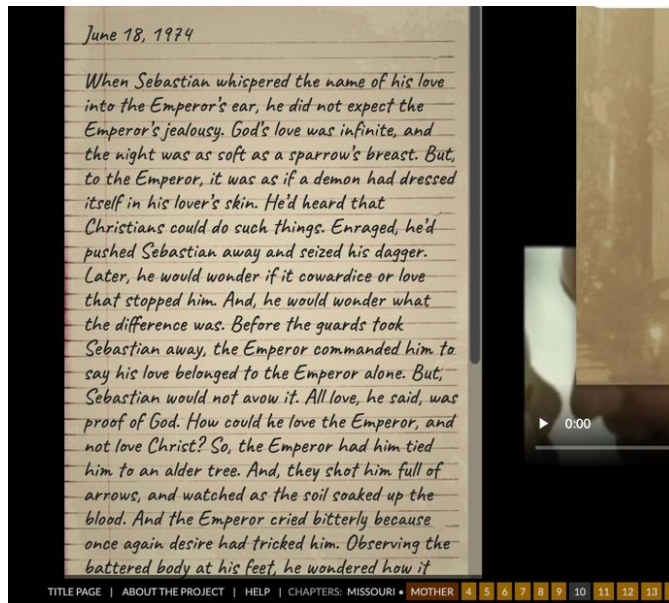


Figure 4 Third-Person perspective in Sebastian's journal

Last but not least, *Queerskins* creates an affective politics that pervades the narrative by informing the society of the struggles and battles of queer individuals. As discussed, IN proves more powerful in generating narrative persuasion. When the audiences get the sense of becoming an intimate friend with Sebastian by rifling through his objects, they feel the bond between them. *Queerskins* aims to build affective connections and bring about an attitude change in real-world social interactions. Apart from realising parts of an identity for non-queer people, queer individuals will receive less prejudice and more positive verification of identity in the real world, which is conducive to the creation of a more generous social environment that helps decrease the psychological distress and emotions of denial caused by identity non-verification.

4.2 *Experience* and Immigrant Identity

Experience (2018) is an online interactive experience that tells stories about the convergence of identity and immigrant. It recounts the experience of eight immigrants of the United States, from Ireland, China, Ghana to Mexico. The narrative covers stories that both chronicle past developments and explore future possibilities. The audiences are encouraged to make a choice at each stage of the immigration process. There is also an option on the website that allows the audiences to submit their own experiences to offer more fresh thoughts on topics such as study, job and human relationships, inquiring into the current global issues of identity.

4.2.1 *Experience*: Content and Structure

Similar to *Queerskins*, the plot of *Experience* is semi-archival. Every one of the eight personal narratives is created based on historical events and real immigration laws. Sticking closely to the theme of immigration and identity, the narrative contents are independent of each other.

Margaret, from Ireland, is one of the earliest newcomers to America. Her family has been reduced to destitute after the Great Famine of 1845-49. It is also a time when the 'Know-Nothings', who are anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant, were at the pinnacle of their influence in America. Margaret works as a housemaid in Boston. Later she loses her brother and father from a quarry working incident in Washington D.C, so she is faced with a decision of whether to stay working or move back to help her family. Marriage seems to be an important part of Margaret's journey. No matter which branches she chooses, she cannot avoid the death of his family members and then she is faced with decisions about love, money and independence. She either meets Louis, a German immigrant at where she is working, or John O'Leary when she moves home to help. In both of two possible endings where Margaret finally becomes a citizen, she obtains it automatically as a wife, of Louis or John O'Leary. In the last possibilities, she remains unmarried, and a non-citizen, which is hardly a misfortune

for her as she can save money for herself and ‘women don’t have the right to vote’ anyway, not for over 40 years.

Li Wei, from China, comes to America as contracted labour. Due to various restrictions for Chinese immigrants outlined in the Page Act of 1975, Li Wei suffers from marginalisation. He works in railroad construction. He lives life as a ‘bird of passage’. After his marriage at home, he tries to bring his family to America, but the law forces them into an indefinite separation. He can choose to take the risk of smuggling them over the Canadian border. When they fail to meet, he learns that his wife has remarried and later lives his life as a bachelor without hope, as the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act made him permanently ineligible for citizenship, prohibiting him from leaving the country and restricting his ability to own property. Another two endings shed a more positive light, in which he takes the risk of bringing his families illegally through the Canadian border and reunites with them, or that he supports the family regardless of his wife’s re-marriage and is later reunited with his son. Although still undocumented and disenfranchised by the law, he leads a modest but contented life with the people he loves.

