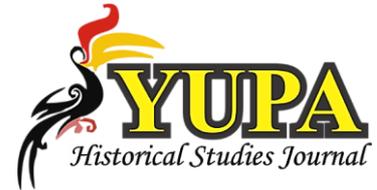


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## Historical Singularity and Alternative Representations of the Hundred Years' War in the Fate/Grand Order Game

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**Abstract** The growing popularity of video games as a means of historical representation has significantly changed how people understand and experience the past. This study analyzes alternative representations of the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) in the video game Fate/Grand Order, with a focus on the figure of Joan of Arc and the narrative construction of the concept of "historical singularity." Using a qualitative approach combining historical methods and virtual ethnography, documented historical events are compared with the game's narrative. The results reveal fundamental differences in chronology, characters, and conflict motives, reflecting a reinterpretation of the past from a transhistorical and fictional perspective. While the game offers pedagogical opportunities to spark interest in history, it also poses the risk of misinterpretation if not accompanied by critical historical literacy. It concludes that digital history, as presented in Fate/Grand Order, must be approached with a reflective eye to foster a deeper understanding of the relationship between historical reality and its cultural representation in digital media.

**Keywords:** Historical Singularity, Video Games, Digital History, Joan of Arc, Fate/Grand Order.

**Abstrak** Meningkatnya popularitas video game sebagai sarana representasi sejarah telah mengubah cara orang memahami dan mengalami masa lalu secara signifikan. Studi ini menganalisis representasi alternatif Perang Seratus Tahun (1337-1453) dalam gim video Fate/Grand Order, dengan fokus pada sosok Joan of Arc dan konstruksi naratif konsep "singularitas historis." Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang menggabungkan metode historis dan etnografi virtual, peristiwa sejarah yang terdokumentasi dibandingkan dengan narasi gim. Hasilnya menunjukkan perbedaan mendasar dalam kronologi, karakter, dan motif konflik, yang mencerminkan penafsiran ulang masa lalu dari perspektif transhistoris dan fiksi. Meskipun gim ini menawarkan peluang pedagogis untuk memicu minat dalam sejarah, gim ini juga menimbulkan risiko salah tafsir jika tidak disertai dengan literasi sejarah yang kritis. Disimpulkan bahwa sejarah digital, seperti yang disajikan dalam Fate/Grand Order, harus didekati dengan pandangan reflektif untuk menumbuhkan pemahaman yang lebih dalam antara realitas sejarah dan representasi budayanya dalam media digital.

**Kata kunci :** Singularitas Sejarah, Permainan Video, Sejarah Digital, Joan of Arc, Fate/Grand Order.



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## INTRODUCTION

The game industry in the 21st century is currently experiencing a rapid surge in development across various dimensions, both internally within the game, such as story writing, character development, and digitalization of in-game elements. With the advancement of digital technology, the delivery of historical narratives has undergone a significant transformation. While in the past, history was learned through textbooks, archival documents, and academic lectures, today digital media such as films, short videos, and even video games have become new channels for conveying stories of the past to younger generations. These digital media present history not simply as a collection of facts, but as a narrative reconstructed through powerful visualization and interactivity. One way to learn history is by using various media such as history books, textbooks, historical notes, scientific articles about history or modern times using contemporary media such as documentary videos on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and other social media; however, video games are also a form of new learning patterns that students can utilize. (Carretero et al., 2022). One prominent example is *Fate/Grand Order* (FGO), a popular mobile game based on historical fiction narrative that presents alternative stories of various historical events with a transmedia and transhistorical narrative approach (Peñate Domínguez, 2022).

Academic attention to popular media, such as games, becomes important when the narratives they construct not only differ from but also distort historical facts. Historical representations in games are often dramatic, fantastical, and inaccurate, as seen in *Singularity: Hundred Years War of the Evil Dragons* in *Fate/Grand Order*, which is loosely based on the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) between England and France. Historical figures like Joan of Arc are reimagined as “Joan Alter,” a fictionalized version born from time distortion and the use of magical artifacts, such as the Holy Grail (Boyd, 2021; Kawaguchi & Type-Moon, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c).

