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ICONOLOGY IN A FICTIONAL CONTEXT

Intradiegetic Design in Worldbuilding

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Abstract

With increased importance placed on immersion and aesthetics in modern high-budget role-playing games, design with roots within the narrative of the game becomes an essential factor in the process of worldbuilding. In this thesis, iconological analysis is implemented into the context of fiction and video games to clarify the scope of the project.

The objective of this thesis was to establish a more solid understanding of this kind of intradiegetic design and implement it in a worldbuilding project. Following research into iconology, worldbuilding, and intradiegetic design, two case studies on high-budget role-playing games were carried out in order to look into various ways of implementing intradiegetic iconology.

The outcome of this thesis project was the fictional city of Yoa and a series of concept art illustrations that included both environment designs and clothing designs. The process of producing these illustrations was meant to test how the implementation of the aspects learned about intradiegetic design works in practice.

The thesis project ended up being a success, providing increased insight into intradiegetic iconology in a fictional context. The thesis author condensed her discoveries about intradiegetic design into three tenets which proved their accuracy in the context of the worldbuilding project that was carried out.

Keywords

worldbuilding, concept art, iconology, clothing design, architecture, game design

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1. INTRODUCTION

Worldbuilding is an essential part of fantastical media. Constructed worlds provide context and meaning for stories; especially in a medium as multi-faceted as video games, where most media offers the player the freedom to experience the world in an interactive way, does the importance of well-thought-out worldbuilding come into play. With greater value placed on immersion and aesthetics in the modern video game market, it is vital to consider not only the design factors outside of the narrative of the game, but within it as well. In this sense, design and worldbuilding are irrevocably linked.

Most character and environment design classes and tutorials available approach design from a fundamentally game design point of view—and that is, naturally, a vital angle that has to be taken in order to insure the success and playability of the finished product. However, the longer one plays games with massive, sprawling worlds and lore, the higher the probability is of them thinking ”Why, in the context of this world, does this asset look like this?”. It may be a sculpture meant to idolize some god or savior, or it may be a chair with interesting patterns carved into the backrest. It may be an emblem that a character is wearing, or even a vegetable that has a strange color; the importance of the reasoning behind this design remains the same. This desire to better understand a fictional world naturally coexists with the desire to create video game worlds that are consistent and believable, and perhaps even convey some deeper meaning to the player that cannot be expressed as efficiently through spoken language. Design is an immensely powerful means to convey information, especially in regard to media as versatile as video games, and hence its intradiegetic (i.e. within the narrative) uses should not be belittled.

This thesis project was born out of a desire to gather a better understanding of the reasons behind design choices in worldbuilding, especially in the context of modern high-budget role playing games. The scope of this project is not the practical function of design for the player or the game developers, or character design that reflects the personalities of individual characters, but rather a deeper

look into the nature of a constructed world and how it visually effects the design language of said world. Thus, the concept of iconology came into play in the process of weighing options for this thesis project. In short, the term has been widely associated with the field of fine art analysis, especially in the context of its time and circumstances. It is analysis in the context of the circumstances under which an artwork was created, analysis that connects the world to the art created in it. That is what defines the scope of this project—design and analysis of elements within a world in the context of that world.

The goal of this project was to create a more solid understanding of intradiegetic design in video games, and to aid people in the effort of avoiding making the intradiegetic design of an asset or a character seem like an afterthought when compared to their extradiegetic designs. A practical approach to this question was deemed to be the most fitting; after all, the best way to study design in worldbuilding is to build a world.

After research into worldbuilding and iconology, two case studies about fantastical role playing games were conducted with the purpose of researching how different games approach the concept of intradiegetic iconology. The thesis author then constructed an entirely fictional world based on her findings, for which an environment, infrastructure, culture, and inhabitants were created. Multiple pieces of concept art were then illustrated to visualize the intradiegetic iconology behind the design of that world. These illustrations included seven environment illustrations and two costume design sheets with eight costumes in total.

2. ICONOLOGY

2.1. Definition of iconology

Iconology, in its most universal definition, refers to the in-depth analysis of principles behind the creation of images. It is a widely argued, nuanced term, used by different art historians and critics in various ways to suit their purposes,

most prevalent example of its use being Aby Warburg's original definition of it as the intrinsic meaning of an image, later popularized by Erwin Panofsky due to the longstanding translation-related availability issues in Warburg's work (Warburg & Forster 1999, 1-2).

Panofsky, according to his three levels of image analysis, differentiates iconology from iconography via the distinction that iconography operates on the secondary level of art analysis as the analysis of symbolism of an image or of the conventional subject matter, whereas iconology strives to understand the tertiary, intrinsic meaning of an image—the factors behind it. It views art through the circumstances under which it was created, and the effect of said circumstances on the art. It connects the artist to the art on an inherent level, posing questions about how the image came into being and what factors in the artist's life influenced the creation of such work. (Panofsky 1972, 5-9.)

Later, authors and researchers such as Creighton Gilbert and W.J.T. Mitchell have used the term for their own purposes—the former proposing a meaning for it that references the result of the analysis rather than the analysis itself (Gilbert 1952), and the latter in reference to the research of the nature of images, what one should think when looking at images, and what differentiates image from text (Mitchell 1986). Due to the malleable nature of the term and its common confusion with iconography, its use is not very widespread outside of art analysis, history research, and philosophy. Thus, it so far has not been associated with the field of game design.

2.2. Intradiegetic vs. extradiegetic iconology

This project will be carried out in accordance with Panofsky's (1972) definition of iconology, operating under the assumption that the term iconology can be utilized in any form of visual communication, including video games. The term, as it is used in this project, will come to mean the intradiegetic reasoning behind design elements such as environments and characters—practical factors such as the sociopolitical climate the story takes place in, the history of the designed world, and its overall culture.

Extradiegetic design factors such as gameplay and other elements meant to enhance the player's experience can also be approached from the view of iconology, albeit through the lens of viewing the game as an artwork itself and not only focusing on intradiegetic design; it requires the posing of questions such as ”What was the reasoning of the level designer to position these two locations in the level so closely together?” or ”How has the current political climate influenced the storytelling of this game?”. However, as this is not the point of this research, but rather the sub-levels of design within the narrative, this project will not be conducted from the viewpoint of an extradiegetic analysis.

3. PRINCIPLES OF WORLDBUILDING

The term worldbuilding, as the name might imply, refers to the act of designing and constructing fictional worlds. It was first used in the context of science fiction and fantasy in R.A. Lupoff's 1965 book *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* (Prucher 2006, 270). The term has since grown to become a staple of the two genres, as nowadays such stories take place in constructed worlds more often than not.

3.1. Implementing lore

Constructed worlds are often transnarrative and transmedial in form, often outgrowing the stories that take place in them, as is the case with extended universes such as Marvel or DC that feature comics, movies, video games, and TV series all taking place in the same world. (Wolf 2014, 3-4.) Thus, it is an essential question in constructing fictional worlds just how much of the constructed world should be appearing outside of the story or not appear at all. There are multiple examples in which narrative material appears outside of the main body of the story, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's work that featured extensive appendices and maps beyond what he included in his stories, and the entire narrative of Overwatch (Blizzard Entertainment 2016) that is told through e.g. external animated short films and comics.

Whether excluding narrative elements from the body of the piece of media supports the positive response of consumers or not depends on the nature of the media in question. In the case of Overwatch, excluding story from the gameplay has presented both upsides and downsides: it has enabled the prioritization of gameplay over narrative elements (which suits it as an online multiplayer first person shooter), but it has also given story-motivated players an excuse not to play the game. It has also rendered the lore of the universe somewhat loose, and as such, it appears to be in a state of flux with no such thing as a canonical in-game narrative to tie it down (Harris 2018).