The rest of the stories are all based on different historical backgrounds. Gianni is from Italy. His immigration experience is scripted by the isolationism and xenophobia towards Italian after the First World War. Being a victim of the national origins quota system, he later becomes an activist to appeal the rectification of immigration policy in America. Similar experiences are shared by Ama, from Ghana, who finds herself a subject of racism, and Hamid, who undergoes the intense post-911 islamophobia as an Iranian.

Hector, a Mexican, crosses the border to ameliorate his life through the Bracero Program. Yesenia comes from El Salvador and she comes to the US to seek asylum after the Salvadoran Civil War in the 1980s. Joyce, from the Philippines, is a bright student who remains an illegal resident until the DACA act is promulgated. All of them suffer from the instability of American immigration policies, especially after Donald Trump holds office.

In terms of the structure, all of the eight experiences follow a chronological order, from the departure from their homeland to the settling down to the destination country. The simplicity in the syuzhet echoes the theme of the immigration process. The results of the choices made along the immigration process can never be predicted and controlled by the immigrant, who plunge into the uncertainty and only see the outcomes of their adventure until it unfolds.

4.2.2 *Experience*: Interactivity and Engagement

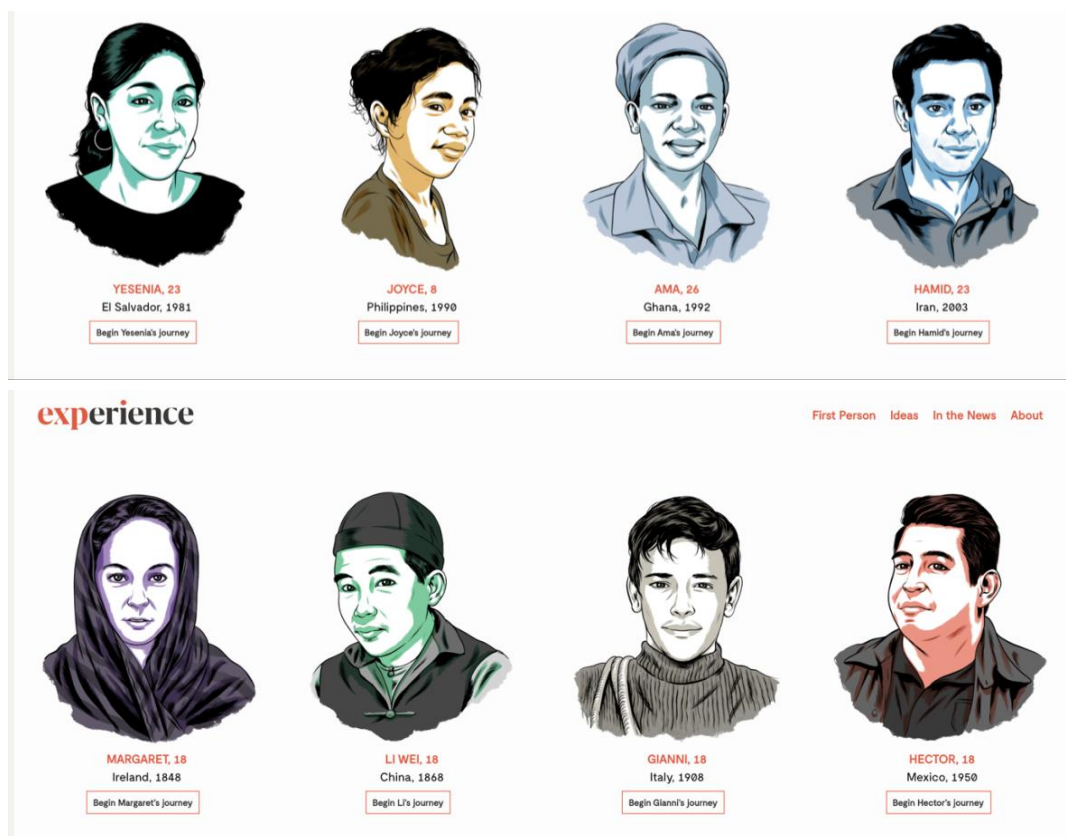


Figure 5 Navigation page of *Experience*

Experience possesses a simple chronological structure. It is the different choices made along the process that renders opposite or similar endings. So, different from *Queerskins*, the agency of *Experience* lies in the audiences' ability to change the *fabula* of the narrative. The

audiences are not confined to a single linear path of beginning and end and are granted the agency to make choices when faced with several forking paths.

