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Playable Ergodic Storytelling of Indian Mythology: Retelling of Ganesha's Lost Tusk in The Video Game Uncharted: The Lost Legacy

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Abstract:

This study will examine the ergodic and playable nature of storytelling in the video game *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy (2017) developed by Naughty Dog*. This is an action-adventure video game that is inspired by the mythology of lord *Ganesha's* broken tusk. The study will not only foreground the reinterpretation of Indian myth of *Ganesha's broken* tusk, but it will also analyse the intricate relationship among the mythological motifs, ludic mechanics, narrative design and other key elements of the game. The research approaches these objectives through close analysis of *Espen Asrseth's* fundamental idea of *Ergodic literature and Marie-Laure Ryan's methodology of interactive narratology.* Ultimately, the findings elucidate how transmedia storytelling enables cross-cultural narrative reconfiguration by translating cultural representation into multimodal narrative frameworks.

Keywords: Indian mythology, video game, Uncharted: The Lost Legacy, Ergodic Literature, storytelling.

Introduction

Video games have become an interactive and significant medium for cultural storytelling. It has transformed the storytelling in a manner that had never done before. Prior to video games, narrative forms were predominantly linear where audience could only consume stories without any scope for interactive participation. Storytelling is an important part of human culture and constitutes a significant cultural practice that has undergone continuous transformation across diverse media platforms, historical periods and evolving technologies. Each medium embodies distinctive feature, from written manuscripts and oral traditions to film and television, have transformed how stories are created, experienced, and passed down through the generations. Video games of India and outside the India are now recreating the stories which are deeply rooted in ancient Indian mythology, hence the essence of Indian mythology is not only passed down to the generation of today's world, but it also communicates to the audience around the world. *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* is one of those video games. Whereas traditional narrative media keep audiences as passive recipients, video games necessitate active participation, inviting players to shape meaning as co-creators through their choices, actions and involvement.

Uncharted: The Lost Legacy (2017) exemplifies this conceptual shift of storytelling by providing players with immersive mythic adventures in the form of ergodic and cinematic storytelling. In this game, the player inhabits a thriving and digitally rendered geography of India's Western Ghats and the monumental architecture of old *Hoysala* temples (The examples that have been examined in this study are mainly drawn from the chapter 4 and chapter 7 of the video game).

As the part of the game mechanics and game narrative, the player can reinterpret the celebrated Hindu mythological story of *Ganesha's* fractured tusk as the primary goal of its treasure-hunting quest. The game navigates the tricky balance between respectful illustration of cultural heritage while delivering exciting, commercially viable gameplay by integrating the personal tale of protagonist *Chloe Frazer*, a treasure hunter of mixed Indian-Australian descent, with an ancient myth.

The representation of Indian mythology, temple, architecture, and topographical regions serves as a prominent source for the storytelling in video game. These illustrations, that underpin storytelling, can be interpreted through *Henry Jenkins's* concept of *narrative architecture.* According to "narrative architecture", the spatial configuration and environmental arrangement of game world extend narrative meaning beyond the dialogues, verbal exposition, cut scenes, and textual elucidation. This feature of video games encourages players to participate physically through navigation and puzzle-solving, as well as narratively with mythology. The deployment of environmental architecture within the game ultimately transforms traditional linear narrative into multifaceted, immersive and interactive experiences.

To achieve the key objective of the research, this study demonstrates how video games can function as both custodian and transformative forces in the perpetuation of mythological narratives, through an analysis of the game's narrative structure, puzzle mechanics, environmental design, and character development.

Theoretical Framework

Espen Aarseth's seminal idea of *ergodic literature*, which he explored in his work *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature (1997),* radically redefines our understanding of interactive texts. According to him, ergodic literature is a work that demands *nontrivial effort*[2] from readers to navigate and create meanings from that work. These *nontrivial efforts* go beyond the basic eye movement and page turning of conventional reading. In video games, players navigate the three-dimensional spaces, make choices at ludic crossroads, and have to solve puzzles to proceed further in the game. These interactions of the players with the game mechanics result in the narrative advancement and the development of plot.

