

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Visual Novels

Visual Novels are an interactive way to experience a narrative. However, what differentiates visual novels between other interactive narratives such as mediums like “Choose your Own Adventure” Books, where the readers will have to flip to a specific page to choose how their story flows (Cook, 2020), visual novels utilize a digital medium which lets it use its technology to portray a story through storytelling, visual elements, and interactivity (Rinne, 2019). One characteristic which sets visual novels apart from things such as graphic novels, which also uses visual elements to portray a story, is the implementation of story choices that the player may choose throughout the story. These choices are deliberately put in place in certain points of the story by the developers and each choice can lead to a difference in story, whether it be from small changes like dialog changes between one choice from the other, to large changes such as different endings/outcomes as a result of the players choices.

2.1.1 Benefits of Visual Novels

Visual Novels have various benefits in portraying or adapting a story in comparison to using traditional mediums such as books. One such benefit is taking advantage of the technology used in a digital medium which can result to visual novels being a more accessible piece of media that can be more easily spread in the era of digital media (Mills, 2020). In relation to the usage of technology, the interactivity implemented in visual novels can result to an increase in interest towards the story/topic portrayed in the visual novel and from the usage of interactivity, the players could also form an emotional bond between the reader and the story due to story choices made by the player (Cesário & Nisi, 2023). Another benefit of visual novels are its usage as an educational medium, as a study by Tokarskaya et al. (2023) concludes that using visual novels as a teaching method results in a more interesting

educational process towards those with intellectual disabilities and even encourage reading and comprehension. Therefore, visual novels serves as an easily spread medium to convey story as they have the advantages of being a digital form of media as well as being an interactive way to get its users invested emotionally through the story choices while being an effective way to teach the users on educational matters.

2.1.2 Types of Visual Novels

Similar to movies, there are various types of visual novels that can be categorized into several genres. These genres are sorted based on the theme and contents of the visual novel, and can even overlap with genres from other media such as movies and books, or even video games. Such genres are explained by Finley (2022) in her book explaining visual novels which are listed below;

1. Interactive Visual Novel

This genre of visual novel is a combination of visual novel elements with video game elements, most notably the interactivity/gameplay from video games combined with the storytelling elements from visual novels. For example, the Persona series from the publisher Atlas, a turn-based RPG which utilizes visual novel aspects such as character sprites, dialog options, and branching stories to depict the story of the games.



Figure 2.1 Screenshot of Persona 5 Royal
Source: https://store.steampowered.com/app/1687950/Persona_5_Royal/

2. Kinetic Visual Novel

Unlike most visual novels, this type of visual novel follows a linear storyline with no branching paths. Despite this, this genre is still considered a visual novel due to the main characteristics of a visual novel which is its visual elements such as character sprites and UI and its audio elements. An example of this genre of visual novel can be seen in *The Fountain* by Jeanne Foissard.

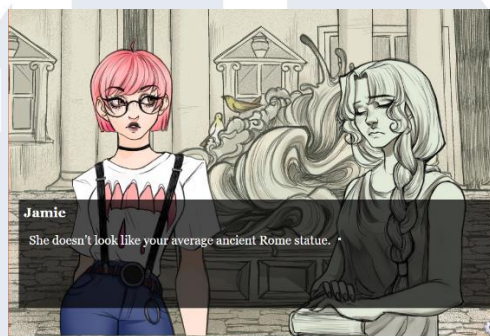


Figure 2.2 Screenshot of The Fountain
Source: <https://jeannefoissard.itch.io/the-fountain>

3. Romance

Romance visual novels are a popular genre of visual novel. This genre mainly focuses on the main character of the visual novel choosing the correct options to achieve the affection of a love interest. Therefore, the biggest characteristics of a romance visual novel are the choices, the characters who act as the love interests, and the branching paths alongside their different endings.



Figure 2.3 Screenshot of Touchstarved
Source: <https://store.steampowered.com/app/2185510/TOUCHSTARVED/>

4. Stat Raising

In this genre of visual novel, they incorporate a mechanic called stat raising to continue forward with the story told within this genre. This mechanic entails that the choices made in the story will be affected by statistics that must be increased by the player. To increase the stats, it often relates to grinding elements or the act of doing an action in the game repeatedly. Examples of this genre includes games such as the *Monster Prom* series made by Beautiful Glitch.



