

1. Premise and purpose

1.1. What is the project about?

This project is about a story of a girl living her days feeling stuck in her everyday life, instead of following her dreams. It touches upon the hypothetical question of *what would happen if one has the chance to magically follow their dreams.*

When it comes to your own life, let's say a mysterious figure comes along one day and offers you immortality and all the money in the world to do whatever you desire.

What would you do? How would you spend your free time now that there are no restrictions and logistical problems (like having to have a regular job or provide for your family)?

And most importantly, what are you willing to sacrifice to achieve it?

1.2. What is the project's core?

The core premise is the dilemma of free will and the consequences it brings.

No matter how bright and shiny, there's always a payoff.

So what makes us want to chase a better future if we'll end up regretting everything regardless?

1.3. Is it a fictional, a non-fiction or a mixed project?

It's a mixed project, it's fundamentally inspired and based on everyday people and their struggles.

1.4. What is its fundamental purpose?

Is it to entertain, to teach or to inform? Is it to market a product?

It's purpose is to entertain but also make us ponder a little about our choices, our actions or lack thereof.

2. Narrative

2.1. What are the narrative elements (such as plot, theme, characters, etc.) of the project?

The plot is about a girl named Chara who is presented with a contract from an ancient demon. This contract states that Chara will get infinite money and immortality, but she will be chased by a regular immortal snail. If the snail catches her, she dies.

2.2. What would be the summary of its storyline?

A Choice is to be made. This choice will give power and money to one but the catch is the person will always be chased by a single snail

2.3. What is the timeframe of the story?

The time frame of the plot is not determined by the dialogs, but rather the elements that are used by the characters, such as smartphones etc. So it is implied that the timeframe is somewhere around the 2020's

2.4. What are the major events or challenges offered by the narrative?

The major effect event is the frustration of the main character. This in turn escalates when the Contractor visits her, forcing her to make the ultimate choice.

2.5. Does the project utilize gaming elements? Does the project involve winning or losing?

No, the project does not utilize gaming elements.

2.6. What are the strategies for expanding the narrative?

We mostly use visual elements and narration by the main character to move the story forward. We also wrote a poem paired with music.

2.7. Are negative capability and migratory cues included?

No, we did not use negative capability or migratory cues.

2.8. Is it possible to identify intermedial texts in the story?

No, there are not any intemedial texts in the story. But the addition of them would definitely benefit our narrative.

3. Worldbuilding

3.1. When the story occurs?

The story occurs in what seems as the present state of our world. Though by focusing primarily on futuristic aspects, we believe it will help our project age well.

3.2. Which is the central world where the project is set?

The central world is the entire world as our main character is forced to change locations. For technical reasons we couldn't achieve that so we strived to depict her life in a contemporary city.

3.3. Is it a fictional world, the real world or a mixture of both?

It's a mixture of both. The world is realistic but there are implications of supernatural phenomena. (Magical Realism)

3.4. How it is presented geographically?

We filmed everything in Syros, but we tried to film on less iconic locations so the viewer can paint a more relatable depiction of the rest of the world based on their own reality.

3.5. How the world looks?

The world is depicted differently based on our main character's emotional state.

In the beginning it looks bright and futuristic, sporting a variety of different saturated colors. Her home and office are ultimately inspired by the Scandinavian style because it's the movement that most middle-class people strive to be able to choose as one of the more affordable options for luxury. Despite that, apart from some playful touches, her home is fairly minimalistic and simple. The balcony of her office building has some amazing views of the city. The scenes of her "new money" days are focusing on the bright aspects of a fantasy we all have: being able to afford everything we dream of. So we chose shops and the beach bar that convey that the best. Her private pool is a contemporary swimming pool.

As her mental and emotional state gets progressively worse, her world changes to one of darker and murkier colors. We are being shown the underbelly of our society, one that we are always so quick to cover up and avoid. The drug addicts, crackhouses, homelessness, overdosing under a bridge.

When our main character starts accepting her fate, the world gets brighter once again, only this time there is no fantasy. Just plain old everyday reality. A neighborhood with old forgotten buildings,

a house full of garbage and old furniture, yet the sun shines through.

3.6. What challenges, dangers, or delights are inherent to this world?

The world doesn't differ all that much from our own. It's not free of dangers like injustice, criminal activity, toxic work culture, burnout and our declining mental state.

