



#Keywords

Chats on Digital Culture

Interactive Fiction

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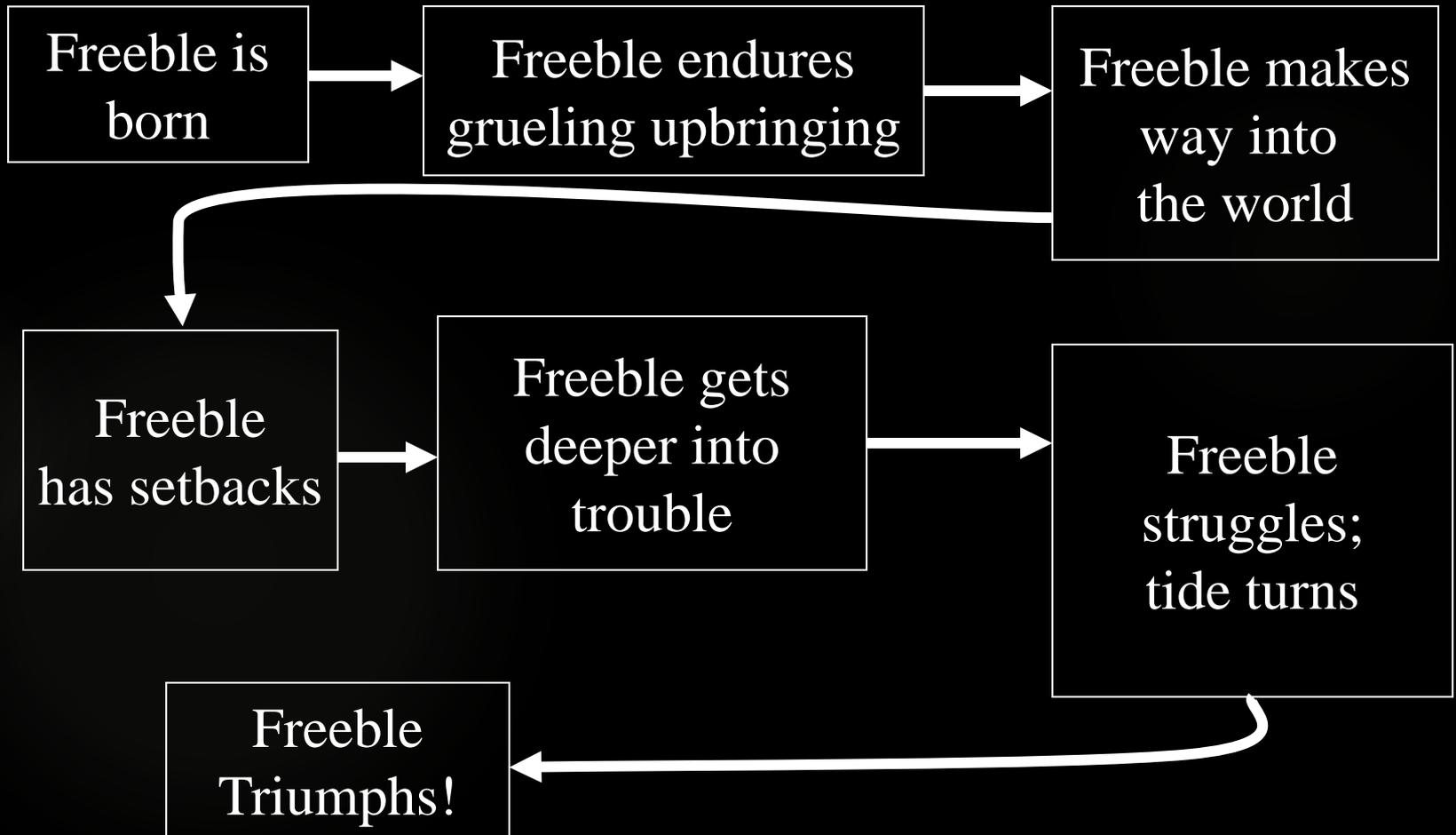
What is Interactive Fiction (IF)?