The first choice that the viewer makes is to find a path of an immigrant to follow. As shown on the screen is the illustrations and basic information of the eight immigrant experiences. This is what Ryan calls ‘a fixed entry point’ that generates a structure of links.¹¹⁹ The viewer clicks on a specific illustration and starts the journey (fig.5). Each narrative is a combination of historical images and texts (fig.6). Each image is accompanied by a caption outlining the background story. Here I take Li Wei's journey as an example to discuss the achievement of interactivity.

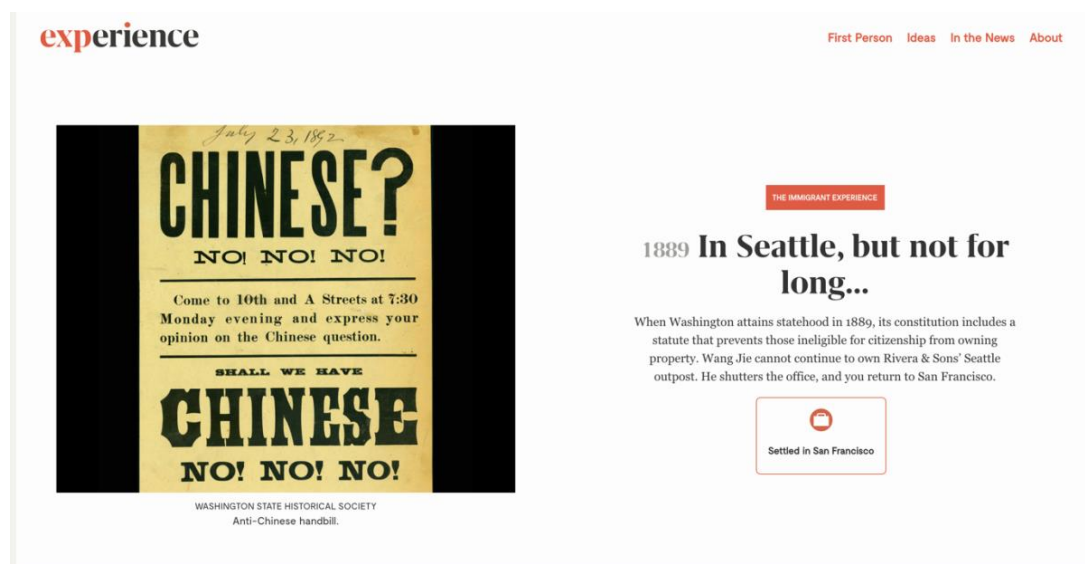


Figure 6 Historical images with texts

Each time the viewer is confronted with a choice, he must make an active decision for the narrative to proceed. The narrative system does not present a narrative default, which denies

¹¹⁹ Ryan, 'Narrative as Virtual Reality', p.226.

the possibility of ‘passive consumption’.¹²⁰ The viewer is thus individually responsible for the frustrations, loneliness or satisfaction. This active participation makes the narrative a domain of responsibility. Viewers must make decisions for Li Wei on where to live, who to marry, how to cross the border, and other decisions that are complicated by the identity of an ‘immigrant’. Viewers may make choices that influence both the presentation of images and the *fabula*. Immersive storylines are thus created. Similar to *Queerskins*, it gives ‘affective immersion’, the quality of feeling yourself rather than feeling for the character. At one point in Li Wei’s journey, the audiences must choose between giving up his families and unconditionally supports his family when such material support could go unanswered. The dilemma is just one in many that the newcomers in America have to face. The viewers are seeing the world through the eyes of Li Wei when navigating those dilemmas (All choices of Li Wei see fig.7).