Figure 2.4 Screenshot of Monster Prom

Source: https://store.steampowered.com/app/743450/Monster_Prom/

5. Dating Simulator

A combination of the romance and stat raising genre, dating simulators are romance centered visual novels where the main character must raise certain stats which relates to a love interest in the game to be able to pursue them. An example of this genre of dating simulator is the *Tokimeki Memorial* series by Konami.



Figure 2.5 Screenshot of Tokimeki Memorial

Source: <https://www.pcgamesn.com/tokimeki-memorial-english>

6. Mobile Visual Novel

As the title of genre indicates, this genre solely uses the mobile platform to house their visual novels, however that is not the only difference between other genres and the mobile visual novel genre, as their monetization is one of the biggest characteristics of this genre. This is due to the usage of microtransactions within this genre of games. To make a choice in mobile visual novels, player must pay microtransactions to choose a specific option, which can be achieved through payment or watching ads. Examples of this genre includes *Episode* created by Pocket Gems.



Figure 2.5 Screenshot of Episode

Source: <https://www.reddit.com/r/Episode/comments/tdcj6h/episode...>

2.1.3 Visual Novel Structure

According to Rinley (2019), what makes a visual novel is the contents and structure of the medium in which it is explained that a visual novel consists of a story, audio-visual elements, and its interactivity. Such aspects of the visual novel will be explained below.

2.1.3.1 Storytelling

Storytelling is the art of telling a story to their readers or listeners and consists of a pattern of events which will be combined into a single plot (Echols, 2014). There are various ways to tell or convey a story, starting from points of views such as first or third person, in which the player will have to view the story from the eyes of the main character or a narrator, to events which relates thematically, chronologically, or repetition. Storytelling can be divided into three types which includes;

1. Linear

A linear story is a type of story structure which explains a story in a straight continuous line (Miller, 2019). This means that the development of the story develops according to a previously determined plot point that cannot be altered or changed by the player or their choices.

2. Non-linear

Unlike linear stories, non-linear stories have various options and choices that can affect the story's development. These choices let the player freely choose which outcome they would like the story to lead to, as non-linear stories have multiple endings which are determined by the choices made by the player.

3. Modular

Meanwhile modular stories are a type of story structure that includes more than one plotline occurring at the same time. Some stories in this type of story structure would have the storylines relate to one another or collide, however some stories using this structure have multiple storylines which do not correlate to the overall storyline (Sheldon, 2022).

2.1.3.2 Interactivity

According to Rafaeli et al. (2004), interactivity can be described as an expression in which someone was to exchange communication from one another, and any other exchanges or message will be related to the previous exchange. Meanwhile, Zeman (2017) defines interactivity by breaking down the two words which makes up the word interactivity, which is inter, between two things, and action, which is to do something. Therefore, Interactivity can be described as communication or an action done between two things.

In the context of interactivity in a digital medium, there are several types of interactivities. According to Thompson (2020), interactivity

can be categorized into three types. The types of interactivity are known as *face-to-face*, a symbolic form of interaction which co-present in space and time, *Mediated-interaction*, interactions that are separated from space and time such as writing letters where the interaction between the two individuals do not take place in the same space or time, and *Mediated quasi-interaction*, a type of interaction that is not bound to space or time and not bound to a single or specific amount of people to receive the interaction.

2.1.4 Visual Novel Design Elements

Another aspect that differentiates a visual novel between a traditional media such as books are their usage of visual elements. These visual elements work as visual context which helps immerse the readers further into the story and enhances the readers' experience. These elements are separated into five parts by Finley (2023), which are explained below.

2.1.4.1 User Interface

User Interface, also known as UI, is the creation of interfaces for digital mediums with the goal of making the interface pleasing to the eye and easy to navigate (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016). In the context of visual novels, UI is used to display important parts of a visual novel such as the text boxes in which the dialog and story will be presented in, or other aspects such as settings (Finley, 2023).



Figure 2.6 Example of Visual Novel UI
Source: https://shared.fastly.steamstatic.com/store_item_as...