This phenomenon raises profound epistemological and pedagogical issues. On the one hand, games can be an effective tool in fostering interest in history. On the other hand, there is a risk that players, especially younger generations, will absorb narratives that are inconsistent with historical facts without a critical understanding of them. The concept of “historical singularity” in FGO is not simply science fiction, but rather a reflection of how history is reconstructed in digital narrative spaces, which can be both an opportunity and a challenge in contemporary history education (Peñate Domínguez, 2022; Seo, 2022).

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to examine how *Fate/Grand Order* presents an alternative representation of the Hundred Years' War and to what extent the *Singularity* depicted in this game represents a shift in the meaning of history in digital culture for a global society studying history. With a history-based approach and virtual ethnography, this article is

expected to contribute to the study of digital history, social studies education, and popular culture studies. Therefore, this article aims to explain how the concept of the form of change in the historical Singularity of the Hundred Years' War, as depicted in the Fate/Grand Order game, relates to the historical reality recorded in World historical documents and its significance in today's history learning.

## **METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative approach, combining two primary methods: historical methods and virtual ethnography. The historical method is employed to review the chronology and facts of the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) as recorded in historical sources, including Carpentier et al. (2011), Djaja (2012), Syariffudin et al. (2020), Wicaksono (2024), and Nelson (1993). The analysis is conducted across three major phases of the war, examining important figures such as Edward III, Charles V, Henry V, and Joan of Arc, as well as the accompanying political and social context. Data search is conducted through literature studies, both from printed and online documents, to reconstruct a historical narrative based on factual documentation. The goal is to provide a valid historical foundation before being compared with the narrative created in digital media and history books (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Zed, 2008).

Meanwhile, virtual ethnography was applied to explore historical representations in the Fate/Grand Order game, particularly in the First Singularity: Hundred Years War of the Evil Dragons section. Researchers conducted participatory and non-participatory observations of the game's visuals, narrative text, characters, and conflict scenarios. Game documentation and supporting sources, such as the manga or anime adaptations, as well as online communities, became part of the unit of analysis. Virtual ethnography enables researchers to explore how historical narratives are reinterpreted in digital spaces and how historical figures are reimagined as fictional characters within new narrative contexts. The analysis was conducted by comparing key aspects—such as chronology, characters, conflicts, and resolutions—between the actual history and the game narrative, to examine the forms of Singularity that emerge and their impact on players' understanding of history (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Fate/Grand Order (2014–present; hereafter referred to as FGO) is a mobile gacha game by Delightworks and now managed by Lasengle, which is part of the larger Fate franchise. Simply put, in this game, the player, as a Master, can summon heroic spirits known as 'Servants' to aid the player in battle and save the world. Servants are usually drawn from the real world, and they can be historical figures (such as Florence Nightingale and Charlemagne), legendary/mythological creatures (such as King Arthur and Heracles), or literary characters

(such as Moriarty and Astolfo). Fate/Grand Order serves as an exemplary case of how visual design and storytelling can be utilized to engage readers and offer fresh perspectives on historical figures. The creative choices made by the game's developers in balancing historical accuracy and artistic interpretation contribute to the ongoing discourse about the representation of historical figures in popular culture (Mufid, 2023; Salvador & Mizumo Tomotani, 2024).

The concept of historical fact is a type of fact related to history. Proving an event as a historical fact requires evidence with a high level of authentication and credibility. Under common assumptions, the difference between two historical facts is referred to as historical distortion (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018). While the concept of historical Singularity itself refers to the word Singularity which means oddity, strangeness, specialness, exception and specialness in the case of the form of historical Singularity itself is based on the form of oddity and strangeness in the changes in historical facts themselves in the game Fate / Grand Order, another definition of the form of Singularity is an unobserved region that does not exist in the historical records of mankind or can also be called an alternative timeline in history. It can also be described as an open hole in the timeline. Certain Singularities have their conditions and mechanisms that are influenced by the emergence of the Holy Grail, which causes a clash of strange changes in the foundation of human history (STIN, 2020).