But it's also one of everyday delights, those based on the sweetness of experiencing simple pleasures, found only in the presence, if one is open to acknowledge them.

Yet, there's also an underlying threat of supernatural beings of unknown origin. They seem to be able to make suspicious deals with people and alter their current state of reality. With that comes the metaphysical question of "what else is there?".

3.7. Is the storyworld big enough to support expansions?

The storyworld is as big as our current understanding of the universe. Of course it can support infinite expansions, perhaps of different stories of people that have accepted such a deal.

4. Characters

4.1. Who are the primary and secondary characters of the story?

Our main character, Chara, is a relatable woman in her 30s. We see her desperately clinging on to elements of her childhood years (her huge stuffed dog in her apartment, her unnatural hair color and twin-bun hairstyle, her youthful outfit choices. Despite her edging a state of chronic burnout, she's trying to hold on to her childhood dreams.

Our supporting cast is:

The strange figure we call "The notary" or "Dealmaker". It's a creature of unknown origins, though clearly inspired by people making strange deals with "the devil" in western folklore. It doesn't seem to have any empathy or regard for human life and simply revels in the idea of human suffering.

It doesn't seem to care about our main character outside the extent of their deal, so it never contacts her after it. One begs the question "how many lives exactly has this creature ruined?"

The boss is a stern and somewhat cold figure. He moves in quick, decisive and calculated ways. He has little time for unneeded things like common courtesy, but of course he isn't completely devoid of human emotion. He fidgets with his clicker pen as a way to relieve the tension in between meetings and firing inefficient workers.

The snail is an equally mysterious creature. It seems like a common everyday snail, and it sure moves as one. Yet, despite its slow pace and it's frail appearance, one can do little to nothing to destroy it. It's simply unkillable. The best thing one can do is pay someone to stick a gps tracker unit to its body, so that they can be aware of its location to efficiently avoid it.

Chara's friends seem fun to be around and charming, often chasing after her so that they can get a taste of her glamorous lifestyle for themselves. Of course, as the story progresses, we see their true colors. They're only here to have a good time and take advantage of our protagonists' assets. But they never make any effort to be there for her when she's having a bad time. They seem to have completely abandoned her by the time her mental health has reached rock bottom.

4.2. Does the project have any spin-offs¹⁵? If so, who are the spin-offs' protagonists?

We haven't made any plans for any spin-offs so far, but we made a poem which is meant to put the listener to our characters place, passing her emotions and thoughts to the listener.

4.3. Can the storyworld be considered a primary character of its own?

If you're willing to look that far into it.

4.4. Can the audience be considered a character as well?

Kinda, in the beginning of the movie, Chara is talking to the viewer, asking them questions about their life. During the course of the movie, she is entrusting her feelings to the viewer like she would to a close friend.

4.5. Are there non-player characters¹⁶ (NPCs) in this project? If so, who are they and what kind of role do they play (allies, adversaries, helper figures, etc.)?

There are only non-player characters in this project. It's a movie with limited options for engagement from the viewer, apart from personal introspection.

5. Extensions

5.1. How many extensions does the project have?

The main project is the short film and we have an extension of the narrative for it. It is a narrated poem with the voice of our main protagonist.

5.2. Are the extensions adaptations (the intersemiotic translation from one system to another) or expansions of the narrative through various media?

The extensions are an expansion of the movie's main focus and meaning through a narrated poem.

5.3. Is each extension canonical?
Does it enrich the story?

It does enrich the story because it shows a more realistic and human way of thinking. It shows the emotions and thoughts that one may experience in the same situation.

5.4. Does each extension maintain the original characteristics of the world?

No, the poem is made in a way so that the listeners can interpret it as they wish. The one thing that is left intact is the struggle that the main character went through and the road to acceptance.

5.5. Does each extension answer questions left previously unanswered?

The poem is not answering any unanswered questions. Everything is answered in the story.

5.6. Does each extension raise new questions?

No, the poem is just a narrative from the protagonist's feelings, leaving room for imagination and interpretation.

5.7. Do the extensions open up new possibilities for additional expansion?

The extension itself is pretty limited to the way it can evolve to something different other than that.