In other cases, where the main body of media features a story, external narrative elements such as appendices function as a way of allowing the consumer to expand upon the lore of the constructed world should they so desire. Only when these narrative elements are excluded from the main body of media, does the question of how much can and should be included become an issue. For example, game designers easily make it their priority to create an immense history for the world they're constructing, drawing from the playbook of Tolkien and many others who have followed in his footsteps with their immersive mythoi, but what they fail to recognize is that loading vast amounts of lore into a character-driven game more often than not distracts from the gameplay (Baur 2012a). In said cases it would work in the story's favor to implement some of the lore outside of the game, but as is the case with most forms of media, there is no single rule on how to implement one's lore correctly. However, in the scope of this project, the approach of intradiegetic design comes into play when considering ways of implementing lore.

3.2. World versus story

Worldbuilding is not merely an act of storytelling, albeit it should be remarked that the act of designing a world is often closely and irrevocably tied to the narrative and the themes of the story that are placed into the world. The cases in which it is not so are examples of completely free design, and should be constrained by no external factors such as the story, but whether one chooses to embrace this

viewpoint or not depends entirely on what one wants to do with the world they have constructed. Should the world be meant for little else than to exist within the creator's head as an imaginary playground, no constraints would matter. However, more often than not there is a story within the world, and in such cases, it is highly essential to the betterment of the cohesiveness of the story, to acknowledge the importance of the narrative theme in the construction process. The essential question here is how one should approach prioritizing these aspects and constructing one's world. This is where the term ”setting design” comes in; it refers to the prioritization of a smaller-scale story-driven approach versus an encyclopedic one. (Baur 2012b.)

Prioritizing setting design is useful in cases in which the consumer must learn as much as there is to know about the world in order to enjoy the media, such as Dungeons and Dragons games (Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. 1974) where the lore is essentially a rule book for the game master. The designer's job in such games should be to provide data which is relevant and immediately useful to the player (Baur 2012b). Media in which the consumer is thrown into the world with little to no responsibility to learn everything there is to know about it is far more suitable for a more encyclopedic approach, as is the case with game series such as The Elder Scrolls (Bethesda Softworks 1994). Allowing the player to interact as they wish with the lore often creates a more engaging experience in such high-budget role playing games, and in this sense, intradiegetic design becomes highly important. The visuals the player engages with are an extremely useful narrative device into the lore of the game, and take up none of the time or focus of the player that verbal or written exposition does.

This manner of exposition is a part of visual storytelling—a way of conveying information, atmosphere, and subtext to the viewer in ways that require no other senses than sight (Cade 2015). The reason for intradiegetic design functioning much more efficiently as an exposition tool is that the human brain processes visuals much faster than text, leading to a much firmer emphasis on visuals in today's fast-paced media designed for consumers with decreased attention spans (Shlomi 2016). In film language, according to Cade (2015), visual storytelling has come to mean framing, composition methods, symbolism, and the usage of color

and light, and as video games are also a concurrent visual medium, these manners of storytelling can also be translated over to them (albeit the extent of this is entirely determined by the nature of the game, e.g. whether it features a fixed camera or not). However, in the context of this project, visual storytelling walks hand in hand with intradiegetic design. It not only refers to the ambience of the world and scene, but the act of storytelling through design elements such as game assets. It is both a way of offering exposition about the world and a means of driving the story of the game forwards.

3.3. Implementing the real

Shelley (2001) argues that realism in video games is simply a tool to add interest, story, and character to the problems posed for the player. As the primary goal of a video game is to be entertaining, the matter of realism and historic fact is secondary, and any education derived from the experience is merely a bonus. This claim, however, true as it may be, fails to address the point that ”realism” is a rather labile concept and can be interpreted in multiple ways. One might see realism as an endeavor to replicate real events, real visuals, and real places with accuracy of single polygons, or one might see it as simply believability. The way two in-game characters interact with each other might be considered believable by some and thus realistic, regardless of the fact that the setting they are in is far from any actual place or time. This type of realism is simply a replication of a pattern, of an internalized formula and a feeling. It is a sense of familiarity for the player.

Familiarity is often a crucial element in ensuring the players’ relatability to the game. It provides access points—a cultural framework through which to interpret the fictional world of the game. Excessive familiarity can also be a detriment to the game—if the player knows too much about the target of the game’s emulation, suspension of disbelief grows harder. Familiarity depends heavily on cultural contextand should thusly be considered when thinking of the target audience of the game. The current trend of nitpicking media has increased the likelihood of consumers that are growing more and more aware and critical of the

media they consume and less willing to suspend their disbelief over fiction. (Baur, 2012a.)

As pointed out by Shelley (2001), it goes without saying that the simplest games do not need a sense of familiarity to succeed as entertaining games, but when the focus is on modern story-heavy high-budget games (especially role playing games), these rules of applying familiarity increase in importance. As implied by Baur (2012a), the player views the worlds depicted in these games through the lens of the real world and its history, and thus even entirely constructed worlds that have no roots in the real world should be viewed through the same lens. This does not mean that every constructed world should entail allegory, but rather that some inherent symbolism from real cultures can and should be translated over to these fictional cultures, e.g. color symbolism and basic symbols such as circles and arrows, to avoid confusing the player and to provide points of relatability. As the thesis author has come to discover during the case studies carried out during this project, drawing parallels between real and constructed cultures can also be a useful tool of providing subtext and information to the player that is not otherwise stated; an iconological analysis of a real building could be applied to a similar building in a constructed context. After all, the iconology behind architecture depends mostly on the sociopolitical climate and the environment, causing the likelihood of similarity between buildings that were built under similar circumstances. It should also be noted that many cultures around the world share the same fundamental building blocks regarding the themes of their myths, structures, and religions. Prominent thinkers such as Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell have proposed that the reason for this is that all myths in human cultures stem from a place called the collective unconscious (Joseph Campbell and the Myth of the Hero’s Journey 2016). This theory, when applied into the context of worldbuilding, suggests that more often than not it is better if fictional cultures are at least somewhat based on real cultures, as introducing elements built from familiar building blocks increases the amount of points of access.

In this project, an emphasis is placed on interpreting the iconology of the design of fictional worlds through the iconology of the real world. In order to gain a deeper understanding about the ways of implementing visual intradiegetic

elements into environment and character design in video games, it was necessary to conduct a series of case studies of games that feature stories. The two games chosen to be the subjects of these studies were Bloodborne (Sony 2015) and Anthem (Electronic Arts 2019), chosen due to the religious and/or spiritual overtones the narratives of both games hold, and the similarity to the constructed world of this thesis project thereof.

3.4. Case study: Bloodborne

Bloodborne (Sony 2015) is a cosmic horror action adventure game developed for the PS4. As is the case with many games in the Dark Souls series (a continuum with which Bloodborne is only loosely affiliated), the design of the game is easily distinguishable from other such fantasy horror games. It features dark, gothic design themes, extremely detailed character and environment designs, and has been carried out with a keen eye for narrative design elements. Even without extensive knowledge over the inner workings of the game, is not hard to come to the conclusion that its engine has been specifically tailored to implement such complicated, physics-heavy character designs; this only further accentuates the impression that this game has been made with an extremely heavy emphasis on design.

