My thesis argues that a narrative shift has occurred within videogames that is correlated to the increased acceptance of women in the game industry as a result of the events surrounding Gamergate in 2014. For the first section of my thesis I describe the differences between “story driven games” and “gameplay driven games,” an important distinction underpinning the shift in videogames in the past year.

I then address underlying fears of the radical gamers who spearheaded the Gamergate movement, and their association of women with narrative. Women developers became a symbol for larger changes towards narrative emphasis in video games, which sparked general animosity to any women associated with the industry as well as towards narrative. The ordeal that started “the Gamergate movement” centered on an independent developer named Zoe Quinn who released a game called Depression Quest, which was textually based. The developer was then harassed to the point of fearing for her life. What started with Zoe Quinn then became witch-hunt for female developers and game journalists industry wide.

With Gamergate subsided, a new acceptance of narrative led to stronger story based games that focus on character interactions and dialogue. In this thesis I used Telltale’s The Walking Dead as a case study that demonstrates this new form of game, or what Telltale terms as their “super show format.” Telltale’s “super show format” is then shown from a series of shot analyses taken from the game that show the short cut-scenes interweaved with player choice and action.

The conflicts surrounding Gamergate highlighted the need for stronger inclusion of women in the industry, and since then there have been improvements. With better representation of women in the industry have come stronger interests in innovative game narratives.