Typically, the user interface of a visual novel consists of several elements which either displays the content of the visual novel or provide buttons which improves the experience of playing the visual novel. These elements are described by Ciesla (pg. 109, 2019) as seen below.

A. Text Display Area

Text Display Areas are dedicated spaces in the screen which displays text containing the contents of the narrative. They are often placed at the bottom of the screen and lets players read dialog.

B. Choice Menus

One of the main aspects of a visual novel which separates itself from other interactive stories are the choices in which the player can choose. These choices are displayed through the choices menu and lets players choose multiple options to forward the narrative.

C. Save/Load System

This element of the visual novel is a button which can be portrayed as a text or as an icon that lets players save their progress or load a previous save which helps in letting them explore the various paths presented by the narrative.

D. Settings Menu

The settings menu is a collection of buttons which lets players adjust the visual novel to their liking such as adjust text speed, volume, or display options. These options can be combined into one singular collection of buttons or separated into their own buttons representing each available settings option.

E. Skip/Auto mode

This aspect of the user interface allows players to skip certain dialogs or cutscenes within a visual novel or let the game

automatically cycle through dialog without needing the interactivity of clicking through dialog.

2.1.4.2 Character Sprites

A character is a participant of the narrative being told within a visual novel. These characters are often times the vessel in which the narrative will be portrayed through and have a range of different purposes throughout the story. An example of such are the characters who move the story forwards such as the protagonist, the main character which progresses the story, and the antagonist, the character opposing the main character to create conflict and an end goal (Berry & Brown, 2017).

Character sprites are the illustrations used to portray the characters in a visual novel, this acts as a visual representation of characters such as the main character, side characters, or NPCs. These character sprites are oftentimes presented as either static or animated. Figures of the character and shows a range of emotions which would relate to the events of the story or the characters dialog.



Figure 2.7 Example of Character Sprites

Source: <https://homestuck.net/img/resources/assets/uncategor...>

2.1.4.3 Background Art

Background art is the accompanying visual to go along with character sprites, as they are the visual representation of the world/setting

of the story being portrayed in the visual novel. The amount and usage of background art solely depends on the story and its events. For example, if a visual novel was set in a school setting, the background required would only need to be those representing a school setting such as classrooms or hallways.



Figure 2.8 Example of Background Art Used in Visual Novels
Source: <https://www.tumblr.com/pabster/163258777902/i-did...>

2.1.4.4 Computer Graphics

Computer graphics, or also known as CGs, are illustrations which visualizes a special event or moment within the story that uses illustrations outside of character sprites. These CGs are typically presented during an important plot beat within the story, or a part of a reward when achieving something within the visual novel, such as going through a specific milestone.

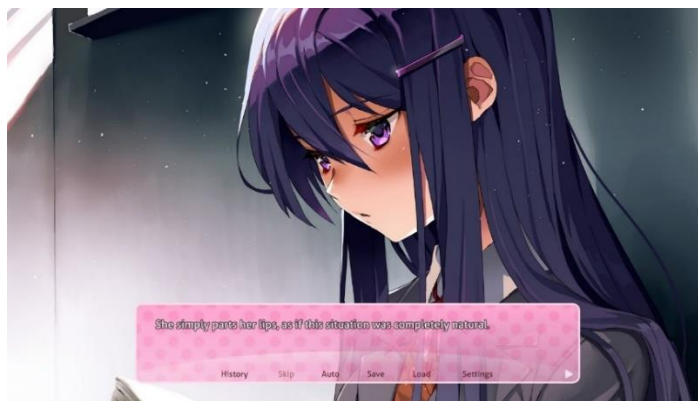


Figure 2.9 Example of Computer Graphics
Source: https://store.steampowered.com/app/1388880/Doki_Doki_Literature_Club_Plus/

2.1.4.5 Soundtrack

A soundtrack consists of various sounds from music to ambient sounds that helps add immersion or emotion into the story portrayed in the visual novel. Ambient sounds like the sounds of birds chirping or the whistling of wind helps bring the static setting in a visual novel come to life and make the setting feel more dynamic. Music also serves an important purpose in visual novels as they add to the atmosphere and emotions/themes of a certain setting or character.

