

Communication Design Project III | 2024

KUTTICHATHAN

A choose your own adventure comic

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Project Guide
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IIT Bombay

Approval Sheet

This project report titled 'KUTTICHATHAN: A choose your own adventure comic' by Abhinav S, 22M2264, is approved for partial fulfillment of the requirements for Masters of Design Degree in Communication Design, IDC School of Design, IIT Bombay.

Project Guide:  29/5/2024

External Examiner:  29/05/24

Internal Examiner:  29/5/2024

Chairperson:  29.5.2024

Date: 29.5.2024

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where other's ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any ideas, data, facts or sources in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause of disciplinary action by the institute and evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.



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Acknowledgment

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Deepa Balsavar for her unwavering guidance and support throughout the journey of creating this project. Her expertise and insightful feedback have been incredibly valuable in shaping this project. I am also deeply thankful to my batch-mates and seniors for their encouragement and motivation, which played a pivotal role in helping me see this project through to completion. Their support has been a constant source of inspiration.

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INTRODUCTION

Context

Kerala's folklore, rich with mythical characters and moral lessons, was a cherished part of my childhood, narrated lovingly by my grandmother. Recognizing the fading awareness of these tales among today's children, this project seeks to revive interest. By blending ancient stories with a novel narrative technique, it aims to spark curiosity, offering interactive and visually immersive experiences. The goal is to ignite a passion for exploring one's heritage and encourage a connection with folklore beyond the confines of modern devices.



Theyyam



Chakyar Koothu



Alamikkali



Padayani

Objective

The aim of the project is to create an interactive and engaging choose-your-own-adventure comic to popularize Kerala folklores.

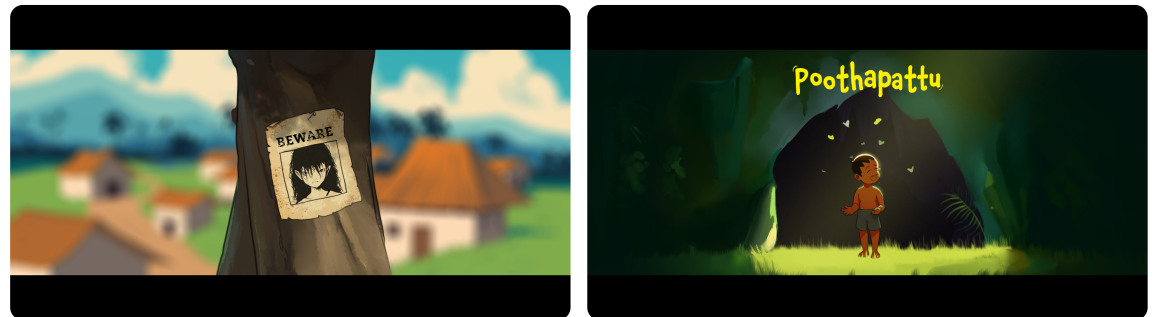
Through an interactive storytelling and engaging experiences, I hope to ignite a passion within children to explore more of their own heritage and seek out books of folklore.

P2 to P3

This project is a continuation of my previous Project(P2), which was a parallax scrolling comic based on the folklore, Poothapattu. In my quest to make the stories more engaging and interactive, I have come up with choose-your-own-adventure narrative.

Additionally, I am using this project, as an opportunity to address and correct the mistakes and feedback received in P2, aiming to create a more polished and captivating storytelling experience. By incorporating interactive elements and multiple endings, I hope to immerse the audience more deeply into the rich folklore of Kerala. This approach not only enhances the engagement but also provides a dynamic way to explore different facets of traditional stories, offering a unique blend of culture and interactivity.