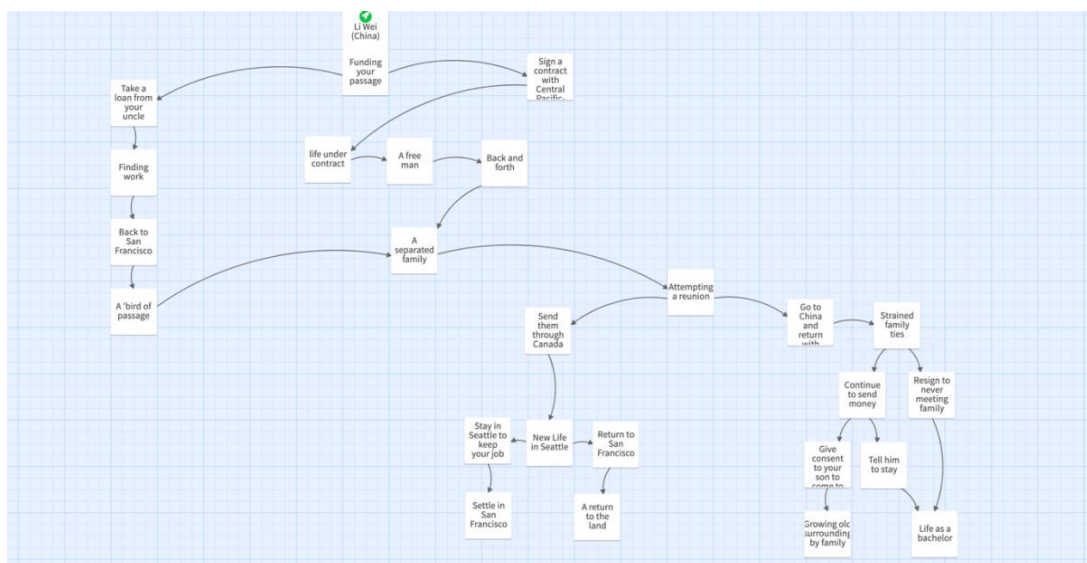


Figure 7 Li Wei's Journey

¹²⁰ Christian Roth, and Hartmut Koenitz. ‘Bandersnatch, yea or nay? Reception and user experience of an interactive digital narrative video’ in *Proceedings of the 2019 ACM International Conference on Interactive Experiences for TV and Online Video*, pp. 247-254 (p.249).

The audience is put in almost the same affective role as Li Wei, which is a characteristic shared by all of the narratives in *Experience*. As a result, dissimilar to what would happen if these texts were viewed as films, those who passively watching the narrative unwraps would have a fundamentally different experience from someone who makes the choice.

On the right top of the page, there is an option for the user to submit their own experiences (fig.8). It brings the interactivity to a new level, by breaking the fourth wall. The absence of the fourth wall generates a straightforward attack on the audience's more emotional responses, feelings, sense of humour, and so on.¹²¹ It adds to the authenticity of the narrative as if they are submitted by individuals who are just one of the audiences.

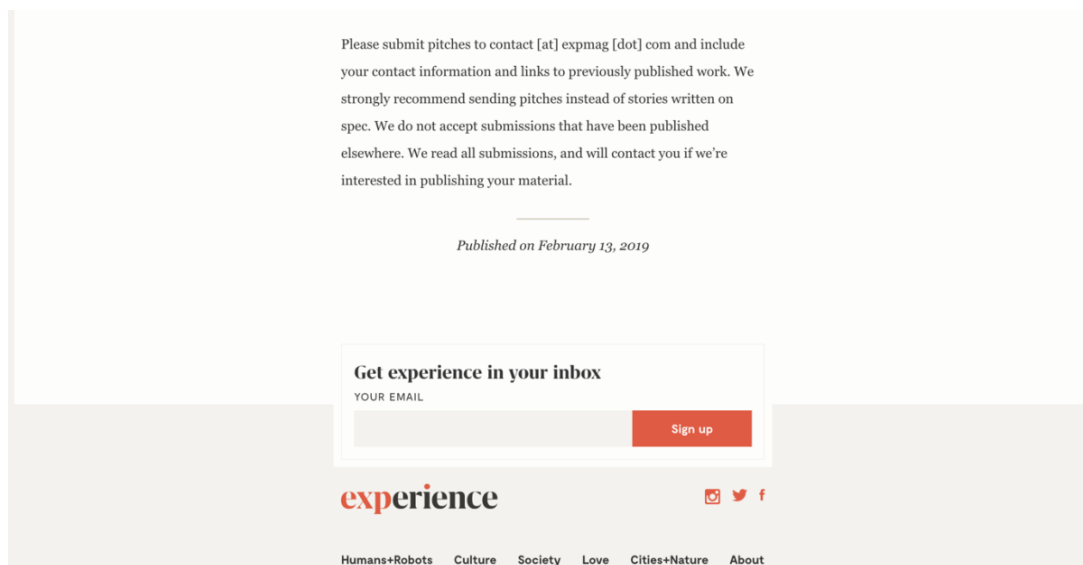


Figure 8 Submission page for more experiences

¹²¹ Tom Brown, *Breaking the Fourth Wall*. (Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p.2.

