

Visual Representation of Hell from Balinese Hindu Beliefs in the Video Game “Escape from Naraka”

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to describe, explain and validate the visual representation of hell from Balinese Hindu beliefs in the video game “Escape From Naraka”. The video game “Escape From Naraka” is a game with the platform adventure genre and is played solo that tells the journey of a man who enters the hell portal of the Balinese Hindu beliefs to save a woman who is sucked in by the portal. This video game is developed by the origin of Yogyakarta - Indonesia, namely XeloGames and published by Headup Games company from Germany. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research with library data method. The research was conducted by examining the visual representation of hell from Balinese Hindu beliefs in the video game “Escape From Naraka”, then linking it with writings related to the theme. In this study, the description uses facts from the data obtained as they are. The results of this study indicate that there are representations of hell that are not in accordance with Balinese Hindu teachings and display some visual representation objects from teachings or cultures outside Balinese Hinduism so that there are errors in visual representation. There are many things that may be wrong in the visual representation of Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka in the video game "Escape From Naraka" such as Thai Statue and other objects that are not in accordance with Balinese culture. This research has an impact on the development of visualization designs in video games that can encourage players to have a misperception of culture. So that the results of this study can be a criticism and help game developers to be more careful in visualizing video games, especially those based on belief and culture.

1. Introduction

Video games are games that are played through audio video devices as a medium for viewing and playing games and usually have a narration. The current condition of the video game industry is already in the realm of a serious industry. Technological developments have advanced the video game industry to become highly developed and profitable. Video games are very popular by both children and adults. Video games are currently played through various devices such as computers, various consoles and even smartphones. Each device for playing video games has a variety of interaction experiences with its players. James Newman stated “... three reasons why videogames demand to be treated seriously: the size of the videogames industry; the popularity of videogames; videogames as an example of human-computer interaction.” [1]. From the above statement, conducting studies related to video games is a serious matter and cannot be underestimated. Video games have positive and negative impacts that cannot be separated.

Of the many video game titles circulating, a video game developer from Indonesia, namely Xelo Games, is one of the game developers who has succeeded in releasing video games with Balinese cultural nuances. The video game entitled “Escape from Naraka” is a video game with nuances of Balinese Hindu belief in the afterlife or Hell. The video game entitled “Escape from Naraka” tells of a man who enters a Balinese Hindu-inspired hell to save a woman. The phenomenon in the video game entitled “Escape from Naraka” shows the Balinese Hindu version of hell which was visualized by Xelo Games developers into the form of an adventure game with various Balinese cultural attributes in it. Figure 1 shows a depiction of hell on the title screen of the game.



Figure 1. Title screen from video game “Escape From Naraka”

The significance of this research related to similar research are as follows; In a study conducted by Eskasasnanda entitled "Causes and Effects of Online Video Game Playing among Junior-Senior High School Students in Malang East Java" This study reveals that students play video games online due to peer pressure; and online video games are liked because they are considered more modern, practical, realistic and varied [2]. Another research conducted by Okur & Aygenc entitled “Video Games as Teaching and Learning Tool for Environmental and Space Design” The story, architectural and graphic elements used in the game made extremely important contributions to the success of the game. This significant impact has been confirmed with a survey conducted with on a number of people that is actively using video games [3]. Further research from Yilmaz et al entitled "The Impact of Heavy (Excessive) Video Gaming Students on Peers and Teachers in the School Environment: A Qualitative Study" The findings indicate heavy gamers to display problematic behaviors including communication and behavioral problems within the school environment. Results also show heavy gaming students to prefer staying at home and playing videogames rather than attending school activities [4]. Next from Baros entitled “Fantasy Video Games and Archetypal Criticism” Many games depend as much on their story as they do their game-play mechanics; they participate in and draw from the same narrative history as novels. [5]. From the studies above, there are things that distinguish where aspects of Indonesian cultural locality, especially Balinese Hindu beliefs, are not contained in this study, as well as related to visualization. The impact of this research can make further exploration related to the placement of Balinese Hindu culture in the real world by placing it in the virtual world, especially the world of video games in "Escape from Naraka".

