

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Digital literature is a category of literature that includes literary works that can be found in the digital space. According to Engberg and Bolter (2011), digital literature is literature that is born and developed in digital form. These literary works utilize digital elements such as multimedia and interactivity. Some examples of digital literature are: Wattpad, an online platform that allows anyone to write and read digitally; Insta poetry, short poems shared through platforms such as Instagram and Tumblr, usually using audio and visual elements to convey emotional messages; Fanfiction, literary works that are usually created by fans and published on digital platforms; and Interactive Fiction, literary works that combine narrative and interactive elements so that readers can also actively shape the story.

Interactive fiction, or IF for short, is a type of digital literature that allows readers to take part in how the story develops. According to Ziegfield (1989), unlike conventional works that have a linear narrative, IF utilizes interactive elements to allow the reader to actively participate. This is what makes it feel more personal and sometimes more emotional. This is because the reader not only sees the characters in the story, but is also involved in determining how the characters develop. IF started in the 1960s with adventure text-based games like ZORK (Costanzo, 1986), and since then, the genre has evolved into something deeper and broader. Today, IF is used to explore all kinds of stories, from simple adventures to serious questions of identity and morality that exist in social life.

Ryan (2001) explains that interactivity in IF creates an atmosphere that makes readers feel as if they are entering the story world and can understand the narrative better. This is in line with Richard Gerrig's (1993) theory of Narrative Transportation, which states that when readers can get into the narrative of the story, they will understand the characters and plot better. Interactivity in interactive fiction (IF) allows readers to actively participate in the course of the story, so that they are not only passive observers but also feel the various choices and consequences experienced by the characters. In this way, IF helps readers understand human experiences more deeply, even if they do not experience them directly in real life.

The interactive elements present in IF (Interactive Fiction) are not merely digital systems; they also serve as a medium for agents to directly experience and understand moral dilemmas and identity construction through the choices they make. In this context, Emily Short's *Galatea* and Victor Gijssbers' *De Baron* become highly relevant examples for analysis. Both works utilize complex interactive narrative structures where readers are confronted with various moral choices and the dynamic development of character identity.

Galatea (2000) is an early IF work created by Emily Short. *Galatea* tells the story of a statue named *Galatea* that is alive and capable of two-way dialogue with the agent. According to Short (2000), unlike conventional literary works in general, *Galatea* possesses a multilinear narrative. This means many possible storylines and endings can be reached, depending on the questions posed by the agent. *Galatea* is inspired by the Greek myth of Pygmalion. Pygmalion was a sculptor who fell in love with a statue he created and then prayed to the gods for the statue to come to life (Shopin, 2023). Beyond having a multilinear narrative that aligns with the concept of interactive fiction, the theme of *Galatea*, a statue that comes to life, can also serve as a relevant example in the context of identity and

consciousness. Furthermore, the complexity of dialogue in *Galatea* can also be highly representative for analysis using the Discourse Analysis approach.

On the other hand, *De Baron* (2006) challenges agents with morally ambiguous choices. *De Baron* by Victor Gijssels (2006) is an interactive fiction that explores themes of morality and inner conflict through a single narrative with branching choices. The story focuses on a father attempting to save his daughter, who has been kidnapped by a wicked nobleman, the Baron. However, behind this rescue story lies a darker and more complex layer, depicting the human side and profound moral dilemmas that can be navigated through branching choices. Despite the limited narrative paths and lack of multiple endings, *De Baron* challenges agents to confront an unavoidable fate and explore questions about human nature and moral responsibility. An interesting aspect of *De Baron* is the absence of right or wrong choices. All decisions depend on how the agent understands and interprets the narrative. With a narrative approach that emphasizes moral conflict over puzzles, *De Baron* becomes a highly suitable example for analysis using the Discourse Analysis approach.