Ergodic works mandate non-trivial user effort, that require sustained active involvement through practices such as clicking the hyperlinks, selecting dialogue options, navigating environmental space, and solving puzzles, etc. This non-trivial user effort is important for the narrative to unfold. In the case of video games, the interface provides general instruction and control layouts that brings the player into close engagement with the game mechanics, wherein the player's inputs physically guide *Chloe* through the temple ruins in *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy*. For instance, while playing *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* on PlayStation, the player uses the *left analog stick* for character movement, the *right analog stick* for camera control, and the *X* button enables jumping, along with other in-game actions. Through the adoption of these engaging and nonlinear narrative paths, video games unlike the traditional literature, in which readers passively consume predetermined textual sequences, have possibly emerged as one of the most iconic and financially successful forms of ergodic art.

Marie-Laure Rya, in her work *Avatars of Story (2006),* defines game narratives as emergent phenomena that arises from players' active involvement with the virtual environments, thereby

extending the conventional narratology into the domain of interactive digital media. She challenges the exclusive emphasis of classical narratology on linear, author-controlled stories and promotes analytical frameworks that take player agency, multi-pathed stories, and participatory meaning-making into consideration. *Ryan's* research emphasizes the productive coexistence of emergent narratives generated through player's decisions and improvisational gameplay alongside embedded narratives constituted by pre-scripted authorial content. She argues that both dimensions are crucial to a comprehensive digital storytelling experience.

For examining mythological retellings in video games, this theoretical dualism is particularly pertinent. While emergent narratives arising from individual player's experiences responsible for personal interpretation and emotional investment in the ancient tale, paradoxically modernizing it through individualized engagement, the embedded narrative of *Ganesha's broken tusk* provides a stable mythological backbone. Together, these narrative dimensions ensure the cultural continuity and educational potentiality.

Narrative Architecture in game

In *Game Design as Narrative Architecture (2004)*, *Henry Jenkins* often addresses the longstanding ludology-narratology divide by rearticulating video games as "narrative architectures" a spatial-constructions in which environmental design communicates meaning as powerful as dialogue or textual narration (web). According to *Jenkins*, there are four different but related narrative modes are used in game spaces: *enacted stories*, in which players act out narrative sequences; *embedded narratives*, in which backstory reveals through exploration and discovery;

emergent narratives, which emerge spontaneously from systemic gameplay mechanics; and *evocative narratives*, which refer to preexisting stories or cultural knowledge.

In *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy,* all four modes are applicable. The digitally recreated *Hoysala* temples operate as *evocative narratives* that undoubtedly diverge from their material location yet effectively evoke historical resonance and produce immersive narrative within the game world. However, they instantly move through the players' enthusiasm for the quest. In this case, players who are already acquainted with India's architecture heritage, such representations function as catalysts for curiosity, motivating deeper exploration and the dissemination of this knowledge to others. Within the game, as players engage with mechanics including climbing, puzzle-solving, and combat, the game enables players to physically perform the treasure-hunting narrative within a player-directed journey focused on the retrieval of *Ganesha's tusk*. As players explore temple interiors, ancient inscriptions, carefully positioned relics, and murals representing the *Parashurama-Ganesha* struggle, these represent the underlying mythological context (shown in the video game's fourth chapter).

Players can experience rather than just hear or watch the cultural stories. The architectural style permits many simultaneous viewpoints on myth and legacy by the players. The game may encourage deeper engagement than traditional media formats by turning mythology into an interactive experience, but this change also calls into the issue of cultural authority and authenticity.

Reinterpreting myth in a game

Uncharted: The Lost Legacy developed by Naughty Dog is a seminal work at the nexus of digital entertainment and world mythology. The game focuses on the myth of *Ganesha's broken*

tusk, a well-known Hindu symbol of sacrifice, wisdom, and transformation. The game follows *Chloe Frazer's* search for the *Tusk of Ganesh* across the landscape of the Western Ghats. In addition to retelling this myth, the game's narrative structure enables fresh interpretations influenced by interactive media's affordances and conventions, making it an excellent subject for narratological analysis (Ryan 1-2; Aarseth 1-3).

