CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses background of research, the statement of the problem, the research purposes, the research significance, the scope and limitation, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Research

Storytellings have become a part of human life. From stories, many products are born that are consumed by society, such as novels, comics, movies, and even video games. In contrast to existing story media, video games can be said to be a new way to convey stories. Their existence has not been long driven by the rapid growth of technology, making innovations continue to develop, making industrialist try to create interesting experiences from the games they make. Video games have evolved beyond mere entertainment to become a powerful medium for storytelling and character exploration. While they may differ in format from traditional literary works like novels or plays, they share many of the same elements and can be considered a form of literature.

From the ideas of industrialists in game development, a pattern starting to emerges that keep repeating on the face of video games. These ideas according to Warlockracy (2024), in his video entitled *Fallout 1: Real Theory Hours*. A certain idea keeps reinvented and from that the outline are four disciplines: *Choices*, *Systems*, *Cracker Ideas*, and *Egalitarianism* that general outline becoming foundation for video games.

Little Misfortune as video game fall to a category of *Systems* type of game ware player engage interactivity with the narrative's choices of the game presented, this is the term of interactive movie came from where basically players given two or more choices that can be selected and its determent ware the story will go as plot in game keep moves forward. This is the point where Juul Jesper make that game and narrative not always work tightly together because for novels, plays, and movies the narrative given is lack of interactivity so the relation

between player in game and reader in story are completely different experiences.

Either so as a storytelling's product, video games has its trade with literature work. There are some key reasons why video games can be considered part of literature, they are: (1) video games often have complex narratives with well-developed characters, plots, and themes; (2) characters in video games can undergo significant development throughout the story, exploring their motivations, fears, and desires; (3) video games can explore a wide range of themes, such as love, loss, morality, and identity; (4) many video games create intricate and immersive worlds with their own histories, cultures, and rules; (5) while video games are interactive, theystill tell stories.

As technology continues to advance, video games are likely to become even more sophisticated in their storytelling abilities, further solidifying their place as a valuable form of literary expression. Among these, *Little Misfortune* stands out as a narrative-driven game that centers on the titular character's journey of self-discovery and coming-of-age. This research proposal aims to delve into the intricate process of character development in *Little Misfortune*, analyzing how the game's narrative, mechanics, and design choices contribute to the creation of a compelling and relatable protagonist. Traditional video games were often seen as simple forms of entertainment, focusing on gameplay mechanics and arcade-style experiences. However, modern video games have expanded their scope to include complex narratives, rich characters, and emotional depth. Beyond simply playing a character, modern video games often delve into the character's motivations, fears, and desires. This character exploration allows players to connect with the protagonist on a deeper level and experience their journey of growth and development.

Unlike many action-oriented or puzzle-based games, *Little Misfortune* prioritizes its narrative, using game play as mechanics to enhance the storytelling experience rather than being the primary focus. The game follows the story of Misfortune Ramírez Hernández, a young girl on a quest to find her own eternal happiness. This journey serves as a metaphor for self-discovery, as *Little Misfortune* explores her identity, emotions, and place in the world. *Little*

Misfortune is a coming-of-age story, exploring themes of childhood, loss, and the challenges of growing up. The game's narrative allows players to witness *Little Misfortune's* transformation and personal growth throughout her journey.

This research proposal aims to examine how Misfortune's unique perspective being a child and the game's narrative structure contribute to her development as a character:

> *The persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who*
> *are interpreted by the readers as being endowed with moral*
> *and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what The say-*
> *The dialogue- and by what They do-The action. The grounds in*
> *a character's temperament and moralnature for his speech and*
> *actions constitute his motivation* (Abrams 1999, p.52-53).

By analyzing the role of the child character, narrator and the way the story is told, this study seeks to understand how these elements shape Misfortune's personality and motivations. The study of character development in video games is gaining prominence as these interactive narratives become increasingly sophisticated. Furthermore, it offers insights into the unique challenges and opportunities presented by storytelling from a child's perspective. Similarly, Abrams (2005:243) observes that it is "the mode in which the story gets told solely, or at least primarily, an address by the narrator to someone he calls by the second person, who is presented as experiencing that which is narrated".