The use of the close reading method for interactive fiction raises several questions and doubts. The analysis of interactive fiction using the close reading method focuses on discourse analysis, particularly through the concepts of identity, positioning, and representation. The researchers' lack of attention to applying discourse analysis to interactive fiction as part of digital literature is a research gap. Therefore, this study aims to apply discourse analysis to *Galatea* and *De Baron*, demonstrating that interactive fiction, like conventional texts, contains rich literary qualities and is worthy of academic analysis.

1.2 Identification of The Problems

Interactive fiction as a form of digital literature offers a more complex reading experience, in which the identities and moral conflicts of the characters are shaped through a process of social and cultural discourse. In *Galatea* (2000) by Emily Short and *De Baron* (2006) by Victor Gijbers, character identities are not explicitly presented through formal textual elements such as paradoxes or irony, but are formed from how the characters position themselves and are positioned by their society. Stuart Hall's theory of identity as a dynamic process is highly relevant to understanding the construction of identity in this context.

The moral conflict in the narrative arises as a consequence of negotiating a constantly changing identity, where the tension between self-perception and social expectations creates an internal dilemma. *Galatea* experiences conflict as a created being who wants independence, while the Baron faces conflict by creating an alternative identity to avoid confessing his sins. Using a discourse analysis approach grounded in Stuart Hall's theory of identity, this study aims to explore the connection between identity and moral conflict in this interactive narrative.

1.3 The Review of Previous Studies

The first relevant study is Richard Ziegfeld's article titled *Interactive Fiction: A New Literary Genre?* (1989). In his article, Zeigfield says that interactive fiction is a literary work even though it has a different narrative form. He also states that IF removes the boundary between narratives created by writers and narratives formed from interactive choices made

by agents. This will give readers and agents a more personal feeling towards the narratives that are formed.

The second related study is Marie-Laure Ryan's book *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (2001). Ryan states that immersion, which is the feeling that the reader is entering the narrative, can be enhanced through interactive elements in IF. According to her works, although IF and conventional literary works both rely on narrative stories, IF provides space for readers to be directly involved in the development of the narrative. Therefore, this study is useful for understanding how *Galatea* and *De Baron* utilize elements of immersion in interactive narratives for readers and agents.

The third related study is Duncan Stevens' article *IF as Argument* (2007). As Stevens points out, interactive fiction (IF) is a genre that is more than a literary definition; it combines philosophy and writing, allowing the writers and the readers to debate and consider concepts and ideas within the context of the fiction they are exposed to, reflecting the decisions and ideas in the stories. Since identity and moral issues are not directly addressed in the text, this concept is very helpful when discussing works such as *Galatea* and *De Baron*.

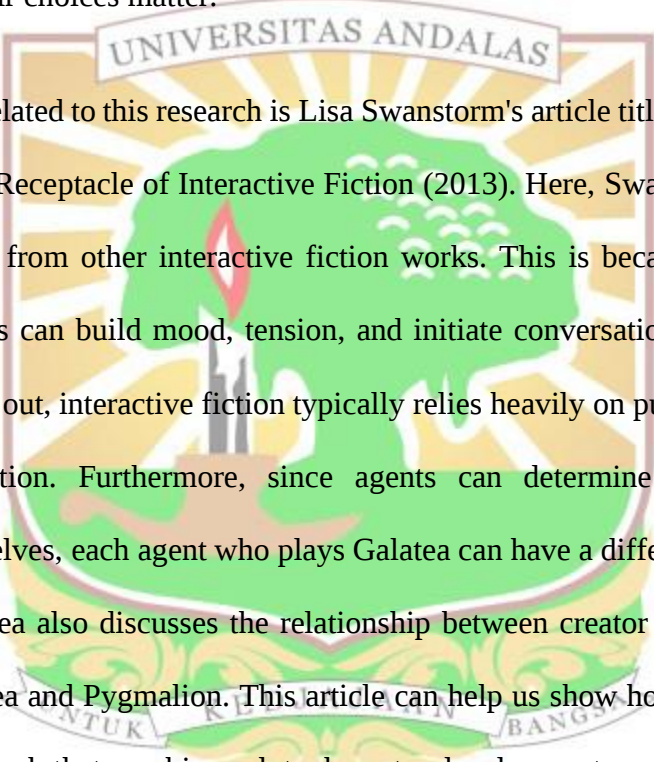
The fourth related study is Nick Montfort's book *Twisty Little Passages* (2003). Montfort emphasizes that interactive fiction (IF) is not solely a form of interactive entertainment but rather a category of digital literature that merges narrative with audience participation. He points out that IF deserves the same critical attention as more conventional literary works. He also suggests that this form of literature is fascinating because it blends gaming and

