

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of research

Interactive fiction is a form of digital stories that includes the users' interaction with the narratives. Interactive fiction can be categorized as literature, it engages the readers to become participative, just like traditional literature, but with the elements of additional interactive activities. In *Twisty Little Passages: An Approach to Interactive Fiction*, Nick Montfort (2003) defines interactive fiction as "a genre of games that uses text as its primary medium, allowing players to read descriptions, enter commands, and make choices that affect the outcome of the story". With emphasis on how he pressed the fact that interactive fiction is often misunderstood as just a game, not literature. He states that interactive fiction can offer a complex narrative with literary elements that are a kind of traditional literature. This definition highlights a unique blend between narrative and interactivity, which becomes the property of interactive fiction, making it possible for the reader to be included in the story differently than the traditional linear narrative.

*AI Dungeon* is an interactive fiction that revolves around the theme of adventure and exploration. The game was based on Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), which is one of the most popular role-playing game (RPG). In D&D, the player begins with the creation of their character and the start of their journey, overcoming challenges and making choices in a fantasy world setting. The game is in the form of a tabletop game, which means the game is played with dice. A Dungeon Master (DM) will accompany the players while narrating the story throughout the story, but the results of the adventure still depend on the choices of the players. While RPG stands for Role-Playing Game, a genre of games where players can

use or create roles within a setting. Players make choices and engage in combat scenarios. RPGs can be tabletop games, video games, or live-action role-playing (LARP). In *AI Dungeon*, the stories are generated by an AI (Artificial Intelligence), essentially making the AI take the role of a Dungeon Master. Using the input or command from the users to further develop the story which is always different and evolves throughout the play. This setting makes *AI Dungeon* distinct from traditional interactive fiction, because players are actively included in the creation of the story. The game design makes it possible for the players to change the path of the story as they intend with their choices, mimicking real-life situations where we have to expect the unexpected.

Postmodernism, as theorized by Fredric Jameson (1991), represents the cultural logic of late capitalism. Jameson (1991) In his work *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, states that postmodernist culture is characterized by multiple elements. Such as the “crisis of historicity,” where the historical narratives lost their identity and connection with real-life experience. He also talks about “intertextuality”, where new cultural elements are combined without a critical foundation or any regard of history at all. Jameson pointed out that postmodernism reflects the shift in the making of cultures that are affected because of capitalism, which makes a fragmented experience and depth of meaning. Another element is the “waning of effect,” where emotional attachment no longer exists between the cultural product and the people.

Because the AI reacts to each player’s input without a set path, there is no clear beginning, middle, or end. Without fixed heroes, clear goals, or specific journeys, theoretically, *AI Dungeon* allows the story to shift endlessly, breaking away from Todorov’s idea of a story moving from balance to disruption and back to balance. This

open, flexible style lets players shape and change the story freely, creating an experience where the usual story rules don't apply.

In *AI Dungeon*, we can see the possibilities that these elements of postmodernism exist. AI created the response based on a huge amount of data, creating a narrative that combined multiple styles and themes without a coherent context. Using Jameson's concept of intertextuality, we can see that it fits Jameson's statement, where multiple cultural elements are combined without proper critical reflection. We can see the nature of *AI Dungeon*, where the narratives are not bound by the traditional way of narrative writings, but more into the modern situation where things are shaped by technology and globalization.

If we look at *AI Dungeon* as a phenomenon, we can see multiple problems arise. The question of authorship mainly accompanies anything that revolves around AI, such matters also invite the problem of coherence in the narrative. While AI allows the possibility of freedom, sometimes the outcome of what the AI wrote is lacking in terms of depth and creativity, because they draw their result based on the data that they process, which came from human writings, without any regard to the writings quality. That can result in a mediocre and lackluster story that is sometimes too repetitive and is presented to the player.

The plot structure of *AI Dungeon* starts with themes of adventure and exploration, similar to traditional RPGs like *Dungeons & Dragons*. However, it does not follow the usual story pattern described by Todorov (1971), where a story begins with a balanced state, is interrupted by some conflict, and then moves toward a new balance. Instead, *AI*

*Dungeon* constantly changes based on player choices, keeping the story in an ongoing state of imbalance.

This study positions AI Dungeon as a postmodern cultural artifact that challenges traditional understandings of authorship and narrative structure. Using Fredric Jameson's postmodern theory and Todorov's narrative model as critical frameworks, the research demonstrates how AI Dungeon exhibits intertextuality, fragmented storytelling, and narrative detachment, features that typify postmodern literature. Analyzing these characteristics is essential for understanding the evolving role of artificial intelligence in literary production and the ways it reshapes storytelling, creativity, and the construction of meaning in the digital age

## 1.2 Identification of Problems

*AI Dungeon* highlights several problems that come from its nature as a platform for modern interactive fiction. Essentially, the narrative result of the AI is created based on a big data set, which is a collection of human's human-generated writings. because the originality has become blurred, and the stories themselves sometimes are not consistent. While AI offers a freedom of creativity, it also comes with its own limitations, such as strict rules that have to be followed by the AI in creating a narrative, or how they have to create a story that is not repetitive, which can result in failing to meet the expectations of the player. AI Dungeon generates narratives by drawing on large datasets of human-authored text and employing machine learning to simulate creativity. The system responds to user prompts in real time, producing the story incrementally rather than following a fixed plot structure. This reactive mode of narration results in narratives that are frequently nonlinear, fragmented, and inconsistent in tone or theme, characteristics that align closely

with postmodern notions of instability and indeterminacy in storytelling. These problems pointed out the key issues of a digital platform that designed around interactive fiction, which reflects the concern of fragmented identities in the late capitalism condition that explained by postmodernism theory of Fredric Jameson, a cultural product that are characterized by crisis of historicity, paired with the emphasized on interactivity and commerciality, instead of traditional linear progression of conventional literature.