The game *Little Misfortune*, in 1 misfortune/?ftag=MCD-06-10aaa1f, it has garnered positive reviews from various gaming outlets, which highlight its engaging narrative and character development:

Notable Recognition from Metacritic Score as the game has a User Score of 77/100 for PC, indicating generally favorable reviews from users; (2) OpenCritic score It holds a 78/100 on OpenCritic, with 50% of critics recommending it; (3) Positive Reviews Critics from sources like Kotaku praised the game's meaningful adventure and the charm of its protagonist, Misfortune, despite recognizing its darker themes and abruptness in storytelling; (4) and very positive over all reviews of 8,933 on Steam gaming platform, has received critical

acclaim and awards for its unique blend of storytelling, art style, and emotional impact. In addition to these awards, *Little Misfortune* has been praised by critics for its innovative storytelling, compelling characters, and beautiful visuals. It has also been recognized for its ability to evoke emotional responses in players and for its exploration of complex themes.

There are many videos on YouTube or any other similar platform that have discussed and analyzed the video game. This research will examine how the game's creators have developed *Little Misfortune* as a complex and engaging character. This includes analyzing her personality traits, motivations, and the challenges she faces throughout her journey. The research will explore how the game's narrative structure, plot points, and dialogue contribute to Little Misfortune's character development. Therefore, based on the focuses, this paper's title is *Character Development in Story-Driven Video Game Little Misfortune.*

1.2 Statement of Problem

Little Misfortune is a narrative-driven video game that centers around the titular character's journey of self-discovery and coming-of-age. This research proposal aims to delve into the intricate relationship between Misfortune's unique perspective as a child and the game's narrative structure, exploring how these elements contribute to her character development. Abrams state (2013:48) Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it—the dialogue—and from what they do—the action. By analyzing Misfortune's worldview, the role of the narrator, and the storytelling techniques employed in the game, this study seeks to understand how the narrative effectively shapes the protagonist's personality and motivations. The statements of problem can be formulated:

1. What role does Misfortune's unique perspective as a child play in her development?

2. How does the game's narrative structure and the role of the narrator contribute

to Misfortune's character development?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the researcher is intended:

1. To analyze the impact of Misfortune's childlike perspective on her character development:
   o Examine the Misfortune's limited understanding of the world, her innocence, and her curiosity shape her perceptions and motivations.
   o Explore her childlike perspective influences her interactions with other characters and her understanding of complex situations.
   o Investigate the ways in which Misfortune's perspective is used to convey themes of childhood, loss, and the search for meaning.
2. To investigate the role of the game's narrative structure and the narrator inshaping Misfortune's character:
   o Analyze the impact of the first-person narration on the player's perspective and understanding of Misfortune.
   o Examine the narrator's relationship with Misfortune influences her character development and the overall narrative.
   o Explore the ways in which the game's narrative structure, including its use of flashbacks and symbolism, contributes to Misfortune's character arc.

By achieving these objectives, the research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how Misfortune's unique perspective and the game's narrative structure work together to create a compelling and relatable protagonist.

1.4 Research Significances

Research Significances for Misfortune's Perspective and Narrative Structure in *Little Misfortune* are related to (1) contribution to understanding child protagonists in video games, which can provide insights into the unique challenges and opportunities presented by depicting a child protagonist in a video game, and understand how a child's perspective can be used to evoke emotional

responses in players can inform future game development and storytelling; and (2) exploring the role of narrative structure, which analyzing the narrative structure and the role of the narrator in *Little Misfortune* can shed light on how these elements can effectively shape a character's development and the player's understanding of their journey, and the game's approach to storytelling can serve as a model for other game developers seeking to create more engaging and immersive experiences; and (3) implications for media studies, which contribute to broader discussions about the representation of children in media and the ethical considerations involved in depicting child characters in potentially dark or disturbing narratives and can provide insights into the potential of interactive media to explore complex themes and evoke emotional responses in audiences.