Bloodborne, as other games in the ”Soulsborne” franchise, has received praise among its fanbase for its emphasis on visual storytelling instead of plot-centered conventional storytelling. Not much is clearly stated to the player as they advance through the game—only snippets of information that never paint a holistic picture of the events that have transpired in the world. The lore of the world is intentionally left mysterious—the player is meant to uncover the story on their own by piecing together snippets of information they sometimes might even have to go through trouble to acquire. And, in fact, there often is no explanation; often the deductions are left to the player themselves. When looking around themselves in the game world, the player often sees these little narrative elements scattered about—the blood staining Queen Yharnam’s stomach as she stands praying handcuffed in the Nightmare of Mensis, suggesting that her child was taken from her against her will, or the red jeweled brooch found on a corpse

in the Tomb of Oedon, suggesting that this was Father Gascoigne's wife Viola. Much is explained visually in Bloodborne, so the question arises: how is the world's history and society reflected in its intradiegetic design?

A broad look upon the map of Bloodborne presents a city that cramped, dark, and multi-layered. It creates the distinct impression of a city that has been built upon itself, buildings upon buildings stacked on top of each other in an attempt to compensate for an apparent lack of space. The city is smattered in narrow alleyways, rooftops that double as walkways, and spires that reach high into the night sky (Figure 1). It is a cramped, claustrophobic place—a city as anxious and haunted as its diseased inhabitants, wrecked by a horrific disaster of a cataclysmic scale.

Figure 1. Yharnam (Bloodborne 2015)

In order to understand the intradiegetic iconology behind Bloodborne's design language, one must look to the design style featured most prominently in its world: Gothic Revival. It is an architectural style that became popularized in the 19th century during the Victorian era in England, after the industrial revolution had sparked an urge in architects to return to the time before—a time of meaningful architecture that was meant to evoke a sense of divinity. The Gothic style of the Late Middle Ages was widely admired, and artists and architects sought to bring it back into the world with an ever-increasing population of steam

engines and factories. Gothic Revival brought back tall spires, pointed arches, rose windows, crosses, and other Catholic ornaments into architecture, and re-introduced churches with tall, large windows as means to create an impression of divine light. (Gothic Revival: Design in a Nutshell (1/6) 2013; Przybylek, No date.) The choice of this dark Neo-Gothic setting in Bloodborne reflects that it is a culture that is very religion-centered—perhaps even a theocracy. At the very center of the city is a cathedral, indicating that before the disaster struck the city, it had been the very essence and pride of Yharnam (Figure 2). The rest of Yharnam surrounds this massive, towering structure, and its towers can be seen from most places in the city.

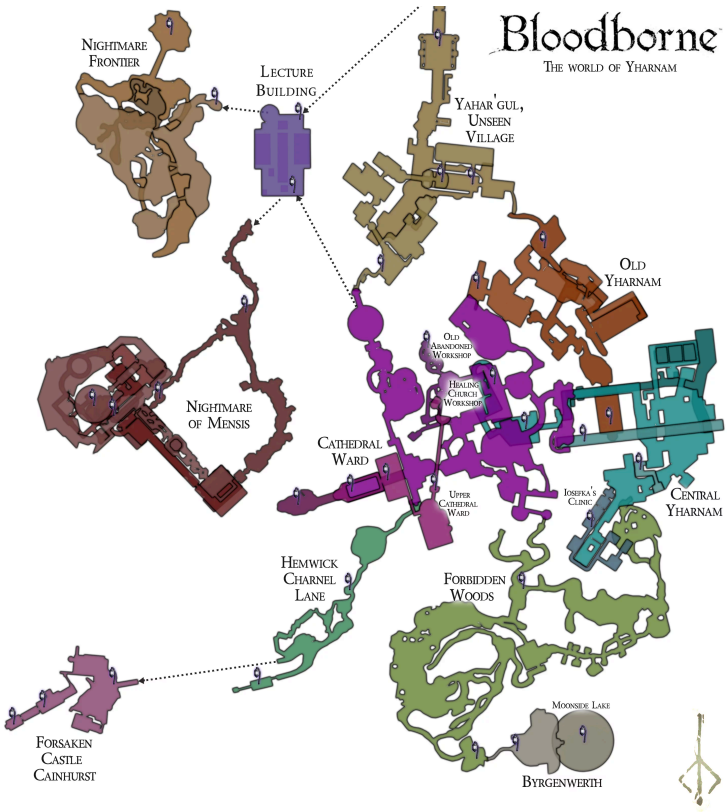

Figure 2. The World of Yharnam (Hypn0tyk 2015)

As was the case with England's Gothic Revival movement, one can only come to the conclusion that Yharnam is also a post-industrial revolution setting—a culture seeking to find God (or some other sublime state of being) once more after a massive shift in societal structures and mechanisms. This aspect is also reflected in the plentiful amounts of Gothic Catholic imagery scattered across the gargantuan reaching structures: crosses, rose windows, and religious sculptures that loom over the city like gargoyles—but something is not quite right with them,

as all the religious imagery in the game functions like a vessel for a deeper narrative (Tolman 1999). Statues are broken, disfigured, and some even bear a greater resemblance to petrified humans than statues, praying to the skies in pain and despair (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Praying statues. (Bloodborne 2015)

This is where the narrative of the game comes into play: a cataclysmic plague has struck the city after The Healing Church sought to use the blood of ancient, powerful beings to elevate themselves to godhood. Instead of healing the populace, the blood of the great ones has turned them into beasts; in their strive for apotheosis, humanity has doomed itself. This theme is mirrored in the very structure of Yharnam, in the way its Gothic spires reach up into the sky as if trying to reach divinity, in the way it piles upon and folds onto itself in a manner that echoes its inhabitants' pursuit for a higher state of being and the subsequent failure. The symbolism of Catholic architecture is used to convey the spiritual despair of the city and of the humans who these ancient gods are hardly concerned with. Yharnam is a chaotic, ruined place, exaggerated in its design elements to further this impression. It cares not for the humans, nor does it care for their actions. It is simply designed to be a self-devouring monstrosity that reaches up into the heavens.

In this sense, Bloodborne does, indeed, live up to its reputation regarding visual storytelling, even in an iconological sense. It conveys the nature of the world efficiently through its design, as further study into the iconology of its environment seems to reveal aspects of the story that a casual player would not perhaps even regard as meaningful.

3.5. Case study: Anthem

Anthem (Electronic Arts 2019) is a science fiction action adventure game developed by Bioware and published by Electronic Arts in February of 2019. Its story takes place in an entirely constructed world, one which is immense and in a constant state of fluctuation. According to the lore of the game, the world was created by godlike beings known as Shapers by using advanced technology that allowed them to tap into the Anthem of Creation, a powerful force of creation and destruction that is interwoven into the fabric of the world. The Shapers created massive relics with the intention of constructing the world in nine days, but due to some unknown reason, they disappeared after three days, leaving behind masses of dangerous, volatile machinery that still continues to churn out life forms unpredictably, setting the humans inhabiting the planet at risk. The humans of Anthem are not a technologically advanced people; the only pieces of advanced technology they possess originate from Shaper technology. The world knows no industry, and its history has fallen into shadow; nobody knows the true origins of how humans came to inhabit the planet. Layers of human civilization have been built upon crumbling ruins of older civilizations eradicated by the Anthem, their settlements protected with walls and barriers.