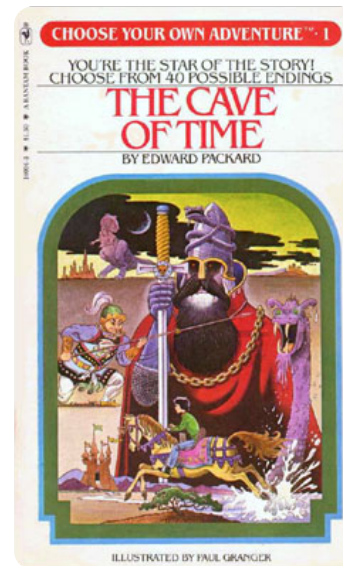
Poothapattu : <https://abhivpm.github.io/Poothapattu/>



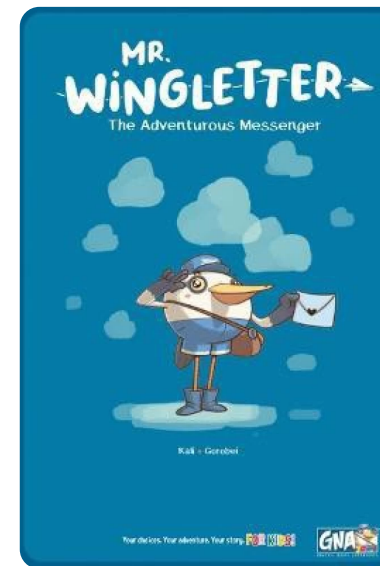
Frames from *Poothapattu*

CYOA

Choose-your-own-adventure (CYOA) stories are interactive narratives that empower readers to make pivotal decisions at various points in the plot, directly influencing the story's direction and allowing for multiple possible outcomes. This format gives readers a sense of control, as they make choices for the protagonist, thereby enhancing their immersion and engagement with the narrative. The versatility of CYOA stories makes them adaptable to various genres, appealing to a broad and diverse audience.



The Cave of Time by
Edward Packard



Mr. Wingletter by Kali



Eighth Grade Witch
by Andrew E.C. Gaska,



STORY DEVELOPMENT

Kuttichathan

The character I chose for my comic is Kuttichathan. Kuttichathan is a spirit from the folklore of Malabar Hindus, often depicted as a portly adolescent boy with a distinctive hairstyle called a kutumi. Known for his mischievous nature, Kuttichathan's tricks cause great trouble and confusion for his victims, though they rarely result in serious harm. His antics range from playful pranks to more elaborate deceptions, creating chaos wherever he goes. Despite his troublesome behavior, Kuttichathan is not malevolent; instead, he is driven by a desire for attention and amusement. In many stories, Kuttichathan demands food and offerings in exchange for granting freedom from his harassment, reflecting a cultural belief in appeasing spirits to maintain harmony. This combination of mischief and the need for appeasement makes Kuttichathan a compelling and multifaceted character, perfect for an interactive narrative that delves into the rich traditions and folklore of Kerala.



Kandittund! (Seen It!)
Studio Eeksaurus



My Dear Kuttichathan (1984)



Kuttichathan theyyam

Multiple stories

While researching about Kuttichathan, I discovered that he has multiple origin stories in different parts of Kerala, each offering a unique perspective on his character. These varied narratives provide fascinating insights into Kuttichathan's background and motivations. Inspired by this diversity, I decided to utilize the CYOA format in my project to allow readers to explore and experience these different origin stories.

The stories are:

- Kuttichathan is the son Shiva and Parvati, when they were in the form of Valluvan and Valluvathi and is considered God,
- Kuttichathan is an evil spirit, and summoned by people to do their dirty deeds. Considered a bad omen.
- Kuttichathan is the child born to a Namboothiri and a backward Pulaya woman who used to sweep the house, because he was born illegitimate he was casted away and neglected by people, and became naughty.

Multiple endings

In the interactive narrative, readers encounter multiple endings depending on which origin story of Kuttichathan they explore first. The protagonist, upon accidentally releasing the mischievous spirit Kuttichathan from a sealed vessel, embarks on a quest to capture him. As she navigates the village, the storyline evolves based on the diverse origin stories of Kuttichathan she hears along her journey. Each choice she makes shapes the trajectory of the narrative, leading to multiple possible outcomes that reflect her decisions, adding layers of suspense and cultural exploration to the story.