The historical event that became a form of Singularity in the Fate / Grand Order game is the One Hundred Years War or Hundred Years War (1337 - 1453) between the Kingdom of France and the Kingdom of England, various historical figures are featured in this era such as Jean d'Arc as the central character of the story besides the game protagonist, Fujimaru Ritsuka. A comparison of historical stories that are very different from the original is that the hundred years war based on history is divided into three periods, namely the First Period in the range of 1337 - 1360 with a focus on King Edward III of England who claimed the throne of the Kingdom of France and ended in a peace treaty on May 8, 1360 in Bretigny, France; Furthermore, the second period in the range of 1369 - 1389, the peace treaty between England and France was no longer valid after Charles V of France began to pursue his ambition to get rid of England. Charles V chose to avoid open battle and focused more on relying on the security of his palace. Additionally, he chose to launch attacks on the southern coast of England because his navy was superior. Most of Aquitaine was captured in 1372, the English fleet was defeated at La Rochelle that same year, and by 1375, the only remaining English hold in France was Calais. Tensions only eased after the truce of 1389, and finally, the Third Period, from 1389 to 1428, when Edward III was no longer in control of the English government. However, Henry V was. Henry V vowed to conquer France and establish his empire. His hopes were fulfilled when the English won another battle and captured Agincourt (Boyd, 2021; Carpentier et al., 2011; Djaja, 2012; Nelson, 1993; Wicaksono, 2024).

This victory ensured England technically controlled western and northern France. After Henry V abdicated, his son, Henry VI, succeeded him as king of England. Meanwhile, France, previously ruled by Charles VI, was succeeded by Charles VII. However, many French commanders were disappointed with Charles VII's leadership, which they considered too weak and lacking ambition to reclaim French territory from the English. France's morale was revived with the emergence of Joan of Arc, who led her country to victory at the Battle of Orleans and forced the English to withdraw. Next, the French captured Reims after a long battle. From then on, territories previously controlled by England were recaptured one by one. According to history, the Hundred Years' War itself ended at Castillon in 1453, where the French successfully captured Guyenne from the English. A peace treaty never marked the end of the Hundred Years' War, but instead died out naturally because the English recognized that the French forces were too strong for them to overcome. Thus, France officially emerged as the victor, marking the end of the Hundred Years' War (Boyd, 2021; Carpentier et al., 2011; Djaja, 2012; Nelson, 1993; Syaefudin et al., 2020).

**Figure 1. *First Singularity: Hundred Years War of The Evil Dragons Orleans, The Holy Maiden Savior***Banner



Source: Fate/Grand Order (2016)

Meanwhile, the singularity story version written in Fate/Grand Order, titled "First Singularity: Hundred Years War of the Evil Dragons Orleans, The Holy Maiden Savior," takes place in France in 1431 AD, shortly after the death of Saint Joan of Arc. Gilles de Rais attempted to resurrect Joan with the Holy Grail but was unsuccessful. Instead, Gilles created a new Jeanne from the Holy Grail he obtained, and a new Joan d'Arc was born from Gilles de Rais's wish. The new Joan (Joan Alter Ego) then summoned five more Servants and gave them all the Berserker attributes. Joan Alter, Gilles de Rais, and their troops then began a war motivated by their desire for revenge against France. The appearance of this new Joan also gave rise to the character of Joan of Arc, who is portrayed as a saint with a gentle heart (Kawaguchi & Type-Moon, 2022a).

After that, they managed to kill King Charles VII and many others, including Pierre Cauchon (Bishop who played an important role in the death of Joan d'Arc), who was personally burned to death by Joan Alter. The core story of this Singularity itself is to save France from the alliance established by Joan d'Arc Alter who seeks revenge and rule France with her power as a Witch and ruler of the Dragons who destroyed cities in France and caused chaos, Ritsuka Fujimaru as the Master who came at that time managed to win the fight against Joan d'Arc Alter

with the help of the original Joan d'Arc who was also summoned in the historical Singularity, so that the Singularity that occurred returned to the initial form of the foundation of human history(Boyd, 2021; Kawaguchi & Type-Moon, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c; Oti et al., 2017; Shiramine & Type-Moon, 2022a, 2022b).



**Figure 2. Central Characters in the First Singularity Story (Left-Right: Joan d'Arc, Joan d'Arc Alter, Marie Antonniete & Mozart)**

Source: Lasengle (2022)

So, seeing the differences in storytelling or conveying historical events in media such as games, there is a form of modification to the authenticity of the historical form itself according to the scenario written by the storywriter himself who provides strong spices that give an interesting impression, so that by rewriting the story that is poured into the game, it forms a new color that can attract potential players or those who enjoy history in the form of the game itself, for that they can explore the story that has been written in the game rather than the facts that happened according to the existing historical facts.(Sembiring et al., 2022; Seo, 2022).