The purpose of this study is to describe, explain and validate the visual representation of hell from Balinese Hindu beliefs in the video game “Escape From Naraka”. Visual representation, in particular, refers to the special case when these signs are visual (as opposed to textual, mathematical, etc.). On the other hand, there is no limit on what may be (visually) represented, which may range from abstract concepts to concrete objects in the real world or data items [6]. This study uses a descriptive approach

to the method of library data. With the library data approach, it can provide an overview of the initial findings of the object under study.

2. Method

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research with library data method. The research was conducted by examining the visual representation of hell from Balinese Hindu beliefs in the video game "Escape From Naraka", then linking it with writings related to the theme. In this study, the description uses facts from the data obtained as they are. Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and the method of analysis is primarily qualitative. This often involves an inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories. [7]. According to George, library method research "involves identifying and locating sources that provide factual information or personal/ expert opinion on a research question; necessary component of every other research method at some point" [8]. In using qualitative descriptive research with the library method, the data is searched by looking at various library data related to the object under study and interpreting the findings from these data with the object under study.

The research question is what is the description of the visualization of the Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka hell for Balinese Hindus in the video game "Escape From Naraka", are there conflicting values in Balinese culture in general regarding the depiction of hell in the game? The steps collecting data to answer the questions are described bellows: 1. Reading and understanding video game "Escape from Naraka". 2. Choosing the data dealing with cohesive devices are used in the video game "Escape from Naraka" such as ornament, object etc 3. Selecting the data dealing with the purpose of the study.

3. Results and Discussion

In this study, it is limited and focuses on level 1 in the video game "Escape From Naraka", namely the Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka level. Twenty-eight hells described in the Bhagavata Purana and the Devi Bhagavata Purana, Tamisra (darkness): It is intended for a person who grabs another's wealth, wife or children. In this dark realm, he is bound with ropes and starved without food or water. He is beaten and reproached by Yamadutas till he faints [9]. In the explanation of Tamrisra/Tamisra hell, this place is mentioned as a hell of darkness both figuratively and physically. In figure 2 of the video game "Escape From Naraka", the Tamrisra/Tamisra hell is shown quite brightly with lots of colored lights. The atmosphere looks like inside a building or temple that is quite spacious with a hallway that must be passed.