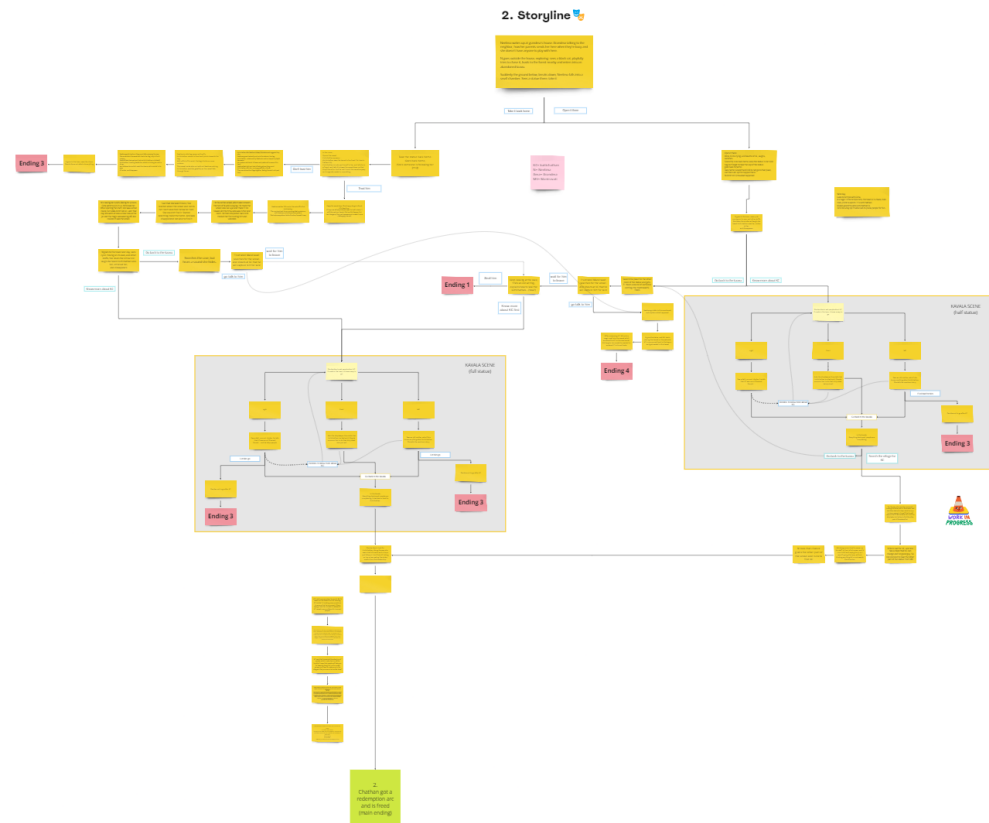
The endings include:

- The protagonist successfully captures Kuttichathan, restoring peace to the village and resolving the mischief caused by the spirit.
- Despite her efforts, the protagonist fails to capture Kuttichathan, leaving the village to contend with ongoing disturbances and pranks.
- Kuttichathan undergoes a redemption arc, reflecting on his actions and ultimately gaining freedom from his mischievous ways.
- Kuttichathan is enslaved by a black magician, facing a dark and uncertain fate under the control of another.

Each ending offers a distinct resolution to the story, influenced by the reader's choices and the origin stories they explore, showcasing the diverse facets of Kuttichathan's character and the cultural traditions surrounding him.