5.8. Do the extensions have the ability to spread the content and also to provide the possibility to explore the narrative in-depth?

Yes, the poem can be listened to before and after the movie so it can mean different things for each individual person depending on when or if they listened to it.

6. Media platforms and genres

6.1. What kind of media platforms (film, book, comics, games, and so forth) are involved in the project?

This project involves short live action film and a narrated poem

6.2. Which devices (computer, game console, tablet, mobile phone, etc.) are required by the project?

The short film, depending on the distribution, requires any device with access to streaming platforms such as Youtube or Netflix. For the narrated poem it is also required of the user to have access to streaming platforms in addition to audio only content (etc. Spotify)

6.3. How each platform is participating and contributing to the whole project? What are their functions in the project?

The way we are distributing our content, it allows for a wider audience to have access to our project, making it a lot easier for them to share our work

6.4. What are the distinctive characteristics of each media platform?

There are no distinctions between the streaming platforms other than their ease to distribute it. We could also send our project to competitions so it can reach a different kind of audience

6.5. Identify problems that are specific of each medium.

The main medium (short film) was a lot harder to create due to the limitations of our location, budget, equipment etc. The poem had a lot of revisions made in order to keep a balance between storytelling and free expression of each listener.

6.6. Is each medium really relevant to the project?

The movie is relevant to the project, because it develops the story prompt. The poem is made in a way that you don't have to listen to it to understand the story.

6.7. What is the roll-out strategy to release the platforms?

The Roll-out strategy is through social media sharing, taking part in a short movie contest for exposure.

6.8. Which genres (action, adventure, detective, science fiction, fantasy, and so forth) are present in the project?

The main genre is Drama, with elements of Comedy.

7. Audience and market

7.1. What is the target audience of the project? Who is the intended VUP?

Our target audience is people above 16 years old because of explicit images.

7.2. What kind of "viewers" (real-time,reflective, and navigational) does the project attract?

We believe our works will attract some navigational viewers. When one of them is exposed to one of our projects he will seek out the other one in order to create a bigger picture of our story, meanings and characters.

7.3. What kind of entertainment does the target audience enjoy?

A dramatic situation that was also made popular through social media in the form of a short movie.

7.4. What kind of technology/devices are people in this group involved with?

Mainly mobile phones and laptops or stationary computers.

7.5. Why does this project appeal to them?

The theme of the movie is a question that everyone has been asked and has tried to answer. It's a what if i said yes, type of thing.

7.6. Do other projects like this exist?

The theme of the film (what choices in life we make, what defines a happy life), has been expressed quite excessively in many media forms. The way we make explore this theme though (with using a meme about the immortal snail), is rather unheard of.

Do they succeed in achieving their purpose?

Yes they do, mainly because this whole story is inspired from an original meme that gained massive exposure in 2016 on reddit and again in 2021 on TikTok.

7.7. What is the project's business model?

There was no business model.

7.8. Revenue-wise, was the project successful? Why?

This project was made as a university project, so no revenue was made. In theory, if we distributed through online services. Our revenue would be through ads.

8. Engagement

8.1. Through what point of view (PoV)

does the VUP experience this world: first-person, second-person, third-person, or a mixture of them?

The VUP experiences the world through the life of our protagonist (Chara). This makes a third person experience.

8.2. What role does the VUP play in this project?

They are just an observer, watching the world being built around the main character and her decision

8.3. How the project keeps the VUP engaged?

Music, a realistic approach to the concept, fantasy aspects and very cool cinematic shots.

8.4. What are the mechanisms of interaction in this project?

The VUP cannot interact with the project more than watching it.

8.5. Is there also participation involved in the project? If so, how can the VUP participate in the open system?

The VUP has no means of interaction with the system.

8.6. Does the project work as cultural attractor/activator?

No ,the project doesn't work as a cultural attractor.

8.7. How does the VUP affect the outcome? What do they add to the storyworld?

The do not affect the outcome whatsoever

8.8. Are there UGC related to the story (parodies, recaps, mash-ups, fan communities, etc.)?

The story is based on a meme that was posted a while ago on Reddit.

8.9. Does the project offer the VUP the possibility of immersion into the storyworld?

Due to the lack of interaction with the project, immersion is quite unlikely. However, if the viewer connects with our main character and

sees himself in her, we can theorise that some level of immersion will be achieved.