Overall, this research has the potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of character development in video games, particularly when the protagonist is a child. It can also inform discussions about the role of narrative structure and the ethical considerations involved in depicting child characters.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework of Misfortune's perspective and narrative structure in *Little Misfortune* is based on the theoretical foundations that this research draws upon theoretical frameworks from various fields to provide a comprehensive analysis of Misfortune's character development in *Little Misfortune*. The way how to understand Misfortune's childlike perspective influence on her understanding of complex concepts and situations, how Misfortune's innocence and naivety shape her interactions with others and her interpretation of events, and how Misfortune's curiosity and wonder drive her exploration and self-discovery.

The key theories include narrative theory, they are character arcs which explore how characters evolve and develop throughout a narrative, often followinga journey of transformation or self-discovery and point of view which examines how the perspective from which a story is told influences the reader's understanding of characters and events. These focus on how the use of first-person narration from Misfortune's perspective affect the player's understanding and empathy for her, the

role of Mr. Voice, the game's narrator, in shaping Misfortune's character and the overall narrative, and how the game's plot structure and pacing contribute to Misfortune's character development and the overall storytelling experience.

Abram's theory of literary criticism provides a valuable framework for analyzing the emotional and affective dimensions of literary experience. To apply this theory to *Little Misfortune* and answer the research questions, there are some data collection techniques will be employed, they are: (1) narrative structure is a close analysis of the game's narrative structure, including plot, pacing, and foreshadowing, that will be conducted to identify how these elements contribute to Misfortune's character development; (2) character analysis focuses on Misfortune's dialogue, actions, and interactions with other characters that will be examined to understand her perspective, motivations, and emotional growth: (3) gameplay observation is part of playing the game multiple times to observe Misfortune's actions, interactions, and emotional responses in different scenarios, and (4) visual analysis is part of the game's visual elements, including character design, setting, and symbolism, that will be analyzed to understand how they contribute to the overall narrative and emotional impact.

Relationships and interactions in this paper can discuss Misfortune's perspective and narrative structure interact to create a compelling and emotionally resonant character, Misfortune's perspective and character development influence her personal growth and development throughout the game, and narrative structure and character development contribute to Misfortune's character development and the overall storytelling experience. This conceptual framework provides a solid foundation for analyzing Misfortune's character development in *Little Misfortune*. By examining the interplay of these theoretical perspectives, the research can explore the complex relationship between Misfortune's perspective, the narrative structure, and her character development.

1.6 Previous Studies

There are many researches on video games and characterization, these are the three examples of the researches: (1) *Multikulturalisme dalam* Video Game

Dragon Age*:* Inquisition*; (2) Analisis Desain Karakter dengan Metode* Bishop's Shape Language *dalam* Video game *(Studi Kasus:* Animal Crossing: New Horizons*);* and (3) Character Design in Games Analysis of Character Design Theory.

Multikulturalisme dalam Video Game Dragon Age*:* Inquisition has been written by Ardian Indro Yuwono and Jusuf Ariz W. This paper has attempted to see how the video game Dragon Age: Inquistion, popular video games Bioware under the auspices of EA Software made in America. With topics related to multiculturalism, topics that related to idea how race and cultural diversity are represented in the media. This research has utilized semiotic analysis and the results of this research show that there are various ways in which multiculturalism is depicted in Dragon Age*:* Inquisition. However, in general, the author looks into how each race and culture is depicted in video games. This is reflected in how each race is depicted, from the physical form, groups, clothing to the residential buildingsof each race that reflect their lives. This paper has given the contribution on analyzing video games even though the focus is different from what will be writtenin the *Little Misfortune* research.