In order to understand how the design choices of Anthem feed into the intradiegetic narrative and the visual storytelling, one must once again look at the closest design equivalents in real-world history. Most architecture found in the wilds, and more prominently in the game’s base area Fort Tarsis, feature prominent elements of Islamic architecture. These elements include domes, arches, floral motifs, arabesques (decorative patterns that consist of rhythmic linear patterns of foliage or tendrils), and various other intricate geometrical

designs (Fleming & Hugh 1977; Rehman 2002). In fact, the bones of Fort Tarsis are almost identical to some Islamic constructs, as seen in Figure 4:

Figure 4. Anthem Concept Art: Fort Tarsis. (Anthem 2019)

Ceiling domes, such as the ones on the mosque-like building in Fort Tarsis, have been seen to carry a significance in Islam and the Eastern Church due to their interpretation as the symbolic representation of the vault of heaven (Lehmann, 1945). One could also consider the tower-like structure above the building to resemble a minaret, reaching up to the sky as a confluence of sleek white pillars. Practically every doorway and window is arched and decorated, and walls and doors are embellished with floral and geometrical patterns, such as sun-like symbols meant to symbolize the Anthem of Creation (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Decorated doors. (Anthem 2019)

What makes the usage of such design elements particularly interesting is their real-life iconology—the reason Islamic architecture is so rich in abstract and floral patterns is partly the principle of *tawhid* that prohibits idolatry (the worship of image). Due to this principle, the usage of sculptures and human figures in architecture is forbidden, and spirituality is instead expressed with elegant patterns and complex fractal designs. (Rehman 2002). However, in the world of Anthem, there are statues, god-figures, and images of heroes scattered about (as can be seen on both sides of the main doorway in Figure 4). Massive heads of Shapers carved in stone can be seen in the wilderness, indicating some form of idol-worship within the history of the world, maybe even enforced by Shapers themselves.

The iconological reasoning behind this clash between idolatry and the disallowance thereof can be interpreted as such: the human culture that built these old constructs was religiously vastly different when compared to the current setting of Anthem. It could have very well been a culture based heavily on Islam —a largely spiritual monotheistic religion that emphasizes the significance of heaven, a One True God, and opposes idolatry. However, as humanity has struggled onwards through centuries or millennia, that religion has largely been forgotten, and its ruins have been built upon. Due to preoccupation with survival, human culture has experienced little to none progress architecture and art-wise, thus leading to a stagnation in building style. Mechanical constructs have simply

been piled on top of old architecture, rendering places like Fort Tarsis cramped, motley settlements. This explanation supports the canonical lore of the origins of humanity being hazy at best, and the fact that entire civilizations have been eradicated by the Anthem in the past.

Anthem does not go delve into the world of intradiegetic design and iconology as much as Bloodborne, but it does not erase the fact that an iconological interpretation can nonetheless be formed of the game's visuals. Through comparative analysis with the iconology of the real world, fascinating insight can be derived into the lore of the game, and theories can be created based on that regardless of the game developers' intentions.

4. PROJECT

After research into iconology and intradiegetic iconology in video games, a worldbuilding project was carried out by the thesis author in order to put the research and case study findings to the test. It consisted of the development of an entirely constructed world based on the lessons derived from the research, and a consequential visualization of the world through a series of digital concept art paintings. Regardless of the fact that no game project was to be developed from these concepts, the world was designed with the scope of an open-world action role-playing game in mind.

The scope of the constructed world project was a single city called Yoa. It's a solitary settlement enclosed by a vast wilderness that is too dangerous and unwelcoming to venture far into, thus making the city mostly isolated from the outside world.

4.1. Environment

Yoa is located on the confluence of two rivers in a valley surrounded by mountains, on a delta where the rivers flow into the sea. Thus much of the soil in and around the city consists of wetlands; the water that flows from higher ground

courses through the city in rivers, ditches, and underground drains. The plains surrounding Yoa are mostly grassy and treeless with various wetland vegetation strewn about closer to the riverbanks. The base rock of the area is a form of white sandstone, born from the sedimentation of sand caused by the water flow.

The climate of the area is very humid and hot. It rains frequently, and the weather changes quickly due to the proximity of the ocean. Flooding is common during winter but is mostly restricted to the farmlands on the outskirts of the city while the elevated inner parts of the city are kept mostly dry. Whereas summers are a little bit dryer than winters, they rarely see the same amount of rain.

The temperature almost never drops below 15°C in the winter and can rise up to 40°C in the summer. This sort of climate has led to a rich and colorful but dangerous fauna, with most insects, reptiles, and amphibians growing to massive sizes, some producing lethal venoms that can paralyze and kill in mere minutes. With the abundance of nutrition for local fauna and the small size of the local human population, there is practically nothing keeping predator populations under control apart from other predators. Those on top of the food chain rule the wilds, and in Yoa, those are certainly not the humans. The insect population is also excessive—the most prevalent example of this is a local breed of midges that plagues the Yoa lowlands, traveling in clouds and biting humans and cattle. In spite of the hot weather, this has forced humans to take precaution and cover up.

4.2. History

Yoa is an ancient construction, its history as a settlement stretching back thousands of years. It started as a pilgrimage site that held only a small temple for the Artifact (a mysterious piece of precursor technology that is considered sacred by the Yoans) that was discovered in the river. However, as the pilgrimage was excessively dangerous and the soil around the site seemed fertile enough to be farmed, people started settling down near the river bank, forming a settlement that eventually grew into a city around the temple.

4.3. Religion and Government

The Yoans believe that divinity resides within machinery. An ancient race of godly beings were the precursors to humans and machines, and according to the Yoans, their spirit is still infused in every piece of technology. These beings were eradicated by a cataclysmic event, but one particularly powerful individual called the Demiurge managed to preserve their race by dividing their essence into two parts: humans and machines. The Yoans worship the pieces of precursor technology left behind, and even though they have reverse engineered it to some degree to create technology of their own, this remains strictly a matter of the religious institution. It is seen as a grave offense for ordinary civilians to meddle with precursor technology or to engineer devices of their own. This renders independent mechanics heretics and outlaws. The priests perform a sacred ritual every time a machine is manufactured, transferring the breath of the precursors to the new creation to bind it with the spirit, thus making it divine. Machines engineered by apostate mechanics are considered to be impure, soulless, evil things, corrupting the natural balance between the humans and machines. The government has ways of hunting down such technology, such as inquisitions checkpoints in temples. This extremely restricted industry has made sure that the regular citizen rarely has access to technology.

According to the Yoans, humanity will eventually ascend into divinity by merging back with the machines, forming the precursor race once more. The Yoan afterlife is seen as a sort of blissful state of limbo where people wait for the apotheosis of humanity. During their lifetimes the Yoans strive for harmony between themselves, machines, and all living things. They believe that harmony is a condition for apotheosis; without harmony, humanity will never achieve divinity. The Yoans do not pray but meditate, believing it to be a path to oneness with the spirit. Yoan temples are specifically dedicated to meditation. It is not obligatory to partake in meditation, but it is strongly encouraged by the priests, who function both as spiritual guides and decision makers for Yoan society.

Yoa is a theocracy, governed entirely by a religious institution called the Brethren. It is a group of priests led by a high priest called the Amar. The Amar functions as

the sovereign leader of Yoa. A degree of democracy is implemented in their system, as the priests of the Brethren are elected once every five years by the people but the final decision-making power remains with the Amar who is selected by the Brethren from amongst the current Brethren. This has been the form of government for Yoa for as long as it has existed—the system has been upheld by the relatively small size of the city, a strong, stable religion, and an active thwarting of any nonconformists that might have appeared.