Mythological concept and narrative adaptation

Hindu texts interpret the myth of *Ganesha's broken tusk* in different ways. In one, *Ganesha* uses it as a pen to write the *Mahabharata;* in another, he sacrifices it in battle with *Parashurama* to uphold *Shiva's* honour ("Tusk of Ganesha," Uncharted Wiki; "Uncharted: The Lost Legacy," Chapter 7). The latter story significantly incorporates into the game's environment, architecture, and riddles. In *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy*, *Chloe* travels back to several *Hoysala* ruins, each of which offers fresh insights into Indian mythology ("Chapter 4 The Western Ghats," IGN). The fundamental conflicts of the myth, including sacrifice, honour, and the interaction between gods and heroes are communicated to players through sculptures, murals, and artifacts. In addition to immersing player in myth, *embedded[1] narrative's* components such as dialogue, visual motifs, and environmental storytelling provide both Western and Indian players with interpretive space (Ryan 3-6).

Narratological Theory: Ryan and Aarseth in Game Analysis

Marie-Laure Ryan's theory emphasises the notion that games incorporate both player-generated *(emergent)*[1] and scripted *(embedded)*[1]narratives, expanding narratology beyond its

literary foundation to include digital, visual, and interactive forms (Ryan 3-6). The majority of the mythological content in *Uncharted* is embedded and pre-scripted, conveyed through characters dialogues, cutscenes, and graphic design. However, players' activities provide emergent story routes, particularly while navigating ruins and solving puzzles, supporting *Ryan's* claim that game's stories are "constructed by the recipient based on observed events" (Ryan 2). For instance, in chapter 4 (*The Western Ghat*) the video game introduces the player to the recurring patterns of ruins navigation. Here, player must first reach the tall tower located at the center of the area, which is clearly marked on the in-game map of the player. At this point, there is the sequence of climbing, roping, and driving. Inside the tower, the protagonist, *Chole* encounters four doors, each offering a pathway towards the *Hoysala* ruins. One door among them can be chosen to access the *Hoysala* ruins and to progress further in the game. Each door is symbolically aligned with a mythological weapon: *Parasuram's Bow* that linked to *Bow fortress* (southwest fortress); second is linked to *Shiva's Axe For*tress and opens into north fortress; and the third corresponds to *Ganesha's Trident fortress*. In order to produce narrative meaning, *Espen Aarseth's* ergodic literature notion places the player's experience as a *nontrivial*[2] traversal that calls for physical effort, strategic decision-making, and investigation (Aarseth 1-2). Despite being constrained by game design, the player's agency plays a crucial role in creating meaning: the user will have effectuated a semiotic sequence, and this selective movement constitutes an act of physical construction (Aarseth 1-3).

Embedded Narratives: Game Design as Myth Retelling

The world-building in *Uncharted* uses interwoven storytelling to recount the myth of *Ganesha.* The puzzle-rich citadel built around *Ganesha, Shiva*, and *Parashurama* is featured in the Western Ghats chapter four of the video game. For instance, in chapter four of the game, the

player encounters a variety of puzzles. In the journey of *Parashurama's Bow's fortress,* at the top of the staircase, player (*Chole*) finds a puzzle which is compiled of a disk in an appropriate place. On the disk, the player must rotate each ring to form a bow and arrow with arrow oriented toward *Chole*. At *Ganesha's Trident* there is a puzzle for creating a form of trident with three of its rings, like the previous puzzle where the tip of the arrow must be oriented toward *Chole,* here in this puzzle also the tips of the trident must be directed toward *Chole*. Further, in the journey through *Shiv's Axe fortress,* the game involves a jumping puzzle and a disk-based puzzle, in which the disk must be arranged to an axe with its head oriented towards *Chole*. The background progressively reveals through statues, inscriptions, and environmental clues. In a battle, *Ganesha* lost his tusk is described as a sacrifice rather than as a sign of weakness ("Uncharted: The Lost Legacy, IGN") ("Uncharted: The Lost Legacy", Chapter 4). Cutscenes and dialogue further elaborate the myth, occasionally invoking traditional accounts (for instance, *Ganesha's* act of breaking his tusk in pursuit of wisdom is mentioned in the dialogues of the first chapter, when the protagonist, *Chloe* is purchasing a stole) while predominantly foregrounding the conflict with *Parashurama* as a heroic narrative. Through her interactions and observations, *Chloe* serves as both a narrator and a surrogate player, mediating myth and offering critical commentary which is served as a narratological technique within the game. According to *Marie Laure Ryan's* concept the narrative is not limited to the characteristics of embedded narration alone, it also incorporates features of *evoked narratives*[1] and *enacted narratives*[1], thereby enhancing the authenticity of retelling (Ryan 6).