2.2 Sang Hyang Antaboga

Sang Hyang Antaboga is a figure from Javanese culture that is believed to reside in the seventh layer of the earth named *Saptapratala* (Sutardjo, 2001). This figure is often seen in various artifacts originating from Java and folklore passed down from generation to generation using the usage of shadow puppetry also known as *pewayangan*. According to Solichin (2017), Sang Hyang Antaboga is identified as a Javanese dragon or *naga* that goes under several different names such as, Sang Yang Nagasesa, Sang Hyang Naga Anantaboga, Sang Hyang Basuki and Sang Hyang Nagaraja. This figure has multiple abilities such as being able to shapeshift into any being with its powers named *Aji Kawastraman* as well as owning holy water named *Tirta Amerta* which has the power to bring back the dead. During the evolution of Javanese history, the people of Java consider this figure as a God that supports and protects the earth and even had the belief that earthquakes happen during the whip of Sang Hyang Antaboga's tail whenever he is angered by the evil of the world (Girinata, 2016, pg. 33-34).

2.2.1 Physiology

As previously mentioned, Sang Hyang Antaboga has the ability to shapeshift using its powers named *Aji Kawastraman*, however, many depictions of this figure often times uses his two main forms, one of a dragon and the other of a God. His draconic form depicts him as a snake-like figure with green scales and adorned with accessories such as a crown with *garuda mungkur* on his head, a necklace, and a tail in the shape of a flower bud.

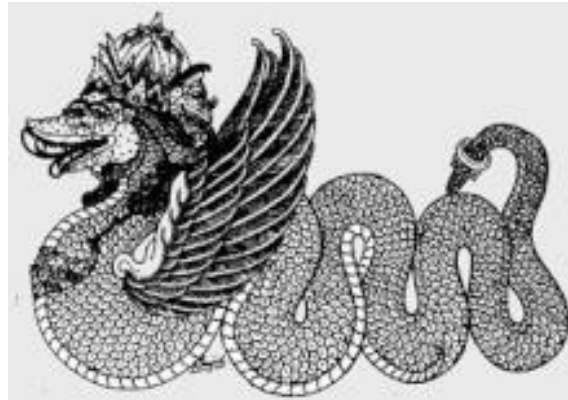


Figure 2.10 Sang Hyang Antaboga

Source: <http://wayangprabu.com/galeri-wayang/tokoh-mahabarata/wayang-a/antaboga/>

There are also some depictions of his draconic form that depicts him having wings shaped like a bird or with a pair of arms. However, there are specific characteristics in his appearance that are set in stone which can be used to identify Sang Hyang Antaboga, specifically in shadow puppetry (*pewayangan*). These characteristics also holds certain meanings that further describes Sang Hyang Antaboga's personality and placement in the folklore conveyed through shadow puppetry which will be explained below;

1. Sang Hyang Antaboga's mouth always bears his teeth, showing his gums and fangs, this feature catagorizes his character as a *raksasa* or giant in shadow puppetry.
2. His eyes are described as *gabahan* or *liyepan* which gives the impression of narrow eyes that represents a sharp and careful gaze.
3. His main colors are green which is symbolized to mean "*kiblat papat lima pancer*" in Javanese which means that this character tends to show off.
4. Sang Hyang Antaboga is always depicted wearing a crown which in shadow puppetry represents the role of the character which are the roles of a king or a God.
5. The position of his head in shadow puppetry is always positioned to be looking up which signifies the character is an agile, nimble, and dexterous character.



Figure 2.11 Sang Hyang Antaboga's God Form
Source: <https://wayang.wordpress.com/2010/03/10/antaboga/>

Meanwhile, Sang Hyang Antaboga's God form depicts him as a bearded man with wide eyes, adorning a crown and wearing full Godly attire. An attire that consists of a shirt, an Indonesian shawl called *selendang*, shoes, and a helmet with a depiction of another mythical creature named *garuda* at the back. In contrast to his draconic appearance, this version of his appearance is often presented to have his head positioned in a lowered bowing position which represents a more polite personality.