Yoa has no military, but a standing defense force is stationed at the walls of the city in case of a natural disaster or an attack of a particularly dangerous and big animal. It is a mostly pacifist culture, albeit very authoritarian about matters of religion. The Brethren has a small, inquisition-like task force that is tasked with hunting down heretics. This sect uses precursor drone surveillance technology and are known for their harsh punishments, making them feared amongst most citizens.

4.4. People

The Yoans are a very ethnically monotonous people due to millennia of near complete isolation. Sometimes travelers from distant lands visit and settle down, but this occurrence is relatively rare. Most Yoans have olive to dark skin, black, wavy hair, and green or brown eyes as a result of this genetic uniformity. Certain genetic diseases are also very prevalent in Yoan society, forcing it to adapt and focus its healthcare system to treat these ailments better.

Income differences in Yoan society are prevalent but regulated. Temples and the Brethren often offer help for law-abiding poor citizens in need, even monetary support. There are very little thieveries or robberies due to the system keeping mostly everyone safe and satiated—the heretics who fall out of the Brethren’s favor usually live either outside the city’s walls or live in hiding at the fringes of the city, making them relatively harmless to the normal citizen. This safety balances out the Brethren’s authoritarian oppression, and combined with the weak democratic system, it has functioned for centuries to keep the populace from lashing out against its rulers.

The Yoan way of life is very informal and easygoing. There is no worry of war or conflict, and the people are safe within the city's walls as long as they abide by the rules. Most common professions are fairly common trades, e.g. farmers, scholars, craftsmen, and animal wranglers. Workdays are kept relatively short and include long siestas, so stress levels remain low among the populace. Yoan people value learning, as they believe knowledge births harmony. A basic level of education is thus provided for every child, heavy in Brethren propaganda as it may be. There is very little discrimination based on gender and income level.

5. DESIGN

5.1. Architecture and infrastructure

The first priority of the design process was to establish the appearance of the environment Yoa is located in. Since the city is located in a delta area, it was essential to make the area look sufficiently like moist lowlands. The rough layout of the area was first sketched to establish the primary geography (Figure 6).

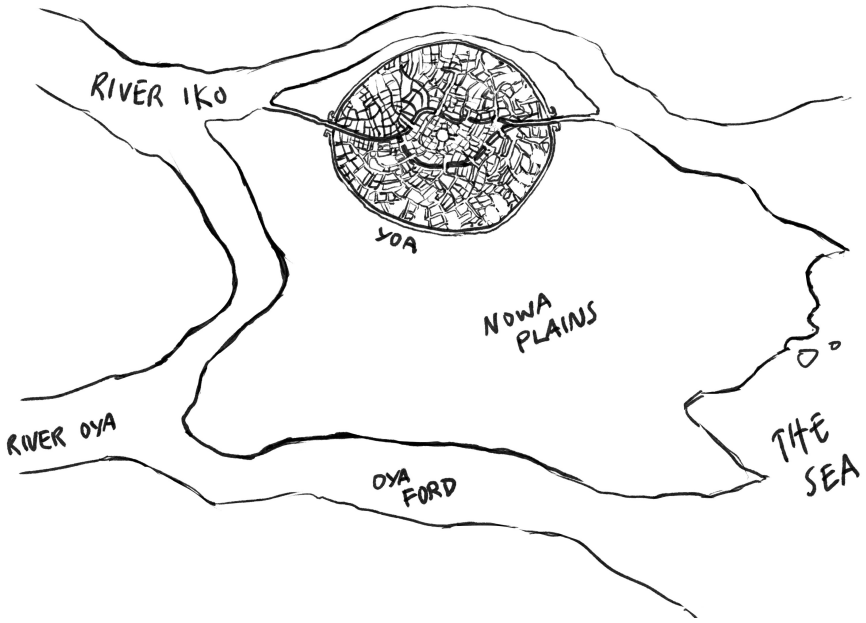

Figure 6. Map of the delta area. (Savikko 2019)

As seen in the figure, Yoa was built one half on Nowa Plains and one half on the small islet cut off from the body of land by a branch of the Iko. This smaller river that runs through the city is called Ara (Yoan for ”sacred” as it was the place the Artifact was discovered in), and it’s an essential element in the Yoan way of life; it powers Brethren factories and waters the crops on the farming areas on the outer fringes of the city.

After finalizing the sketching phase and determining the geography of the location, an illustration of the delta area was created by the thesis author. It depicts Yoa in the midst of mountains, close to where the land crumbles into the sea (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Yoan lowlands. (Savikko 2019)

The center point of Yoa, the Grand Temple, is shown to rise in the middle of the city, having been erected on a smaller islet enclosed by the Ara (as illustrated in figure 6). It is elevated from the rest of the city, both from practical reasons to keep the occasional flooding from damaging it, and for reasons regarding visuality.

To provide some context in real-world iconology, tall buildings such as churches or town halls have often functioned as landmarks for cities. They have marked the centers of towns, the roads of their respective cities often headed towards these tall constructs. The reason why these buildings have been tall is rooted deep within the human psyche; the monumentalism of buildings with

characteristics such as a large scale, prominent location, separation from its surroundings, noble materials, uniqueness, etc. has an inherent appeal for the viewer. This is why places of worship have most commonly been built taller or higher than the surrounding establishments, and why the Grand Temple has been constructed with the same impression in mind. It provides an impression of grandness and a greater spiritual impact. (Czyńska 2019.)

The Grand Temple of Yoa stands up high above the other buildings of the city, its fair and golden dome shining bright in the sunlight. Its circular form mimics the shape of the city—the Yoans believe the circle to be the most harmonious, perfect form, and strive to emulate that in their design and architecture. This is a property of the circle that has also been recognized by real architects; Renaissance mathematician Luca Pacioli (1509) stated that the proportions of the human body are designed to be perfect by God, and that ancient civilizations based the design of their temples on that visual harmony of the human figure achieving two impossible shapes—namely the perfect circle and the square. This notion was established by Vitruvius (1st century BC) and the subsequent famous illustration of the Vitruvian man by Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1490), depicting a well-built man with his arms and legs spread out to encompass the two most perfect geometrical shapes of the square and the circle (Figure 8). (Wittkower 1971, 13-16.)

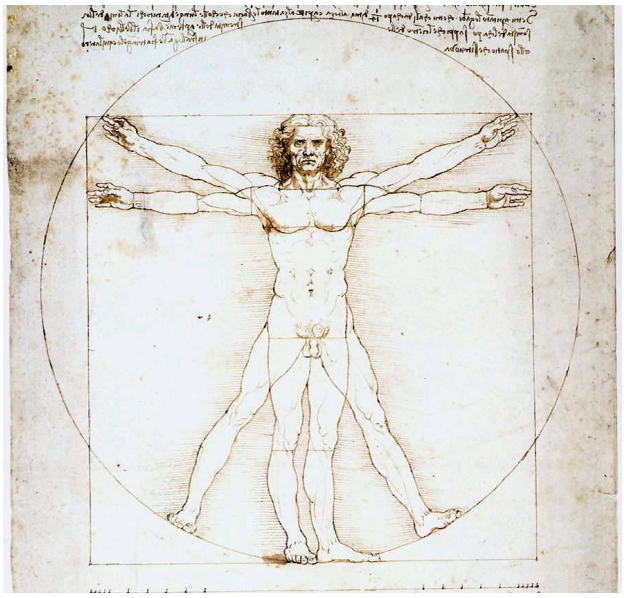

Figure 8. The Vitruvian man. (Da Vinci c.1490)

There was a belief among Renaissance artists and mathematicians that this discovery indicated the perfection of the human figure and proved that a human was, indeed, the image of God. Thus, in most churches of that era, the house of God was thought best to be constructed in accordance with the fundamental geometry of the square and the circle. (Sb.)