Analisis Desain Karakter dengan Metode Bishop's Shape Language *dalam* Video game *(Studi Kasus:* Animal Crossing: New Horizons*)* has been written by Shannon Glenda Tenardi, and Naldo Yanuar Heryanto. This paper focuses on the discussion of shape language on character design from an educational video game entitled "Animal Crossing: New Horizons". This discussion will be based on a theory called Bishop's Shape Language. The research method used is the literature study method, this method will help the author in the process of analyzing shape language. Shape language analysis will be carried out on the villagers characters from "Animal Crossing: New Horizons". This analysis was raised based on the high interest in video games during the pandemic among children in Indonesia, especially video games. Through a problem-based approach, the author can conclude that the theory of shape language can help authors and players understand the meaning of the characteristics, traits, and feelings of the characters created by the game designer's

characters through the basic forms or primary shapes that buildthem. This research has helped in analyzing the characterization.

Character Design in Games Analysis of Character Design Theory has been written by Hagung Kuntjara S.W. and Betha Almanfaluthi. This paper explains character design development and its art and design aspect using constructive method. Character design in games, well-known as games art material, requires knowledge and constant practice. Designers gain their knowledge from design studies, covering all elements like shapes and colors, composition, drawing, etc. Those elements have been turned from ideas to real characters. Designing characters, games storyline, challenges, mission, and surroundings are inseparable things in video games. A character's personality must be designed based on the game's storyline and challenges. Ideas from game designers have been turned into a game play and go through a *gamification* process. Along with game programmers, games art designers complete the game's assets and look for the game's most ideal goal. Before finishing the game and finally launching it, the game developers constantly try the game out so they can perfect it. This paper has shown the characterization on video games.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

a. **Character Development** – The process by which a character in a narrative evolves emotionally, psychologically, and morally over time. In *Little Misfortune*, it specifically refers to the growth and transformation of the protagonist, Misfortune, as she navigates her journey.

b. **Story-Driven Video Game** – A genre of video games where the narrative and character development play a central role in the gameplay experience. *Little Misfortune* is an example of this genre, as it emphasizes storytelling through interactive elements.

c. **Emotional Engagement** – The player's emotional connection to the story and characters within a game. In *Little Misfortune*, this is fostered through Misfortune's journey, the choices players make, and the way the narrative invites players to empathize with her.

d. **Naivety** – A key characteristic of Misfortune's early development, referring to her innocent, simplistic understanding of the world around her, shaped by her age and her upbringing.

e. **Agency** – The ability of the player to influence the character's actions and decisions within the game. In *Little Misfortune*, the player's choices determine the direction of Misfortune's character arc and emotional growth.

f. **Narrative Structure** – The organization of events and themes in a story, including plot, pacing, and foreshadowing. In *Little Misfortune*, the narrative structure helps to guide Misfortune's development, with certain events unfolding based on player decisions.

g. **Innocence** – A theme within the game that relates to Misfortune's early stage of development, where she is shielded from understanding complex, darker aspects of life, such as death and moral ambiguity.

h. **Maturation** – The process through which Misfortune's character moves from innocence to a more mature understanding of the world. This development is integral to the emotional journey that unfolds during the game.

i. **Visual Symbolism** – The use of visual elements in the game, such as character design, setting, and color schemes, to enhance the emotional tone and narrative. These symbols contribute to the overall story and Misfortune's psychological development.

j. **Player Choice** – The decisions made by the player that directly affect the outcome of the game and the evolution of the character. In *Little Misfortune*, these choices shape how Misfortune grows emotionally and psychologically, influencing the narrative outcome.

k. **Narrator (Mr. Voice)** – A key figure in the game who acts as both a guide and an influence on Misfortune's journey. Mr. Voice's interactions with Misfortune help shape her understanding of the world and contribute to her emotional growth.

l. **Resilience** – A central theme in Misfortune's development, illustrating her capacity to endure and adapt to challenges, despite the traumatic events she encounters.