4.2.3 *Experience*: Identity Construction

Standing in the shoes of the eight immigrants, we are transported in time and space, engaging in socially charged experiences. The narrative maps immigrants of diverse areas, occupations and historical periods.

For immigrants who have gone through similar struggles and are currently experiencing those dilemmas, *Experience* illustrates the memories that ‘dwell in (their) dreams’.¹²² It organises the social interactions into textual and imagery information, prompting them to contemplate on their identity, and what has formed their identity. Hannah Arendt has argued that the identity of immigrants are so vulnerable and volatile that their ‘humanity ceased to exist’, and only confined in ‘passports, birth certificates and even income tax receipts’.¹²³ Immigrant life is inherently political, as outlined in Li Wei’s experience, where his life is dictated by the Page Act of 1875, and Gianni’s fight against the racial quota in the law. *Experience* concentrates on the tragedies and asks where exists the humanities of immigrant life other than just in laws and regulations.

The wide variety of paths signifies the loss of identity for immigrants. ‘Margaret, Li Wei and Hamed’ suffers from the uncertainty of identities, not solely in documents and visas, but also in the loss of their individuality. The consciousness that they are unified by their identity of ‘newcomers’ to America, make them lose themselves in the process, as Arendt holds that ‘a man who wants to lose himself discovers...the possibilities of human existence, which are indefinite’.¹²⁴ To be able to navigate through is to realise the individual aspects of immigrant identity that excludes the pursuit of political self and that ‘dwells in their dreams’.

¹²² Hannah Arendt, ‘We Refugee’, in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile* ed by Marc Robinson (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), pp. 110-119 (p.112).

¹²³ Arendt, ‘We Refugees’, p.118-9.

¹²⁴ Arendt, p.117.

For others whose identity may not echo such experience, this project calls for their attitude and behaviour change. As argued, the more time a person spends in this story, or the more time they spend 'being' the character, the more accepting they would be of the characters and the disenfranchised community they represent.¹²⁵ In reality, this attitude could potentially bring about changes in social mentality. The 'us versus them' ideology embedded in group identity may be reduced, and thus easing the intensity of xenophobia, enhancing the identity construction of immigrants.

¹²⁵ Green and Jenkins, 'Interactive narratives: Processes and outcomes', p.480.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

No matter how loving and supportive one's family might be, to experience same-sex desire while growing up in heteronormative culture is to doubt what you know about yourself... I like to tell people that everything I know about being a gay man I learned by watching television.¹²⁶

In his book about sexuality in the digital age, Griffin talks about how narratives about desire and identity found in television and on the Internet help sexual minorities comprehend their identities. Inspired by the value of narratives, this paper is concerned with how narratives on minority identity augment their value when created in cooperation with the property of interactivity. The findings suggest that it is theoretically feasible to draw support from interactive narratives (INs) for the identity construction of socially marginalised and disenfranchised groups. IN plays a dual role in the identification process. First, it serves as a site for virtual social interaction, rendering positive identity verification for the minor identities which is hard to avail in reality and offering rehearsals for their identity construction both mentally and socially. Second, it serves as a form of education, as interactivity helps foster a persuasive effect upon its audiences and guide them to change real-world attitudes and behaviours to create a more generous social environment conducive to identity diversity.

This paper takes a humanistic approach to the discussion of IN, by building scholarships from media studies on narrative and social constructionist view on identity. Identity plays a critical role in empowering individuals to exercise their rights and obligations fairly and equally, but the process of identity formation associated with minority groups are often set against a backdrop of stigma and abnormality. IN, as a form of expression that allows for a more immersive and affective experience, engenders potential in filling the gap in which narratives

¹²⁶ Griffin, *Feeling Normal*, p. 1.

and social interactions are lacking for certain identities. As such, it may be an effective tool to cultivate a more liberal social environment.