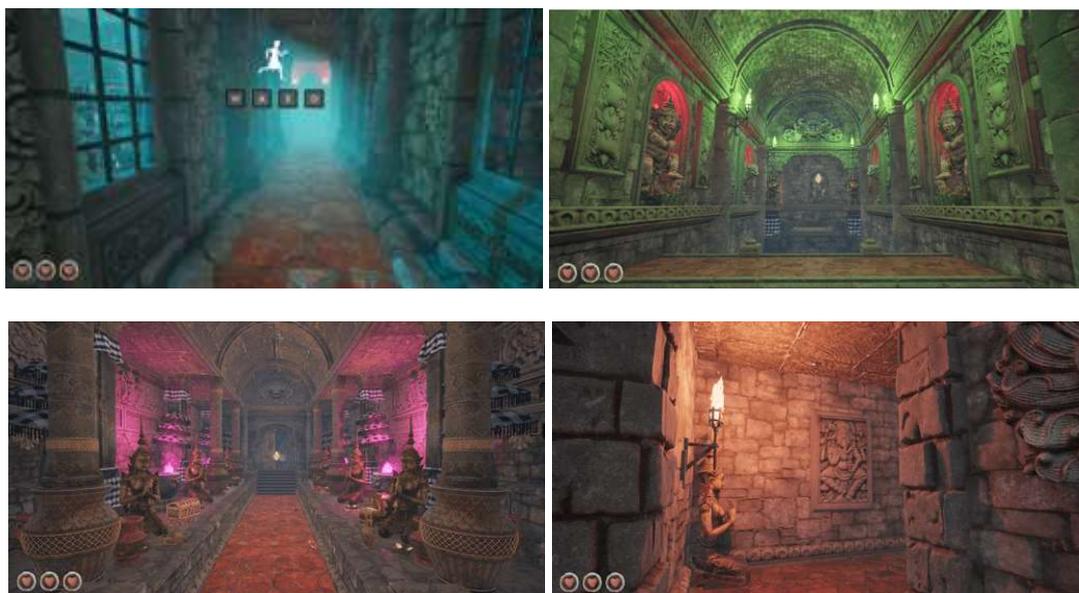


Figure 2. The atmosphere of Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka in the video game "Escape From Naraka"

In figure 3 of the video game “Escape From Naraka”, the Tamrisra/Tamisra hell is shown to have diveable water and hot lava rivers. Players are given the challenge not to fall on the lava and have to dive into the water before the air in the lungs runs out to get out of this hell and continue the adventure. Adventure games focus on puzzle solving within a narrative framework, generally with few or no action elements. Other popular names for this genre are “graphic adventure” or “point-and-click adventure”, but these represent only part of a much broader, diverse range of games. [10].

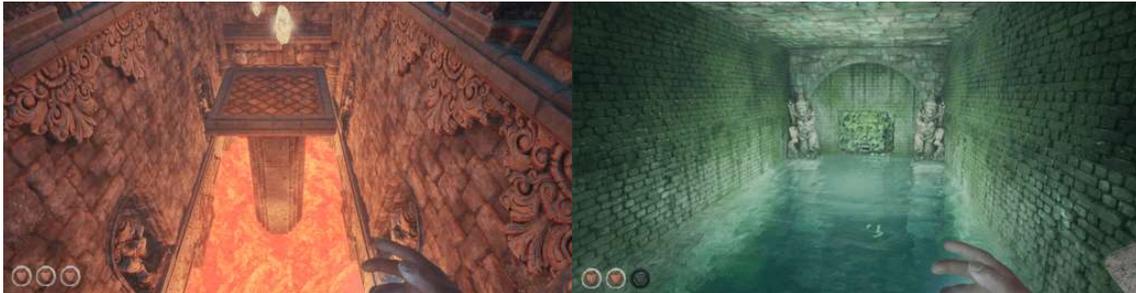


Figure 3. Lava flows and dive pools

In the figures above, no one is tied up with ropes or beaten and no one is starving in the game's narrative plot. However, there are creatures such as statues or Yama Bala (figure 4) who chase players and beat them when hit by them. The depiction of Yama Bala / Rancang (servants) in the video game "Escape From Naraka" is shaped like a statue. Arca is a sculpture that serves as a medium of worship. In contrast to statues in general which function as professional entertainment, statues have religious values because they are a medium of worship in the embodiment of gods or God. [11].



Figure 4. Yama Bala/Rancang, Yamaduta servant in “Escape From Naraka”

In literature, Yama Bala is shown as a scary human, so there is a difference in his visualization. In figure 5, Yamaduta rides the Buffalo with Yama Bala/Rancang next to him [12]. The depiction of Yamaduta riding a buffalo or with a buffalo is a fairly common depiction found in various literatures in both India and Thailand, as well as in Buddhism.



Figure 5. Yama Painting from India made in 1820

In Balinese Hindu depictions, Yama (Figure 6) looks like a scary giant, but still not a statue and does not ride a buffalo. This depiction is quite similar to Yama Rancang in the video game "Escape From Naraka" in terms of appearance, especially from his teeth and fangs. Dewa Yama also as the lord of the hell realm bhur loka, the god of death and the god of justice who is mentioned in the story of Bhima's journey to save his parents who went to hell in the source of the quote lontar geguritan bhima swarga [13].

