

Story

Core Themes and Goals

“Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not over, it’s not the end.”

Myth cycle: enter to do your job and then leave when it is done

Messianic? Giving tree

See the

Job: Cultivate the community. Bring them to a better place.

You’re not tasked directly with helping them, but figure this out over time

(Cutscene reminders? Or people leave candles that glow, things that grow. They will eventually take over your screen, is it that when they rely on you too much you leave? Is it clear that you’re working toward ascension?)

Did they pray the statue to life? Is it a symbiosis, their interactions keep you alive?

Questions:

- What scenarios do I want the player to experience?
 - Choice conflict - trying to weigh options against each other in scenarios where there is no ‘objective’ path result
 - Empathy towards their constituents, hopefully lending itself toward making choices feel more difficult, significant (care about the outcomes)
 - An inquisitive feeling - a desire to explore the narrative and piece together outcomes
- What will their expectations be, coming into the game?
 - Interaction - choices will have a direct effect on future outcomes (branching path)
 - Choices have explicit effective/ineffective results
 - Should choices always relate directly to the problem? Break expectation of both what they can do, how it will turn out?
- Challenge: connect text to visual and narrative abstraction.

What is the core story? Set of narrative events that will be led through?

How are you introduced to the village?

> Scene fades into view, animated leaves fall down

> Text fades up - first interaction: Simple - kids playing in the woods, three interactions that show them that you are alive

>

Start mid-action? A few candles, so you can see when they are taken away. (en media res)

Connection with liveliness/light. As you lose the peoples' faith, it gets darker, and emptier, and eventually stills. As you become more active in their lives, you gain light.

Not all choices are clear, not every problem has an answer that works out, but you try your best and work with people to make things better.

I am banking on some narrative curiosity as well as visual feedback (and curiosity from that) to get people interested in continuing, in investing in the village and, as a result, themselves.

Optimism bias

Curiosity: use mundane objects in novel ways (subvert expectations)

Believe that you can make sense of the situation with the right resources

Design

System Variables

World states:

World states are a set of variables that are tallied in the background and affected by choices. At the moment there are three overarching states, that can be broken off into smaller states with more content development.

Community relationship with the guardian is represented as a sum of the others states; shown visually on the screen as aggregate of geometry.

1. Community relationship with outsiders
 - a. Safety, shelter
2. Community relationships between members of the community
3. Community relationship with the environment
 - a. Health, food

Relationships:

A series of state metrics, from 0 to 100. Will increase/decrease based on choices made.

Events:

An event is triggered after each choice input. It selects a Choice at random based on the current Relationship values.

Choices:

Choices manifest as text onscreen. They have event text, a set of options, and maybe some prerequisites. Each option has an effect on the world states,
Example choices:

1. Event:
The village is attacked
Prerequisites:
Weighted by relationship with outsiders; If < 50,
Options:
 - a. Build a wall +random
 - b. Fight back +random
 - c. Surrender +outsiders -community
2. Event:
The village is affected by plague.

Concrete things - life in the village

Drought
Plague
War
Animal sickness
Stranger in the village

Personal things - sad & hopeful (choices are abstract, whether they have actionable consequences)

Death of a family member
Crush on someone
Fear for the future
Existential crisis
Children playing in the woods
Problems with people (petty)
Problems with people (serious)

Should there be a transition to more personal things?

Should questions be statements about moralistic things i care about?

More personal things have higher prerequisites

But will be interspersed with bigger things, so those bigger things will have more impact

Focus in from a breadth view; start out standard but get personal, (subvert expectations)

Need a decent pool of events without prerequisites. Event "payoff" should scale with prerequisites.

Visuals

Statue
Offerings

Environment?

Open vs closed (intimacy? Wonder? folklore?)

Space that will be populated with objects.

Consideration:

Wordiness of choice options.

Color?

Voice of choice options (commands? dialogue?) tone?

INTENT INTENT INTENT

Themed objects? (different kinds of light) or related to states?

Speeds

NOTES FROM CRIT:

social structure of the community - what culture and society consists of, themes in culture (status rivalry, etc.)

whether or not it resembles ours, generic enough, etc?

what constitutes loss of face, bad luck, interpersonal issues, fear of the unknown, etc.

empathy is a key element - content of the story is critical for that, how to create empathy, within different cultural and societal context, what does empathy mean

symbolic and formal strategies, visuals to trigger empathy

Sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9XG9NGDaO4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puLnIQ-plR8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GjQQuXKuGJI> ***

Rattles, bells, chimes, white noise, static, clanging sounds, brushing leaves, theremin

Language

Book of kells, old english, sanskrit, chinese

Abstraction & ideography, meaning in context, invent a system of combinations

Key: color, placement, form (lines/negative space)

Tone (writing)

Year of the flood, kerrin,

Lori rec: genesis, exodus, Bhagavad Gita? (idk if i want religious tone tome, trying to avoid explicit co-opting of religious stuff)

Title ideas - *Alt. ideas: Shrine in the Woods, Statues, Gehenna*

4a. Narrative Influences and Resources:

Adams, Tarn and Adams, Zach. *Dwarf Fortress*. 2002.

Diamond, Jared M. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. Print.

Extra Credits: Choice in Games. By James Portnow. Perf. Daniel Floyd. *Youtube*. N.p., 24 Mar. 2012. Web. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg8fVtKyYxY&list=PLL_m9qdrw0GEhuV2T9JZADFwa2T1uwBld>.

Holowka, Alec, et al. *Longest Night: Lost Constellation*. Windows, OS X, and Linux. <https://finji.itch.io/lost-constellation>

McCaughrean, Geraldine, and Sophy Williams. *Treasury of Fairy Tales*. Barnes and Noble Books, 2003. Print.

Townsend, Michael. *A Dark Room*. 2013. Doublespeak Games. Web. <http://adarkroom.doublespeakgames.com/>

Possible Narrative Stylistic Influences:

Kerren McAdden - specific details and mood of her poetry (*Landscape with Plywood Silhouettes*)

Margaret Atwood - specific details and flow of her writing. *Year of the Flood* also has parables from an authored religion that mimic a more folkloric style of storytelling, for reference. (*Year of the Flood*, *Handmaid's Tale*, etc.)

4b. Visual Influences and Resources:

@digitalsqand. "About @ebooks_goetia Glyphs." *Dracula City*. N.p., 17 Sept. 2016. Web. <<http://dracula.city/about-goetia/>>.

Gardner, Helen, and Richard G. Tansey. *Gardner's Art through the Ages*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College, 1996. Print.

Hill, Crag, and Nico Vassilakis. *The Last Vispo Anthology: Visual Poetry, 1988-2008*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Piringer, Jorg. Visual Poetry Gifs. Digital image. Jorg Piringer - Digital Sound, Interactive Poetry, Etc.

N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://joerg.piringer.net/index.php?href=visual/gifs.xml>>.

Skinner, Stephen. *Sacred Geometry: Deciphering the Code*. New York: Sterling, 2009. Print.

4c. Human Resources

There are three grad students I've gotten in contact with that have work or are doing work that relates to choice/interactive narrative. Should I be able to meet and discuss with them, it is likely they will influence design choices in this project. I have reached out to Jason Coley, Lorelei Wagner, and Eric Walsh. My faculty mentor is Patricia Search.

Jason - spoke about interaction design & intent

Eric - Spoke about narrative design & implementation

Lorelai - Talk about themes, imagery? (Thurs 11/17)

Language and culture -