Game Introduction

Title: Transmigrate As a Spy Who Conveys Distorted Royal Edicts
Players take on the role of a spy disguised as a "royal edict envoy" in the fairytale kingdom of Solnira. Their mission: rewrite royal edicts to subtly sabotage the kingdom while avoiding suspicion. Powered by LLM[1]-based AI, players' creativity and decisions dynamically shape Solnira's evolving fate.

Game Mechanic[2]

Players will be presented with a series of chapters. Each chapter begins with a royal family member issuing an edict along with their specific requirements. The spymaster, the protagonist's boss, may also provide secret sabotage objectives for players to achieve. Players rewrite the edicts freely, provided they gain the issuer's approval. Once approved, the edict is passed to subordinates for interpretation and execution. These outcomes ripple across Solnira's key stakeholders and metrics, influencing the kingdom's fate.

Narrative Innovation

The narrative is co-created by players' creativity, AI's dynamic output, and carefully controlled interventions from the designer.

Players are granted a unique dimension of freedom/power to shape the fate of the kingdom and their own. Unlike mainstream games where player impact is confined to combinatorics of preset choices (e.g. quests to accomplish, narrative branches), this game gives players the freedom to decide *how* to execute each task and *what outcomes* to pursue. Through edict rewrites, players may sabotage the kingdom as spies, help it prosper, or forge unexpected paths. Every decision, big or small, reflects their beliefs and personality. One playtester, for example, avoided destroying the kingdom, citing parallels with current U.S. politics.

However, players don't have complete control. While their input drives the story, AI adds unexpected twists, and the designer retains control over some key turning points. This hidden layer of designer influence, discoverable by players, challenges players' perception of freedom and power, sparking reflection within and beyond the game.

Appendix

1. DEMO video link: https://youtu.be/ff3p3JSDAEU

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[1] Large Language Model, the technology behind applications like ChatGPT
[2] Recommended to read along with the demo video

2. Author statement: Xinya Yang, unaffiliated/independent, is a solo game developer creating her first game. She aspires to use interactive media to explore critical societal topics. Trained as a computer scientist, she worked as a software engineer in several tech companies before leaving her career to take a gap year in search of her passion. This game is one of the resulting projects, combining her technical expertise with her interest in storytelling and social commentary. She is particularly interested in creating novel experiences for players within and beyond the gameplay. Other projects include open source projects, and a blog discussing societal topics.

Mother Tongue

Hassan Ali Kazmi, Jamila Kabir, Xinyin Zhang, and Yuxin Jiang

Mother Tongue is an interactive VR experience that takes users on a literal and metaphorical journey through environments rich in visuals and audio testimony, transforming them from strangers to the Sylheti culture into participants familiar with its struggles. Interactive elements, from cultural items like fish to significant monuments, deepen immersion, offering a ground-level exploration of Sylheti and wider Bengali heritage. This approach creates a tangible, interactive world that fosters a meaningful connection with the culture and its story.

VR immerses users in the narrative by framing them as strangers to Sylheti culture, allowing them to explore its identity through interactions with other passengers and reflections on their own experiences. By engaging with relevant items and environments, users develop a deeper understanding, fostering a stronger sense of presence than traditional documentaries. Users actively uncover Sylheti culture and language, gaining insights through both their own perspectives and those of others.

This piece also documents the endangered Sylheti language and the lesser-known liberation war while addressing a key issue in anthropology: alienating the public with overly formal academic styles. By leveraging a digital lens, it bridges the gap between academic rigor and public engagement, presenting significant historical and socio-cultural events in an accessible way.

Finally, VR offers users an interactive experience with NPCs inspired by interviewees and cultural objects, deepened by Sylheti script and audio. Combining interaction, authenticity, and education, users gain meaningful insights into Sylheti identity, traditions, and language in an engaging and immersive way.

Demo Link

Video Link: https://youtu.be/S5v5_XvrklU

Personal Statements for
Mother Tongue

Author 1 - Hassan Ali Kazmi

Hassan Kazmi is a Creative Technologist and recent graduate of UCL's Immersive Factual Storytelling programme. Holding a BA/LLB in Anthropology and Law, he aims to translate complex academic and social scientific themes into accessible educational mediums using immersive technology. This is evident in projects such as The Fandom and I, which documents emerging connections and shared identities between the professional and fandom scenes. Meanwhile, Mother Tongue is the first VR experience dedicated to preserving the endangered Sylheti language while exploring cultural struggles around war, cross-generational dialogue, and immigrant identity. Additionally, his 2022 ethnography, funded by LSE, examines how post-Covid socially and loneliness are mediated by the emerging phenomenon of hybrid digital-social relations.