This notion of spiritual harmony is translated over to the Yoan culture and the way the circular city surrounds the Grand Temple, yet instead of approaching the symbolism of the circle from the point of view of the perfection of man, it treats the circle as a symbol of all things perfect and complete, of harmony. Stairs lead up to the temple from all sides in perfect symmetry, and water from the Ara is lead up through pipelines to flow around and inside the temple in fountains, falling down from the sides of the building in decorative waterfalls (Figure 9).

Figure 9. The stairs to the Grand Temple. (Savikko 2019)

The top floor of the temple is opened up by arched doorways on all sides and skylights that decorate the dome. This is a theme in many Yoan buildings—the openness of the space is valued greatly as it ties the space together with the outside world and the nature, creating a harmonious environment. Only insect nets are used to separate sacred places and other public venues from the outside, as the midges are a common problem—especially during winter.

The iconology behind the skylights that open up the roof dome of the Grand Temple is based on the Renaissance principle established by the architect Leon Battista Alberti (1991), that windows in houses of worship should be high enough for the beholders inside to only see the sky, and not the common life outside (Wittkower 1971, 9). This principle is modified slightly to the accordance of the Yoan philosophy of open spaces—the skylights are not meant to separate the place of worship or the act of meditation from the world, but to intertwine the two together further by opening the space up to the sky as well. The light that floods the space through the skylights is meant to create an impression of divinity without separating the divine from the common; in Yoa, religion is so closely tied with everyday life that their language does not even have a word for religion. It is as an essential part of life for them as eating and sleeping, and the design of their houses of worship reflects that synchronicity.

The skylights also function as means of timing meditation; the windows are designed to cast directional light onto the Artifact that is kept within a circular pool at the very center of the Grand Temple. There are mirror structures within the windows to make it so that exactly once a day at high noon, the light from the sun hits the Artifact from all directions (Figure 10). This moment is considered to be the opportune moment for meditation, reflection, and relaxation. Some Yoans choose to come out to the Grand Temple to pray, some elect to utilize the services of smaller temples, and some simply meditate at home or at work. The importance of this is that it marks an approximately hour-long siesta during which life calms down in the city.

Figure 10. Inside the Grand Temple. (Savikko 2019)

The vaulted ceiling in the Grand Temple is engraved with patterns resembling circuitry, meant to invoke the holiness of machinery and their infinite wisdom. The role of nature comes into play via the water vegetation in the pool surrounding the Artifact; it is important for the design of the Grand Temple to retain a sense of balance between the human, the natural, and the technological.

Another important feature of the interior of the Grand Temple is that it mimics the circular, open structure of the outside. Nothing breaks the harmony of the inner sanctum; its design is perfectly symmetrical on all sides, and even the stairs leading down to the lower parts of the temple circle the area symmetrically (Figure 11).

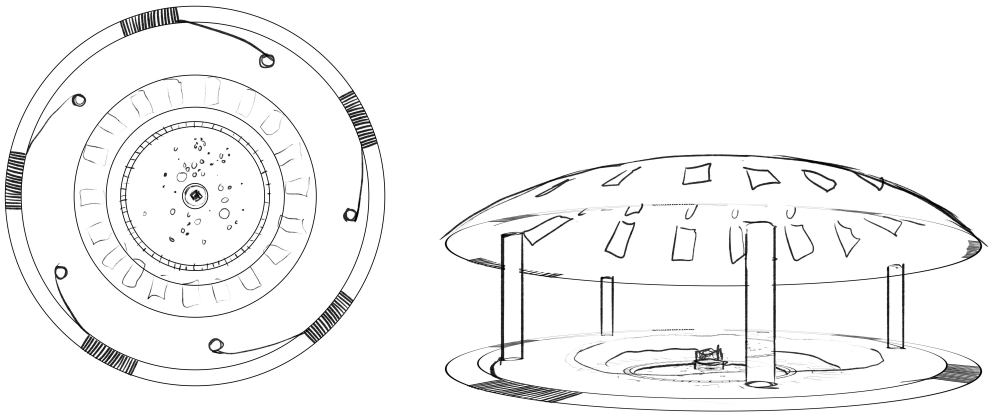

Figure 11. Early sketches of the Grand Temple. (Savikko 2019)

These early sketches present the stairs concealed in the area between the meditation area and the outer wall, circling the sanctum. The initial idea of the space being lined by columns was abandoned in favor of arched doorways, as they brought about a greater sense of serenity and harmony in the space.

The iconological reasoning behind arched doorways, windows, and ceilings in Yoa has more to do with engineering than it does with the harmony of the shapes or the beauty of the round form—albeit it does have roots in the aesthetics of the arch as well. In the history of the real world, the arch has been an essential feat in structural engineering throughout the ages; due to their increased efficiency in the distribution of weight, they have allowed humans to build massive complexes such as the Roman aqueducts and the Colosseum (Sinclair 2014). The implementation of arches in Yoan architecture shows not only an eye for aesthetics, but a somewhat developed level of engineering in the culture—not yet advanced enough to accomplish the feats of modern engineering and render the need for arches moot, but advanced enough to be able to build large constructs efficiently and without fear of them crumbling under their own weight. With Yoa being a small and mostly stagnant civilization in terms of development, its architecture reflects a contrast between the advanced technology they worship and their own simple lifestyle.

To illustrate the most prominent and biggest example of the utilization of arches in Yoa, the thesis author created an illustration of the bazaar near the Grand Temple. It is a long, tall structure that winds through the city around the temple, its inner walls lined with merchant stands and other miscellaneous services. Its ceiling is vaulted, peaking in elegant pointed arches one after the other. The reason for the arches being pointed instead of regular Roman-style arches is that the design of pointed arches allows for much taller structures and more interior space as the pointed design concentrates, rather than evenly distributes, the pressure. As the pointed arches reduce stress on the walls, they can be built thinner and higher, resulting in better heat regulation functionality of the building in a hot climate. (Muscato, No date.)

The illustration created for the bazaar of Yoa depicts the vaulted ceiling, the merchant stands lining the walls, and also features some character concepts (Figure 12).

Figure 12. The bazaar. (Savikko 2019)

The lack of significant industry disables any chance for industrial design or advanced, light materials. Most buildings in Yoa are constructed from the local white sandstone found in the delta area; wood is a much more rarely used building material than stone bricks due to the danger of venturing out into the forests at the foot of the mountains. If a building in Yoa features elements like wooden lattice roofs, it is an important building that belongs to someone like a high-standing priest or a wealthy merchant.

A concept illustration was created on a building one such as this—a public siesta house that is functionally a combination of a library, a garden, and a temple (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Siesta house. (Savikko 2019)

The building's layout is very open to allow for easy access for every citizen. It is center-pointed by a water fountain at its ground level, meant for sitting and meditating at. Stairs lead upstairs into a library area and a balcony overlooking the garden in the backyard. The decorative posts on the exterior of the building are meant to create an aesthetically pleasing, attractive first impression for the passerby, and to invite them in to take part in the space that opens beyond. The lattice roof is lined with glass from the inside to prevent winter rains from reaching the upstairs library area without obstructing light from accessing the space. The designs on the railings of the staircase and the mezzanine are created in the likeness of circuitry—a kind of pattern considered to hold a great spiritual value to the Yoans, as formerly seen on the inside of the dome of the Grand Temple.