Mapping out the storylines

After sketching a rough story, I carefully mapped out each part and decided where the choices would happen and where they would lead. I used a Miro Board to draw everything out visually. I also planned how different storylines could end up at the same place if needed. This helped me make sure the story flowed well and stayed consistent, while still giving readers lots of options to choose from.



miro

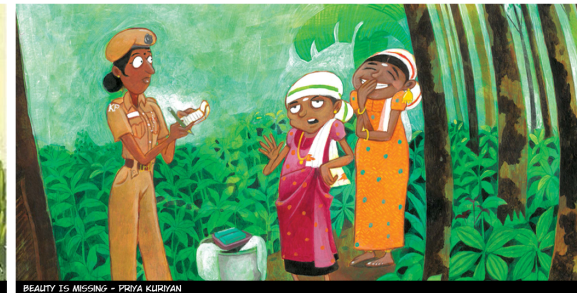


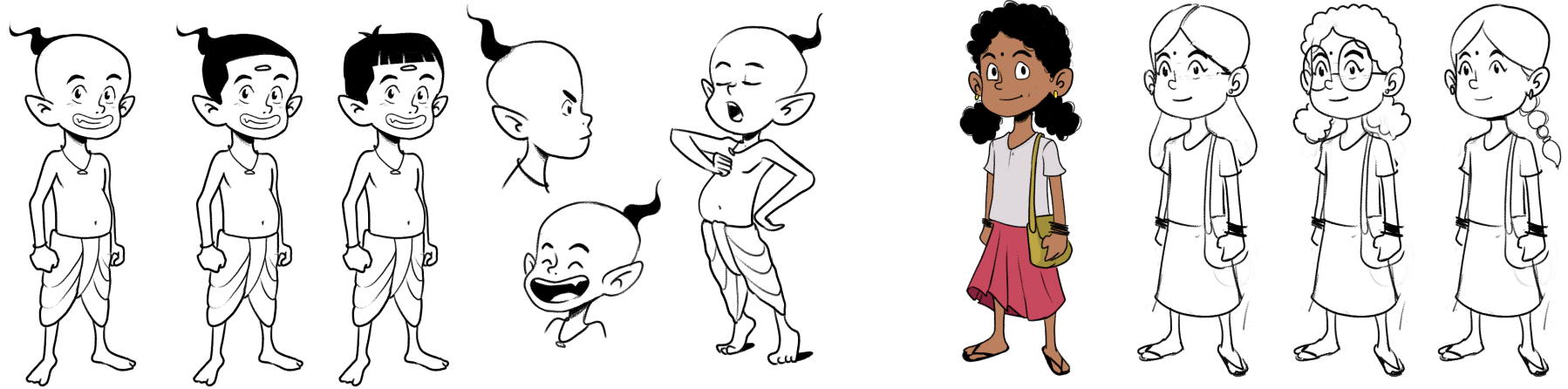
PROCESS

Character Design

For the next step, I focused on character design, taking into account feedback from my previous project where the characters didn't quite fit the context. This time, I wanted to ensure that the character designs were appropriate for the story's setting. I researched illustrations from various artists to understand how characters from Kerala are typically depicted. Drawing inspiration from these references, I created a set of designs that I felt best suited the narrative and captured the essence of Kerala's cultural backdrop.

Moodboard:

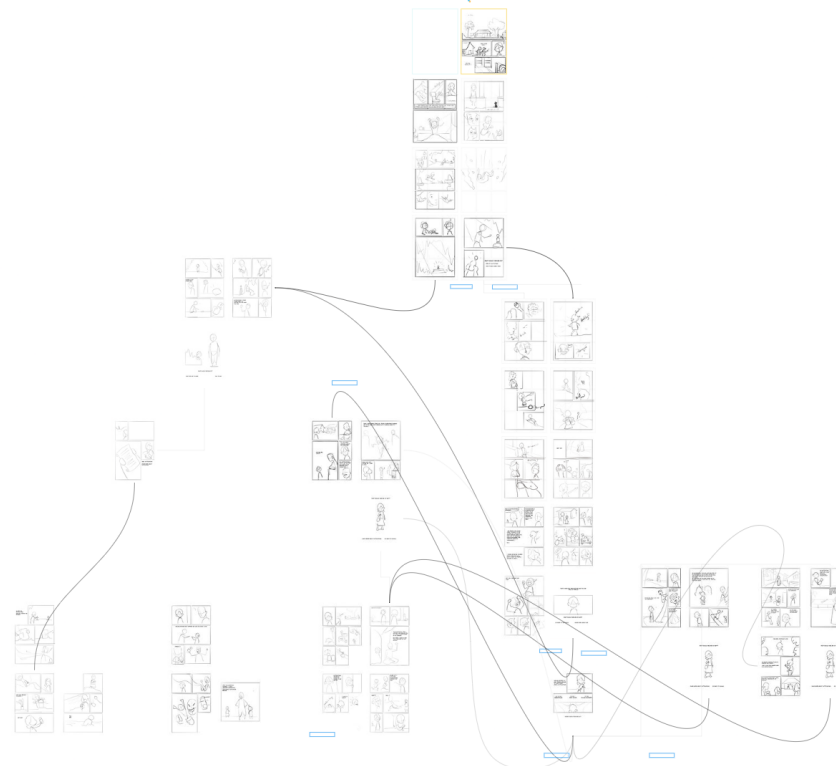






Script and Storyboarding

Once the script was finalized, I began storyboarding the narrative. Given the length of the story, I needed to be mindful of the number of panels to ensure I could complete the drawings on time. To manage this, I minimized the panels while still capturing key moments and plot developments. I arranged the storyboards on the same Miro Board, drawing branches to visualize the various branching storylines. This allowed me to see the entire narrative structure and ensure coherence across different paths and choices.



miro

[illegible]

Final Pages

Once the script was finalized, I began storyboarding the narrative. Given the length of the story, I needed to be mindful of the number of panels to ensure I could complete the drawings on time. To manage this, I minimized the panels while still capturing key moments and plot developments. I arranged the storyboards on the same Miro Board, drawing branches to visualize the various branching storylines. This allowed me to see the entire narrative structure and ensure coherence across different paths and choices.

...HER PARENTS SEND HER HERE WHEN THEY'RE BUSY. POOR THING DOESN'T HAVE ANYONE TO PLAY WITH AROUND HERE.

"YEAAA... SHE'S HERE!"

"NEELUMMA, WAAAKE UP!!!"

WHERE DID THAT KUTICHATHAN GO?

DA KUTICHATHAN, ONCE I CAPTURE AND ENSLAVE YOU, I'LL HAVE ULTIMATE POWER AT MY COMMAND. BUT FIRST, I NEED TO FIND THE OTHER PART OF THE STATUE.

Final Output

The final output of the project will include both a printed comic book and a digital web comic. In the printed version, navigation through the branched storyline will be page number-based. Each branch of the story will lead to a specific page number, allowing readers to follow different paths by turning to the corresponding pages. On the other hand, the web comic version will be tap-based, where readers can interact with the story by clicking on the options provided within the narrative. Each option clicked will lead to the corresponding page, offering an interactive reading experience tailored to the digital platform. This dual approach ensures accessibility and engagement across different mediums, catering to a diverse audience and enhancing the overall storytelling experience.

Link for the web comic : <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/2e70105e04.html>

Conclusion

In conclusion, the journey of creating "KUTTICHATHAN: A choose your own adventure comic" has been both enriching and rewarding. This project provided valuable insights into the complexities of interactive storytelling, highlighting the importance of thoughtful scripting, strategic storyboarding, and effective visual communication. Moreover, the process of refining character designs and narrative structures taught me the significance of authenticity and cultural sensitivity in creative endeavors.

Time management played a crucial role throughout the project, as I had to balance the storytelling process with the practical constraints of meeting deadlines and completing artwork. As I reflect on this project, I recognize the importance of embracing feedback, learning from challenges, and continuously striving for improvement. Moving forward, I am excited to apply these learnings to future projects, further exploring the possibilities of interactive storytelling and continuing to share the rich heritage of Kerala with audiences worldwide.