Emergent Narratives: Player Agency and Mythic Engagement

According to *Ryan*, "emergent narrative" refers to stories created through player improvisation and gaming (Ryan 4-6). Emergent storylines in *Uncharted* come from a variety of angles:

1. Puzzle-solving: Similar to the labyrinthine structures that *Aarseth* outlined (Aarseth 3-5), *Ganesha's* temple features multi-layered challenges in which players must interpret symbolic arrangements from legendary clues. (The examples of puzzles from chapter four of the video game have been discussed above.)

2. Exploration: By allowing players to discover hidden objects, supplementary conversation, visual references, and nonlinear design the game enables player's play-driven subjective interaction with the mythological narrative (Aarseth 5).

3. Tactical choices: The pace, order, and tone of the game's mythological retelling are influenced by players' decisions on how to approach foes and which areas to search.

According to *Aarseth*, the fictitious setting of a *multicursal labyrinth*[3] (Doob 17-38) creates both shared and distinct narrative experiences for many participants (Aarseth 3–5). As a result of this plurality, which is essential to ergodic literature, *Uncharted's* mythology is dynamic and sensitive to player involvement rather than static.

Myths and Authenticity: The Balance of Tradition and Transformation

Whether myths maintain their authenticity when translated for digital play is a central point raised by *Ryan* and echoed by the game studies critics (Ryan 6; Aarseth 9). In order to generate "authentic" architectural themes, *Uncharted's* designers worked with Indian advisors and conducted study on Hinduism; yet, they modified the myth to fit dramatic requirements and

Western narrative standards (Wikipedia). Players and commentators have debated over cultural authenticity and creative license in response to some decisions, such as changing the cause of *Ganesha's* broken tusk or changing its geographic origin to suit in game regions. *Ryan* contends, however, that narrative significance emerges from a story's capacity to evoke emotional response, ethical contemplation, and identificatory engagement, rather than solely from fidelity to its source material (Ryan 5-7). Through the player's embodied experience, along with its linguistic and visual allusions, *Uncharted* effectively elicit empathy and introspection (Ryan 5-7).

The Interplay of Game Design, Player Agency, and Myth

The interaction between user control and predetermined narrative is highlighted by *Aarseth's* typology of ergodic textuality. The landscapes and challenges in *Uncharted* both guide and react to player agency, demonstrating the reciprocal effect of ergodic and conventional narrative genres (Aarseth 5).In Chapter 4, specific examples show:

1. *Nontrivial effort*: Players must complete several strenuous activities in order to earn the tusk, which reflects *Aarseth's* paradigm of nontrivial traversal and risk (Aarseth 2).

2. *Multicursal path*: This refers to an unstructured gameplay path in which the player, unlike in linear storytelling, is afforded multiple choices regarding how to proceed and enables narrative development through players (Aarseth 4).

3. *Narrative control*: This is a defining feature of digital ergodic literature in which the player's inputs and choices are responsible for narrative development; for example, in *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy,* player's decisions determine which elements of the mythological setting are accessed in what sequence (Aarseth 5).

Retelling and Transmission: Interactive Narratology in Practice

According to *Ryan's* "transmedial narratology", game's visual, spatial, and interactive techniques convey traditional literary qualities like character, time, causality, and myth (Ryan 5-7). In *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy*, cutscenes, dialogues, and ambient elements function together to convey mythological meaning. All these narrative components operate through what *Gerard Genette* terms *Intradiegetic narrators* in his work *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method (1980). Intradiegetic narrator* defined as a narrator inside the story. When the active balance of these elements (Intradiegetic narrators) is processed by the player's choices, it heightens narrative identification and agency (Ryan5- 7). Here, the choices are guided by *Extradiegetic narrators* (narrators outside the game world*),* such as *menus, HUD, checkpoints, tutorials, and prompts. Chloe's* role as both avatar (of player) and narrator allows players to engage and reinterpret *Ganesha's* myth (Ryan 5-7; Aarseth 3-5).