The case studies presented in the paper are hypertext-based fictions, which is only a subset of IN. As an emerging concept, INs cover a broad area of narrative expressions, from non-digital storytelling such as choose-your-own-adventure books, interactive live performances, and interactive cinema (such as *Blue Moon*) to digital narratives such as hypertext fiction and computer-mediated interactive films. The new type of interactivity in 360° has been produced via VR technology, which is predicted to foster new social and cultural engagement for the audience, such as heightened empathy.¹²⁷ Due to the researcher's difficulty in accessing live performance and virtual reality hardware during the researching process, the case analysis of this paper is confined to the discussion of online interactive fictions. Further research that explores the Virtual Reality projects, such as *Queerskins*, *A Love Story*, would shed more light on the relations between media, narrative and identity. A variety of applications from non-digital narratives could also be incorporated to outline the contribution of digital technology to interactivity and the evolution of narratives.

The case studies focused on minority group identity which is largely excluded in the discourses of the society, and which is in dire need of support in identity construction. In fact, the role of INs is discussed in all identity formation when all individuals suffer from the fragmentation and instability of identity in modern society.¹²⁸ It would be worth exploring the potential of INs in mapping modern identities through overwhelmingly complex social relations.

More importantly, the theoretical nature of the paper calls for future empirical studies on IN and its effects, to provide more quantitative evidence for the hypothesis, and a better

¹²⁷ Chris Milk, *How Virtual Reality Can Create the Ultimate Empathy Machine*. TED: Ideas Worth Spreading. <https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_milk_how_virtual_reality_can_create_the_ultimate_empathy_machine> [accessed 23 May 2021].

¹²⁸ Filiciak, 'Hyperidentities', p.94.

framework for the design of IN. It should prove helpful to conduct an empirical test on IN to find answers to practical questions such as when elements of the interactive storytelling should be controlled to let IN be the most effective to the identification process, what theme of the IN is the most suitable in the context of identity construction and whether individual differences in age, gender, education background, etc. play an important part in one's engagement with IN.

Furthermore, as discussed in 4.2.2, *Experience* (2018) breaks the fourth wall by inviting the audience to join the creation of narratives at the level of discourse. It enhances the participatory form of media that is inherently linked with interactive technologies. Future research could focus on the how participatory culture absorbs and responds to IN technologies that allows identity construction potential in powerful new ways.

References

- Bal, Mieke, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985)
- Benshoff, Harry M. and Sean Griffin, *Queer Images: A History of Gay and Lesbian Film in America* (USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2006)
- Berlant, Lauren, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997)
- Bers, Marina Umaschi, and Justine Cassell, Interactive Storytelling System for Children: Using technology to Explore Language and Identity (Master's Thesis. MIT Media Laboratory)
- Bordwell, David, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (USA: The university of Wisconsin Press, 1985)
- Bowman, Sarah Lynne, *The functions of role-playing games: How participants create community, solve problems and explore identity* (USA: McFarland, 2010)
- Branigan, Edward, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (USA: Routledge, 2013)
- Brown, Tom, *Breaking the Fourth Wall*. (Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press, 2013)
- Burke, Peter J. and Jan E. Stets. *Identity Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Calleja, Gordon, *In-Game: From Immersion to Incorporation* (USA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011)
- Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and Social Order* (New York: Scribner, 1902)
- Cohen, Jacob, 'Defining Identification: A Theoretical Look at the Identification of Audiences with Media Characters' in *Mass Communication and Society*, 4(3), (2001), pp. 245-264. doi:10.1207/S15327825MCS0403_01
- Courtney, Packard, 'Individual Work Queerskins' (2012), in <https://directory.eliterature.org/individual-work/5048> [accessed 23 May 2021]
- Daly, Kristen, 'Cinema 3.0: The Interactive-Image', in *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Fall 2010)