- ▶ Refers to any story that allows reader participation to alter the narrative
- ▶ Emphasizes narrative development over the game-play challenge
- ▶ Since 1980s used specifically for works that are text based adventures, focusing heavily on puzzles and exploration

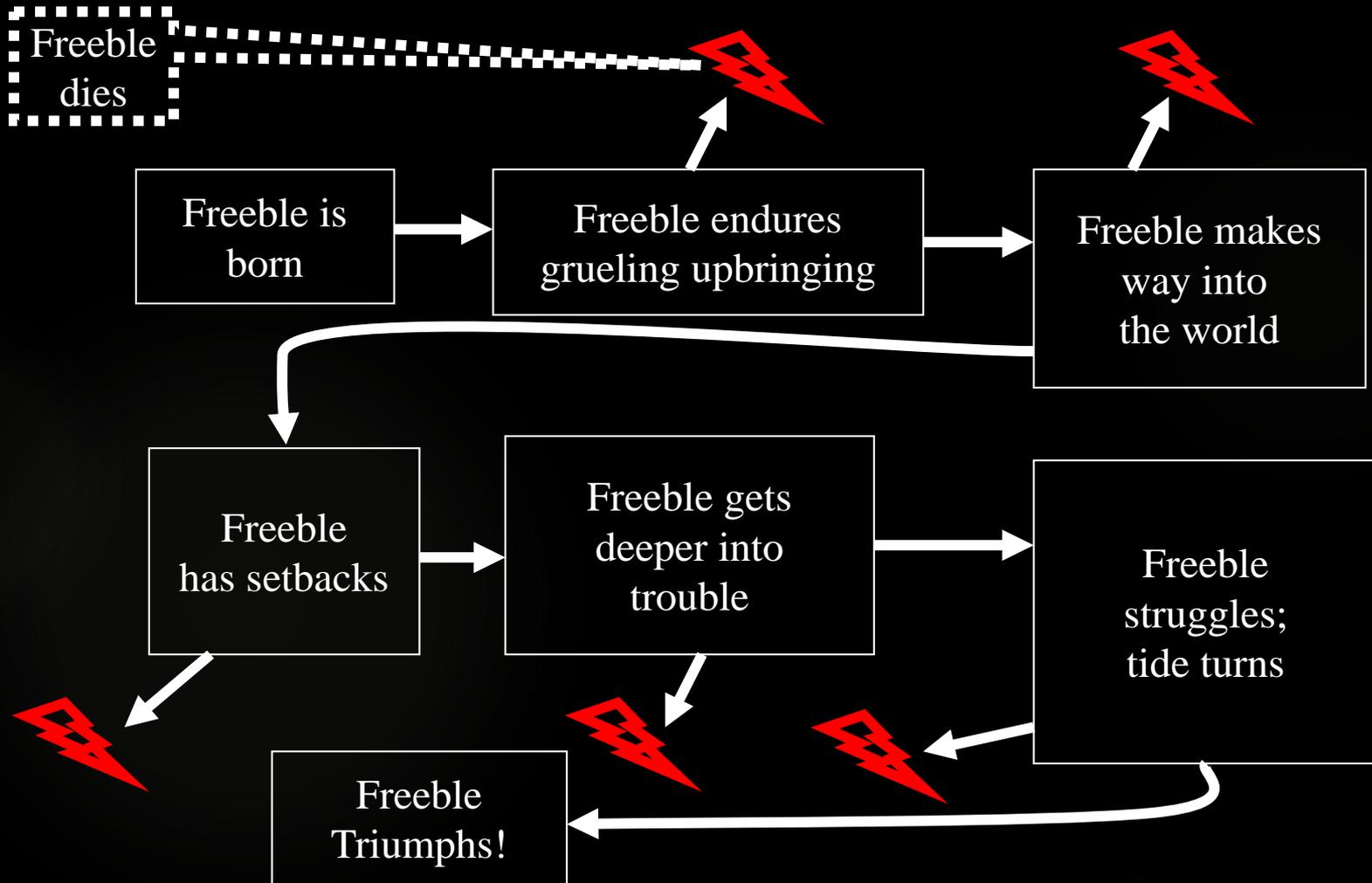
Text Adventure

- ▶ an interactive fiction where the reader/player controls a player character who sets out on out-of-the-ordinary undertakings involving risk or danger.
- ▶ Unlike Traditional Literature, where
 - ▶ Control vested entirely in the author
 - ▶ What happens when in the imagined world
 - ▶ What the reader finds out about it, and when.
 - ▶ Reader can only choose to stop or continue