### 1.3 Review of Related Studies

Several researchers have explored the intersection of artificial intelligence and interactive storytelling, which contributes to our understanding on how the technology can shape the experiences while being engaged with the narratives.

In the paper "Language as Reality: A Co-creative Storytelling Game Experience in 1001 Nights Using Generative AI," Yuqian Sun et al. (2023) research a narrative game that combined Artificial Intelligence and narrative, in order to make a proper game, where the narratives can make a reliable immersive experiences for the users. They draw on Wittgenstein's concept that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" to illustrate how players can influence the game's reality through specific keywords. This study mainly highlights the importance of user interaction in the making process of the narratives, highlighting the postmodern element of user agency within a constructed narrative framework.

Ghajargar et al. (2022) further explore human-AI collaboration in their study "A Redhead Walks into a Bar: Experiences of Writing Fiction with Artificial Intelligence." They examine how AI tools, specifically GPT-3, assist the author in the process of writing. The study highlights the limitations and specific rules that the author need to follow in

order to create a coherent and readable narrative experience for the reader, where sometimes the AI unpredictability can bring problems the author in creating their narrative.

Udhayakumar and Srividya Lakshmi (2023), explore the use of AI within digital literature in their study, "Exploring The Impact Of Ai-Generated Narratives On The Evolution Of Digital Literature In The English Language", The study explores the intricate relationship between AI and the literary world. What kind of impact the AI have on the development of digital english literature. Examining what kind of resources are used and how the narrative are created. The study also examines the real life application of AI in literary field, offering an insight of the practicality of AI. The research give a thorough understanding on how AI are changing the narrative creation process and the impact it has towards the future of literary by giving solid framework of the analysis.

Chambers et al. (2024) present a different perspective in their work "BERALL: Towards Generating Retrieval-augmented State-based Interactive Fiction Games," which focuses on the creation of interactive fiction using AI. The study shows the challenge in the process of creating a structured narrative through the help Artificial Intellegence. The research show that with AI, there exist potential of benefits in creative writing, although with its ow nlimitation, with the similiarity can found in *AI Dungeon's* narrative generation process.

Triyason's study (2023) on "Exploring the Potential of ChatGPT as a Dungeon Master in Dungeons & Dragons" examines how advanced AI can enhance tabletop role-playing games by acting as a Dungeon Master. The study found that AI can create an engaging and entertaining narratives for the players, highlighting the potential benefits in

creating an interactive narrative. But this also pointed out the problem where the narratives are heavily reliant on the AI while making the narrative outputs, with the possibility of creating a content that lacking and not fulfilling for the users.

Alina Trapova (2023), with the paper “AI as a Vehicle for Creativity in Video Games – Any Room for Flexibility Via Contracts? A Case Study on AI Dungeon”, highlight the question surrounding the legality of authorship with AI produced content. This brings the issue on the complexities of a narrative ownership, where an AI learns from sets of data that consisted of huge amounts of human’s writings. Highlighting the elements of postmodernism, where cultural productions are combined without a proper critical foundation.

All of these studies pointed out that the growing interest within research community, that focus on the intersections between Artificial Intelligence and the process of narrative writings. With these research, they align with postmodern themes discussed in relation to *AI Dungeon*, particularly regarding user autonomy, fragmentation of narrative, and the growing problems that can be found in the process of narrative writing. As these studies bring various methodologies and perspectives on AI's role in narrative construction to lights, they also create the necessary path to further enhance our knowledge in the field of AI driven narrative writings and how the technology can shape our understanding towards storytelling.

#### 1.4 Research questions

- What are the postmodern elements in *AI Dungeon*?
- How does Todorov's narrative theory of equilibrium support the evidence of postmodern elements in *AI Dungeon*?

### 1.5 Objective of the research

The objective of this research is to provide a comprehensive analysis of *AI Dungeon* as a postmodern phenomenon, integrating Jameson's theory of postmodernism with insights from structuralism, particularly Todorov's theory of narrative. This study aims to explore how *AI Dungeon* reflects and reinforces the cultural logic and the reflections of postmodern elements while highlighting its unique narrative structures and user interactions.

### 1.6 Scope of the research

The scope of this research is to focus on understanding the main aspects of postmodern elements in *AI Dungeon*. This research examines both the intrinsic and production-related aspects of *AI Dungeon* as interactive fiction. On the intrinsic level, it analyzes the narrative structure of AI-generated stories, particularly in relation to Todorov's model of narrative, while also identifying postmodern elements such as intertextuality, the crisis of historicity, and the waning of affect as described by Fredric Jameson. On the extrinsic level, the study considers the creative process underlying narrative generation, emphasizing the collaborative dynamic between the AI system and the player. Although aspects of reception are acknowledged, especially in relation to user interaction and agency, they remain a secondary concern, as the primary focus is on narrative structure and production.

The research will examine how *AI Dungeon* inherits the elements of postmodernism, such as crisis in historicity, intertextuality, waning of effect, and hyperreality. The analysis will give insight to how the platform reflects the cultural logic of

late capitalism. Afterwards, the research will also include an analysis of user interaction, especially how the player co-creates the narrative with the AI in *AI Dungeon*. Understanding these aspects can ensure an optimal result in how we understand the dynamics between the user and the AI. Lastly, for the structure and narrative analysis, Todorov's narrative theory of equilibrium will be used to confirm whether *AI Dungeon* conforms to traditional narrative writing or instead breaks out of the norm and intersects with postmodernism theory of Fredric Jameson. By focusing on these aspects, this research aims to contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of AI in literature, its role within the postmodern culture, and its potential impact on the experience of the player.