2.2.2 Life Story

Sang Hyang Antaboga, or as he's known throughout his childhood as Sang Yang Nagasesa, is the eldest son of Anantanaga, the father, and Dewiwasu, the mother. His lineage comes from the *naga* tribe also known as the snake tribe, which often have conflicts with the *kaga* tribe who are a tribe of birds. The *naga* tribe are known to be cruel and deceitful, yet Sang Yang Nagasesa does not wish to engage in evil acts such as the acts in which the *naga* tribe tricked the *kaga* tribe into being their slaves, and instead Sang Yang Nagasesa devotes his life to meditation to be able to purify himself from evil and behaves in a way which reflects his priesthood and good nature (Prabowo, 2014).

The name Sang Hyang Antaboga in actuality is a title given to Sang Yang Nagasesa after helping the Gods in two instances, the first being retrieving the *Tirta Amerta* which is the holy water that revives the dead. Sang

Yang Nagasesa retrieves this holy water from its origins, which is a mountain named Mount Mandira which had been flipped and sunk into the ocean. Using Sang Yang Nagasesa's shapeshifting ability, he transformed into a large dragon that was able to wrap itself around the mountain to pull it out of the ocean, giving access to *Tirta Amerta* which could be obtained by the Gods. The Gods, grateful for his assistance, gave him the *Tirta Amerta* as his heirloom.

The second instance revolves around delivering a sacred object named *Cupu Linggamanik* to Batara Guru, a God who created the earth and is mankind's ancestor. During this delivery, the *Cupu Linggamanik* slipped into Nagasesa's mouth while he was resting in a cave called Ringrong. Once awakened, Nagasesa opened his mouth and out came a woman that was named Dewi Sri who shall become Batara Wisnu's wife. With these two kind-hearted acts, the Gods bestowed upon Nagasesa the title of Sang Hyang Antaboga or Sang Hyang Nagaraja and assigned him to rule and lead Saptapratala, the seventh layer of the earth in which his home now resides.



Figure 2.12 Nagagini Speaking to Her Father Antaboga
Source: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:230509>

Within the palace located in Saptapratala, Sang Hyang Antaboga shares a home with his wife, Dewi Superti, alongside his two children, Bambang Naga Tatmala and Dewi Nagagini. Throughout the rest of his life story, he serves to protect the earth and aid his children which form into folklore used in shadow puppetry.

2.2.3 Historical Origins

Sang Hyang Antaboga's oldest records are dated back to 1396 AD seen in a relief in Candi Sawentar, a Hindhu temple located in East Java, depicting Sang Hyang Antaboga swallowing the sun, which is a representation of the Majapahit kingdom's downfall. Yet despite these records, there is a high likelihood that Sang Hyang Antaboga's origins date further back than its physical presence, as Sang Hyang Antaboga appears during the development of Hindu-Buddhist religion in Indonesia and his stories are often spread through word of mouth. Therefore, due to the nature of being passed down through generations orally, there is a high possibility that this figures existence dates further back than the oldest record of his appearance through artifacts.



Figure 2.13 Relief depicting Nagaraja at Candi Sawentar
Source: <https://travellersblitar.com/candi-sawentar-blitar/>

Throughout the evolution of Indonesia's culture, the Javanese people started to worship dragons as Gods, their snake-like appearance symbolizes blessings and fertility, therefore there are many relics of the past in which dragon Figurery are used to protect and fertilize their land. Sang Hyang Antaboga was also worshipped as a God that protects and supports the earth, and was believed to achieve Godhood as a result of his wise and helpful nature (Marsudi, 2015).



Figure 2.14 Statue of Antaboga at Goa Antaboga
Source: <https://statics.indozone.news/local/6400142d379ee.jpg>

As the belief in Sang Hyang Antaboga grew, the people of Java speculated that a cave located in Mount Arjuno holds the location of a giant snake that is believed to be the figure of Sang Hyang Antaboga. It is said that the figure of Sang Hyang Antaboga only appears after a pilgrim to the cave and a ritual named “*Laku*”, only then will this figure appear. This cave was then named *Gua Antaboga* or *Guo Onto Boego* and is used as a place to meditate and worship Sang Hyang Antaboga (Sulistyo & Nazlah, 2023. Pg. 25).