- Daniel MacKay, *The Fantasy Role-Playing Game: A New Performance Art* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001)
- Elizabeth Reid, "Text-based Virtual Realities: Identity and the Cyborg Body," in *Cultural Formations in Text-Based Virtual Realities* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1994), pp. 75–95.
<<http://www.rochester.edu/College/FS/Publications/ReidIdentity.html>> [accessed 10 May 2021]
- Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968)
- Filiciak, Miroslaw, 'Hyperidentities: Postmodern identity patterns in massively multiplayer online role-playing games' in *The Video Game Theory Reader*, ed, by Mark J. P. Wolf & Bernard Perron (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2003), pp.87-102
- Frasca, Gonzalo, 'Rethinking agency and immersion: video games as a means of consciousness-raising', in *Digital Creativity*, 12:3 (2001), pp.167-174 <<https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ndcr20>> [accessed 10 May 2021]
- Gauntlett, David, 'Anthony Giddens: The theory of structuration,' extract of *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).
<<http://www.theory.org.uk/giddens2.html>> [accessed 10 May 2021]
- George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934)
- Goffman, Erving. *The presentation of self in everyday life* (London: Harmondsworth, 1978)
- Grahame Weinbren, *Navigating the Ocean of Streams of Story*
<https://www.guggenheim.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/guggenheim-navigating-ocean-of-streams-weinbren-grahame-erl-king.pdf> [accessed 12 April 2021]
- Gray, Mary L., *Out in the Country" Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America* (New York and London, New York University Press, 2009)
- Green Melanie. C. & K. M. Jenkins, 'Interactive Narratives: Processes and Outcomes' in *user- directed stories. Journal of Communication*, 64(3), (2014), pp.479–500
- Griffin, Emory, M. *A first look at communication theory*. (United States, McGraw-hill, 2006)
- Griffin, F. Hollis, *Feeling Normal Sexuality and Media Criticism in the Digital Age* (USA: Indiana University Press, 2016)

- Hales, Chris, 'Interactive Cinema in the Digital Age' in *Interactive Digital Narrative - History, Theory, and practice* (New York: Routledge, 2015)
- Hand, Stacey, and Duane Varan, 'Interactive narratives: Exploring the links between empathy, interactivity, and structure' in *Changing television environments*, ed by M. Tscheligi, M. Obrist, & A. Lugmayr (Berlin: Springer, 2008), pp. 11–19
- Hannah Arendt, 'We Refugee', in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed by Marc Robinson, (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), pp. 110-119
- Jeffrey Stanton, 'Experimental Multi-screen media' (1997)
<<https://www.westland.net/expo67/map-docs/cinema.html>> [accessed 03 March 2021]
- Jenkins, Richard *Social Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014)
- Julián, Francisco, Martínez-Cano and Roselló Tormo Emilio. 'La dirección y realización audiovisual de realidad virtual. Análisis de *Queerskins*: a Love Story, una aproximación al cine volumétrico.' ASRI: *Arte y sociedad*. Revista de investigación 18 (2020, translated by Google Translate), pp.111-125
- Juul, Jesper, *A Clash Between Game and Narrative* (Master thesis, University of Copenhagen, 1999. Translated by Jesper Juul in 2001)
- Karen A. Cerulo, 'Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions' in *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1997, Vol. 23 (1997), pp.385-439
- Kavka, Misha, *Reality Television, Affect and Intimacy* Basingstoke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)
- Kellner, Douglas, *Media Culture. Cultural Studies, Identity and Politics between the Modern and the Postmodern* (USA and Canada: Routledge, 1995)
- Ko, I-Chen, *Titanic film festival program*, (Budapest: 1999)
- Koenitz, Hartmut, 'Five Theses for Interactive Digital Narrative' in *Interactive Storytelling*, ed by Alex Mitchell, Clara Fernández-Vara and David Thue (Switzerland: Springer, 2014), pp.134-139
- Lawler, Steph, *Identity: sociological perspectives* (UK and USA: Polity Press, 2014)
- Le Guin, Ursula K, *Language of the Night: essays on fantasy and science fiction* (London: Women's Press, 1989)