literature. The story is not simply given to the reader; it is crafted through the reader's actions and decisions.

One of the relevant studies is Alex Fisher's *Truth in Interactive Fiction* (2022). In this paper, Fisher talks about how interactive fiction (IF) contains many narrative paths, and how each decision can lead readers or agents to a different version of the truth. He breaks this down into two types: *work-truth* and *branch-truth*. *Work-truth* refers to the central facts in the story that stay the same no matter what choices are made. Meanwhile, *branch-truth* refers to the truths found in the specific paths that readers follow. For instance, in *Galatea*, the idea that she is a statue brought to life is a *work-truth*. The details that unfold depending on the player's interactions are examples of *branch-truth*. In *De Baron*, the constant fact that the protagonist turns out to be the actual perpetrator is a *work-truth*, while the scenes where the agent decides how to move forward toward the baron's castle show *branch-truth* in action.

Neil Yorke-Smith's article titled *The Success of Genre in Interactive Fiction* (2012) is also relevant to the analysis of *Galatea* and *De Baron*. Yorke-Smith explains that interactive fiction can either follow conventional literary genre rules or defy them. In other words, interactive fiction is not just about how readers can become active agents who can help determine the available narrative paths, but also how interactive fiction uses genres commonly found in conventional literature to create interactive fiction. For example, interactive fiction typically focuses more on puzzle or riddle elements. Yorke-Smith argues that interactive fiction can still follow these rules, but genres like science fiction or mystery are naturally more suited to incorporating such elements. It would be extremely challenging to introduce and add puzzle elements to more dramatic genres. Therefore, Yorke-Smith's

article can be very helpful in analyzing *Galatea* and *De Baron* using Discourse Analysis, since *Galatea* and *De Baron* focus more on narrative play and agent choice, not puzzles. We can see how genres like *Galatea* and *De Baron* can still be good interactive fiction works without puzzle elements. Finally, Yorke-Smith also states that the success of a genre in interactive fiction does not depend on genres like mystery or drama, but on how the author can make interactive fiction a medium for readers and agents to understand meaning and think about how their choices matter.

The logo of Universitas Andalas is a circular emblem. At the top, a banner reads "UNIVERSITAS ANDALAS". The center features a green tree with a red flame-like shape at its base. Below the tree, a banner contains the text "WATUK KULIN BANGUN".

Another study related to this research is Lisa Swanstorm's article titled *Galatea's Riposte: The Reception and Receptacle of Interactive Fiction* (2013). Here, Swanstorm explains that *Galatea* is different from other interactive fiction works. This is because *Galatea* focuses more on how agents can build mood, tension, and initiate conversations with *Galatea*. As Yorke-Smith points out, interactive fiction typically relies heavily on puzzle elements rather than just conversation. Furthermore, since agents can determine the theme of the conversation themselves, each agent who plays *Galatea* can have a different experience. Not only that, but *Galatea* also discusses the relationship between creator and creation, in this case between *Galatea* and *Pygmalion*. This article can help us show how *Galatea* can be an interactive fiction work that combines plot, character development, and agent involvement. Therefore, this article is also important for understanding the development of interactive fiction and the potential it can generate.