Ganesha's broken tusk's myth in *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* is a prime example of how video games transform traditional classical mythology into an ergodic, narratological medium. The video game offers new ways to interact with legacy by presenting mythology to modern audience through integrated and emergent narrative forms (Ryan 6; Aarseth 13).

The Mythological Source: Ganesha's Broken Tusk

The story of *Ganesha's* broken tusk holds great spiritual and symbolic significance in Indian mythology. It symbolises the themes of wisdom, devotion, sacrifice, and acceptance of imperfection. According to the *Brahmanda Purana* (part 2, chapter 1-4) and numerous local Indian folktales, the story revolves around a conflict between *Ganesha*, the elephant-headed god and *Parashurama*, the sixth avatar of *Vishnu*, renowned as a formidable warrior-sage.

According to *Brahmanda Purana*, *Parashurama* traveled to Kailash to meet *Lord Shiva*, his mentor, who bestowed upon him a heavenly axe. As a protector and obedient son of his parents, *Ganesha* did not let *Parashurama* enter, stating that *Shiva* should not be disturbed during his meditative state under any circumstances. In anger, *Parshurama* struck *Ganesha* with his axe. Ganesha recognized the axe as the one bestowed upon *Parshurama* by his father *Lord Shiva*. For the respect of the axe, and his father he did not halt the blow. Consequently, one of his tusks was broken and fell away. When *Parashurama* recognises the depth of *Ganesha's* dedication and intelligence, he regrets his impulsive rage.

Thereafter, the iconography of *Ganesha* as *Ekadanta* (the one-tusked) became widely recognized and cherished in depictions of the deity within Indian mythology. The illustration is prevailed across religious art, both in ancient temple sculptures and in contemporary shrines. It serves as a constant reminder to follow the imperfection that can reflect divine perfection and that the ultimate wisdom exists in sacrifice made for the service of higher ideals.

The myth of *Ganesha's* broken tusk is closely connected to the local cultural memory, its symbolical presence in the architecture of South Indian temples, particularly in the elaborate stone carvings of the *Hoysala temples* at *Belur and Halebidu*. These visual scriptures serve as an architectural narrative along with artistic decorations. These visual narratives educate devotees while conveying cultural knowledge to succeeding generations. Although the video game's setting significantly alters the spiritual or religious purpose of these visual narratives, the art of spatial storytelling through temple design remains integral to *Uncharted's: The Lost Legacy* intradiegetic environmental narrative.

Historical Context: The Hoysala Empire and Temple Architecture

The temple at *Belur, Halebidu, and Somanathapura* are renowned for their architectural accomplishments during the *Hoysala Empire*. Its prominence flourished in South India from the eleventh century onward. The sculptural narratives of the temples function as visual encyclopedias of Hindu mythology, cosmology, and cultural values in addition to being architectural wonders and artistic legacies (HoldMyTrowel).

The digital reconstruction of these historical sites in *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* provides players with virtual access to heritage locations that might otherwise remain inaccessible, anchoring the video game's legendary narrative within culturally significant and recognizable geographical landscapes. To incorporate realistic sculptural details and spatial layouts into the game design, the environmental artists conducted an in-depth study of *Hoysala* architectural elements (HoldMyTrowel). When players are exposed to the digital representations of cultural heritage, the precise architectural details stimulate interest and curiosity in Indian history and supports the promotion of heritage tourism.

The video game's transformation of architecture into ludic environment through mechanics such as hidden chambers and puzzle-based locks, the video game aligns itself closely analogous to cinematic adventure fiction. The complex relationship between video games and cultural representation is characterized by the conflict between didactic intent and spectacular entertainment.

Narratological Analysis of *The Lost Legacy*

Embedded Narrative: The Pre-Scripted Mythological Tale

Uncharted: The Lost Legacy's narrative framework operates on multiple parallel layers, resulting in a rich tapestry of storytelling formats from fixed authorial content to player-generated experiences. The mythological basis that guarantees cultural continuity and narrative coherence throughout the video game is provided by the embedded narrative and pre-scripted elements within the game created by *Naughty Dog's* writers and designers.

