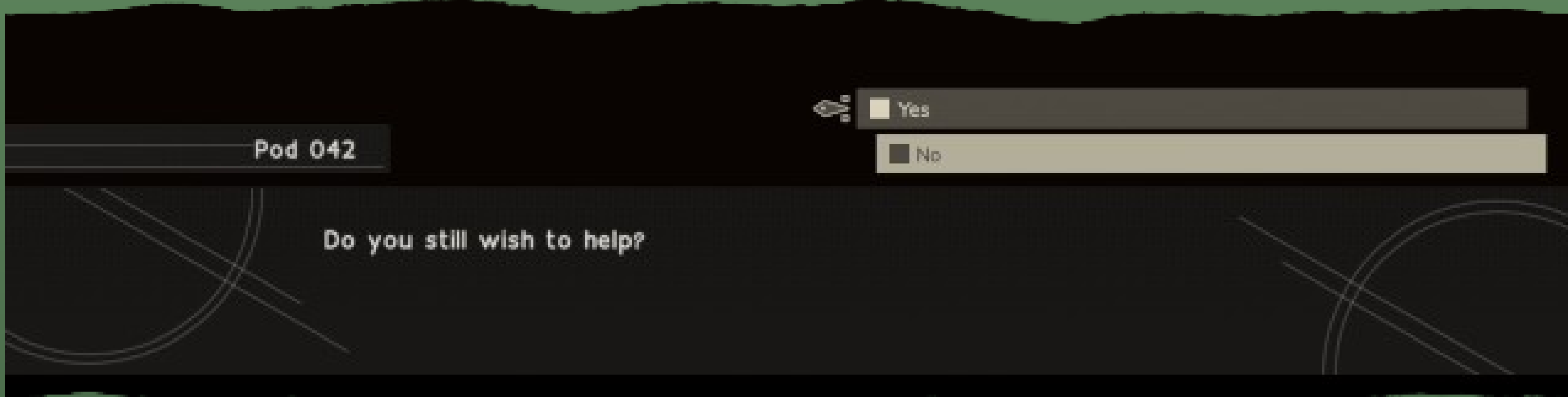


NieR: Automata

Narrative Review by Mathew Rosario

"For the first time it finally felt as though I could let all the hurt that I bottled up inside of me for all of these years go. As I watched my save file be deleted, I also felt part of that pain be deleted as well. But more than that, it felt as though that pain wasn't just disappearing into the ether, but was actually going to help someone else. For me, that sort of closure is beyond anything that I could have ever hoped for. "



"A future is not given to you. It is something you must take for yourself."

Narrative Through Game Mechanics

The strongest element in NieR: Automata is its ability to weave narrative elements into game mechanics and its ability to make that conversion impactful. The strongest and most obvious example of this is the respawning system of 2B and 9S. The opening line of the game centers around the idea that the protagonists are trapped in a perpetual cycle.

"Everything that lives is designed to end. We are perpetually trapped in a never-ending spiral of life and death. Is this a curse?" -2B

Yet, this narrative device is subverted at the end of the game. The player is given the option to delete their entire save file of the game in order to help another player defeat the final boss, just as how the player was given aid during that segment. The "cycle" is finally broken when the player decides to symbolically sacrifice themselves for somebody else, something we consider in our culture to be the ultimate symbol of humanity, something the protagonists desired to understand.