Author 2 - Jamila Kabir

Mother Tongue is a VR project that reflects my personal connection to Sylheti, my own mother tongue, an indigenous language often misclassified and underrepresented. Growing up speaking Sylheti, I've always felt a strong connection to its unique rhythms and stories, but I've also seen how easily minoritised languages can be dismissed in a globalised world. As an immersive storyteller with a background in fine art, audio-visual production, and digital heritage, I'm passionate about using technology to bridge the gap between tradition and innovation. Through this project, developed during my MA in Immersive Factual Storytelling at UCL, I combined narrative design, Unity development, and spatial sound to create a VR tool for both language learning and cultural advocacy. My work extends to creating Chan Yun Nandu, an interactive experience on cultural preservation for the Great Bao'en Temple in Nanjing, China, as part of Digital Heritage 2024. I look forward to presenting Mother Tongue at ICGAN2025, sharing my perspective on interdisciplinary storytelling and exploring how immersive tools can celebrate underrepresented cultures.

Author 3 - Xinyin Zhang

Website: www.ariawork.com

Xinyin Zhang is an XR developer and storyteller who recently graduated with an MA in Immersive Factual Storytelling from UCL, holding a BA in Media Production and Design from Carleton University. Her research focuses on using multimedia tools to innovate interactive narratives and design emotionally resonant content from a user-centred perspective. With an interdisciplinary study background, she explores the gamification of journalism and has created

a series of serious games and interactive experiences addressing social issues, cultural heritage, and public affairs. After the pandemic, she further explored the use of Virtual Reality in storytelling and produced non-linear VR stories such as Echoes of Sanxingdui, Mother Tongue, and Letters from the Attic. In the future, she will continue to research immersive interactive storytelling and bring more groundbreaking experiences.

Author 4 - Yuxin Jiang

I'm Aurora Jiang. I graduated with a master's degree in Immersive Documentary Narratology from University College London. Additionally, I'm a blogger on we-media platforms, focusing on traditional Chinese culture. I've been wholeheartedly committed to exploring how to convey intangible cultural heritage through interactive narrative and also investigating how to construct cultural emotional landscapes in VR spaces. Throughout my master's program, I developed several interactive narrative game projects, including "Mother Tongue" and "Letters in the Attic". Each project represents my exploration of the combination of interactive narrative and serious games. I firmly believe that the ultimate essence of interactive narrative games is to involve the audience actively in the construction of the narrative.

Karrawirraparri Journey

A boardgame about caring for Kaurna Country

Karrawirraparri Journey is a collaborative boardgame developed in partnership with the History Trust of South Australia to teach an introductory understanding of the Kaurna language, seasons, and importance of Country. Kaurna Country refers to what is now known as the Adelaide Plains in South Australia, and caring for Country describes the Kaurna people's way of knowing, caring, and living with the land. This game is pitched at students aged 10 years and upwards, and is expected to release in February 2025 as a free downloadable resource for teachers under a Creative Commons licence.

During gameplay, players travel the historical seasonal routes of the Kaurna people with their family (other players), and along the way must care for Country and ensure the health of the Karrawirraparri (Red Gum Forest River). They must also complete seasonal tasks, grapple with unexpected events, and utilise strategies to maintain ecological balance. The games seasons turn using a star-chart based on Kaurna knowledge of the southern sky, and the mechanics that underpin the game encourage teamwork and understandings of Kaurna ways of learning.

This demo sits as an exploration of how First Nations history and ways of being can be adapted into a low-cost boardgame for primary and secondary students. Additionally, how protocol and respect can be established and maintained when working within historically colonial institutions, working towards decolonial practice. We hope Karrawirraparri Journey serves to highlight that going forward, the responsibility of First Nations history education lies not only with communities themselves, but also with all cultural institutions that exist on Country.

Current Draft Demo video (6 minutes)

https://youtu.be/o5YpKq50HJg?si=x0dXL0NXMB9z614V

Please note: as this project is ongoing, the provided video is our latest draft of the demo and is 6 minutes long. Before the conference, we will have a finalised a shorter demo video that includes updated graphics and gameplay, as well as the optional support Go-Kuyu (Go-Fish) learning flash cards. We would love to present a physical, playable version of the game at the conference, with set up requirements being a flat surface to play on (floor or table).

Authors

Sophia Booij – PhD Candidate, University of South Australia
sophia.booij@mymail.unisa.edu.au

Sophia Booij is a second-year PhD candidate in the University of South Australia Creative faculty, researching strategies to promote the development of narrative-based learning games by and for Australian collections. She is currently working on an introductory 'how-to' game development guide for industry professionals, in partnership with the History Trust of South Australia. Her work is informed by a background in interactive fiction, digital humanities, museum studies, collections management, and digitisation. She is particularly interested in enabling and encouraging games that tell regional and rural Australian stories.