These embedded narratives in the game are cutscenes that progress the main plot, dialogue between *Chloe* and her companion *Nadine Ross* and others that reveals character's motivations and backgrounds, and environmental storytelling through ancient inscriptions and temple murals that recount the *Ganesha-Parashurama myth*, and collectible artifacts(for example in the very first chapter of game we find the conversation between protagonist *Chole and Meenu* at *Meenu's* shop discussing about the story of *Ganesha's broken tusk*, when *Chole* unintentionally takes *Ganesha*'s figurine from her pocket while paying the money) with text descriptions that provide historical and mythological context. Every player encounters the central narrative of *Ganesha's tusk* and grasps its cultural significance, as these elements remain constant regardless of the player's choices within the video game.

When it comes to embedded mythological information, the game's environmental storytelling is especially compelling. The arrival of *Parashurama* at Kailash, his encounter with *Ganesha*, the throwing of axe, and the intricate wall carvings encountered by the players while navigating the temples, all of these operates as embedded mythological information within the video game. For players without prior acknowledgement of Hindu mythology, these visual narratives function pedagogically, conveying meaning through imagery rather than text, in a manner reminiscent of historical visual traditions.

Emergent Story: Player Investigation and Learning

Emergent narratives arise organically from player's decisions and pattern of exploration, generating improvisational experience within the game world. It transcends conventional narrative experience by transforming passive myth consumption into individualized, participatory myth-making. Each player's actions in the *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* are unique, as they depend on individual choices regarding pacing, combat tactics, and puzzle-solving techniques.

For instance, in the chapter four of the game, *Western Ghats* (as discussed above), the semi-open world design affords players considerable freedom in deciding which ruins to visit first, which additional objectives to pursue, and how extensively to explore environmental. A streamlined version of the story with additional action-adventure elements may be experienced by players who directly rush to the main objectives. At the same time, others can explore each extra place to learn more about Hindu culture. These varied ludic patterns result in varying degree of narrative experience.

Sacred Symbols as Ludic Icons: Semiotic Components

By reading the semiotics of game environment in the *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy*, one can observe Hindu mythological symbols are transformed into ludic signifiers that convey both gameplay information and mythological meaning. For example, in the video game, the *axe* (*Parashurama's weapon*), *bow* (associated with multiple deities), and *trident (Shiva's trishula)* function as puzzle mechanisms (as discussed above), navigational markers, and symbolic references that players must interpret in order to progress within the game.

The iconography of *Ganesha's broken tusk* in the game is intricate. It is depicted through various sculptures including the elephant head, the broken tusk, multiple arms bearing symbolic implements, and mouse vehicle (vahana). All of these are connected to the mythological perception related to *Ganesha.* Through ludic repetition, particularly the collection of the collectable treasures at each level of game, players unlock the points and contributes to environmental exploration, rewards and overall game progression and completion. In chapter 4 of the game, there are 19 treasures (such as, *Medieval Indian lock and key, Rosewood spice box, Serpent and Ladders Game, Ancient Stone Jar, Trinket Box, Ivory Casket, Hoysala Coin, Silver Goblet, etc.*) and didactic instruction, as a result, players build visual literacy in Hindu creative conventions and mythology.

Character Story: Chloe's Relationship with Heritage

The mythological retelling of *Ganeha's tusk* has been adapted to serve the ludic and narrative purposes of game. In the video game, it is connected to the character *Chloe Frazer's* personal story of treasure hunting. During the insurgency led by the insurgent *Asav*, she was searching for the legendary tusk of *Ganesha*. Her father was also killed by bandits while he was searching for the tusk. *Asav* seeks to wield the tusk to ignite civil war across India. The game represents its own interpretation of the mythology yet its theme of cosmic balance and protection against the destruction are similar to those found throughout Indian mythology.

Player Positionality and Cultural Tourism

As a form of virtual cultural tourism, the video game enables players to virtually explore Indian heritage sites that they may not have the opportunity to visit in person. There are both

positive and negative aspects of this virtual tourism. On appositive note, it can promote historical tourism that boosts local economies, stimulates sincere interest in Indian culture, and educates audience around the world about non-western cultural practices. Problematically, it might encourage superficial participation that views complex living cultures as merely beautiful scenery for amusement, giving the sense of competence based more on gaming than on actual research.