8.10. Does the project offer the VUP the possibility to take away elements of the story and incorporate them into everyday life?

The meaning of the story and the feelings the VUP felt can be incorporated into everyday life.

8.11. Is there an important goal that the VUP is trying to accomplish in the project?

There are no goals that are made clear for the VUP. However, our goal as creators is to make our VUPs to self-reflect, even for just a little bit.

8.12. What will make the VUP want to spend time accomplishing this Goal?

The main motivation of the VUP to accomplish our goal is through the anticipation. Meaning, he wants to sit through our short film all the way in order to experience the ending.

8.13. What adds tension to the experience? Are there any ticking Clocks?

During the first act, the tension comes from the choice that the main character will make. Later on in the film, the feeling of the constant manhunt by the snail, adds to that tension. The ticking clock is the lifespan of the MC.

8.14. Is there a system of rewards and penalties?

No, there are no such systems.

9. Structure

9.1. When did the transmediation begin? Is it a proactive or retroactive TS project?

The project is a proactive TS. It was required for the project to create two types of media for the same story.

9.2. Is it possible to identify any consequences for the project caused by the fact that this is either a pro-active or a retroactive transmedia story?

We do not believe that there was any real, damaging consequence. In fact, it helped us organise our timeline so there was enough time for both media.

9.3. Is this project closer to a transmedia franchise, a portmanteau transmedia story, or a complex transmedia experience?

Our project is much closer to a portmanteau transmedia story. Both works were created to complement one another.

9.4. Can each extension work as an independent entry point for the Story?

No, it's just a poem that expresses the feelings of the protagonist following the main story line

9.5. What are/were possible endpoints of the project?

We believe watching a movie from start to finish is the best way to experience it

9.6. How is the project structured? What are the major units of Organisation?

The project was made by 4 university students. Right from the get go, all four of us had equal say concerning our project and how it should be made.

9.7. How could a map of the story-world be presented?

Because the projects don't support interaction with the VUPs, one way to present a story-world map is through a website that. In order to have access to the website, at the end of each medium (short film, poem) the link will be presented to the VUPs, creating a sense of curiosity.

10. Aesthetics

10.1. What kinds of visuals are being used (animation, video, graphics, a mix) in the project?

For the primary movie, we use video footage taken by a digital mirrorless camera.

For the secondary narrated poem, we use illustrations created by Artificial intelligence, animated on hand and brought to life using computer software.

10.2. Is the overall look realistic or a fantasy environment?

It's meant to look realistic with a touch of futurism and a slightly uncanny valley effect, meant to induce mild discomfort to the viewer, in service of making them feel slightly unsettled, to ponder a bit about their own life.

10.3. Is it possible to identify specific design styles in the project?

Yes! The houses we chose to film in are heavily inspired by the Scandinavian Modern movement.

10.4. How does audio work in this project? Is there ambient sound (rain, wind, traffic noises, etc.), sound effects, music, and so forth?

In filming the movie, we encountered the problem of wind in some of the scenes. Despite the difficulties of trying to get clean, crisp audio, we figured that the natural ambient sounds of wind add to the charm of some of the scenes, so we didn't remove it. We used a mixture of natural sounds and audio effects, all to enhance the immersion of the viewing experience.

Some of the natural ambient sounds we used include the wind, the sounds of a pool, the opening and closing of doors, the ambience of rooms, and dogs barking being a natural response to our character's pleas to get her own life back. Some of the audio effects and songs we used include the ominous sound of a bell when the strange creature enters, the sounds of a cashing machine whenever our character buys something, uplifting music during her glory days, as well as sad cinematic music towards the end of her journey.

In the narrated poem we used a great microphone for enhanced vocal clarity. This way, we can hear every little change of the narrator's tone and expression. We added a background sound of the natural ambience of the recording room, and we also added rain and deep ocean sounds to enhance the moody and suffocating tone

of some parts of the poem. Last but not least, we used a song called "Childhood" by a lesser known composer called Vitaliia Pavlova on their channel called "Infinite Stream". The gloomy and melancholic, yet bittersweet tone of the song fits the theme of the poem like a glove, ultimately making the bigger positive difference in the experience.