- Lunenfeld, Peter, 'The Myths of Interactive Cinema,' in *Narrative Across Media: The Languages of Storytelling*, ed. Marie-Laure Ryan (USA: University of Nebraska, 2004), pp.377-390.
- Meyrowitz, Joshua, 'Media and community, Critical Studies' in *Mass Communication* (1989), pp.326-334, DOI: 10.1080/15295038909366757
- Milk, Chris, *How Virtual Reality Can Create the Ultimate Empathy Machine*. TED: Ideas Worth Spreading. <https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_milk_how_virtual_reality_can_create_the_ultimate_empathy_machine> [accessed 23 May 2021]
- Monika, Górská-Olesińska, 'Pamięć (współ) tworzona i (współ) doświadczana – partycypacyjne i cielesne wymiary doświadczenia VR.', *Rzegląd Kulturoznawczy* 2(44) (2020 translated by Google Translate) pp.107-116, in <www.ejournals.eu/Przegląd-Kulturoznawcze/> [accessed 23 May 2021]
- Moses, Jonathan Wayne and Torbjorn L. Knusten, *Ways of Knowing* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Murray, Janet H., *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*, 2 ed. (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2017)
- Onega, Susana, and José Angel García Landa, eds. *Narratology: an introduction*. (USA: Routledge, 2014), pp.1-35
- Rehak, Bob, 'Playing at Being: Psychoanalysis and the Avatar' in *The Video Game Theory Reader-Routledge* ed by Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron (USA and Canada: Routledge, 2003), pp.103-129
- Ricoeur, Paul, *On Paul Ricoeur: narrative and Interpretation*. (London: Psychology Press, 1991)
- Roth, Christian and Hartmut Koenitz. 'Bandersnatch, yea or nay? Reception and user experience of an interactive digital narrative video' in *Proceedings of the 2019 ACM International Conference on Interactive Experiences for TV and Online Video*, pp. 247-254
- Russell, Michael, 'The Kuleshov Effect and the Death of the Auteur', in *FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts* (12/12/2005)
- Ryan, Marie Laure, *Avatars of Story* (Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press, 2006)

- — —, *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001)
- — —, 'Narrative.' in *A companion to critical and cultural theory* ed by Imre Szeman, Sarah Blacker, Justin Sully (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2017) pp. 517-530
- Savage, Scott V. and Jan E. Stets, 'Identity and Exchange: Person Identities and Power Use' in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed, Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.107-135
- Stets, Jan E. and Richard T. Serpe, 'New Directions in Identity Theory and Research: Looking Back and Moving Forward' in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed, Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.1-27
- Stryker, Sheldon, *Symbolic interactionism* (Caldwell: Blackburn Press, 2002)
- Szilak, Illya and Cyril Tsiboulsk, 'Queerskins: a love story—a haptic cinematic VR experience', (2018) in <<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/climate-impacts/urban>> [accessed 23 May 2021]
- Szilak, Illya and Cyril Tsiboulski, *Queerskins: A Novel* (2012). <<http://online.queerskins.com>> [accessed 23 May 2021]
- Szilak, Illya, *Queerskins: A New Multimedia Novel That Looks at the Beginning of the AIDS Epidemic* (2017), in <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/queerskins-a-new-multimedia-novel-that-looks-at-the-beginning-of-the-aids-epidemic_b_2106771> [accessed May 23 2021]
- Taylor, Laurie N., *Video games: Perspective, point-of-view, and immersion* (Master thesis, University of Florida, 2002)
- Thomashevsky, Boris, 'Thematics' in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, ed., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 66-98
- Trettevik, Ryan and Matthew Grindal, 'Self-Guides and the Affective Consequences of Identity Verification' in *New Directions in Identity Theory and Research*, ed, Jan E. Stets, and Richard T. Serpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp.601-616
- Tynianov, Yuri, 'Plot and Story-Line in the Cinema', in *Russian Poetics in Translation 5* (1978)

- Veale, Kevin, 'Interactive cinema is an oxymoron, but may not always be', in *Game Studies: the international journal of computer game research* (2012),
<<http://gamestudies.org/1201/articles/veale>> [accessed 24 April 2021]
- — —, 'Making Science-Fiction Personal: Videogames and Inter-Affective Storytelling' in *The Projected and the Prophetic: Humanity in Cyberculture, Cyberspace & Science Fiction*, ed. Jordan J. Copeland (2001) <https://www.interdisciplinarypress.net/my-cart/ebooks/ethos-and-modern-life/the-projected-and-prophetic> [accessed 28 April 2021]
- Vogler, Carolyn, 'Social identity and emotion: the meeting of psychoanalysis and sociology' in *The Sociological Review*, Vol.48, No.1 (2000)
- Weiberg, Birk, 'Beyond interactive cinema' in *Keyframe. org: Cinema in the Digital Age* (2002): pp. 5-7.
- White, Hayden, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality' in *On Narrative* ed by W. J. T. Mitchell. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) pp.1–23

Figure References

Figure 1-4: Szilak, Illya and Cyril Tsiboulski, *Queerskins: A Novel* (2012)
<<http://online.queerskins.com>> [accessed 23 May 2021].

Figure 4-8: Zak, Dan, Experience (2018) < https://expmag.com/immigrant-experience/#all_opening> [accessed 23 May 2021]