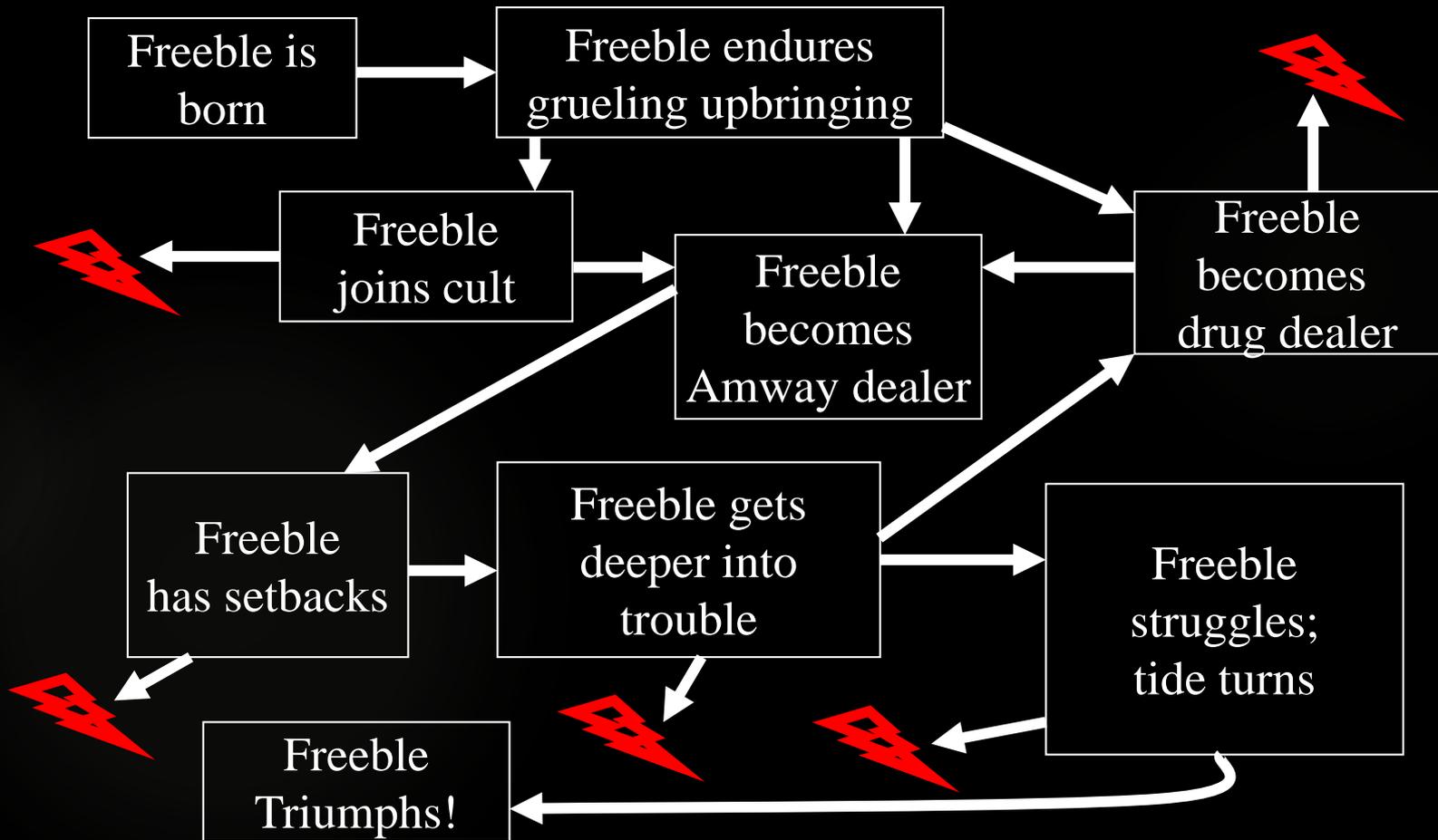
Plot Structure in Traditional Fiction



Linear Plots in Interactive Fiction



IF Supports Complex Plot Structures

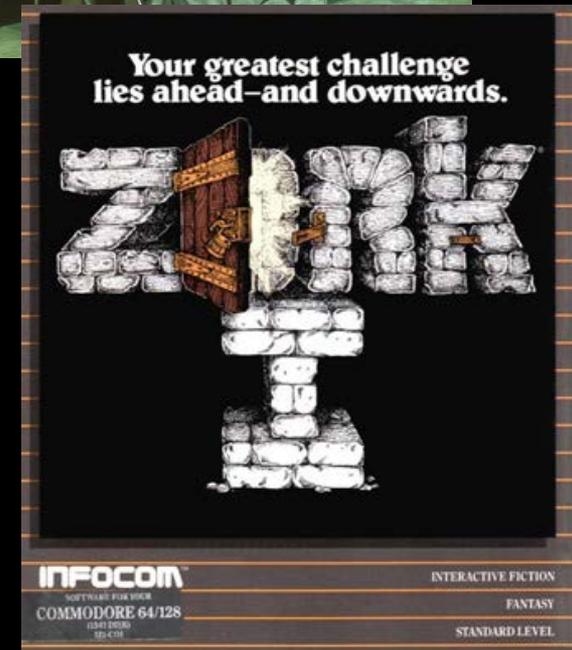


Gameplay Elements of IF

- ▶ Exploration
 - ▶ Traveling through a new, and unknown world
- ▶ Mazes
 - ▶ Successfully navigating through non-standard level geometries
- ▶ Puzzles/riddles
 - ▶ Solving the puzzle allows player to continue in the game
- ▶ Acquiring items
 - ▶ Gaining treasure, picking up items used to solve puzzles
- ▶ Guessing correct verbs/keywords
 - ▶ Learning how to express intent is part of gameplay