Michelle Fulham – Manager, Education Programs, History Trust of South Australia

As head of the Education team at the History Trust, Michelle is keen to embrace the use of technology to reach all students and teachers regardless of their location. Her background is in primary and secondary education, with over 10 years in the field. With her support, the team endeavours to integrate sound pedagogical practice and the latest in educational research to develop resources that engage students and support educators in the teaching and learning of South Australia's histories and stories.

Crystal Forward – Education Coordinator, History Trust of South Australia

As Education Coordinator, Crystal Forward aims to create immersive educational experiences that don't feel like traditional learning. She has worked in a range of educational and youth settings and is currently in her last semester of a Diploma of Cultural Resource Management with the University of Victoria. Crystal also serves as a committee member for the Port Adelaide Historical Society. Outside of work, Crystal loves exploring international markets, baking sourdough, bike riding with her family and hoarding paint samples for art projects.

Ethan White – Digital content Producer, History Trust of South Australia

Working with the Education Team, Ethan creates digital resources to support teachers and students discover South Australia's stories within the classroom. Working with Sophia on Karrawirrapari Journey, Ethan has created the digital elements and supportive resources that accompany the game. Additionally, Ethan has produced the travel television series Off the Couch with Ethan, and is involved in his local community as an elected councillor within his municipal government.

Fandom and I

Guan-Yin Chen, Hassan Ali Kazmi, Qian Tan, and Xinyin Zhang

The Fandom and I is a VR 360 Film documenting the interplay of developing social acceptance between professional and fandom-based identities.Through VR/360, our project transforms the traditional documentary format into an interactive experience, making the audience active participants rather than passive observers. They can explore the bustling convention floor while following an interviewee's personal story, creating a sense of connection. This immersive approach allows viewers to engage directly with the vibrant atmosphere and understand how fandom culture unfolds across different environments and identities, fostering a deeper, more personal comprehension of the narrative. Our piece explores how fandom culture, once considered niche, gains temporary societal legitimacy during comic conventions, reflecting a growing acceptance of countercultures. Through the lens of a zoologist turned content creator, we highlight the emergence of professionals blending their careers with fandom passions, signalling a shift in how these interests integrate into mainstream life. The 360 film uses environmental storytelling to immerse viewers in Shelby's journey as a Pokémon fan, creator, and biologist, blending the vibrancy of the MCM convention with the zoo's tranquillity, showcasing her balance of virtual and scientific identities.By using sweeping shots of the convention floor and having interviewees look directly at the camera, we encourage the audience to immerse themselves in the culture and partake in its shared identity. This sense of presence deepens the connection between the audience and the event, reminding fandom enthusiasts of their convention memories while introducing the culture to newcomers.

Demo Link

This is a 360 experience. Please open with supported video player!

Video Link: https://youtu.be/C3yNx7YZ5ik

Personal Statements for Fandom and I

Author 1 - Guan-Yin Chen

I am a recent graduate of UCL. I have an academic background in psychology due to my undergraduate studies. It was during this time that I became particularly interested in research on social psychology and the use of virtual reality (VR). This sparked my passion for VR creation, which has guided my current studies at UCL. So far, I have developed three VR projects, each exploring a different theme, ranging from anime fandom, the culture of Nvshu, to offering a unique perspective on war through the eyes of a pigeon. I find it fascinating to create immersive environments that place the audience at the center of the experience, especially when it involves directly immersing them into the story.

Author 2 - Hassan Ali Kazmi

Hassan Kazmi is a Creative Technologist and recent graduate of UCL's Immersive Factual Storytelling programme. Holding a BA/LLB in Anthropology and Law, he aims to translate complex academic and social scientific themes into accessible educational mediums using immersive technology. This is evident in projects such as The Fandom and I, which documents emerging connections and shared identities between the professional and fandom scenes. Meanwhile, Mother Tongue is the first VR experience dedicated to preserving the endangered Sylheti language while exploring cultural struggles around war, cross-generational dialogue, and immigrant identity. Additionally, his 2022 ethnography, funded by LSE, examines how post-Covid socially and loneliness are mediated by the emerging phenomenon of hybrid digital-social relations.

Author 3 - Qian Tan

I am an XR designer passionate about creating immersive storytelling experiences by combining sound, visuals, interaction design, and narrative. I graduated with a Master's degree in Immersive Factual Storytelling from University College London (UCL). During my studies, I developed projects like The Flight of D-Day, where users embody a carrier pigeon delivering the first message of D-Day, offering a unique perspective on war. Another project, In the Loop, explores OCD through an abstract representation of the brain, immersing users in the cycle of intrusive thoughts to foster empathy. I am also an award-winning designer. My Shufa project, developed during XR Hack, won two awards for its innovative blend of culture and immersive technology. Currently, I am the founder and designer of ROOTED, an emotional health companion app that uses immersive media to help users connect with their inner world, driving emotional exploration and personal growth.

