Video Games as Transformation of Digital Literature: Immersion and Ludonarrative Harmony in
What Comes After

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INTRODUCTION

2020:

The Year of the

Plague,

The Year of

Digital Entertainment

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Rise in Popularity of The Visual Novel

According to Cavallaro, the visual novel "typically articulates its narrative by means of extensive text conversations complimented by lovingly depicted (and mainly stationary) generic backgrounds and dialogue boxes with character sprites determining the speaker superimposed upon them" (2009).

Ensslin noted that "digital literature excludes at least two mainstream forms of digital media that we might otherwise associate with the term: e-books or any other paper-under-glass forms of digital writing that can be printed without losing their specific aesthetic appeal and distinctive interactive qualities; and videogames that we cannot read in the sense of close-read and close-play for their artistic verbal and ludological forms and contents" (2014).

She further stated that "[l]iterariness, if and when applied to computer games, tends to be embedded in *ludic-mechanic* structures, much in the same way that *ludicity* in electronic literature is embedded in specific literary macrostructures, such as a multimedia novel or short story collection" (2014).

OBJECT

WHAT COMES AFTER (Fahmitsu, 2020)

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Unlike the entirely point-and-click control of Coffee Talk, What Comes After involves some movement controls using the arrow keys on the keyboard or the directional pad of the Nintendo Switch. The movement makes sense since the story takes place on train cars, and Vivi, the player's alter-ego, has to navigate these cars back and forth to interact with the non-player characters.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

What Comes After is a straightforward and linear experience. As opposed to the variety of choices that other similar games often provide, What Comes After still does not give many in the way of branching paths and subplots.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

However, this adherence to linearity is cohesive with the game's minimalistic control scheme and focused interaction methods. Rather than the open-ended exploration and complex puzzle-solving of graphical adventure games, What Comes After streamlines its interactivity through a cursor-based dialog system that propels the narrative forward.

CONCLUSION

The game achieves a cohesive ludonarrative harmony where its narrative themes align seamlessly with its core gameplay mechanics. The restricted movement controls, linear level design, and streamlined dialog interaction system cohere with the game's contemplative storytelling goals, fostering a tightly focused and immersive literary experience.

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