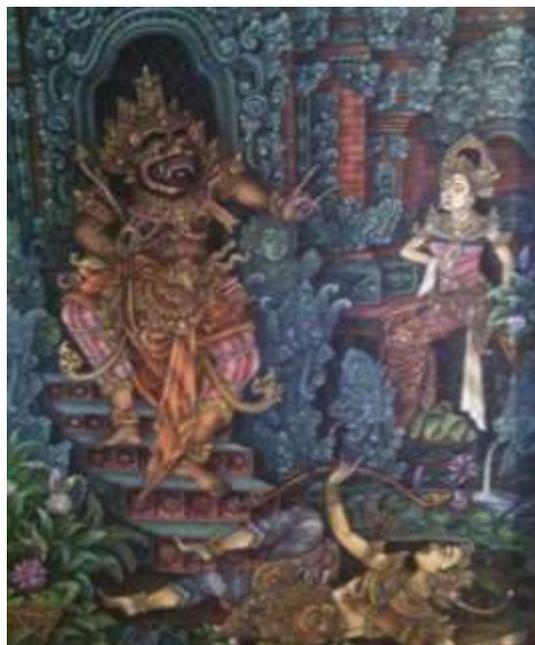


Figure 6. Yama in Balinese painting

In figure 7. There is a buffalo human figure in the video game "Escape From Naraka", is it related to Lord Yama who is depicted riding a buffalo in other Hindu literatures. But in this depiction, the buffalo creature holds an hourglass and light.



Figure 7. Yama in “Escape From Naraka” ?

The lack of explanations for visualizing the atmosphere of Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka makes the visualization bias in the video game "Escape From Naraka". There are some questionable objects regarding their appearance in video game settings. Here are some things that deserve to be questioned further and other additional methods need to be done besides the library method, such as the interview method, ethnography and so on in order to answer the harmony of values from the appearance of this object. The objects that become irregularities include the following;



Figure 8. Thai Statue

Figure 8 is a statue that looks unique to a statue from Thailand, this statue is a statue of a Thai woman wearing traditional Thai clothes. In the literature in figure 9. There is a Thai female figure wearing a costume that resembles a figure 8 with the characteristic crown of a sharp, conical towering crown.



Figure 9. Girls in traditional Thai costumes

In figure 10. The appearance of a Barong Ket relief or statue in hell, even though Barong Ket is a sacred barong that appears in Balinese Hindu culture or belief. Barong Ket is the opposite of Rangda in the story. Until now, Barong is considered a protector by the Balinese people and the art of Barong Ket is often performed during religious ceremonies and as entertainment for tourists in Bali. [14].



Figure 10. Barong Ket Relief in “Escape From Naraka”

In figure 11. Dwarapala acts as a guard in charge of guarding the entrance to a sacred and sacred area. In addition, guarding the area of the noble's castle, the king's palace to the castle for priests. [15]. The existence of the Dwarapala statue in hell needs further questioning regarding its habit of placing it.

Likewise with the Naga Taksaka statue as a symbol of the ruler of the upper realms but appears in the naraka realm.



Figure 11. The guardian statue of Dwarapala and the Taksaka Dragon in “Escape From Naraka”

Next in figure 12, the figure of Rangda as an evil character who is given offerings/gebogan. Gebogan towers like a mountain, the higher you go the more conical or sharp. For the top part, canang and sampiyan are placed, as a form of offering and devotion to God, the creator of the universe [16]. Of course, it became something that seemed unusual when Gebogan was assigned to the figure of Rangda.



Figure 12. Statue of Rangda is worshiped in Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka in the video game “Escape From Naraka”

4. Conclusion

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there are many things that may be wrong in the visual representation of Tamrisra/Tamisra Naraka in the video game "Escape From Naraka" so that further follow-up is needed in researching the visualization in the game. It is necessary to know the intent of the game developer in visualizing and examine the impact of the appearance of the visualization on the meaning formed. Research in making references in the visual representation of a video game

requires seriousness, especially with elements of culture or belief so that it is not misunderstood or can even change a value in the teachings.

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