2.2.4 Related Folklore

Folklore in relation to Sang Hyang Antaboga are often conveyed using shadow puppets, also known as *wayang*, which is a traditional play which represents Indonesia’s art and culture that is typically used to convey a story which gives advice about life and teaches good moral values. These plays are called Lakon and Sang Hyang Antaboga is featured in several of them which are listed below as told by Solichin (2017);

1. Lakon Bale Sigala-gala

This play tells the story of the Pandava, a group of five brothers who are all raised by different Gods (Anwari, 2020), who were invited to have dinner and spend the night at a Bale Sigala-gala by the Kaurava, a group consisting descendants of Kuru. Once the Pandava arrived at the Bale Sigala-gala, the Kaurava set the building ablaze as a scheme to murder the Pandava. However, the Pandava were able to evade

death with the help of Sang Hyang Antaboga who shapeshifted into a white fox and guided the Pandava to his home, Saptapratala.

2. Lakon Antareja lahir

This next play acts as the continuation of the Lakon Bale Sigala-gala, the story begins after a celebration of marriage between Bima, one of the Pandava, and Nagagini, Antaboga's daughter, where the Pandava must return to their homes while leaving Nagagini, who is currently pregnant with Bima's child, at Saptapratala. During the events of this story, a man under the title of Prabu Nagabaginda forcefully takes over *Istana Jangkar Bumi* and acts as the antagonist of this story. Learning of this forceful takeover, Sang Hyang Antaboga swallows Bima and Nagagini's son named Antareja, to grant him the power of the Gods so that he is able to defeat Prabu Nagabaginda and reclaim *Istana Jangkar Bumi*.

3. Lakon Nagatatmala

In contrast to the previous play, this play focuses on the love story between Antaboga's son, Bambang Nagatamala, and Dewi Mumpuni, Batara Yamadipati's wife. In this story, Antaboga is tasked by Batara Guru to sentence Nagatamala to death for daring to having an affair with Batara Yamadipati's wife, Dewi Mumpuni.

2.2.5 Moral Values

In tandem with the nature of folklore, Sang Hyang Antaboga's story holds several moral values that can be learned from. The most prominent of which is Sang Hyang Antaboga's lifestory in which he earns his title of Sang Hyang Antaboga, alongside his palace in Saptapratala and his Godhood, by helping the Gods when he saw that they were in need of help. In these instances, Sang Hyang Antaboga was able to realize the potential and capabilities he had in helping others and so he did them without expecting anything in return and knowing his self-worth.

2.3 Relevant Studies

To further understand the topic, the author will analyze several relevant studies. In this analysis, the author will be able to gleam relevant information found in these studies and their results. From there, the author will find the novelty between the previous studies to be able to innovate and extend this topic.

Table 2.2 Relevant Studies

No.	Judul Penelitian	Penulis	Hasil Penelitian	Novelty
1	Information Design Regarding Figure Sang Hyang Antaboga Through Comic	Dani Akbar Rizaldi	An informative media on Sang Hyang Antaboga using the usage of illustration and storytelling through comic books.	Using an interactive medium to showcase illustrations and stories/moral value of Sang Hyang Antaboga
2	Board Game Antaboga: Media Permainan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Untuk Meningkatkan Self Confidence Siswa	Setyaputri, Nora Yuniar, Yuanita Dwi Krisphianti, and Danastya Nurdwi Sukmadeva	Creating a board game based on the Sang Hyang Antaboga myth to teach students on self- confidence	Using a digital approach to interactive media which will be more accessible than board games
3	Tokoh Pewayangan Naga Sang Hyang Antaboga Sebagai Inspirasi Penciptaan Karya Kriya Logam	Jafar Huda Cahyanto	Using Sang Hyang Antaboga as the main focus of a sculpture made out of bronze	Using Sang Hyang Antaboga as a medium to teach the younger generation on the moral values he holds and more on his backstory

From these relevant studies, it shows that a digital medium has never been used to help teach the younger generation in learning about Sang Hyang Antaboga. The exploration on the moral values given by Sang Hyang Antaboga's folklore are also very minimal. Therefore the novelty found in the author's project in comparison to previous studies is the usage of an interactive digital medium to convey information on Sang Hyang Antaboga, as well as to teach the younger generation the moral values his folklore holds.