One study that discusses the role of nonlinear narratives is Mark-David Hosale's dissertation titled *Nonlinear Media as Interactive Narrative* (2008). In his writing, Hosale explains how interactive media, especially those with nonlinear structures, offer experiences

that are different from conventional narratives. He notes how immersion, agency, and interactivity shape the way an agent experiences a story. These three aspects are closely related to interactive fiction. This idea becomes relevant when looking at works such as *Galatea* and *De Baron*. In both stories, the agents do not simply follow a predetermined storyline. Their choices have consequences, and each path they choose leads to a different experience. For example, *De Baron* begins with choices and a narrative that resemble a rescue mission. The agents are given choices that sound heroic, creating the impression that they are indeed trying to save his kidnapped daughter. However, as the story progresses, the tone changes. The choices become heavier and more difficult to make. As the climax approaches, when the agent finally confronts the Baron, the dialogue begins to feel heavier. It no longer feels like a conversation with another person. Phrases like “this is just your reason, our reason” (De Baron, 2006) feel like a reflection of the agent’s own struggle. This becomes a moment where the story becomes personal. Through this, Hosale’s point about the agent becomes clearer. Interactive fiction is not just a game-like experience. It can also offer emotional depth, like literature.

Vinícius Carvalho Pereira’s article *The demiurgic power of natural and artificial languages in Galatea*, by Emily Short (2020), offers a different perspective on *Galatea*, focusing on how language and code work together to produce a sense of life in a digital character. Although the article centers on the creative power of language, it also highlights the interactive quality of the narrative, which supports the idea that meaning in *Galatea* emerges through the agent’s choices. This idea connects with the present study, which explores how such choices reveal moral tension and identity issues through the story’s

branching structure. His analysis reinforces the argument that IF is a legitimate form of literature because this work utilizes language as an agency that constructs narrative and characters, and explores deep philosophical themes through interactivity that gives players an active role in shaping the story. Therefore, *Galatea* is not merely a game but an interactive literary work rich in meaning and philosophically relevant, expanding the definition of literature in the digital age.

1.4 Research Question

1. How is identity constructed and negotiated through discourse in *Galatea* and *De Baron*?
2. What is the relationship between the characters' identities and the moral conflicts they experience in the narratives of *Galatea* and *De Baron*?

1.5 Scope of The Research

This study focuses on the literary analysis of two interactive fiction works, *Galatea* by Emily Short and *De Baron* by Victor Gijbers, using a discourse analysis approach. This study is limited to examining how issues of identity and moral conflict are formed and negotiated through the discourse process in the narrative. Rather than analyzing external factors such as the author's intent, historical background, or agent choices in story interactions, this study focuses on textual discourse and the process of social positioning that emerges in the narrative.

Both works are intrinsically interactive fiction that emphasizes elements of interactivity. However, this study will not discuss how the agent's choices affect the storyline. The focus is on how issues of identity and moral conflict arise and are shaped in narrative discourse, including how the processes of positioning and representation play a role in the construction of meaning. Elements such as ambiguity, paradox, tension, and irony are treated as part of a narrative strategy that supports the depiction of these issues. The aim is to show that even though interactive fiction has a non-linear narrative structure, these works are still capable of conveying complex literary meanings and can be analyzed using both discourse analysis and conventional literary approaches.

1.6 The Objective of The Research

This research focuses on analyzing issues of identity and moral conflict in *Galatea* (2000) and *De Baron* (2006) using discourse analysis. The analysis will involve examining how these issues are constructed within the narrative through positioning and representation, with attention to textual elements such as paradox, ambiguity, irony, and tension. The researcher will first read the texts, identify these elements, and then explain how the two issues emerge and are shaped within the discourse. Additionally, this study aims to demonstrate that interactive fiction, despite its non-linear narrative, can be meaningfully analyzed using both discourse analysis and conventional literary approaches.