As depicted on the exterior of the siesta house, common decorative motifs in Yoan design are flowers, meant to invoke a balance between human design and nature. Plentiful vegetation is a recurring theme in Yoa, and interiors are often rich in plant life. Potted plants, planter boxes, and hanging baskets are a common sight in both Yoan public spaces and households. On the streets of Yoa, the vegetation burgeoning from beneath cobblestones and climbing over cracks in sandstone has been embraced as a representation of harmony between nature and human engineering, so very little trimming or other maintenance is done on vegetation. It simply chooses to grow wherever it wishes; even the central pool within the Grand Temple houses water vegetation that climbs along the pedestal of the Artifact unrestrained. Vegetation such as vines and trees occupying a lot of

space on the streets is a common theme in nearly every illustration created of the city. Often the natural corrosion and the invasion of plant life upon the buildings is so severe that it brings the constructs into a state of disrepair, but unless it poses a hazard to the populace, Yoans often view it as aesthetically pleasing; the less sterile and new a building looks, the more in harmony it is with nature.

5.2. Visuality

Mirzoeff (2011) talks about the complexes of visuality. Visuality, in the sense that he applies the term, refers to the visual (referring to both literal and psychological imagery) means established to uphold authoritarian systems and the status quo among the people, using information, images, and ideas. Mirzoeff uses examples such as the American plantation complex, the military-industrial complex, and the imperial complex to establish how these systems used visuality to uphold themselves. The word ”complex” in this context refers to a configuration of visuality against countervisuality (i.e. resisting forces), a system established to maintain absolute power with those it serves.

In this sub-chapter, it is established how the Brethren upholds the visuality of the prevalent religious complex through imagery and other visual means to be found in the cityscape of Yoa. This is done due to visuality being a concept that is closely tied in with iconology, especially in matters of politics and their iconological impact on architecture, infrastructure, and art. The effect of the Brethren’s complex of visuality and its subsequent iconology is illustrated through environment concept illustrations that depict the various ways in which the authoritarian theocracy manifests itself.

As religion is a deeply ingrained aspect of Yoan life, upholding absolute power is an easy feat for the Brethren. The authority they uphold has gone unchallenged for centuries due to the firmly established complex of visuality; the citizens of Yoa simply have never known of anything better. The Brethren uses many visual means to establish themselves as the absolute, such as art and government-funded propaganda. Yoan art is and has always been heavily spiritual, and thusly, even without conscious effort from the government or the people, it fosters the

visuality of the Brethren. The art history of the city state has evolved from abstract decorative patterns and mechanic figures to idolatry of the Brethren - mainly the idolization of the Amar and the archetype of a priest. Yoan art pays homage to religious leaders and their greater spiritual connection to the precursors—so commonly, in fact, that idol sculptures can be found even in the outer districts of the city, around farmer housing and farmland (Figure 14).

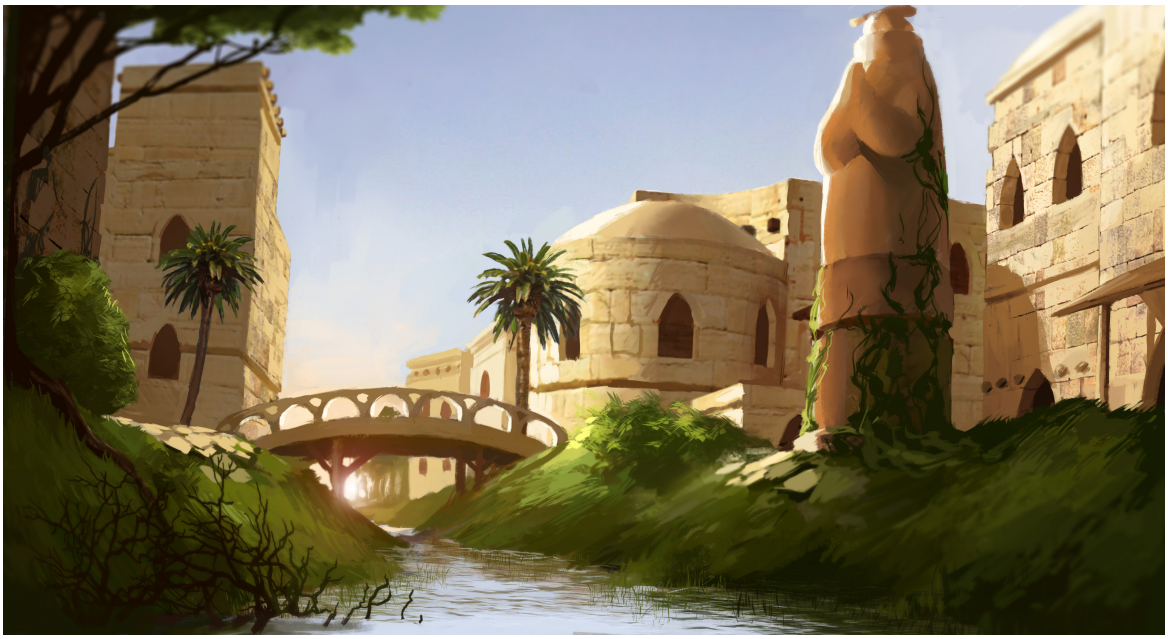

Figure 14. Priest idol by the river. (Savikko 2019)

In this illustration, a large priest idol is seen overlooking a narrow stream of the Ara, as if blessing the water. These sandstone statues are seen all throughout Yoa, overlooking the city, its buildings, and its inhabitants. The surrounding buildings are residential houses, dwellings for farmers, merchants, and other lower mid-class citizens. It shows that this kind of art is prevalent everywhere in Yoa, ensuring both increased value of life through aesthetic satisfaction, and a thoroughly upheld system of visuality.

Electricity and technology are the greatest things the Brethren has to hold over the common people of Yoa. They serve as means to control and to impress, and to create an impression of otherworldliness upon the Brethren; most common people only have access to simple pieces of technology such as electric lights, battery-powered clocks, or bug zappers. Greater pieces of machinery are

reserved for Brethren use only, and thus displaying that privilege helps further the visuality of the Brethren's absolute power.

The Brethren often organizes public events in which the Amar traverses the city in a large walker robot, accompanied by a parade of nuns (Figure 15). Events such as this are meant to invoke respect and awe in the populace.

Figure 15. Brethren parade. (Savikko 2019)

As technology is considered mystical and spiritual to the common populace and the chances for the ordinary farmer to become a Brethren mechanic are slim, these shows of power thicken the veil of power and mystery between the city state and its rulers, thus enforcing the Brethren's complex of visuality.

5.3. Clothing design

In spite of most of this project being focused on architecture and environment, the thesis author also deemed it necessary to expand a bit more upon the topic of clothing design as well. Clothing is an essential part of a culture, after all, and thus the implementation of a brief overview of the essentials and iconology of Yoan apparel was necessary.

The iconology of Yoan apparel reflects the values of the culture, the structure of its society, its prosperity, its environment, and the materials available to make clothing. Values within the scope of this project include concepts such as equality of genders, the prevalence of classism, and the roles of various age groups.