Author 4 - Xinyin Zhang

Website: www.ariawork.com

Xinyin Zhang is an XR developer and storyteller who recently graduated with an MA in Immersive Factual Storytelling from UCL, holding a BA in Media Production and Design from Carleton University. Her research focuses on using multimedia tools to innovate interactive narratives and design emotionally resonant content from a user-centred perspective. With an interdisciplinary study background, she explores the gamification of journalism and has created a series of serious games and interactive experiences addressing social issues, cultural heritage, and public affairs. After the pandemic, she further explored the use of Virtual Reality in storytelling and produced non-linear VR stories such as Echoes of Sanxingdui, Mother Tongue, and Letters from the Attic. In the future, she will continue to research immersive interactive storytelling and bring more groundbreaking experiences.

Letters in the Attic

Authors:

Guan-Yin Chen

Xinyin Zhang

Yuxin Jiang

Authors:

Guan-Yin Chen

Xinyin Zhang

Yuxin Jiang

1. Game Demo Video Link: https://youtu.be/3mpjO1WDRKk

2. Personal Statement:

We are a team of three alumni from Immersive Factual Storytelling MA at University College London, UK — Guan-Yin Chen, Xinyin Zhang, and Yuxin Jiang — focusing on interactive cultural and digital narratives. Together, we have conducted interdisciplinary research on VR/AR tools, exploring their application for immersive stories. Our work aims to innovate traditional storytelling methodologies and elevate audience experiences from traditional 2D media to environmental 3D space, from passive listeners to story co-authors. We are excited to present our findings at ICGAN2025 to engage with thought leaders, exchange ideas, and refine our approach. By participating, we seek to further our knowledge and contribute to ongoing discussions in immersive storytelling. Thank you for considering our work.

3. Abstract:

Virtual reality (VR) storytelling games are redefining the preservation and experience of historical and cultural narratives. This game examines the potential of VR to narrate the history of Nüshu, a gender-specific script created by women in Jiangyong County, China, within a gamified immersive environment. Leveraging sensory immersion, player agency, and interactive storytelling, the research explores how narrative exploration games and puzzle-based adventures can reimagine the socio-cultural context in which Nüshu thrived. By transforming passive spectators into active participants, VR fosters emotional engagement, bridges generational and geographical gaps, and promotes cross-cultural dialogue. This game also addresses cultural heritage preservation through participatory storytelling models that amplify the voices of Nüshu practitioners and local communities, contributing to the discourse on decolonizing cultural heritage. The game centers on a Jiangyong girl fleeing an arranged marriage, with players uncovering her life through sub-stories set across timelines that

culminate on her wedding day. The non-linear structure, driven by user choices, enhances narrative agency, allowing participants to actively engage with the story rather than passively observe it. Through a first-person perspective, players connect with the protagonist's struggles under feudal traditions, gaining deeper insights into the survival of women in oppressive systems. This immersive experience positions VR storytelling games as transformative mediums for cultural preservation, innovating narrative genres and ensuring endangered traditions resonate across generations.

4. Keywords:

Virtual Reality game

Interactive narrative

Non-linear narrative

History adaptation and translation

Cultural heritage gamification

Cultural heritage preservation

Role-Play Game

Immersive storytelling

Personal Statements for
Letters in the Attic

Author 1 - Guan-Yin Chen

I am a recent graduate of UCL. I have an academic background in psychology due to my undergraduate studies. It was during this time that I became particularly interested in research on social psychology and the use of virtual reality (VR). This sparked my passion for VR creation, which has guided my current studies at UCL. So far, I have developed three VR projects, each exploring a different theme, ranging from anime fandom, the culture of Nvshu, to offering a unique perspective on war through the eyes of a pigeon. I find it fascinating to create immersive environments that place the audience at the center of the experience, especially when it involves directly immersing them into the story.

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Author 3 - Yuxin Jiang

I'm Yuxin Jiang. I graduated with a master's degree in Immersive Documentary Narratology from University College London. Additionally, I'm a blogger on we-media platforms, focusing on traditional Chinese culture. I've been wholeheartedly committed to exploring how to convey intangible cultural heritage through interactive narrative and also investigating how to construct cultural emotional landscapes in VR spaces. Throughout my master's program, I developed several interactive narrative game projects, including "Mother Tongue" and "Letters in the Attic". Each project represents my exploration of the combination of interactive narrative and serious games. I firmly believe that the ultimate essence of interactive narrative games is to involve the audience actively in the construction of the narrative.