Players' experiences in comprehending mythology are greatly influenced by their positionality and relationship to the culture. Indian players are likely to experience with the game different from the western players, who may be less familiar with Hindu mythology and traditional sculpture designs. While some people could be content to have their cultural history represented in a prominent game, others might be irritated by unavoidable simplifications, errors, or the commercial exploitation of mythological customs.

On the other hand, Western players may perceive the game mostly as an exotic adventure, the interaction with Indian cultural elements amusing rather than a parts of actual religious and cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Through a comprehensive narratological analysis, *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy* demonstrates the remarkable potential of video games as vehicles for mythological retelling and cross-cultural storytelling. By transforming the ancient Hindu tale of *Ganesha's* broken tusk into an ergodic narrative, the game encourages players to actively engage with and explore mythological storytelling, rather than merely consuming passively it as a passive spectacle. The interactive feature of video game represents a genuine innovation in how mythological narratives can be experienced in contemporary media contexts.

The video game as an ergodic narrative demonstrates how interactive media can represent the multivocality and adaptability of mythological elements through its intricate illustrations of narrative architecture, environmental storytelling, and semiotic communication in embedded and emergent narrative modes.

Although the game is developed by the Western production house and developers its transmedia strategy broadens its appeal to multicultural audiences while maintaining a fundamental balance between respectful cultural engagement and commercial interests.

This study concludes how digital narratives serve as a site where issues of authenticity, ownership, authority, and respect are constantly negotiated. It has become a medium for cultural preservation, exposing audiences around the world to customs they might not otherwise come across. Ultimately, *Uncharted: The Lost Legacy's* succeeds in engaging players with Indian mythology while providing interest and offering immersive interactive experiences of Indian mythology.

Future studies could effectively look at how players from various cultural backgrounds react to games, look into how exposure to mythology in games influences later cultural learning and attitudes, investigation of collaborative design models that put cultural insiders at the center of how their own traditions are portrayed, and create frameworks for ethically responsible cultural storytelling in interactive media. As video game continue to rise as an important cultural form worldwide, it has become important for the scholars of game studies, cultural studies, religion studies, and digital humanities to comprehend how these video games reinterpret ancient myths for contemporary audiences.

End Notes

1. *Henry Jenkins,* in his work *Game Design as Narrative Architecture*, which was first published in the book *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance and Game (2004)* distinguishes four kinds of narrative patterns in games:

Evoked narratives: These narratives are adapted from another medium. Character names, visual elements, and the key elements from the original source, such as the use of *lightsabers* as weapons in a *Star Wars* game, serve to evoke the broader complexity of the original story, which is typically too intricate to be fully implemented within the game.

Enacted narratives: The episodic structure of these games is usually based on Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey. To complete a quest, the player navigates the game space, identifies with an avatar representing the hero and overcomes various obstacles. The episodic format of a game enables to develop new levels. Since enactment occurs across multiple categories, the term "enacted" is regarded as problematic.

Embedded narratives: By investigating the surroundings, examining things, and speaking with non-playing individuals, players might uncover embedded narratives, which are storylines concealed within the game world. Examples include walking simulators and detective games.

Emergent narratives are stories that are not preprogrammed or pre-structured but instead develop dynamically as the player activates a system of existents with varying options for action, like in simulation games like *The Sims*.

2. Nontrivial efforts: In his book *Cybertext and Ergodic Literature (1997), Espen J. Aarseth* defines the term *Ergodic*, derived from the Greek words, *ergon* and *hodos,* meaning "work" and "path", respectively. *Ergodic* Literature is characterized by features required for the active

participation from readers or users, with nontrivial effort is necessary to enable the reader to navigate and traverse the text.

3. Multicursal Labyrinth: *Penelope Reed*, in her *work Physical and metaphorical labyrinths of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages (1990),* defines two kinds of structures:

A *unicursal Labyrinth* is a structure *where there is only one path, winding and turning, usually toward a center.* The *Multicursal Labyrinth* is a structure *where the maze wanderer faces a series of critical choices, bivia.*

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