Major Publishers

- ▶ Adventure International
 - ▶ Scott Adams
 - ▶ The Adams Adventures series
- ▶ Infocom
 - ▶ Zork series
 - ▶ Deadline
 - ▶ Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy



Adventure: First Text Adventure

- ▶ Adventure (1975)
 - ▶ Some variants called Colossal Cave
 - ▶ First text adventure, precursor to modern role-playing games
- ▶ Will Crowther
 - ▶ Explored caves as a hobby, also played Dungeons & Dragons
 - ▶ Decided to "write a program that was a re-creation in fantasy of my caving, and also would be a game for the kids, and perhaps [have] some aspects of the Dungeons and Dragons I had been playing."

Zork

- ▶ Zork is a text-based interactive adventure game that was written in the late 1970's.
- ▶ What Zork lacks for in graphics it makes up in the rich story line and mystery of not just the plot, but trying to figure out how to go about playing the game.
- ▶ *Zork I: The Great Underground Empire*

Façade: An Experiment In Interactive Drama

- ▶ “In [Façade](#), you, the player, using your own name and gender, play the character of a long-time friend of Grace and Trip, an attractive and materially successful couple in their early thirties. During an evening get-together at their apartment that quickly turns ugly, you become entangled in the high-conflict dissolution of Grace and Trip’s marriage. No one is safe as the accusations fly, sides are taken and irreversible decisions are forced to be made. By the end of this intense one-act play you will have changed the course of Grace and Trip’s lives – motivating you to replay the drama to find out how your interaction could make things turn out differently the next time.”

RedRidinghood

- ▶ Donna Leishman's playful retelling of the Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale makes use of comic book vernacular, limited forms of explorative interaction, optional narrative paths, and a jazzy soundtrack.
- ▶ *RedRidinghood* is the type of Flash piece that suggests the potential for complex forms of interactive storytelling without typographic text.

What Interactive Fiction is not...

- ▶ **hypertext literature** – due to input
 - ▶ [Fair e-tales](#)
- ▶ **chatter bot** – due to a world model
 - ▶ [Galatea](#)
- ▶ **interactive poetry** – due to progression of story/plot vs. narrative
 - ▶ [Stir Fry Texts](#)

Interactive Fiction: Pros and Cons

▶ Pro

- ▶ Gameworld described using text
 - ▶ Permits greater expressiveness about internal mental states of characters
 - ▶ Can permit better control over the mood of a scene
- ▶ Low computational resources, easy to implement
 - ▶ Well suited to early computers

▶ Con

- ▶ Gameworld described using text
 - ▶ Games that use graphics are more visually interesting
 - ▶ Have pretty screenshots
- ▶ No real-time action
 - ▶ More deliberative, turn-based gameplay
- ▶ Natural language interface impoverished
 - ▶ Permits much broader range of expression that game understands
 - ▶ Can be very frustrating

Links

- ▶ Interactive Fiction Archive- <http://www.ifarchive.org>
- ▶ The Interactive Fiction Database- <http://ifdb.tads.org/>
- ▶ Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/hitchhikers/game.shtml>
- ▶ Hamlet- The Text Adventure- <http://www.robinjohnson.f9.co.uk/adventure/hamlet.html>

Further Reading

- ▶ Short, Emily. "Interactive Fictions." *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, Lori Emerson, and Benjamin J. Robertson, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. pp. 289-92
- ▶ Ciccoricco, David. "Digital Fiction Networked Narratives." *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*, edited by Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons, and Brian McHale, Routledge, 2012. pp. 469-482
- ▶ Hayles, N. Katherine. (January 2, 2007). *Electronic Literature: What is it*. From <https://eliterature.org/pad/elp.html>. Accessed February, 28, 2017.
- ▶ Drucker, Johanna. "Electronic Literature." *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media*, edited by Marie-Laure Ryan, Lori Emerson, and Benjamin J. Robertson, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014. pp. 169-73