Therefore, it is important for someone who studies history itself not to distort his understanding of the game towards the historical facts that occurred so that with the form of presentation of historical information in the Fate / Grand Order game itself, it is hoped that those who study history and consumers of the game can be more critical and able to compare the form of conception of historical facts that happened with the form of information written in the game. Therefore, the depiction of historical figures that appear in the game, especially in the French Singularity stage, is a real strength to attract the interest of game players both in Japan and globally, because this game already has many servers such as Japan, Korea, China, and Global (Baihaqi et al., 2022; Fukuoka, 2011; Марчел & Хендра, 2023).

Upon closer examination, numerous discrepancies are found between the actual history and the narrative in Fate/Grand Order. For example, in real history, Joan of Arc never led a dragon army or burned King Charles VII; instead, she supported Charles's ascension to the throne. However, in the game, Charles is depicted as a victim of Joan Alter's cruelty, essentially a reversal of the real Joan. This reconstruction can be interpreted as both narrative entertainment and an epistemic deviation that needs to be critically examined by historical researchers to provide in-

depth insight so that young people who play the game can gain a factual historical perspective not only by enjoying the story in the game but also by comparing the historical facts with what they learn from the game.(Boyd, 2021; Марчел & Хендра, 2023).

On the other hand, the transhistorical approach used in the game allows players to experience alternative versions of history. This can have pedagogical potential if accompanied by adequate historical knowledge. Players can feel emotional involvement with historical figures, but they also risk internalizing inaccurate information if not accompanied by critical thinking skills. This is the focus of history educators in providing insight to their students who enjoy this information. The importance of critical thinking in today's history learning enables us to enhance the sustainability of history education in schools, making it meaningful, significant, and relevant to the way we think as individuals who learn history (Peñate Domínguez, 2022). Therefore, the educational function of media, such as games, must be understood not as a substitute for history, but rather as a complementary medium that requires support for historical literacy, so that current digital media content provides a new perspective on studying history in schools and the broader community. The representation of history in games such as FGO reflects the increasingly dominant digital cultural trend in shaping society's collective perception of the past. In many cases, popular culture can reconstruct history as a "consumer product" packaged emotionally and aesthetically, rather than based on factual accuracy (Boyd, 2021; Carretero et al., 2022; Mufid, 2023). This poses a challenge for history education, particularly in distinguishing between "history as it happened" and "history as it is told" or "historical dramatizations" that emphasize fictional elements, so that concern in learning history is significant for both individuals and history teachers themselves (Handy, 2021; Tanjung et al., 2022).

Reading this phenomenon can utilize the perspective of representation theory, as proposed by Stuart Hall (1997), which states that meaning does not lie in the historical object itself, but in how it is interpreted and circulated within culture. Therefore, Fate/Grand Order not only represents historical events but also imbues them with a new meaning within the framework of entertainment, ideology, and the current global market, which is loved by our society. Therefore, educators and researchers need to develop media literacy strategies in history education, enabling students to distinguish between historical reality and popular fiction reflectively, as this is crucial information for studying both Indonesian and world history (Mufid, 2023; Nurshadrina, 2015).

## **CONCLUSION**

The results of this study suggest that Fate/Grand Order offers an alternative and speculative approach to historical representation through the concept of historical Singularity. The Hundred Years' War, historically recorded as a political and dynastic conflict between

England and France, is significantly transformed in the game into a transdimensional conflict with magical elements, reincarnated figures, and time distortions. Characters such as Joan of Arc are represented as Joan Alter, who becomes an antagonist who is ideologically and emotionally at odds with her historical self. This demonstrates that the game's narrative does not attempt to be a factual representation of history, but rather a creative arena that reshapes history for the sake of entertainment and dramatization.

Nevertheless, these findings also underscore the importance of a critical approach to popular media in history learning. Games like *Fate/Grand Order* can be a gateway to fostering interest in history, especially among the digital generation. However, without strong historical literacy, there is a risk of misunderstanding historical events and figures. Therefore, educators and researchers in the fields of history and social studies education need to utilize digital media contextually and reflectively, not merely as a means of entertainment but also as a learning tool that sparks dialogue between fact and fiction, between the recorded past and the past reconstructed through popular culture.

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