Yoan clothing is colorful. Due to a rich soil having enabled a rich agriculture, and the presence of a rich wildlife, many materials such as roots, berries, insects, and leaves have been used to produce dyes. Shades of red and orange are the most common colors as their dyes are the cheapest to manufacture; they are plant-based and easily farmable on the damp soil of the Yoan lowlands. Other dyes that fall under this category are the leaf-based muted greens, and berry-based muted purples. Turquoise is the most common of the slightly more luxurious dyes, as the mineral it is derived from is found in plentiful amounts near the roots of the mountains. However, its location makes it far more dangerous to procure, and thus slightly more expensive than the standard reds, muted yellows, oranges, and browns. Black dye is a step farther from that, as the mineral it derives from is procured from higher up the mountains, from significantly more hostile environments. Pure blue and bright green dyes are unprocurable in Yoa.

As for the materials, all fabrics are manufactured from either plant fibers or animal furs. Linen and cotton are the cheapest materials, and wool from the local farm animals is the second cheapest. Leather’s level of expensiveness depends on the animal it originates from—farm animal leather is the cheapest but also the least durable, and luxury products are made from the hides of big reptilian predators that are not only dangerous but difficult to process into wearable products due to the toughness and durability of their skins.

A series of character lineups was created by the thesis author to visualize the differences between classes, ages, genders, and the materials they wear. In figure 16 are depicted a farmer man, a high-class woman, a child of nobility, and a merchant woman:

Figure 16. Character lineup 1. (Savikko 2019)

The farmer man is shown to wear a certain type of hooded poncho that is made of a durable, warm wool and dyed a muted green. It is a winter garb, meant to shield the wearer from the elements. The outer surface of the cloth has been treated with beeswax to make it wearable in the profuse amounts of rain that winter brings along, and the protection it provides to the wearer's torso and head also helps to shield them from harsh winds. The durable cotton pants the man is wearing are equipped with knee pads to enable working on one's knees without putting them under great duress—the pads are also easily changeable. The tall boots are made of leather, and are essential to anyone with work on the wetlands as they are waterproof. Working class people often invest in good boots to make their job on the moist lowlands easier and more comfortable.

The high-class woman is shown to be clothed in layers of stiff, form-fitted cotton, in an ensemble that has an air of nobility to it. This is also a winter attire, meant for higher coverage than most summer attires, but it is less practical than the former example. The cream-colored leather boots are a rare commodity as their

materials derive from creatures with rare albinism; they are a status symbol as their wearer has most likely spent a lot of money on them. The wide-brimmed hat is more of a fancy accessory than anything practical like a hood would be; the wearer of this attire displays a clear inclination towards vanity rather than practicality.

The lack of tall boots in favor of simple sandals on the noble child indicates that she is one who does not venture out from the inner parts of the city much. Her attire is one of a life of comfort, not needing to concern herself with wearing hardy waterproof clothing. The black and turquoise color scheme of her attire and the gold jewelry in her hair also indicate her class.

The merchant woman is clad in hardy boots, comfortable cotton pants, and a shirt with practical detachable sleeves. They can be useful in situations that require temperature regulation, situations where one has to avoid getting messy, or situations where one has to protect themselves from insects; many Yoan outfits feature detachable sleeves and a high degree of adaptivity in their design due to the labile nature of the weather and environment. The colors of the merchant woman’s outfit are simple reds and oranges—very cheap and practical. The gold jewelry around her waist are measuring tools used in trading; they’re used as counterweights in the Yoan system of weighing items.

In figure 17, various designs for Brethren apparel were designed. This includes the gown of the Amar, the standard priest and nun outfits, and a design for a Brethren mechanic.

Figure 17. Character lineup 2. (Savikko 2019)

Brethren attires appear more futuristic than the clothing of common people, as the equipment used to exclusively manufacture them features precursor technology and makes significantly more advanced design possible. The Amar's gown is a heavily layered ensemble, meant to invoke a sense of authority and imposing stature in their presence. Its outer layer is a heavy, luxurious fabric, embroidered with golden floral patterns. Its deep, greenish turquoise color is among the hardest to produce in Yoa, and thus appropriate for the leader to be wearing. There are carious support structures built into the outfit, such as lightweight metal rings keeping the hem and collars of the Amar's gown circular. The headdress is also made out of a lightweight gilded metal, and a turquoise jewel has been embedded into its center. The shape of the headdress is modeled after a piece of ancient technology, and it repeats the theme of the harmony of the circle.

Both the Amar's and the priests' attires are designed to be gender neutral as there are no gender restrictions in being elected into either position. The priest's outfit is significantly plainer, featuring a more diminutive version of the Amar's headdress and a more subdued decorative belt with black gemstones (the same ones used to make black dye). The priest's outfit is very covering and stiff,

restricting greater movement and creating an impression of nobility. Impractical clothing is seen as a sign of authority in Yoa as it indicates that the wearer of the attire does not have to do manual labor.

The nuns in Yoa are the hosts of temples and their caretakers, lower in rank than priests but looked up to by civilians. The nun is the only profession in Yoa that is exclusive for women; this is an age-old tradition that has its roots in women being seen as calm and collected nurturers and protectors. Only daughters of nobility become nuns, as the training to become one starts from a young age and worker class children often have other priorities than spirituality. This is reflected in the design of the nun's attire; its white color is accented with pale turquoise, creating an impression of serenity and purity. The attire is also less stiff than the outfits of the higher-ups, enabling more free movement and indicating a more liberated lifestyle. The extremely long sleeves are detachable—a feature shared with many common attires in Yoa. Should a nun choose to do so, she could easily free up her arms to partake in more physical hobbies and activities.

The mechanic's attire is the most practical of all the Brethren outfits. It features practical cotton pants and a shirt, and a large utility belt meant for holding various equipment. The uniform coat on top is the same deep greenish turquoise as the Amar's dress, signifying the authority and significance of Brethren's mechanics as the precursors' hands. The golden patterns embroidered onto the coat are more mechanical in nature than the organic floral patterns on the Amar's gown, indicating a closer relationship to the artificial. Mechanics also more often than not have augmented body parts—a feature only seen on the rich in Yoa. These mechanic extensions of oneself are seen as sacred as they are always licensed by the Brethren and infused with the breath of the precursors. Mechanics are known for the practice of replacing their own body parts even without any dire physiological need for it, such as injury or blood poisoning. This process of self-mutilation is seen as sacred and valued greatly in the ranks of the Brethren, as it indicates great loyalty and dedication to the faith.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis was successful in the sense that it provided a greater understanding of intradiegetic design for the author. The research into worldbuilding and its relation to intradiegetic design helped understand the tenets according to which iconology could be implemented and analyzed in video games—three of which are especially important:

1. Implementing lore visually through intradiegetic design is an extremely efficient way to convey subtext, atmosphere, and sometimes even story elements to the player. It diminishes the need for verbal or written exposition and allows the player to process the required information much faster and easier.

2. An encyclopedic approach to intradiegetic design is important when designing massive open-world role-playing games, as the player is more often than not given full freedom to experience the world as they please.

3. Drawing parallels between the iconology of the real world and the iconology of the constructed world can be a useful tool in iconological analysis in regards to worldbuilding, as it helps create points of relatability for the player, establish a sense of realism, and thus enhance immersion in the game.

These tenets were successfully put to the test in the development of Yoa and the concept art illustrations created for the world. The project proved to be highly useful regarding the strengthening of composition and painting skills, as well as improving the sense of implementing visual storytelling in concept art. Yoa also proved to be a fruitful project in regards to the development of its world and lore, and has plenty of potential to be implemented in a possible future project, such as an original story, a comic, or a game. Having a well-thought-out setting and intradiegetic design for any project will free up time and resources to crafting other aspects of the project, such as the plot or possible game mechanics. In that regard, it is likely the existing design of Yoa will be taken advantage of in the future.

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